



Norwegian University
of Life Sciences

Master's Thesis 2021 30 ECTS

Faculty of Landscape and Society

The Right to Food in a Global Pandemic: Status of Food Security in the phase of COVID-19

**A case study of daily wage workers residing in Samakhushi,
Kathmandu, Nepal**

Sugam Thapaliya

Master of Science in Global Development Studies

DECLARATION

I, Sugam Thapaliya 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.

Signature.....

Date.....

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Firstly, I would like to thank my supervisor, Professor Ola Westengen at the Faculty of Landscape and Society at the Norwegian University of Life Sciences for his continuous supervision and support. Your guidance has been critical for the completion of the project, and it is highly appreciated. I am also grateful to the informants who agreed to be a part of this study and finally to my family and friends for their moral support and encouragement.

ABSTRACT

The outbreak of COVID-19, followed by the lockdown imposed by the government to contain its spread, has brought Nepal to a standstill. As most of the economic activities have slowed down, food security amongst the vulnerable groups who fundamentally rely on daily wage to fulfill their day-to-day food needs are in a state of jeopardy. The rights-based approach to food security claims that the government and the society have a duty to identify who is vulnerable to food insecurity, and why they are vulnerable to make decisions regarding how to address food insecurities in the nation. The rights-based approach argues that despite there being enough resources available around the world to ensure food security, the inequalities and policies prevent the achievement of food security. Therefore, these advocates of a rights-based approach seek appropriate laws and policies to ensure the right of every human being. This research aims to study the consequences of COVID-19 on food security amongst the poor, and the government's and NGOs' food security measures, and the media and NGOs response to these through the lens of rights-based approach between 24th March 2020 (when the first lockdown was introduced by the government) and 20th May 2021. This research identified that the status of food security amongst the daily wage workers in Kathmandu in the phase of COVID-19 is deteriorating because the restrictions imposed to contain the virus resulted in weakening the already shaken foundation of food security amongst the vulnerable. The poor food accessibility amongst the daily wage workers was a result of loss of jobs affecting their purchasing power, the high price of food commodities, disruption of other sources of income, and fear of infection. Further, inadequate food availability and poor food utilization too were the factors contributing to food insecurity amongst the respondents. Nepal being a signatory member of International human rights instruments binds the country to assure the rights to food to the citizens through law. However, the nation has failed to protect the right to food to its vulnerable citizens. The food security response ordinance produced by the government barely touches upon the food security principles, very few proceedings have been done by the government regarding food security in the phase of COVID-19. In contrast, a wide range of NGOs has come forward to provide food relief to the poor. This research paints a clear picture regarding the poor operationalization of the rights-based approach to food security in Nepal. It has been understood that the government of Nepal was not prepared, and its poor response has resulted in a food security crisis in Nepal.

Table of Contents

DECLARATION	<i>i</i>
ACKNOWLEDGMENT	<i>ii</i>
ABSTRACT	<i>iii</i>
Abbreviations	<i>vi</i>
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
1.1 Research questions.....	2
1.2 Thesis objectives	2
1.2.1 Specific objectives	2
Chapter 2: Background	2
2.1. Food Security in the context of Nepal.....	3
2.1.1. Drivers of food insecurity in Nepal.....	4
2.1.2 Vulnerable groups to food insecurity in Nepal	5
2.2 Government of Nepal’s emergency responses during 2015 Earthquake.....	10
CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	12
3.1 Research design	12
3.2 Study area.....	12
3.3 Sampling method	13
3.4 Data collection	14
3.4.1 Interviews.....	14
3.4.2 Secondary data.....	14
3.5 Triangulation.....	15
3.6 Thematic analysis	15
3.7 Ethical considerations.....	16
3.8 Reliability and Validity.....	17
3.9 Theoretical framework	18
CHAPTER 4: Findings	19
4.1 Governments’ food security preparedness	19
4.1.1 Constitutional and legal provisions for right to food in Nepal	19
4.1.2 Supreme court of Nepal and right to food	21
4.1.3 Food security through agricultural development	22
4.2 Government’s food security measures in the phase of COVID-19	25
4.3 Role of NGOs to address food insecurity amongst the vulnerable communities living in Kathmandu, in the phase of COVID-19.....	27
4.4 Status of food security amongst daily wage workers in Kathmandu, in the phase of COVID-19	29
4.4.1 COVID-19 impact on food accessibility	29
4.4.2 Inadequate food availability in the market	33

4.4.3 Poor food utilization.....	34
4.5 NGOs and Media’s response to the government’s food security measures in the phase of COVID-19.....	35
4.5.1 Ineffective government.....	35
4.5.2 Government’s Lack of accountability and transparency.....	36
4.5.3 Government as an impediment to NGOs working to feed the poor.....	36
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION.....	38
5.1 Overall.....	38
5.2 Right-based approach to food security in the phase of Covid-19.....	40
Chapter 6: Conclusion.....	40
Chapter 7: Recommendations.....	41

Abbreviations

ACAPS	Assessment Capacities Project
ADS	Agriculture Development Strategy
AFSP	Agricultural and Food Security Project
APP	Agricultural Perspective Plan
CBS	Central Bureau of Statistics
CCMC	COVID-19 Crisis Management Center
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease of 2019
DCA	Dan Church Aid
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FIAN	Food-first Information and Action Network
FNSP	Food and Nutrition Security Plan
GAFSP	Global Agriculture and Food Security Program
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute
ILO	International Labour Organization
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
MoAC	Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperative
MoAD	Ministry of Agricultural Development
MoHP	Ministry of Health Policy
NFC	Nepal Food Corporation
NDHS	Nepal Demographic and Health Survey
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
Q&A	Question and Answer
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WFP	World Food Program
WHO	World Health Organization

Chapter 1: Introduction

Nepal, as one of the poorest countries in the world, is susceptible to natural disasters, vulnerability to fluctuations in global market prices, and poor infrastructures that drive food insecurity in the nation. In addition to the existing drivers, the COVID-19 pandemic and its economic impact have resulted in an increase in the number of food-insecure people throughout the nation (USAID, 2019). As a result of WFP's food security assessment, the findings recorded a spike in food insecurity to 23.2 % during the first nationwide lockdown phase in 2020 (United Nations, 2021). With their deteriorated economic ability to access food because of the lockdown imposed, it is estimated that 57,787 food-insecure families will continue to face food insecurity (United Nations, 2021). A country that is struggling to recover from the severe adverse impacts of the devastating aftermath of a major earthquake in 2015 (Manandhar, Varughese, Howitt, & Kelly, 2017), with the current lack of immediate intervention and assistance, the deterioration of food security in Nepal is likely to get worse or at least remain the same.

The pandemic resulted in job loss, hence increasing food insecurity status among vulnerable households such as migrant workers, daily wage workers, female-headed households among others. The situation might worsen as the coping mechanisms of these families have been exhausted during the first lockdown (United Nations, 2021). In this context, it is vital to study the measures adopted by the government to assure food security among these vulnerable groups, especially the daily wage workers who went jobless overnight. As the rights-based approach to food security advocates the role of government and society to assure a standard level of well-being of its citizens, this paper will study the measures adopted by the government of Nepal and NGOs to address food insecurity amongst the daily wage workers engaged in the informal economy in Kathmandu. Further, the status of food security among the daily wage workers, and NGOs and Media's response to the measures is also studied to observe the effectiveness of the adopted measures.

1.1 Research questions

1. How has Covid-19 and the food security responses to the pandemic affected the food security of daily wage workers living in Samakhushi, Kathmandu, Nepal?
2. How have NGOs and media responded to the government's food security measures in the phase of COVID-19?

1.2 Thesis objectives

The objective of this qualitative research is to analyze the consequences of COVID-19 on food security amongst the poor, and the government's food security measures, as well as the media and NGOs' response to these.

1.2.1 Specific objectives

1. To evaluate the measures taken by the government of Nepal to address food insecurities prior to COVID-19.
2. To study the food security measures adopted by the Government of Nepal and NGOs in response to COVID-19.
3. Study the consequences of COVID-19 on the status of food security amongst the daily wage workers living in Samakhushi, Kathmandu, Nepal.
4. To evaluate NGOs and media response to the government food security measures in the phase of COVID-19.

Chapter 2: Background

This chapter will provide background regarding the food security issues in Nepal. Further, historical evidence of the preparedness and responses carried out by the government of Nepal in regard to addressing food insecurity in the context of disaster like the 2015 earthquake is presented.

The purpose of focusing the literature review on these topics is to understand i) where Nepal stands in regard to the status of food security, ii) who are food insecure groups in Nepal, iii) drivers of food insecurity in Nepal, and iv) how had the government responded to address food insecurity issues in the nation during uncertain events/shocks like the earthquake. This knowledge is essential in this research because the primary data collected in this research is based on daily wage workers working in Kathmandu Valley; Lovendal(2004) states that most of the vulnerable groups to food insecurity consist of daily wage workers. Further, as the driver of vulnerabilities is understood through literature review, this research will analyze whether plans, policies, strategies, and activities prepared by the government of Nepal is targeted to the vulnerable groups, and vulnerabilities amidst the growing trauma of COVID-19. Lastly, the government's preparedness and response during the 2015 earthquake is presented because this knowledge provides ideas regarding the position of Nepal's government to deal with the food security issues during past shocks like the 2015 earthquake. This knowledge is used in this research to make comparisons regarding the government's preparedness and response to deal with food security issues during the past shocks(earthquake) in comparison to the present shock caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

2.1. Food Security in the context of Nepal

Food insecurity is a global issue. This global issue tends to be more acute particularly in the least developed countries like Nepal (Pandey, & Bardsley, 2019). Nepal is one of the poorest nations in the world with 25.2% population living below the national poverty line (Pokharel, 2015). The poor economy does not have adequate resources and capacities to recover from shocks like natural disasters such as earthquakes, drought, floods, and landslides, fluctuations in global food prices, political instability, and poor infrastructures. Thus, the incapability to recover from shocks affects food insecurity in Nepal (USAID, 2020). Research has claimed a significant decline in the status of food security in Nepal. For example, research conducted by Hobbs (2009) identified a significant decline in food security in Nepal and a notable population living in rural areas of Nepal regularly facing acute food insecurity (Pain, Ojha, & Adhikari, 2015). The Global Hunger Index of Nepal between 2009 and 2016 had deteriorated, shifting Nepal from moderate to seriously food insecure (IFRI,2009, 2016). For example, the Global Hunger Index of Nepal in 2013 was 17.3 indicating a serious problem of food security (Von Grebmer, Headey, Bene, Haddad, Olofinbiyi, Wiesmann, & Iseli, 2013).

2.1.1. Drivers of food insecurity in Nepal

Food insecurity in Nepal exists as a manifestation of i) insufficient per capita food availability as a result of low productivity, unprecedented weather or small/no land farm holdings, ii) Lack of purchasing power (poverty) and iii) poor utilization of nutrition (Lovendal, 2004). The main drivers that contribute to food insecurity at the household level include high dependence on subsistence farming possessing a small size of landholdings, low-agricultural productivity, limited opportunities for off-farm wage employment, low wage rate, and less income, and socio-cultural exclusions. At the individual level food insecurity amongst Nepalese is driven by illiteracy, lack of skills, and high morbidity rate amongst Nepalese (UNDP,2002, as cited in Lovendal, 2004).

Research conducted by Lovendal (2004) identified that some of the drivers of food insecurity amongst the vulnerable group of Nepal can be classified as poor quality of livelihood assets (human, social, physical, natural, and financial). Further, the research has highlighted that rapid population growth, insufficient wage labor opportunities, increasing competition, increasing fragmentation of lands, political instability, climate change-induced natural disasters, and inadequate interventions by the government of Nepal to address these issues as some of the drivers of food insecurity in Nepal (Lovendal, 2004).

Further, many researchers have studied the relation between climate change and food insecurity in Nepal. As the livelihoods of Nepalese are highly dependent on subsistence agriculture, the economy of Nepal is sensitive to loss of agricultural production influenced by climate change. (Gebreegziabher, Stage, Mekonnen, & Alemu, 2011). For example, there have been cases where the crop production in Nepal has been hit hard by rapid climate change resulting in food insecurity throughout the nation. Between the years 2006 and 2009, Nepal faced two winter droughts. As a result, national crop production during 2006/07 and 2008/09 decreased (MoAC, WFP, & FAO, 2009). For example, in the year 2008/09, the yield of wheat and barley decreased compared to the previous years by 14.5% and 17.3% respectively, it had been estimated that the decreased crop yields as a result of winter drought caused around 3.4 million people to be severely food insecure during these years (MoAC, WFP, & FAO, 2009).

Through the Living Standard Survey 2010/11, it was identified that food insecurity in rural areas of the country was more prevalent while compared with urban areas (Wagle, 2012). The primary reason for the food insecurity could be associated with the high dependence of households in rural areas on rainfed subsistence agriculture and large family size. Further, food security amongst households in Nepal has a positive correlation with education level, female education level, agricultural landholdings, irrigation facilities, access to markets, assets, and access to financial services (Regmi, Rijal, Joshi, Sapkota, & Thapa, 2019).

Nepal's food insecurity has also been associated with its geography. Nepal is divided into three geographical regions: The Terai region, the Middle- Mountain region, and the Trans- Himalayan region. The Terai region is the most fertile region of Nepal where 50% of Nepalese live. Although the Terai region covers only 17% of the surface area of Nepal (CBS,2012), the region produces 56% of the nation's agricultural production i.e., a regional grain surplus of nearly 125%. However, the Middle-mountains and Himalayan regions face a food deficit producing just 85% and 75% of food respectively required to feed the population living in the regions (Regmi, 2007). The Hilly and Mountainous regions of Nepal are characterized by rainfed agriculture, small landholdings, rugged terrain, and harsh climatic conditions. As the altitude of hilly and mountainous regions increase, the temperature decreases. The lower temperature leads to a prolonged cropping cycle. Further, the poor infrastructures due to underdevelopment and lack of infrastructures like transportation, irrigation facilities, and farm inputs result in inadequate agricultural outputs required to feed the population living in these regions. To make food insecurity more severe, off-farm/ non-farm employment opportunities in hilly and mountainous regions are limited. Due to rugged terrain and lack of infrastructures like roads, people in rural parts of hilly and mountainous regions are food insecure because they cannot access food even if they can afford to purchase it (Maharjan, & Khatri-Chhetri, 2006). These factors lead to food insecurity amongst households living in hilly and mountainous regions.

2.1.2 Vulnerable groups to food insecurity in Nepal

In Nepal, Marginal farm households represent the largest vulnerable groups with around 28% of the population of Nepal belonging to this group. Followed by rural service cast and low cast

households, porters, and urban poor engaged in the informal economy in Kathmandu valley (Lovendal, 2004).

2.1.2.1 Marginal farm households and agricultural labor households

In a study conducted by Lovendal (2004) marginal households are characterized by households who possess less than 0.5 hectares of land including agricultural laborers who do not have agricultural lands and sharecroppers who have access to land in exchange for sharing agricultural outputs with the landowner. These marginal farm households are vulnerable to food insecurity because they rely on cash or food earnings attained through employment in farming. As they have limited earnings, agricultural laborers borrow money to fulfill their food needs. In most cases, 90% of the income earned by sharecroppers is spent to fulfill their food needs. Nevertheless, the marginal farm households suffer malnutrition and food insecurities as their diet lacks green vegetables and proteins, and they often eat just two meals per day (Lovendal, 2004).

Further, agricultural labor households include daily wage laborers and laborers who work on short-term contracts with the landowner. Most of the households engaged in agricultural labor are situated in the Terai region and belong to the lower cast and have no/little landholdings. Laborers working in the farmlands of Terai earn an average of NRS 60 to 80 per day (equivalent to 8 to 10 kroner), (Lovendal, 2004). This low income pushes agricultural laborers into food security because they cannot afford to purchase food to fulfill their daily food needs especially during off agricultural seasons. (planting season: June to August and the harvest season: November to December)

2.1.2.2 Dalits and service castes

In Nepal, ethnicity plays a crucial role in determining food insecurity. The primary reason behind the high prevalence of food insecurity amongst Dalits is social exclusion. Caste-based discrimination prevails in Nepal from generation to generation. These discriminations exclude Dalit's access to economic opportunities, education, employment, landholdings, and economic institutions. Though social policies aiming to reduce disparities amongst Dalits and other ethnic groups through scholarship programs, income generation activities, awareness campaigns, and

training campaigns have come into play, these programs in Nepal are poorly funded and implemented (Bhattachan, Sunar, & Bhattachan, 2009).

Further, Dalit communities in rural parts of Nepal are the most food insecure as they have access to less/no farmland, less/limited livestock holdings, larger family size followed by low income (Maharjan, & Khatri-Chhetri, 2006). Though larger family size might benefit or affect a household's food security, in the context of rural Nepal where subsistence agriculture is the primary source of household food, larger family size requires more food. Thus, the risk of being food insecure is high. Moreover, as non-farm income opportunities amongst the Dalits are limited due to multiple reasons like social stigma, poverty, and illiteracy, larger family size causes these groups to be more vulnerable to food insecurity while compared to higher caste households (Maharjan, & Joshi, 2011).

Research conducted in the Humla District of Nepal also shows that Dalits and women were the most vulnerable to food insecurity because they often lack access to agricultural assets, land, networks and are excluded from decision making processes (Nagoda & Eriksen, 2015).

Rural service castes include households engaged in traditional caste-based occupations like singers (Gaine), shoemakers/ leatherworkers (Sarki), metal workers (kami), and tailors (Damai). The caste-based service providers in Nepal are vulnerable to food security because of the social stigma that considers them as low caste and excludes them from education, financial services, or decision making. Further, globalization and technological advancement have made the service castes more vulnerable to food security because the consumer behavior of Nepalese have changed and they are inclined towards industrial products like branded shoes/ clothes, western music, industry made metal products, etc. This inclination towards industrial products has threatened service cast communities because of the loss of income and their incapability to purchase food required to achieve their dietary needs (Lovendal, 2004).

2.1.2.3 Porters in hilly and mountainous regions

In Nepal, both women and men work as porters for rural clients and tourists. Households belonging to full-time porters working in non-tourist destinations and routes tend to have no/few assets and

no/less source of secondary income. The porters belonging to this category are the most food insecure. Porters working in rural areas of Nepal carry heavy loads but are paid very little. The households of such porters fulfill their daily food needs on a day-to-day basis i.e., the earnings they get in a day are spent to fulfill their daily food needs. Thus, any kind of shocks and uncertainties like sickness or lack of clients even for a day can harm the food security of those households (Lovendal, 2004). In most cases, if they are unable to work, porters are bound to borrow money. Thus, a large part of their day-to-day earnings is spent either on food or repayment of loans. Moreover, developmental activities in the form of roads and the use of vehicles to carry loads instead of porters have a devastating impact on their livelihoods and earnings.

In contrast, porters working on touristic routes and destinations have better working conditions; lighter loads, higher wages. But porters working on touristic routes work on a seasonal basis (peak periods: September to November and March to May). As most of the wage earners go away from home during these seasons, the households purchase food on credit to support their livelihood which will be repaid in the offseason when the wage earner returns from work. Although households who have porters working in tourist routes have savings to avoid hunger in the off-seasons, unexpected shocks and events like natural disasters, sickness, festivals, etc. increase the probability of these households facing food insecurities due to reduced earnings and savings (Lovendal, 2004). Thus, porters working in both non-tourist and tourist routes and destinations are vulnerable to shocks and stresses such as natural disasters, diseases, and injuries, that directly affect their earnings, and food security (Lovendal, 2004).

2.1.2.4 Urban poor engaged in the informal economy in Kathmandu

The capital city of Nepal, Kathmandu has an increasing flow of impoverished rural population who come to the capital city in search of livelihood options. These populations often have poor standards of living and are found living in streets and squatters (Timalsina, 2007). The urban poor engaged in an informal economy consist of domestic servants and unskilled laborers who usually work in sectors like construction, restaurants, hotels, transport, etc, and rely on daily wages to support their livelihood. They work as waiters, dishwashers, bus conductors, house servants, garden boys/girls, and earn comparatively higher than street children working as plastic pickers (Lovendal, 2004). But they are vulnerable to food security as these jobs depend on one's

hard work/ connections. Moreover, the wage of people engaged in informal sectors is really low, limiting their purchasing power and access to food (Lovendal, 2004; Timalina, 2007).

Amongst the rural poor, street children are one of the most food insecure. The majority of street children depend on jobs where they pick reusable items like plastics as a source of income. The plastic pickers work is paid NRS 8 per kg (0.8 Kroner) of plastic and earns roughly NRS 50 to 60 (5 to 6 Kroner) per day if they work throughout the day. These children are vulnerable to food insecurity because of their low wages and using 80% of their wages on commodities like drugs or cigarettes (Timalina, 2007). However, many street children who do not work as plastic pickers are found to be engaged in illegal activities like pickpockets, drug traffickers, prostitution, theft, etc (Lovendal, 2004).

2.1.2.5 Women and children

Food insecurity amongst women and children does not depend just on resources or purchasing power but is driven by socio-cultural practices and the patriarchal society in Nepal. Thus, even if a household is food secure, women in the same household might be food insecure because women are expected to eat at the end and the amount of the food, they eat depends on the amount of food that is left over after all the male members in the family have their meal. Further, children, primarily girls, are another vulnerable group that is vulnerable to food insecurity (Lovendal, 2004).

Nationally representative research based on the Nepal Demographic Health Survey, 2016 to study the status of food security amongst women of age between 15 to 49 showed that 56% of Nepalese women and 76% of Dalit women belonging to the age group experienced food insecurity in some way. Moreover, the research showed Dalit women were likely to be more food insecure even if they were educated and had wealth. However, women with secondary education (6th to 10th grade) were 40% less likely to be food insecure compared to women who did not undergo formal education. Lastly, women living in rural areas were found to be more food insecure compared to women living in urban areas (Pandey, & Fusaro, 2020).

In Nepal, the proportion of malnutrition amongst children is one of the highest in the world. Nepal Demographic and Health Survey conducted (NDHS) in 2011 showed that 41% of children under the age of 5 years suffered stunting, 29% children were underweight and 11% wasted. The children in the mountain region of Nepal are the most vulnerable groups to malnutrition as highlighted by (NDHS) because 53% of the children in the Mountain region are stunted and 36% of children in that region were underweight (Singh, Singh, & Ram, 2014). The degree of malnutrition amongst children is closely associated with food insecurity because food insecurity is a major contributor to malnutrition in low-income countries like Nepal. Malnutrition is associated with food insecurity because food insecurity occurs where a person/household does not have access to nutritious food due to low purchasing power and/or lack of physical availability of food, which might lead to malnutrition (Black et al.,2008).

2.2 Government of Nepal's emergency responses during 2015 Earthquake

The government of Nepal's preparedness and response during the 2015 earthquake will be presented in the forthcoming paragraph. This section provides knowledge regarding the position of Nepal's government to deal with the food security issues during past shocks like the 2015 earthquake. This knowledge will be used in this research to make comparisons regarding the government's preparedness and response in the past shocks(earthquake) in comparison to the present shock; COVID-19.

On 25 April 2015, an earthquake of 7.6 Richter scale shook Nepal followed by a 7.3 Richter scale aftershock on 12 May 2015. The earthquake had affected the lives of eight million people: one-third of the population in one way or the other. The destruction caused by the earthquake ranges from the collapse of buildings, heritage sites, schools, hospitals, roads, bridges, agricultural lands, water supply systems, trekking routes, hydropower plants, etc. with total economic cost of damage estimated to be UDS 7 billion (Shrestha, & Pathranarakul, 2018).

The Government of Nepal has endorsed a National Disaster Risk Reduction Policy 2075 (2018) and Disaster Risk Reduction National Strategic Action Plan 2018-2030, which provides a comprehensive planning framework for disaster risk reduction and management in Nepal, encompassing different priority areas and guiding government actors and stakeholders to achieve

targets by adopting appropriate processes. In addition, the National Disaster Response Framework, 2070 (2014), and the first amendment, 2075 (2019) have been formulated to ensure the role of governmental bodies and the private sector to effectively carry out disaster response activities. The government of Nepal through the National Disaster Response Framework called international organizations for assistance and coordinated emergency response activities to assure disaster risk management during the 2015 earthquake (Shrestha, & Pathranarakul, 2018).

The emergency response had kept food security as a key concern. However, even with food assistance, food consumption was found to be severely low in most of the affected areas, particularly in the mountainous regions. A significant proportion of households in the affected areas were found to be adopting consumption-based coping strategies where the households had limited the portions of meals and the number of meals they consume. Moreover, 35% of the households reported that the adults in the households would eat less to provide food for younger members. This makes it clear that if Nepal did not have food assistance from international organizations, the food security situation would be much more devastating (Government's Nepal Food Security Monitoring System (NeKSAP), United Nations World Food Programme (WFP), and the Food Security Cluster., 2015).

Research conducted to study the Nepal government's emergency response to the 2015 earthquake suggested that even though the government called international organizations for assistance. It failed to conduct a preliminary assessment regarding its institutional capacity to handle a large number of international aids and teams in terms of such foreseen disasters like earthquakes. As a result, handling and coordinating between international organizations and aids turned out to be overwhelming. Thus, distribution and coordination amongst government and multiple international organizations was an issue. For example, the Tribhuvan International Airport in Kathmandu was overwhelmed with tons of relief materials such as canned goods or beef meat products, which are not consumed by Nepalese due to cultural stigmas (the cow is God), (Shrestha, & Pathranarakul, 2018).

Further, food insecurity was significant amongst households in the earthquake-affected areas. For example, more than 50% of the households in the earthquake-affected regions of Nepal were

food insecure in terms of food availability, accessibility, and utilization (Ulak, 2015). The report highlighted that elevation was a prominent factor to determine household food insecurity i.e., 15% of the households in low hills were food insecure compared to 27% in the high hills. Moreover, rural households were more food insecure (20%) compared to urban households (6%). Lastly, Dalit households were the most food insecure because over 70% of the Dalit households had inadequate food consumption (Aryal, 2021).

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research design

This is a qualitative research. Qualitative research is a type of research where researchers study things in their natural settings, with an attempt to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them (Bryman, 2012). While quantitative research is often conducted to test or conform theories and assumptions, qualitative research in other hand is conducted to understand concepts, context, or experiences (Bryman, 2012).

The data required for this research is obtained through both primary and secondary data sources. Though secondary data have multiple drawbacks such as less control over data quality, lack of familiarization, and complexity of the data (Bryman, 2016), the various travel constraints and uncertainties because of COVID-19 left me with no other choice. The primary data sources in this research are based on semi-structured interviews conducted with individuals engaged in an informal economy (domestic servants and unskilled laborers who usually work in sectors like construction, restaurants, hotels, transport, etc.) working in Samakhushi, Kathmandu as daily wage workers, who fall under vulnerable groups to food insecurity (Lovendal, 2004). Further, a short Q&A session with 3 individuals affiliated with NGOs working to feed the urban poor in Kathmandu valley was conducted.

3.2 Study area

The study area for the primary data collection of this research is Samakhushi, Kathmandu, Nepal. Samakhushi is an urban town in Nepal located within the capital city, Kathmandu.

3.3 Sampling method

The sampling method adopted in this research is purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is a type of probability sampling where the research questions act as a guideline that indicates what categories of population (people, organizations, documents, etc.) should be sampled. Thus, in purposive sampling, units are selected with direct reference to the research questions (Bryman, 2016).

In this research, the sampling units for primary data collection consist of 10 sampling units: daily wage workers working in Kathmandu. Due to multiple regions like individuals moving back to villages due to COVID-19 restrictions and lack of a dedicated data enumerator the number of sample units for this research is just 10 individuals.

The sample included individuals working in restaurants, street vendors, maids, waste/plastic collectors, and construction workers who are one of the most vulnerable groups to food insecurity in Kathmandu. The logic behind selecting this particular group of individuals is that this group of individuals are representative of almost all of the food security vulnerable groups as presented by Lovendal (2004). Representative in a sense that the daily wage workers engaged in informal economies in Kathmandu could be a child or adult, male or female, Dalits (Low cast) or Brahmin (High Cast), farm laborers or porters. For example, a Brahmin (high cast) male/ female or child can work as a daily wage worker, so can a Dalit (low cast) male/female or child.

Out of the 10 sample units 5 were female and 5 were male to assure data reliability and reduce bias. Further, out of the 10 sample units 2 individuals worked in restaurants as a dishwasher, 2 individuals worked as a waste/plastic collector, 2 individuals worked in construction sites, 3 individuals were street vendors and 1 individual worked as a maid/ helper in different households. As all the respondents could not communicate in English, interviews were conducted in Nepali and further translated to English.

As qualitative samples are purposive and are selected by their capacity to generate rich information relative to the research, qualitative research requires less sample size if adequate data can be generated through a single sample (Vasileiou et al., 2018). Experts working in the field of

qualitative research suggest that very little new information is obtained after 20 interviews (Green, & Thorogood,2004) and more than 50 interviews are almost unmanageable (Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls, & Ormston, 2013). These parameters have been considered while selecting sampling units for this research. To assure that the sampling units vary in nature, the sampling units belong to different backgrounds in terms of work, gender, and age.

3.4 Data collection

3.4.1 Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the help of the interview guide that is presented in the annex section. Although I wanted to conduct the interview sessions myself, due to reasons like lack of dedicated interview room, proper internet connections, and incapability of the sampling units to afford mobile phones that supported video calling, I had to ask a data enumerator to conduct the interview sessions. Though a well-trained data enumerator would have been an ideal choice, I could not find any person who was willing to work as a data enumerator for this research. Thus, I decided to ask my father (who will be referred to as the data enumerator of the research) to conduct interview sessions after no other choices were left. The logic behind selecting my father as a data enumerator is that he is a social worker and the landlord of some of the interviewees of this research, he knows all the interviewees because they lived in the same locality where the data enumerator lives, building rapport was not a daunting task. While interviewing, the data enumerator shared that the interview sessions with all respondents went very well, and they answered openly throughout the interview sessions.

3.4.2 Secondary data

Secondary data are data where the researcher conducting the research has not been engaged in the data collection process and the data had been previously collected by various institutions or researchers to fulfill the purpose of their research (Bryman,2016). Though secondary data have multiple drawbacks such as no control over data quality, lack of familiarization, and complexity of the data (Bryman, 2016), the various travel constraints and uncertainties as a result of COVID-19 left me with no other choices. Moreover, qualitative analysis of secondary data might assist the researcher to generate data that has not been identified by the primary researcher or new

interpretations of the data is also possible (Bryman, 2016). Also, as collecting secondary data is less time-consuming (Bryman, 2016), more time has been allocated for data analysis.

Secondary data required for this research were collected through online sources. The primary source of secondary data in this research was the Nepal Nutrition and Food Security Portal which is an official portal of the government of Nepal, the National Planning Commission. The portal consists of several plans, policy, and strategies documents that are useful to conduct thematic analysis and to answer the research questions. Moreover, news portals and reports published by NGOs and INGOs like Dan Church Aid (DCA), Inner Voice Nepal, Hamro Sano Prayas, FAO Nepal, WFP Nepal, WHO Nepal, and NGOs regarding their responses to the government plans and interventions were reviewed. Further, reports published by researchers, along with scholarly documents were referred as a secondary data source for this research.

3.5 Triangulation

Data triangulation refers to using more than one source of data, resulting in greater confidence in the research findings (Bryman,2016). Data triangulation in this research is obtained because both primary and secondary data have been used in this research. The secondary data needed for this study has been extracted from the Nepal nutrition and food security portal which is the official portal of Nepal's national planning commission. Moreover, additional data from reports, journals, newspaper articles, and scholarly articles published by the government, NGOs, the UN, or other relevant institutions have been accumulated to conduct this research. The primary data sources for this research are 10 individuals working in informal sectors in Kathmandu valley classified as daily wage workers. Lastly, question and answer sessions with 3 key informants affiliated to multiple NGOs working to provide food relief to the poor in Kathmandu had been conducted to assure data triangulation.

3.6 Thematic analysis

Thematic analysis is one of the most common approaches used in qualitative data analysis (Bryman, 2016). The themes and sub-themes are motifs that are identified by reading and rereading transcripts or notes that help to extract meaning and context through the data. One of

the common ways to generate themes is by giving emphasis on the repetition of data within or across data sources (for example interview transcript). However, repetition of data doesn't always mean that it can be considered as a theme. Thus, in thematic analysis, the most essential factor is to reflect on the research questions and research focus and generate codes. These codes will contribute to establishing linkage and continuities within the data thus themes and subthemes can be identified (Bryman, 2016).

In the first phase, keeping in mind the research questions and focus, codes were developed, further, the codes were used to extract findings relevant to this research. In the later stage, themes and subthemes were developed after rigorous reading and rereading of the findings consisting of codes. Thematic analysis was conducted as a data analysis tool because thematic analysis enables the interpretation of rich data (Braun, & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis was conducted by constructing an index of central themes and subthemes which was then applied to the data to understand recurring patterns. The themes and subthemes were the results of thorough reading and rereading of the relevant documents and interview transcript obtained through the research data (Bryman, 2016).

Thus, in this research, the combination of primary data (interview data) along with the secondary data (Literatures, documents, reports, news articles etc) provided essential information while analyzing the findings i.e., what has been done by the government to address food insecurity in Nepal, what positive/negative changes has it brought, and what individuals think regarding the government's preparedness and response to address food security in the phase of COVID-19.

3.7 Ethical considerations

As a researcher, it is my duty to follow ethical principles while conducting this research. The four major ethical aspects of research are classified as: whether there is harm to participants, whether there is a lack of informed consent, whether there is an invasion of privacy, and whether deception is involved (Diener and Crandall, 1978 as cited in Bryman, 2012). Also, the secondary data required for this research is available to the general public, there will not be an invasion of anyone's privacy. The authors and owners of documents and data accessed for this research will be acknowledged in the references and citation.

While obtaining primary data, my father acted as a data enumerator for this research. As a data enumerator, he conducted the interview sessions guided by the semi-structured interview guide. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the logic behind selecting my father as a data enumerator is that he is a social worker and the landlord of some of the interviewees of this research, he knows all the interviewees because they live in the same locality where the data enumerator lives. Thus, this social connection between the interviewer and the interviewee living in the same locality helped in building rapport. While conducting the interview sessions, the respondents were told about the motive of conducting the interviews to assure that the respondents were fully informed about the nature and purpose of this research. Lastly, this research analysis was conducted with honesty, and manipulation of the data was avoided.

3.8 Reliability and Validity

The reliability and validity of research are two essential criteria to establish and assess the quality of the research (Bryman, 2016). Reliability in qualitative analysis of secondary data can be hindered because the researcher might lack an insider's understanding and knowledge of the social context where the data was produced. Thus, as this research is based on qualitative analysis of secondary data, this issue might have caused misinterpretations of data (Bryman, 2016). But the reliability in thematic analysis can be achieved through supervisor review/ peer review regarding if they would code the data in a similar way as the researcher did (Lune, & Berg, 2016). The researcher had done a peer review regarding the codes and updated some codes after multiple discussion sessions. The coding approach to qualitative data analysis is also criticized because there is a possibility of losing the context of what was said because coding consists of picking chunks of text out of the main context (Bryman, 2016). However, achieving external reliability i.e., replicating qualitative research is almost impossible because social settings and circumstances in which research has been conducted are always changing (Bryman,2016). Further, internal reliability of this research has also been compromised because to assure internal reliability, there needs to be more than one observer, members of the research team that agree about what they see and hear (Bryman, 2016). However, the interview sessions were conducted by an unprofessional data enumerator and inter-observer consistency could not be generated.

Moreover, the reliability of primary data can be obtained if the respondents do not have any kind of emotional disturbances and are willingly taking part in the interview. The reliability of the primary data obtained through this research might be questioned because the respondents might have been emotionally disturbed because of the trauma they are facing because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Further, secondary data obtained through the government's website could be biased and the trustworthiness of the data is questionable which affects the reliability of this research.

Validity of research can be defined as the integrity of the data analysis i.e., the results of the research correspond to the real characteristics or context of the social/ physical world. Although the internal validity (good match between research observations and the theoretical ideas they develop) of research can be maintained using appropriate data analysis tools/techniques and through triangulation of the data (Bryman, 2016). However, external validity (if the findings can be generalized across the population) tends to be weaker in the case of qualitative research which is based on a small sample size. Thus, the validity of this research is questionable because it might not be representative of the population.

Lastly, although interviews in qualitative research should consider factors like postures and gestures of the interviewee (Bryman,2016), as the researcher was only provided with audio recordings, the detailed interpretation of what the interviewee was trying to convey might have been lost, affecting the reliability and validity of the findings. Also, in some of the interview recordings, as the relation between the interviewee and the interviewer was good the interview sessions lasted very long, and the conversions were irrelevant to the context of this research and interview guide.

3.9 Theoretical framework

Between various approaches to studying food security, one view contends that the politics and associated power distributions within a society are the main cause behind food insecurity or even famine (De Waal, 1989; Keen, 1994, as cited in Yaro, 2004). People who follow this view to studying food security, advocate a rights-based approach to it. The rights-based approach argues that despite there being enough resources available around the world to ensure food security, the

inequalities and policies prevent the achievement of food security. Therefore, these advocates of a rights-based approach seek appropriate laws and policies to ensure the right of every human being to achieve food security (Maxwell & Smith, 1992; Johnson and Forsyth, 2002, as cited in Yaro, 2004). The governments and societies have a responsibility to provide and maintain a standard level of well-being of their citizens. It is the duty of the Government to identify who is vulnerable to food insecurity and why they are vulnerable to make decisions regarding how to address food insecurities in the nation taking into account the rights-based approach to food security (Dahl, 1971 as cited in Morales, 2014). At least to a certain degree, they are expected to fulfill the demands of their citizens. Pitkin (1967) defined representative government as one whose institutional design guarantees ‘a constant condition of responsiveness’ to its citizens’ needs and demands. The responsiveness of the democratic government can be studied focusing on how the policymaking reflects the needs and preferences of the public. Since governments are the primary actors in ensuring a country’s food security, the government has a primary role to achieve food security.

The right to food has been mentioned repeatedly on international human rights instruments such as, article 25 of the universal declaration of human rights, article 11 of the international convention on Economic, social and cultural rights, article 6 of the international convention on civil and political rights, convention on rights of the child, convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and the convention on the rights of persons with disabilities (Assembly, 1948; Chapman, 2017; De Schutter, 2010; Joseph, & Castan, 2013; Unicef, 1989; Assembly, 1979; Winzer, & Mazurek, 2017). As Nepal has ratified these human rights instruments, it is the duty of the government of Nepal to assure right to food to its citizens. Thus, this research will interpret the findings through the lens of rights-based approach to food security.

CHAPTER 4: Findings

4.1 Governments’ food security preparedness

4.1.1 Constitutional and legal provisions for right to food in Nepal

Nepal is a signatory member of international human rights instruments that binds the country to assure the rights to food to the citizens through legal enactments. Thus, the Constitution of Nepal, 2015 has acknowledged the right to food as a fundamental right (Gautam, 2020; Constitution [Nepal], 2015).

Some of the provisions of the Constitution of Nepal, 2015 to assure right to food include:

Article 36: 'Right relating to food'

- Every citizen shall have the right relating to food.
- Every citizen shall have the right to be safe from the state of being in danger of life from the scarcity of food.
- Every citizen shall have the right to food sovereignty in accordance with law.

Moreover, the constitution of Nepal states that social protection to vulnerable groups and communities will be provided to assure food security amongst these groups. Some of the social protection provisions addressed by the constitution of Nepal are Article 42 (2) Right to social justice provides rights to impoverished citizens. The constitution provides rights to education, health, housing, employment to assure food and social security amongst the indigent groups. Further, article 38 (5) gives women "the right to obtain special opportunity in education, health, employment and social security, based on positive discrimination". Article 40 (3) states "Special provision shall be made by law to provide health and social security to the Dalit community". Further, Article 40 (5) assures that the state should provide land to landless Dalit in accordance with the law (Secretariat, & Durbar, 2015; Constitution [Nepal], 2015).

The Constitution of Nepal, 2015 states that every citizen shall have rights relating to food. It has acknowledged vulnerable groups like women and Dalits in Nepal and has assured social protection to the vulnerable groups. However, the constitution which is one of the most important documents that govern Nepal has multiple loopholes. The constitution has stated to provide social protection to the vulnerable groups and communities but has not clearly defined who the vulnerable groups are and what will the social protection consist of. Further, it has mentioned providing rights to food and social security amongst the indigent groups but fails to clearly define who the indigent groups are. The rights-based approach to food security seeks the

government to identify vulnerable groups to food insecurity and their vulnerability. This would help the government make decisions to address food insecurities in the nation. However, the constitution of Nepal and the right to food in the context of Nepal fails to define the vulnerable groups highlighting the failure of operationalization of the rights-based approach to food security.

4.1.2 Supreme court of Nepal and right to food

Under the Constitution of Nepal, the supreme court of Nepal is allowed to issue orders to assure the fundamental rights of Nepalese; the Right to food in cases where no other remedy has been provided (Secretariat, & Durbar, 2015). Citizens of Nepal have the right to file Public Interest litigations to obtain judicial interventions in case of violation of the Right to food. Some of the examples of cases regarding the Rights to food in Nepal have been presented below:

The first case in Nepal where the Supreme Court justified the right to food is the case between Madhav Kumar Basnet and Prime minister Girija Prasad Koirala regarding mass starvation in remote districts of Nepal; Mugu, Kalikot, Dolpa, Bajhang, Jumla, Bajura, and Darchula. The Supreme court ordered the government of Nepal to supply food grains in these districts (KC, 2018).

Further, another case that provides a basis regarding the enactment of the right to food in Nepal is the litigation filed by Prakash Mani Sharma and others regarding the mass starvation in 12 hilly districts of Nepal in 2014. In this case, the Supreme court ordered that the government was accountable to ensure the supply of adequate food in these food deficit districts (Adhikari, 2017).

In litigation filed against the government by Bujuddin Miya and others concerning the destruction of crops by wild animals, the Supreme court ruled that the government cannot back off from its responsibilities claiming that there is an absence of policies and laws to guide the government regarding this issue. Thus, the government was made accountable, and compensation was provided to the victims for the violation of their right to food (Pingsdorf, 2016).

These cases are examples of how the right to food has been operationalized in Nepal. The example provides understanding regarding how the government of Nepal is made accountable if the right to food is violated. In the cases presented above, the government's inability to assure the right to food has been corrected through legal provisions by the supreme court of Nepal. Although in the case between Bujuddin Miya and others regarding the destruction of crops by wild animals, the government tried to back off from its responsibilities due to the absence of laws to guide the government regarding the cases, the Supreme court did not allow the government to back off from its responsibilities and compensation was provided to the victims for the violation of their right to food.

4.1.3 Food security through agricultural development

The government of Nepal has developed an Agriculture Development Strategy (ADS, 2015-2035) as a tool to drive agricultural development in Nepal. ADS aims to make Nepal self-sufficient in food grains by converting the food grain trade deficit of 5% to a trade surplus of 5%. Further, the ADS aims to increase the percentage of agribusiness to the GDP from 10% to 20% by 2035. Moreover, the ADS aims to increase the percentage of women-owned farmland from 10% to 50% by 2035. Lastly, the ADS has been developed by the government to reduce food poverty from 24% to 5%. The ADS aims to attain these goals through agricultural research and extension programs. The agricultural research and extension programs will focus on the efficient use of agricultural input, sustainable agricultural practices, and natural resources to attain food security through increased resilience to climate change and disasters/shocks (Khanal, Nepal, Zhang, Nepal, Paudel, Liu, & Rai, 2020; MoAD, 2014).

The government of Nepal with the support of the Asian Development Bank, World Bank, FAO, WFP, JICA, USAID, and DANIDA developed the Agricultural Development Strategy (ADS) in Nepal. The ADS was adopted to guide the agricultural sector in Nepal from 2015 to 2035. The ADS has been developed to address food insecurity and poverty in Nepal through strengthening the linkage between agricultural and other economic sectors. The components of ADS include improved governance, higher productivity, commercialization of the agricultural sector, right to food, right to small farmers, landless and vulnerable groups (Roka, 2017; MoAD, 2014).

The ADS aims to develop competitive, sustainable, and inclusive agricultural development to achieve economic growth, livelihood upliftment, and food security amongst the vulnerable population in Nepal (ADS, 2013). The government of Nepal formulated a Food and Nutrition Security Plan (FNSP) to implement ADS throughout the Nation. The FNSP has been considered as the Governments' standard document to conduct any food security intervention for the vulnerable populations in Nepal, during 2013 and 2023 (Acharya, Paudel, Wasti, Sharma, & Dhital, 2018; MoAD, 2014).

4.1.3.1 State food provisions: Nepal agricultural and food security project

In 2011, the government of Nepal was awarded a grant of US\$ 46.5 million through an investment proposal submitted to the Global Agriculture and Food Security Program (GAFSP, 2018). The agricultural and food security project (AFSP) was designed by the Government of Nepal to comprehensively address agriculture and food security issues in Nepal. The AFSP was developed to address the issues of low productivity, limited livelihood opportunities, ineffective food distribution system, weak market access and poor infrastructures in Nepal (Christian, 2011).

The AFSP is implemented in 19 districts of the Mid and Far Western development region of Nepal and consists of 162,000 beneficiaries. The AFSP is implemented jointly by the Ministry of Agricultural Development (MoAD) and the Ministry of Health Policy (MOHP) with a multi-sector approach to promote agriculture and food security in the nation. The AFSP consists of four complementary components; technology development and adaptation, technology dissemination and adoption, food and nutrition status enhancement, and project management (Acharya, Paudel, Wasti, Sharma, & Dhital, 2018; Stein, & D'Souza, 2013)

4.1.3.2 Nepal food corporation and food Aid

The government of Nepal has been obtaining food aid since the 1950s. The aid has been used by the government to provide food (mainly rice) in emergencies in food-insecure regions of Nepal. For example, the government of Nepal through the Nepal food corporation (NFC) spends approximately 2.6 to 3 million US annually to provide food at a subsidized price to the vulnerable groups/communities in remote districts of Nepal (Adhikari, 2008).

4.1.3.3 Agricultural perspective plan (APP 1995-2015)

The Agricultural Perspective Plan had been developed by the government of Nepal to obtain economic development, poverty reduction, and food security through agricultural development. Some of the key aspects of APP is to accelerate agricultural growth through increased agricultural production, poverty alleviation through employment opportunities in the agricultural sector, transforming Nepal from subsistence agriculture to commercial agriculture, agricultural development for overall economic transformation and food security throughout Nepal and to develop strategies, plans and programs to prepare Nepal for future food needs (Chaudhary, 2018; APP, 1995).

4.1.3.4 National agricultural policy (2004)

The National Agricultural Policy had an aim to attain food security and poverty alleviation in Nepal through competitive and commercial farming systems and sustainable economic growth (Arun, & Ghimire, 2018). Some of the provisions of The National Agricultural Policy are as follows:

- Landless people and farmers with less than half a hectare of land will be provided free input, technical support, land lease, and irrigation facilities
- Food insecure regions will be provided with food for low prices, food coupons, and credits to purchase food.
- Every family in food-insecure regions will be employed for at least 100day/family/year and poor households will be provided with access to agricultural land, forest and other resources to improve food accessibility (Arun, & Ghimire, 2018)

The government of Nepal has primarily put its focus on Agricultural Development as a way to address food insecurity in Nepal. Food security through agricultural development in the context of Nepal makes sense because agriculture provides livelihoods for 68% of Nepal's population, accounting for 34% of the GDP (USAID,2021; NITC, 2021). However, agricultural development strategies like the AFSP and National Agricultural Policy designed by the Government of Nepal to address food security are only implemented in food-insecure regions in Nepal. This means that the beneficiaries of AFSP and National Agricultural Policy are vulnerable people living in regions that are considered food insecure. Therefore, food insecurity vulnerable people living

outside these regions are left out. For example, Kathmandu being the capital city of Nepal does not fall under the food insecurity vulnerable region of Nepal. This means that these groups of people living in Kathmandu are not the beneficiaries of the government's food security programs just because they live in the capital city. Further, APP operated between 1995 and 2015 to achieve economic development, poverty reduction, and food security through agricultural development. However, even though the government had given high priority to the development of agriculture in Nepal between 1995 and 2015, the performance of the sector was disappointing and agriculture production figures remained stagnant or even declined per capita (DevKaphle, Rizal, Karki, Ghimire, & Paudel, 2020).

Nepal has also been obtaining food aid since the 1950s. Food aid in Nepal is mostly used to provide food (mostly rice) in food-insecure regions of Nepal in case of emergencies. The food aid by the NFC although aims to provide food aid in case of emergency, the food that it provides consists mainly of rice and it provides food aid to the areas classified as food insecure regions. But, generalizing food insecurity according to region or area seems pointless because there are groups of people who are vulnerable to food insecurity, but do not live-in regions recognized as food-insecure regions. For example, although daily wage workers engaged in the informal economy in Kathmandu are one of the most food-insecure communities in Nepal, they do not fall under the beneficiaries of NFC because NFC does not provide food aid in Kathmandu.

4.2 Government's food security measures in the phase of COVID-19

The immediate measure of the government after the effects of COVID-19 was seen was to go into lockdown. The same measure was seen in both the phases of COVID-19. The first lockdown was introduced by the government on 24th March 2020 and lasted up to 21st July 2020 and the second lockdown started on 24th April 2021 and is ongoing as of 20th May 2021. The lockdown was initially done for a period of a week but was elongated till a later date. During those times, the government of Nepal only focused on strengthening the health sector, maintaining quarantines, and stopping the spread of the COVID-19.

In response to the first phase of the COVID-19 pandemic, the government prepared a body of executives and other experts called as COVID-19 Crisis Management Center (CCMC). The first

meeting held on 1st March 2020 prepared some precautionary measures to be followed, focusing on disinfecting goods, following a 14-day quarantine, contact tracing, and travel restrictions. The meetings further scaled up to the management and organization of PCR tests, self-quarantine, home isolation, compulsory usage of masks and sanitizers. As per the federal provision of Nepal, the CCMC was further expanded in scope and services to three other bodies i.e., Provincial COVID-19 Crisis Management Center, District COVID-19 Crisis Management Center, and Local COVID-19 Crisis Management Center.

The measures taken by the COVID-19 Crisis Management Center to maintain food security during the COVID-19 pandemic can be summarized as follows:

- a.) Regarding the imports of food and beverages in Nepal, the COVID-19 Crisis Management Center coordination committee (2020) proposed that proper testing, monitoring, and checking mechanisms had to be developed so that they wouldn't be the carrier of the virus.
- b.) Decisions by the CCMC High-level Coordination Committee on 13th June 2020 briefly focused on the issues of food management in the quarantine centers prescribed by the government. The decision stated that nutritious food is to be provided to pregnant women and children who have been residing in the quarantine at a subsidized rate set by the government (CCMC, 2020).
- c.) On 9th August 2020 at the 8th meeting of the CCMC, the proper management of foods and vegetables in the market was kept into consideration; due to the haphazard buying and selling of vegetables, fruits, and daily foods at open spaces and footpaths, the cases of COVID could surge high and its proper management should be done by the local administration (COVID-19 Crisis Management Center Directors Committee, 2020).
- d.) Key decision made by CCMC (2021) under the supervision of the Vice-Prime Minister of Nepal during the second lockdown states that during the lockdown chances of malpractices in the market are high. For the proper management of import and distribution of food, medicines, and other necessities in the market, the Ministry of Industry and Commerce and other responsible bodies will be constantly monitoring the market so that the black market can be reduced.

The food security ordinance produced by the government of Nepal barely touches upon the food security principles, very few proceedings have been done by the government regarding food security in the phase of COVID-19.

However, the government hospitals have been providing free and nutritious food to those admitted to the hospital, those waiting for recovery, and their relatives who've been waiting to serve them in the hospital, without any issuance of the government bills. As per the Nepal Gazette (2021), businesses that provide the services of Take away and home delivery have also been allowed to operate during the second lockdown by following the safety protocols prescribed by the government. The service of take-away and home delivery was discarded during the first lockdown period. The primary focus of the government during the second phase of lockdown is to ensure the oxygen cylinders and manage beds for the patients as the crisis has caused a surge in the management of hospital beds and supplies. The government's COVID-19 crisis management strategy has barely addressed food security issues caused by the pandemic.

4.3 Role of NGOs to address food insecurity amongst the vulnerable communities living in Kathmandu, in the phase of COVID-19

Eradication of hunger and ensuring food security to its citizens is one of the primary responsibilities of the state actors, which has been repeatedly promoted in the local, national as well as international forums. To ensure food security the government ,and the NGOs must recognize their respective role and responsibilities to fend off hunger, consequently, ensure food security (Vyas, 2000). NGOs can be understood as the space or the 'third sector for collective action conducted by the society, separate from the government and the commercial actors (for profit), and incorporating family and the private sphere. It involves charities, faith-based institutions, community groups, women-based organizations, social movements, and advocacy groups (WHO, 2007).

The Covid-19 has been endorsed as a public health crisis, but it is more than that. It has led to an economic crisis, a social crisis and now it has become a human rights crisis. As this crisis took a rise, the citizens rightly looked up to their respective governments' leaders to make reasonable and sound choices to save their lives and livelihood. There were instances where the governments

made sound decisions, which as a result controlled the transmission of the virus. There were instances where the corrupt and self-serving governments made decisions that have cost us countless lives, restricted the rights of the citizens, and consequently worsened the impacts. The actions of the government have been highlighted more often. However, there has been little to no acknowledgment of the role played by the NGOs. A wide range of groups of NGOs has come forward to help the most affected communities by the pandemic. Where the government have failed to act efficiently, NGOs have come forward to help the vulnerable.

Dan Church Aid (DCA) provided roughly 21 million NRS worth of assistance to support pregnant and lactating mothers since hunger and malnutrition can affect the production of milk which further hinders the healthy growth of the child. With the aim of assist 25000 individuals, this assistance has supported about 4000 families by providing the mothers with special aid packages in addition to the regular food packages with nutritional meals. The Nepal Red Cross Society (NRCS) targeted to address food insecurity during the first wave of the pandemic by providing a total of approximately 18,000 meals (Thelwell, 2020). Inner Voice Nepal an NGO based in Kathmandu has been consistently working intending to provide basic meals to 60 people per day since the first wave of COVID-19 hit Kathmandu. Another initiative by Guna Raj Pyakurel is applaudable. Pyakurel, along with his friends lead Subharambha Club have been distributing Biryani (rice with soft meat/vegetables) since the sixth day of their campaign regarding coronavirus in Sinamangal, Kathmandu. Their initiative, at first, was an awareness campaign regarding the coronavirus and its preventive measures. But since the sixth day of the lockdown, they have been feeding the hungry, many daily wage workers, and squatters in the Pashupati area, Chabahil, and some areas of Bhaktapur, with an average of 350 people every day (Sen, 2021; The Kathmandu Post, 2021).

Another similar initiative was conducted by Min Bahadur Bham and Pukar Bam and the cooks of Ageno restaurant as a collaborative effort which is Hamro Sano Prayas. They have been distributing free meals to the marginalized groups in different areas around Kathmandu such as Lagankhel, Lazimpat, Ranibari, and Khula Manch. The target group in Lagankhel includes the family members of the infected victims admitted to Patan Hospital which is around 200 people

every day. In addition, they have recently started providing free meals to the 22 families in Gathaghar, who had been stranded without jobs and food for over two weeks (Khanal, 2020).

4.4 Status of food security amongst daily wage workers in Kathmandu, in the phase of COVID-19

In this section, the themes and sub-themes drawn out of the findings through primary data have been presented. The headings in this chapter have been constructed through examining the findings to understand common themes i.e., topics, ideas, and patterns of meaning that have come up repeatedly during the interview sessions.

The themes and sub-themes identified are:

- 1) COVID-19 impact on food accessibility

Sub-themes

- a) Job loss leading to reduced purchasing power
 - b) High food prices
 - c) Disruption of other sources of income
 - d) Limited time to access food in the market and the fear of infection as a factor affecting food accessibility
- 2) Inadequate food availability in the market
 - 3) Poor food utilization

4.4.1 COVID-19 impact on food accessibility

The COVID-19 has curtailed access to food amongst the daily wage workers in Kathmandu due to job loss leading to the loss of income. This has decreased the purchasing power of individuals, making them vulnerable to food insecurity (Subedi, 2020). In this research through the review of secondary and primary data sources, it has been understood that factors like job loss leading to reduced purchasing power, high food prices, and disruption of other sources of household income has been the primary factor affecting food accessibility amongst the daily wage workers engaged in the informal economy in Kathmandu.

4.4.1.1 Job loss leading to reduced purchasing power

The nationwide lockdown imposed by the government of Nepal has caused job losses/ reduced working hours. It has been estimated that about 1.6 to 2 million people will lose their jobs due to the lockdown imposed by the government of Nepal, where approximately 5.7 million i.e., nearly

80% of workers in Nepal are engaged in the informal economy (ILO, 2020; Sharma, Banstola, & Parajuli, 2021). A rapid assessment conducted by UNDP Nepal shows that every three in five people working in the informal sectors in Kathmandu had lost their job due to the nationwide lockdown (UNDP Nepal, 2020). Similarly, research has shown that about 25% and 12% of the daily wage workers working in non-agricultural sectors and agricultural sectors respectively reported having been laid off because of COVID-19 (ILO, 2020). A survey conducted in April 2020 showed that access to food amongst the daily wage laborers in Kathmandu has deteriorated due to COVID-19 restrictions (Sharma, Banstola, & Parajuli, 2021). This has resulted in reduced / loss of income. The daily wage workers in Kathmandu are one of the most vulnerable groups to food insecurity because they cannot afford to buy food if the lockdown continues, because they lack monetary savings (ILO, 2020).

The experiences shared by the respondents too show a similar pattern. Some of the experiences shared by the respondents during the interview has been quoted below:

“Me and my husband had been feeding our family with our daily wages, if the lockdown continues, we will die of starvation.”

“Rich people have managed to store food and can now spend some time at home with their families. It’s like a vacation for them, but for working-class people like us, if this situation prolongs, we will die of hunger.”

“It has been a year that I have not been able to work due to the lockdown and restrictions imposed by the government. I have not been able to provide adequate food and basic needs for my family. I have not been able to pay my rent for the last 8 months and my landlord has threatened me to leave my apartment if I do not pay the rent soon”.

“COVID-19 has impacted every aspect of my life. I have been laid off for a year now. The only source of income for my family is the money my sister had sent me from America 6 months ago. My wife has been complaining to me about not being able to feed my daughter with proper food. Our family has been eating Chow-Chow (Packed noodles) for dinner for most of the days for the past couple of months.”

Through the primary data, the impact of COVID-19 on food accessibility has been understood. Food accessibility was disrupted as the lockdown led to the loss of job-reduced/ no income; thus, reduced purchasing power amongst the daily wage laborers working in Kathmandu. Out of the 10 interviews that had been conducted to understand the status of food security amongst the daily wage workers working in informal sectors of Kathmandu, all of the respondents reported that they had been laid off from their jobs due to the restrictions imposed by the government. The respondents were asked about the impact of COVID-19 on their livelihood, and food accessibility. Every responded shared to having faced difficulties in accessing food in one way or the other. This shows the failure of operationalization of the rights-based approach to food security because the fulfillment of the right to food has 2 components i.e., facilitate a social and economic environment to foster human development and to provide food to people in an emergency or situation when self-provisioning is beyond their control (Seatzu, 2011). However, in the case of Nepal, the government adopted lockdown has led to the rupture of the social and economic environment where the daily wage workers could work and earn their living. Further, the government's poor food security response in the phase of COVID-19 shows that it failed to provide food to people in an emergency.

4.4.1.2 High food prices

Moreover, the respondents reported that in a situation where they had no source of income, the hike in the food prices had brought an additional burden to their food accessibility. Out of the 10 respondents, more than half of the respondents reported that the prices of food grains like rice, cereals, meat, milk, and vegetables had increased. Some of the response of the respondents has been quoted below:

“The price of vegetables has increased so much that I usually have biscuit for my breakfast and packed noodles for my lunch/ dinner”

“My son loves chicken meat but, I have not been able to buy chicken meat because the price has gone up from NRS 310/kg to NRS500/kg within a month”

“I have not been able to feed my family properly because I lost my job and now the prices of each and everything has gone up, I think me, and my family will die of hunger”

“While going to the market, the police forces ask us to wear double masks and sanitizers. We don’t even have enough money to feed ourselves. How can we afford the masks and sanitizers? It is traumatizing to see people die every day, I sometimes fear that we’ll be led to the same fortune.”

COVID-19 crises had brought the vulnerable people to the ground, surviving on daily wages and lack of savings have further ignited the crisis they have felt. The respondents were fearful that prolonged lockdown by the government of Nepal would lead them to die of hunger. Thus, it is understood that the government has failed to maintain food prices to assure its accessibility to its poor citizens, i.e., failure to assure and protect the right to food.

4.4.1.3 Disruption of other sources of income

Further, the loss of jobs due to COVID-19 extends to the international job markets. At the national level, Nepal had received USD 8.2 billion remittance: about 29% of the GDP in 2019 (World Bank, 2020). However, due to the loss of foreign jobs, Nepalese foreign workers have returned to Nepal. For example, about 400,000 to 750,000 migrant Nepalese workers entered Nepal from the Indian border because they had been laid off from work due to COVID-19 (Adhikari, Timsina, Khadka, Ghale, & Ojha, 2021). The ADB (2020) estimated that remittance in Nepal decreased by 29% in 2020. Further, the government of Nepal has estimated that about 0.5million of 2.5 million Nepalese migrant workers working in the Gulf of Malaysia will return to Nepal due to COVID-19 (ACAPS, 2020).

During the primary data collection, two informants used to receive remittance from their family members working abroad. However, due to COVID-19, both of the respondents reported having lost their source of remittance, leading to the disruption of additional sources of their income and food insecurity. The respondents shared the following experiences:

“My Husband used to send me money from abroad. But, due to COVID-19, he lost his job, and he had no other option than to return back to Nepal. Our family now has no income source at all. If the lockdown continues, we might die of Hunger”.

“My brother used to send me money every month so that me and my daughter could sustain our life. But it has been 6 months he has not sent me any money because he too is struggling with his life”.

4.4.1.4 Limited time to access food in the market and the fear of infection as a factor affecting food accessibility

Although just two respondents shared that limited operation of the markets and fear of infection as a factor affecting their food accessibility. These factors have been presented in this research as it shows the poor response of the government that will be discussed in the forthcoming chapter. Significant proportion of the respondents shared that, “*as the grocery stores were only open in the early morning it led to overcrowding*”. They shared that they often used to skip meals or eat what they had in their home rather than to go to the stores full of people as they were afraid of getting infected.

A clear example of the government of Nepal’s poor operationalization of the rights-based approach to food security can be understood through this context. The rights-based approach to food security requires a government to assure that every citizen should have physical access to food at all times (Seatzu, 2011), however, the government of Nepal seems to have done the opposite by restricting the markets to open just for a couple of hours, affecting food accessibility amongst the respondents.

4.4.2 Inadequate food availability in the market

The disruption of the supply chain as a result of extended lockdowns has brought extreme risk to the availability of food in Nepal. For example, a market update published by the Nepal Food Security Monitoring System (2020) shows that 53% of the traders in Kathmandu valley reported that the food availability in the markets was considered to be insufficient. Nationwide Lockdowns followed by international border lockdowns have disrupted the cross-border food supply chains leading to disruption of the supply of food commodities throughout Nepal. For example, in April 2020 import of rice and vegetables from India was halted due to the border closure, leading to insufficient rice and vegetable imports in Nepal, and a hike in the price of these food commodities. (WFP,2020). Similarly, at the national level, the pandemic emerged in Nepal during the time of wheat harvest and paddy cultivation. Farmers throughout the nation have reported having an inadequate supply of seeds and manure required for paddy and rice cultivation which will affect the production of these crops. It has been estimated that in the year 2021/2022 Nepal will have to highly depend on import rice/paddy from India to assure the availability of these products in Nepali markets (Subedi, 2020; Joshi, Mainali, Marasini, Acharya, & Adhikari, 2021).

Similarly, the COVID-19 has brought a massive effect on poultry, milk, and vegetable productions in Nepal due to market closures, disruption of transportation, and closure of hotels, businesses, and restaurants. It has led to wastage/rotting of these food products compelling the farmers to destroy/throw away the vegetable and dairy products (Poudel, 2020). This has led to food price hikes, black marketing, and a shortage of food products in the markets (Poudel, & Subedi, 2020). During the interview sessions, four respondents reported having faced multiple issues regarding the availability of food in the market. The response of the respondents has been quoted below:

“Most of the time the grocery store run out of food commodities like sugar and salt”.

“The rich people in this locality buy more than they need because they can afford it, but poor people like us cannot afford to stock food in our home, and when we go to the shop to buy food, they often say that they ran out of stock”.

“It has been more than a month since the grocery stores near my apartment ran out of Jasmine rice (cheap) that I eat. I have been buying expensive rice nowadays. Although it tastes good, it has increased my monthly expenses”.

4.4.3 Poor food utilization

Poor food utilization was also significant amongst the respondents in this research. Nutritious food is essential to support the human immune system and reduce the risk of infections. However, as people’s ability to engage in economic activities deteriorates, this negatively affects their ability to afford a healthy diet (FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP & WHO, 2019). The respondents during the interview sessions have reported to have replaced nutritious food like vegetables and meat with junk food like biscuits and packed noodles, contributing to poor nutrition. Moreover, more than half of the respondents have reported having skipped meals due to loss of income and reduced purchasing power due to the restrictions imposed by the government. Some of the quotes shared by the respondents illustrated poor food utilization:

“The price of vegetables has increased so much that I usually have biscuit for my breakfast and packed noodles for my lunch/ dinner”.

“In the past one year, If I were to calculate, I must have slept hungry for more than a month”.

“Our family usually eat twice a day so that we can minimize our expenses”.

4.5 NGOs and Media’s response to the government’s food security measures in the phase of COVID-19

The NGOs and Media’s response to the government’s food security measures in the phase of COVID-19 shows a similar pattern regarding the government’s lack of concrete strategy to deal with food security in the phase of COVID-19. To understand NGOs and Media’s response regarding the government’s food security measures news articles available through online news portals were reviewed. Further, short question and answer sessions with 3 youth activist were conducted. The findings obtained have been classified according to following themes:

- 1) Ineffective government
- 2) Government’s lack of accountability and transparency
- 3) Government as an impediment to NGOs working to feed the poor

4.5.1 Ineffective government

The government of Nepal has failed to protect the right to food to its poor citizens. With an inability to take timely decisions on crucial matters like food security, the status of food security amongst the daily wage workers has become worse (Pokharel, 2021). News articles have claimed that the measures adopted by the government have been inadequate and inappropriate. But the government of Nepal continues to ignore its ineffectiveness (Nepali, & Bisukhey, 2020). The government of Nepal has resource constraints, but the effective mobilization of available resources could have minimized food insecurity amongst the vulnerable (The Kathmandu Post, 2021). The rights-based approach to food security argues that representative government is one whose institutional design guarantees ‘a constant condition of responsiveness’ to its citizens’ needs and demands. The responsiveness of the democratic government can be studied focusing on how the policymaking reflects the needs and preferences of the public. However, the media and NGO’s response to the government shows that the government of Nepal was not responsive as they failed to develop policy and address the food insecurity of the public. For example, “Although the government had understood the consequence of the pandemic in health and

economic sectors during the first wave of COVID-19, the government wasted crucial time and did nothing to improve the health and economic sector; instead, the government focused only on infection control through lockdown”. Thus, the second wave was even worse than the first one, says Anisha Regmi, a journalist working in The Kathmandu Post (The Kathmandu Post, 2021).

Ranju Darshana, a female activist working as a volunteer in different NGOs to feed the poor in Kathmandu during a short Q&N session says, *“the government seems to be ineffective as the government focused only on the mobilization for PCR tests and vaccines.”* She added, *“The government needs to focus more on addressing food security issues because the poor people in Kathmandu are dying of hunger rather than by the disease itself”*.

4.5.2 Government’s Lack of accountability and transparency

The government of Nepal has not shown accountability and transparency (Pokharel, 2021). In a news article posted in The Kathmandu Post (2020), one of the leading media houses of Nepal, the government’s accountability and transparency have been questioned. Although the government claims to have spent huge amounts of money in the name of relief distribution, the vulnerable groups claim to have received no assistance at all. The article states that “a relief package that does not support the needy is as good as not distributed at all” (The Kathmandu Post, 2020). The lack of government accountability and transparency has also been reflected through the experiences shared by the informants i.e., the respondents have not received any kind of assistance from the government to protect their right to food indicating failure of operationalization of the rights-based approach to food security.

4.5.3 Government as an impediment to NGOs working to feed the poor

Similarly, as the government was not able to address food insecurity amongst the vulnerable groups living in Kathmandu, NGOs working in Kathmandu had initiated campaigns to feed the hungry people. However, the Kathmandu metropolitan city restricted the campaign to feed the hungry people claiming that it would further increase the infection rate (Pokharel, 2021). In an article posted by the Himalayan Times (2020), the government of Nepal has been criticized for not allowing NGOs and social workers to distribute free food for the poor in Kathmandu. The authorities of Kathmandu Metropolitan City issued an order to stop the distribution of free food in

the open space claiming that this action would rather tarnish the image of Kathmandu and make the city dirty (Onlinekhabar, 2020; Himilayan Times, 2020). For example, team of Hamro Sano Prayas while conducting free meals program to protect the overlooked as well as the neediest segment of our society, Mayor of Kathmandu Metropolitan City on November 4 announced that the volunteers will not be allowed to conduct such free meal programs in Khula Manch (Open Ground) because these workers were “painting a negative picture of the city in the international arena” by feeding them out in the open (Khatiwada, & Pant, 2020).

Further Bam, team leader of Hamro Sano Prayas an NGO working to feed the poor in Kathmandu during a short Q&N session says, *“The reason why we conducted this free meal distribution program at Khula Manch is that the porters and the daily wage workers reside around this area i.e Ason, Indrachowk, New Road, Ratna Park. But as the city Mayor forced us out of Khula Manch, many diasabled informal sector workers staying in the inner Kathmandu area could not walk to Thapathali as we had to relocate our program from Khula Manch to Thapathali. As a result, the beneficiaries of our free meal programs decreased to about 20 percent of the total people who came to Khula Manch. Meanwhile, none of the 32 wards in the city have initiated programs to feed the most vulnerable and the needy.”* He added, *“it was shameful on part of the local government to obstruct the noble initiative of the social organizations”*.

A similar experience was shared by Arjan Kc, a youth activist working as a volunteer in multiple NGOs to feed the poor in the phase of COVID-19 regarding government impeding the NGOs.

“Daily wage workers seem to be suffering the most as they have lost their livelihoods and most don't have stocks. Different organizations are conducting aid and relief programs along with food distribution. However, the government seems to not approve this. It may be because the government lacks empathy and is inconsiderate” Says Arjan K.C.

Although, the rights-based approach to food security emphasizes that the governments are the primary actors in ensuring food security in the nation. Thus, the government has a primary role to achieve food security. However, through this research it has been understood that the government rather than contributing to achieve food security in the nation, has become a

hindrance to other actors (NGOs) of the society that have come forward to protect the right to food of the vulnerable citizens.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

5.1 Overall

This research was conducted to study Nepal's food security preparedness and response in the phase of COVID-19 and the status of food security amongst the daily wage workers engaged in the informal economy in Kathmandu. In this section, the understanding and interpretation of the research findings will be discussed. The purpose of this section is to provide in-depth knowledge that will be essential to get answers to the research questions taking into account the rights-based approach to food security.

Through this research, it has been understood that the government of Nepal's food security response during the COVID-19 was not adequate at all. First, there are very few documents available regarding the government of Nepal's food security response in the phase of COVID-19. Second, the documents related to the Government of Nepal emergency response plan have literally no plans to address food insecurity in the phase of COVID-19. The only food security response that has been identified through this research is the development of the COVID-19 Crisis Management Center by the government that barely has any concrete measures to assure food security amongst the vulnerable.

The food security measures during the 2015 earthquake in Nepal clearly showed that the government lacked a concrete food security strategy in case of uncertainties like the earthquake. During the 2015 earthquake, the government of Nepal responded poorly to address the food insecurity issue in the nation. The government's poor food security measures and lack of concrete strategy to deal with food insecurity during the earthquake resulted in a food security crisis. This shows the inability of the government of Nepal to provide food to its citizens in an emergency or circumstances when self-provisioning is beyond control. The poor preparedness and response of the government of Nepal to address food insecurity during the Earthquake could have been a learning experience for the government to develop concrete strategies in case of

uncertain events in the future. However, the results obtained through the secondary data sources shows that the government food security measures in the phase of COVID-19 is not adequate at all and the government lacks concrete strategy to deal with the food security issues in the phase of COVID-19 also. The poor response to food security has led to food insecurity amongst the daily wage workers, indicating failure of operationalization of right to food.

Moreover, the findings obtained through the primary data sources is an example of poor food security response of the government of Nepal in the phase of COVID-19. The findings show that the status of food security amongst the daily wage workers in Kathmandu in the phase of COVID-19 is appalling. As the government of Nepal implemented the nationwide lockdown, it affected the food accessibility amongst the daily wage workers. The poor food accessibility amongst the daily wage workers was a result of loss of jobs affecting their purchasing power, high price of food commodities, disruption of other sources of income and fear of infection as a factor affecting the food accessibility amongst the respondents. Further, inadequate food availability and poor food utilization too was a factor that contributed to food insecurity amongst the respondents.

The poor food security response of the government of Nepal in the phase of COVID-19 has been associated with the government being inefficient and lacking ability to take timely decisions, government's lack of accountability and transparency, and government as an impediment to NGOs working to feed the poor. Further, through this research it is understood that the NGOs working in Kathmandu played a crucial role in feeding the poor in Kathmandu even if the government turned blind eyes to its vulnerable citizens. Multiple NGOs based in Kathmandu have been directly addressing food insecurity issues amongst the poor living in Kathmandu through food distribution. However, it is strange to know that none of the respondents of this research have got any food assistance from the government or NGOs. This could be because the NGOs in Kathmandu have been providing food relief in certain localities only, due to resource constraints. Thus, Samakhushi, where the respondents live might not fall in the area where food relief initiatives had been conducted.

5.2 Right-based approach to food security in the phase of Covid-19

The rights-based approach to food has two components: i) The government should facilitate or create social and economic environments that assure food security, and ii) the government should provide food to its citizens in an emergency or circumstances when self-provisioning is beyond their control (Chilton, & Rose, 2009). It is the duty of the Government to identify who is vulnerable to food insecurity and why they are vulnerable to make decisions regarding how to address food insecurities in the nation taking into account the rights-based approach to food security (Dahl, 1971 as cited in Morales, 2014). The findings obtained through this research provides a clear picture regarding poor operationalization of the right-based approach to food security in Nepal before COVID-19 and in the phase of COVID-19. It has been understood that the government of Nepal was not prepared, and its poor response has resulted in a food security crisis in Nepal. Although the primary data collected for this research does not represent all the vulnerable groups of people living throughout Nepal, the poor status of food security amongst the people living in the capital city can be taken as a reference point to understand the status of food security amongst vulnerable groups living in already food insecure, rural areas of Nepal.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

There was massive food insecurity prevalent in Nepal even without the pandemic. With most of the staple diets needing to be imported, the situation got only worse after lockdowns. The government never took the pandemic seriously and has still been downplaying the damage. As with every aspect of the response to the situation, food security also suffered. While most households did stock up food, many people lost their jobs, and many of those that did not saw a decrease in their income. Pair that with rising costs for daily essentials and consumables, many are going through a hard time. The pandemic has also impacted the food production of the country. While it did disrupt the transportation and cargo of goods of this heavily trade deficit nation, this also hit the agriculture industry which imports seeds, equipment, and most importantly fertilizers. With the government unable to procure fertilizers, food production is projected to go down in the coming year. Since the country and politics are still caught with other issues such as who has the power and what coalition to make. The primary needs of the citizens seem to be of lesser priority which can spell doom for the common people.

Chapter 7: Recommendations

Nepal has several active policies for agriculture and food security that emphasize the right to food. Through this research it has been understood that the policies had not anticipated disasters like COVID-19 pandemic, and so there were no preparations to deal with such a crisis. The government-imposed lockdown has taken a longer route with no alternatives, and it might not take long for this pandemic to ruin our economic system and cause a famine. The question remains, how long should the poor endure hunger, when the only policy measures, the government is taking to tackle COVID-19 is through extending the lockdown. To address the current issue of food insecurity, social safety nets or relief packages in the form of cash/food should be provided to those who are the most vulnerable. Moreover, to tackle unforeseen shocks such as COVID-19, short-term as well as long-term reforms should come with the aim of stabilizing food supply chain. For example, promoting local food sufficiency by encouraging local producers to farm and meet the market demand. The citizens themselves can grow crops for example on the backyard or even roof top. This might help reduction of dependency on the market as well as the chances of getting exposed to the virus. This pandemic also gives an opportunity to revive the agricultural initiatives such as the Agricultural Perspective Plan (APP). Social protection mechanisms can also be practiced by the government to protect the citizens, especially the vulnerable groups. To achieve that, the food market should be monitored by managing price hike of food commodities. On the other hand, it can also reduce the incidence of price differentiation to maintain uniformity in the food prices.

REFERENCES

- Aase, T. H., Chaudhary, R. P., & Vetaas, O. R. (2010). Farming flexibility and food security under climatic uncertainty: Manang, Nepal Himalaya. *Area*, 42(2), 228-238. ACAPS (2020). Migrant Vulnerability in Bangladesh, India and Nepal. Covid-19 and labour migration. Retrieved from https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/20201012_acaps_thematic_series_on_migrant_vulnerability_in_south_asia_0.pdf
- Acharya, A. K., Paudel, M. P., Wasti, P. C., Sharma, R. D., & Dhital, S. (2018). Status Report on Food and Nutrition Security in Nepal. Ministry of Agriculture, Land Management and Cooperatives, Kathmandu, Nepal.
- ADB (2020). Remittances in Nepal to Decline by 29%: ADB. 2020. Retrieved from <https://www.investopaper.com/news/remittances-in-nepal-to-decline-29-percent-by-2020-adb/>
- Adger, W. N., Agrawala, S., Mirza, M. M. Q., Conde, C., O'Brien, K., Pulhin, J., ... Takahasiki, K. (2007). Assessment of adaptation practices, options, constraints and capacity. In M. Parry, O. Canziani, J. Palutikof, P. van PANDEY AND BARDSLEY 147 der Linden, & C. Hanson (Eds.), *Climate change 2007: Impacts, adaptation and vulnerability. Contribution of Working Group II to the Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change* (pp. 717–743). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Adhikari, J. (2008). Food crisis in Karnali. Martin Chautari.
- Adhikari, B. (2017). THE WORLD HERITAGE CONVENTION AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN NEPAL. *World Heritage and Human Rights: Lessons from the Asia-Pacific and global arena*.
- Adhikari, J., Timsina, J., Khadka, S. R., Ghale, Y., & Ojha, H. (2021). COVID-19 impacts on agriculture and food systems in Nepal: Implications for SDGs. *Agricultural Systems*, 186, 102990.
- ADS. (2013). Nepal: Agricultural Development Strategy — Final Report. ADB: Technical Assistance Consultant's Report. Prepared by PPTA Consultants Kathmandu, Nepal for Government of Nepal.
- Agriculture Perspective Plan(APP).(1995). Kathmandu: His Majesty's Government of Nepal. Retrieved from <http://extwprlegs1.fao.org/docs/pdf/nep171583.pdf>
- Arun, G. C., & Ghimire, K. (2018). A SWOT analysis of Nepalese agricultural policy. *International Journal of Agriculture Environment and Food Sciences*, 2(4), 119-123.
- Aryal, K. (2021). Nepal Earthquake Response: Joint Assessment of Food Security, Livelihoods and Early Recovery. Project Advisor, UNOCHA Nepal Earthquake Response Task Force,

- Joint Food Security, Livelihoods and Early Recovery Assessment. (Government of Nepal, UNOCHA, WFP, FAO, UNDP, NRCS and REACH). Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/316968098_Nepal_Earthquake_Response_Joint_Assessment_of_Food_Security_Livelihoods_and_Early_Recovery/citations
- Assembly, U. G. (1948). Universal declaration of human rights. UN General Assembly, 302(2), 14-25.
- Assembly, U. G. (1979). Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women.
- Bhattachan, K. B., Sunar, T. B., & Bhattachan, Y. K. (2009). Caste-based discrimination in Nepal. New Delhi: Indian Institute of Dalit Studies.
- Black, R. E., Allen, L. H., Bhutta, Z. A., Caulfield, L. E., De Onis, M., Ezzati, M., ... & Maternal and Child Undernutrition Study Group. (2008). Maternal and child undernutrition: global and regional exposures and health consequences. *The lancet*, 371(9608), 243-260.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>.
- Bryman, A. (2016). *Social research methods*. Oxford university press.
- CBS (2012). National population and housing census 2011 (National Report) (ed., Vol. Government of Nepal, Kathmandu: National Planning Commission Secretariat.
- CCMC. (2020, June 13). ‘Decision 2’. In Minutes of COVID-19 Crisis Management Center High-level Coordination Committee 13th June 2020. Retrieved from https://ccmc.gov.np/key_decisions/27.pdf.
- CCMC. (2021, April). ‘Decision 11’. In Minutes of COVID-19 Crisis Management Center High-level Coordination Committee April 2020. Retrieved from https://ccmc.gov.np/key_decisions/key%20decision%2023.pdf.
- Chapman, A. R. (2017). A “Violations Approach” for Monitoring the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights 1. *Human Rights*, 449-492.
- Chaudhary, D. (2018). Agricultural policies and rural development in Nepal: an overview. *Research Nepal Journal of Development Studies*, 1(2), 34-46.
- Chilton, M., & Rose, D. (2009). A rights-based approach to food insecurity in the United States. *American Journal of Public Health*, 99(7), 1203-1211.

- Christian, P., (2011). Development Impact Evaluation (DIME).The World Bank. Nepal - Agriculture and Food Security Project Impact Evaluation, Baseline Survey (AFSP-BL). Retrieved from <https://microdata.worldbank.org/index.php/catalog/3634>
- CIVICUS. (2020). SOLIDARITY IN THE TIME OF COVID-19 Civil society responses to the pandemic. CIVICUS. Retrieved from https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/solidarity-in-the-time-of-covid-19_en.pdf
- COVID-19 Crisis Management Center coordination committee. (2020, March 1). ‘Decision 2’. In Minutes of COVID-19 Crisis Management Center High-level Coordination Committee 1st March 2020. Retrieved from https://ccmc.gov.np/key_decisions/1.pdf.
- COVID-19 Crisis Management Center Directors Committee. (2020, August 9). ‘Decision 9’. In Minutes of COVID-19 Crisis Management Center High-level Coordination Committee 9th August 2020. Retrieved from https://ccmc.gov.np/key_decisions/key%20decision-2077-04-25.pdf.
- De Schutter, O. (2010). Countries tackling hunger with a right to food approach. Briefing note by the Special Rapporteur on the right to food.
- DevKaphle, B., Rizal, G., Karki, S., Ghimire, M. S., & Paudel, M. M. (2020). Food Security in Nepal: An Overview from Policy Perspective.
- Fafchamps, M., & Shilpi, F. (2003). The spatial division of labour in Nepal. *The Journal of Development Studies*, 39(6), 23-66
- FAO & GoN. (2016). Food and nutrition security in Nepal: A status report, A Report by MoAD and CBS, Building statistical capacity for quality food security and nutrition information in support of better-informed policies TCP/RAS/3409. Kathmandu, Nepal.
- FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP & WHO. (2019). The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2019. Safeguarding against economic slowdowns and downturns. Rome, FAO. Retrieved from <https://www.wfp.org/publications/2019-state-food-security-and-nutrition-world-sofi-safeguarding-against-economic>
- Food and Agriculture Organization. (1996). Rome Declaration on World Food Security and World Food Summit Plan of Action: World Food Summit 13-17 November 1996, Rome, Italy. FAO.
- Food First Information and Action Network Nepal (FIAN). (2014). Parallel Report: The Right to Adequate Food in Nepal. Kathmandu.

- GAFSP. (2018). First call for proposals. Retrieved from <https://www.gafspfund.org/first-call-proposals>
- Gautam, D. R. (2020). An Assessment on the Constitution of Nepal 2015. *Journal of Political Science*, 20, 46-60.
- Gebreegziabher, Z., Stage, J., Mekonnen, A., & Alemu, A. (2011). Climate change and the Ethiopian economy: A computable general equilibrium analysis. Washington, DC: Resources for the Future. Governance. (2015). Retrieved from <http://www.nnfsp.gov.np/Governance.aspx>
- Government's Nepal Food Security Monitoring System (NeKSAP); United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) and the Food Security Cluster. (2015). A report on the food security impact of the 2015 earthquake Food Security Cluster. Retrieved from <https://documents.wfp.org/stellent/groups/public/documents/ena/wfp275351.pdf>
- Hobbs, S. (2009). The cost of coping: A collision of crises and the impacts of sustained food security deterioration in Nepal. UN-World Food Programme and Nepal Khadya Surakshya Anugaman Pranali (NeKASAP): Kathmandu.
- IFPRI. (2009). Global hunger index. The challenge of hunger. The focus on the financial crisis and gender Inequality. Washington DC: International Food Policy Research Institute.
- IFPRI. (2016). Global hunger index. Washington DC: International Food Policy Research Institute. Accessed from Interactive database of IFPRS <http://ghi.ifpri.org/on> 15 October 2016
- ILO. (2020). COVID-19 Labour Market Impact in Nepal. Retrieved from https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/---ilo-kathmandu/documents/briefingnote/wcms_745439.pdf
- Joshi, T., Mainali, R. P., Marasini, S., Acharya, K. P., & Adhikari, S. (2021). Nepal at the edge of sword with two edges: The COVID-19 pandemics and sustainable development goals. *Journal of Agriculture and Food Research*, 4, 100138.
- Joseph, S., & Castan, M. (2013). The international covenant on civil and political rights: cases, materials, and commentary. Oxford University Press.
- Kathmandupost. (2021). The lockdown is killing the poor and the marginalised. Retrieved 10 February 2021, from <https://kathmandupost.com/province-no-2/2020/06/04/the-lockdown-is-killing-the-poor-and-the-marginalised>
- KC, P. (2018). Transitional justice through truth and reconciliation commission of Nepal. Available at SSRN 3328398.

- Khanal, N. R., Nepal, P., Zhang, Y., Nepal, G., Paudel, B., Liu, L., & Rai, R. (2020). Policy provisions for agricultural development in Nepal: A review. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 261, 121241.
- Khanal, S. (2021). Covid-19 in Nepal: Is the worst yet to come? Retrieved from <https://english.onlinekhabar.com/covid-19-in-nepal-is-the-worst-yet-to-come.html>
- Khatriwada, N., & Pant, S. (2020). Protecting the Economically Vulnerable Population. Retrieved from <https://thehimalayantimes.com/opinion/protecting-the-economically-vulnerable-population>
- Lovendal, C. R. (2004). Food insecurity and vulnerability in Nepal: Profiles of seven vulnerable groups.
- Lune, H., & Berg, B. (2016). *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences* (9th ed.). Harlow: Pearson Education Limited.
- Maharjan, K. L., & Joshi, N. P. (2011). Determinants of household food security in Nepal: A binary logistic regression analysis. *Journal of Mountain Science*, 8(3), 403-413.
- Maharjan, K. L., & Khatri-Chhetri, A. (2006). Household food security in rural areas of Nepal: Relationship between socio-economic characteristics and food security status (No. 1004-2016-78861).
- Malville, N. J. (2005). Bearing the burden: Portage labor as an adaptive response to predictable food deficits in Eastern Nepal. *Human Ecology*, 33(3), 419-438.
- Manandhar, M. D., Varughese, G., Howitt, A. M., & Kelly, E. (2017). Disaster preparedness and response during political transition in Nepal: Assessing civil and military roles in the aftermath of the 2015 earthquakes.
- Ministry of Health-Nepal/ New ERA/ ICF. Demographic and Health Survey 2016. Kathmandu: Ministry of Health; 2017.
- MoAC (Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives). 2009. Selected indicators of Nepalese agriculture and population. Government of Nepal, Kathmandu.
- MoAC (Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives)/ WFP (World Food Programme) / FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization of United Nations). 2009. Winter drought in Nepal. Crop and food security assessment. MoAC/ WFP/ FAO. Kathmandu, Nepal.
- MoAD (2014). Agricultural Development Strategy (ADS) 2014, Kathmandu: Ministry of Agricultural Development.

- Nagoda, S., & Eriksen, S. (2014). The role of local power relations in household vulnerability to climate change in Humla, Nepal. *Climate Change Adaptation and Development: Transforming Paradigms and Practices*. Routledge, New York, 200-218.
- National Information Technology Center (NITC). (2021). Agriculture Sector.Economic Scenario of Agriculture. Retrieved from <https://nepal.gov.np:8443/NationalPortal/view-page?id=44>
- Nepal Food Security Monitoring System. (2020). Nepal COVID-19: Food Security and Vulnerability Update 3. Retrieved from https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000115490/download/?_ga=2.203669911.660105381.1589685430-1587278730.158968543
- Nepal Gazette. (2021, April 18). ‘Order 11’. In Nepal Gazette April 18, 2020. Retrieved from <https://drive.google.com/file/d/10QgE4-yuaZhvy5Yu0AZLR9FLAPJICVUU/view>.
- Nepal Government. District Administration Office. (2021). Public Notice 27 May 2021. Retrieved from <https://daokathmandu.moha.gov.np/post/ma-ta-gata-ka-sa-ra-vajana-ka-sa-cana-1>
- Nepal Nutrition and Food Security Portal (NNFSP). (2013). Nepal Thematic Report on Food Security and Nutrition. Retrieved from <http://www.nnfsp.gov.np/PortalContent.aspx?Doctype=Resources&ID=121>
- Nepali, P., & Bisukhey, M. (2020). COVID-19 and food insecurity. Retrieved 29 June 2021, from <https://thehimalayantimes.com/opinion/covid-19-and-food-insecurity>
- Onlinekhabar. (2020). Despite city govt’s warning, volunteers continue feeding the needy at Khulamanch. Retrieved from <https://english.onlinekhabar.com/despite-city-govts-warning-volunteers-continue-feeding-the-needy-at-khulamanch.html>
- Pain, A., Ojha, H. R., & Adhikari, J. (2015). Social inequality and food insecurity in Nepal: Risk and responses. In I. Christoplos, & A. Pain (Eds.), *New challenges to food security: From climate change to fragile states* (pp. 221–240). London: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group.
- Pandey, R., & Bardsley, D. K. (2019). An application of the Household Food Insecurity Access Scale to assess food security in rural communities of Nepal. *Asia & the Pacific Policy Studies*, 6(2), 130-150.
- Pandey, S., & Fusaro, V. (2020). Food insecurity among women of reproductive age in Nepal: prevalence and correlates. *BMC public health*, 20(1), 175.
- Pinstrup-Andersen, P. (2009). Food security: definition and measurement. *Food security*, 1(1), 5.

- Pokharel, K. (2021). Nepal's shambolic Covid-19 policy response. Retrieved 20 March 2021, from <https://theannapurnaexpress.com/news/nepals-shambolic-covid-19-policy-response-2897>.
- Pokharel, T. (2015). Poverty in Nepal: Characteristics and challenges. *Journal of Poverty, Investment and Development*, 11.
- Poudel, K., & Subedi, P. (2020). Impact of COVID-19 pandemic on socioeconomic and mental health aspects in Nepal. *International Journal of Social Psychiatry*, 66(8), 748-755.
- Poudel, R. (2020). Barimai Kuhiyera Sakiyo Tarkari, Ani Khulyo Bazaar (The market opens after the vegetables get rotten in the field). Kantipur. Retrieved from <https://ekantipur.com/business/2020/06/08/15915926194256713.html>
- Regmi, H. R. (2007). Effect of unusual weather on cereal crop production and household food security. *The Journal of Agriculture and Environment.*, 8,20–29.
- Regmi, H. R., Rijal, K., Joshi, G. R., Sapkota, R. P., & Thapa, S. (2019). Factors Influencing Food Insecurity in Nepal. *Journal of Institute of Science and Technology*, 24(2), 22-29.
- Roka, H. (2017). The status of smallholder farmers in Nepal's agricultural development strategy (2015–2035). *Agrarian South: Journal of Political Economy*, 6(3), 354-372.
- Seatzu, F. (2011). The UN committee on economic, social and cultural rights and the right to adequate food. *Anuario Español De Derecho Internacional*, 27, 571.
- Secretariat, C. A., & Durbar, S. (2015). *Constitution of Nepal 2015*. Kathmandu: Constituent Assembly Secretariat.
- Sen, S. (2021). Good Samaritans continue to feed poor people at Khula Manch. Retrieved from <https://thehimalayantimes.com/kathmandu/good-samaritans-continue-to-feed-poor-people-at-khula-manch>
- Sharma, K., Banstola, A., & Parajuli, R. R. (2021). Assessment of COVID-19 pandemic in Nepal: A lockdown scenario analysis. *Frontiers in Public Health*, 9.
- Shrestha, B., & Pathranarakul, P. (2018). Nepal government's emergency response to the 2015 earthquake: a case study. *Social Sciences*, 7(8), 127.
- Singh, A., Singh, A., & Ram, F. (2014). Household Food Insecurity and Nutritional Status of Children and Women in Nepal. *Food and Nutrition Bulletin*, 35(1), 3–11. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1177/156482651403500101>
- Stein, D., & D'Souza, R. (2013). *Nepal agriculture and food security project (AFSP). Impact evaluation concept note*.

Subedi, D. R. (2020). Impact of COVID-19 on food security in Nepal. *International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Economic Issues*, 4(1), 97-102.

The Center for Excellence in Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance. (2020). *Disaster Management Reference Handbook* [Ebook]. Retrieved from <https://www.cfedmha.org/DMHA-Resources/Disaster-Management-Reference-Handbooks>

The Kathmandu Post. (2020). Feed the hungry. Retrieved from <https://kathmandupost.com/editorial/2020/06/04/feed-the-hungry>

The Kathmandu Post. (2021). Pandemic pushing more families into poverty as unemployment soars. Retrieved from <https://kathmandupost.com/national/2021/05/20/pandemic-pushing-more-families-into-poverty-as-unemployment-soars>

Thelwell, K. (2020). Poverty in Nepal | The Borgen Project. Retrieved 21 February 2021, from <https://borgenproject.org/tag/poverty-in-nepal/>

Timalsina, K. P. (2007). Rural urban migration and livelihood in the informal sector: A study of street vendors of Kathmandu Metropolitan City, Nepal (Master's thesis, Geografisk institutt).

Ulak, N. (2015). Nepal's earthquake-2015: Its impact on various sectors. *The Gaze: Journal of Tourism and Hospitality*, 7, 58-86.

UNDP Nepal. (2020). Three in Five Employees Lost their Jobs due to COVID-19.

UNICEF. (1989). *Convention on the Rights of the Child*.

United Nations. (2021). Nepal: COVID-19 Response Plan, issued 20 May 2021 (for the period May 2021 – August 2021). United Nations Country Team. Retrieved from <https://reliefweb.int/report/nepal/nepal-covid-19-response-plan-issued-20-may-2021-period-may-2021-august-2021>

USAID. (2019). Food Assistance Fact Sheet - Nepal. Retrieved from <https://www.usaid.gov/nepal/food-assistance#:~:text=Speeches%20Shim&text=Nepal%20remains%20one%20of%20the,food%20insecurity%20in%20the%20country.>

USAID. (2021). Agriculture and Food Security | Nepal | U.S. Agency for International Development. Retrieved from <https://www.usaid.gov/nepal/agriculture-and-food-security>

Vasileiou, K., Barnett, J., Thorpe, S., & Young, T. (2018). Characterising and justifying sample size sufficiency in interview-based studies: systematic analysis of qualitative health

- research over a 15-year period. *BMC Medical Research Methodology*, 18(1), 148.
Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12874-018-0594-7>
- Von Grebmer, K., Headey, D., Bene, C., Haddad, L., Olofinbiyi, T., Wiesmann, D., ... & Iseli, B. (2013). 2013 Global Hunger Index: the challenge of hunger: building resilience to achieve food and nutrition security (Vol. 79). Intl Food Policy Res Inst.
- Vyas, V. S. (2000). Ensuring food security: the state, market and civil society. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 4402-4407.
- Wagle, U. R. (2012). Socioeconomic implications of the increasing foreign remittance to Nepal: Evidence from the Nepal living standard survey. *International Migration*, 50(4), 186-207.
- WFP. (2009a). The cost of coping; a collision of crises and the impact of sustained food security deterioration in Nepal. WFP, Lalitpur, Nepal.
- WFP. (2020). Nepal COVID-19: Food Security and Vulnerability Update 2. Retrieved from https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000115489/download/?_ga=2.160745914.660105381.1589685430-1587278730.1589685430
- Winzer, M., & Mazurek, K. (2017). The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. *The Wiley Handbook of diversity in special education*, 3.
- World Bank. (1990), World development report 1990: Poverty. Washington DC, USA: The World Bank.
- World Bank. (2020). COVID-19 impact on Nepal's economy hits hardest informal sector. Retrieved from <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2020/10/08/covid-19-impact-on-nepals-economy-hits-hardest-informal-sector>
- World Bank. (2020). Personal Remittances Received by Country. Retrieved from <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/BX.TRF.PWKR.DT.GD.ZS?end=2018&locations=NP&start=1993>
- World Health Organization. (2007). Commission on Social Determinants of Health. World Health Organization. Retrieved from https://www.who.int/social_determinants/themes/civilsociety/en/

APPENDIX

1. Interview Guide (Translated to English)

The aim of this research is to study the the consequences of COVID-19 on food security amongst the poor, and the government's food security measures, and the media and NGOs response to these.

The aim of this interview is to understand the status of food security amongst the daily wage workers, in the phase of COVID-19

Daily Wage Workers

- Can you please tell me what you do for your living?
- Has COVID-19 affected your job? If yes, can you please tell me how?
- Have you and your family faced any difficulties accessing food because of COVID-19, If yes can you please tell me how?
- Have you been provided any kind of help from the government during these difficult times?

2. Q&A Session with youth activists working in NGOs to feed the poor in Kathmandu

The aim of this Q&A session is to understand the government's food security measures in the phase of COVID-19, and the media and NGOs response to these.

- What are your views regarding the government's food security measures in the phase of COVID-19?
- Do you have any suggestions for the Government of Nepal while dealing with situations like COVID-19?



Norges miljø- og biovitenskapelige universitet
Noregs miljø- og biovitenskapelige universitet
Norwegian University of Life Sciences

Postboks 5003
NO-1432 Ås
Norway