FROM THE PEAKS AND BACK: EXPLORING THE EDUCATIONAL JOURNEYS OF TRANS-HIMALAYAN STUDENTS IN KATHMANDU, NEPAL

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Abstract

In a rapidly modernizing Nepal where urbanization is on the rise, families in rural areas participate by sending their children to urban schools, vast distances from home. Children/youth who have migrated to Kathmandu from Trans-Himalayan regions of Nepal, who experience interconnected and multidimensional conditions of poverty are the focus of this study. The journey these students undertake to Kathmandu span thousands of kilometres and often results in long-term (multi-year) family separation. The children in this study who migrated were between the ages of 4-10 and did not return for several years, with very minimal and/or no contact with family during this period of family separation. This thesis explores and chronicles the journeys taken and rationales for such acute family migration experiences; educational integration of Himalayan students into boarding school residency in Kathmandu; and emotional articulations of return visits back to their remote villages.

Dedications

There are a number of people without whom I am greatly indebted for the completion of this thesis.

To my mother and father who have been my educators, mentors, and supporters for every single step of my life. They kept me motivated during the hardest times, and cheered me on during the successes. They told me to create my own life path and take each step with determination. It is their footsteps that have truly shaped my life, and will always continue to do so.

To my brother, grandparents, family, and friends who constantly encouraged me throughout the completion of this work. Thank you for listening, sharing your company, and for your constant and endless support.

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Chapter 1

Establishing Linkages Among: Development, Himalayan Youth Migration, Education, and Family Separation

> One English sponsor told my mom that she would bring me from Mustang to Kathmandu to study. My mother said yes. At that time I did not know she was trying to send me away from the divorce process she was facing with my father. I still remember that day. At that time I was 8 years old. It was morning and my mom and I started our journey. My mom carried my small brother on her back. We walked for 6 hours to another village. We then walked another day to another village. We were forced to stay there for two days due to weather problems. After one more day of walking, the English girl came and took me in a plane. After some time we arrived and stayed two days in Pokhara. When I reached in Pokhara we stayed in a hotel and I asked a lot about my mom but the tourist could not understand a word of what I was saying. I cried a lot so she gave me lots of food. I said I don't want it I want my mom, but she didn't understand. To try and calm me down she took me on a boat trip. I told her I will jump if you don't take me to my mom, but she didn't directly understand. She held my hand and said my mother will come. The next day the tourist said to get on the bus that she would take me to see my family. Once we got onto the bus I was very happy, but then she brought me to Kathmandu…. 3 months later I got admission to school.... I tried three times to run away and go back home…. I feel like my mom lied to me. She said in Kathmandu there was chocolate on the road and lots of toys, food, and new clothes. Also she said she will reach the next day to meet me. I didn't cry I even smiled and said bye to my mom and brother that day…. It has now been 5 years since I last saw my parents and family…. (Purnima, Upper Mustang/Upper Dolpa, age 17).

1.1 Rationale and Research Objectives

The rapid and continuous processes of urbanization throughout Nepal result in rural communities increasingly being forced to send their children to participate in a modernizing nation which often leads to major influxes of children migrating for schooling and employment opportunities (Basnet 2011; Shrestha, 1995). My research explores migration, education, and family separation. The children/youth I have worked with over the last five years have migrated to Kathmandu from Trans-Himalayan regions under interconnected and multidimensional conditions of poverty. How interconnected and multidimensional conditions are framed and conceptualized throughout my research draws predominantly from the work of Cohen (2010). Cohen, addressing rural poverty, states that poverty is often not presented as "a multifaceted

phenomenon with highly complex causes and consequences…. [Thus,] addressing the urgent needs of poor rural people requires appropriately targeted, context specific initiatives, which in turn require tools to assess the primary constraints that the poor face" (Cohen, 2010, p.888). Furthermore with respect to detailed, accurate, and context-specific poverty assessment, "participatory approaches are, arguably, the most effective means of understanding the nature of poverty in a given area…. priority is to help to create an enabling environment within which people can build the type of life that they choose" (p.889). When considering poverty as lacking basic needs Cohen acknowledges, "why not stop here, with human beings' most fundamental needs?.... Poor people have needs, but reducing people to just their needs robs them of their aspirations, dreams, ambitions, and skills – in short, of their ability to help themselves" (p. 890). Therefore, Cohen ties poverty not only to fundamental need but rather expands it to what he refers to as non-fundamental-needs. Non-fundamental-needs are often intangible conceptualizations such as aspirations, dreams, ambitions, skills, and gender equality that help to present the multi-dimensional and abstract nature of poverty, while trying to create enabling environment often necessary for contemporary rural poverty reduction. Thus the assessment of poverty in relation to my research takes into consideration these concerns by presenting poverty as multifaceted and complex by addressing how the participants from Himalayan regions conceptualize poverty themselves. More specifically, the participants in this study present poverty as multidimensional by raising factors such as emotional disconnect from family; a rural household's ability to cope and recover after exposure to natural, political and socioeconomic shocks such as the Maoist insurgency that started in 1996; and gender dynamics in relation to migration and educational decisions. The journeys my participants undertake to Kathmandu span thousands of kilometres and often result in long-term family separation. The particular

children/youth I worked with migrated between the ages of 4-10 and do not return in over a decade later with very minimal and/or no contact with family during this period of family separation. The question that is explored is, why do youth migrate from their Himalayan villages for education if it could potentially result in prolonged family separation?

My research builds upon the last five years I have been working in and/or with a number of organizations in Kathmandu, Nepal. I started my journey in youth community development in 2010 when I began teaching as a volunteer at a Himalayan orphanage-boarding school in Kathmandu. Working with this community made me aware that frequently the concerns of Himalayan students are amalgamated into larger national Nepalese discourses. In addition, often the voices of youth are marginalized in the public discourse; thus, working with youth I organized written submission/testimonies of young people to their local politicians to raise awareness pertaining to the issues they felt needed attention as students. This initiative grew to the capacity of some of the national newspapers publishing some of the submissions written by the students, and resulted in increased scholarship prospects for the students attending schools. In the subsequent 4 years (2011, 2012 and 2014) I spent summers in Nepal working on Community Development projects including supporting local administration and teaching needs at small community schools and orphanages for children and community supported retirement homes. To be clear, these development experiences were not 'charity' but rather working with particular communities I was able to join movements on the ground to help facilitate changes. For example, working in collaboration with a local NGO and a rehabilitation school for children and adults with mental and physical disabilities in Kathmandu, we were able to increase the leadership of the students at this school through curriculum changes that emphasizes the active participation of students though increased dialogue/communication between teachers and students. These changes were enacted in 2010 and continue to develop to date. In my recent four months of fieldwork in Nepal in 2014, I interned and volunteered in multiple contexts which

further builds upon access to and dissemination of youth voices in research contexts, as will be outlined in section 1.4. Overall, these experiences gave me the opportunity to engage in communities through multiple micro-to-macro interactions and community development initiatives, which simultaneously grounds my research through a community-based development lens. For the purposes of this study, I will be aligning with the conceptualization of community-based development and research from Stack-Cutler (2011) who describes community-based research (drawing from the work of Israel, Schulz, Parker, & Becker, 1998; Strand, 2003) as involving "(a) supporting collaborative partnerships in all phases of research, research, (b) integrating knowledge and action for mutual benefit for all partners, (c) promoting empowerment for those experiencing social inequalities, and (d) disseminating findings in a respectful and accessible language (p.39).

I choose to predominantly focus on the well-being of youth since youth studies internationally is a developing field, and a consideration of the in-depth engagement of the migration patterns of Himalayan youth has not been researched in-depth. Furthermore, research that has been conducted regarding youth is often done *on* youth rather than *with* youth, which often diminished the ability of providing youth the agency to engage with research that deems them as competent social actors. Regarding power dynamics in and across research, Bosco and Herman (2010) stress that "one can never assume that power relations among people in a group of apparently similar characteristics are equal" (p. 12). Thus, the methodological framework of my research engages in active consideration of power relations. To elaborate, O'Leary (2004) acknowledges that a methodology is "the framework associated with a particular set of paradigmatic assumptions that you will use to conduct your research. i.e. scientific method, ethnography, action research" (p. 85). Methods are defined as "the techniques you will use to collect data i.e. interviewing, surveying, participant observation" (p. 85). The methodological design of my research is methodologically predicated upon qualitative research that reflexively

considers my positionality as a researcher/community development practitioner in relation to my research participants, and engages in ethical practice through the use of qualitative methods such as semi-structured interviews, focus groups and participant observation. Thus, I have implemented my research methods in a way that tries to prevent the perpetuation of unequal power dynamics between my participants and myself while simultaneously encouraging active participation. Furthermore, regarding research methodology in relation to working with children and youth, Clare O'Kane (2000) strongly acknowledges that "research methodology concerns more than the tools selected! Attention to personal style and facilitation skills are essential for while the activities provide a source of data in themselves the dialogue around the activities provides the richer source of interpretation and meaning" (p. 151). Thus, O'Kane places an emphasis upon creating spaces that are dialogical since it adds another dimension to research, participation, and data collection. Similarly, Herbert (2010) illuminates the nuanced relationship among theory, data, and practice in qualitative research in relation to the social context of space and place. Additionally in relation to space and place, Jensen and Glasimer (2010) and Krog (2011) explore how the recognition of a researcher's positionality (such as my own self-identification as a development practitioner/researcher from the Global North), within/to a particular research initiative needs to be critically recognized in order to better understand the power dynamics between researchers and participants (p.85; p. 382).

Furthermore, apart from researchers'/participants' unequal power relations, 'power' issues can also be manifested in relation to the marginality of Himalayan youth concerns from 'mainstream' Nepalese concern(s). To elaborate, regarding the marginalization of Himalayan populations Rasali (2012) states that there has been "gross negligence on the part of the mainstream population in Nepal in handling the societal structure, its functions and the environment around it" (p. 55). Thus, there should be an increased realization of "change" in the society as a whole, and for creating an equitable space for marginalized [Himalayan]

populations that would otherwise be left out from the mainstream of socio-economic life" (p 55). Therefore, by emphasizing a more equitable space for Himalayan concerns raises issues around social economic life as Rasali (2012) considers above, as well as the creation of an ethical space that aligns with the marginalized that allows marginalized voices to enter 'our' discourses and research as Cannella and Lincoln (2011) and Krog (2011) acknowledges (p. 81; p 384).

Nevertheless, seeking better socio-economic conditions is a large contributing factor towards youth migrating for better education and/or work opportunities. Kollmiar (2011) illuminates education as being linked to rural youth migration since:

> education has emerged as an important push factor among those disillusioned with rural life and agricultural work. Even young people with only an intermediate education feel that there are better livelihood opportunities for them outside their villages and are reluctant to take up agricultural work" (p. 2).

In addition, from a development studies perspective when considering the relationship among education and remittances in relation to poverty Kollmiar (2011) acknowledges that "a recent World Bank study in Nepal showed that among remittance receiving households, the poorest households spent the highest proportion of their remittances on education" (p.3). These two interconnected statement explores a relationship among poverty, migration, remittance, and adults investing into children/youth education, but what this literature and literature in general does not adequately consider how Himalayan youth migrants are connected to their villages thorough the remittances they provide. Furthermore, the sparse literature that considers youth remitting to family back to Himalayan villages is often quantitative in nature without adequately exploring the emotional experience of the migrating youth. Thus, my qualitative research initiative considers the emotion experience of Himalayan youth in relation to poverty, remittances, and educational experiences while actively stressing the voices of the youth themselves as the opening account by Purnima reflects. However, before exploring the themes of

migration, family separation and education, it is important to contextualize my research by providing a socio-political, educational and cultural overview of Nepal and the Trans-Himalayan region since these dimensions all contribute to the educational aspirations and facilitation of migration patterns of Himalayan students.

1.2 Social and Educational Overview of Nepal and the Trans-Himalayan Regions

Demographics and Border Regulation

The total size of Nepal is 147, 181 sq. km and the estimated population of Nepal as of July 2014 is 30,986,975 (CIA World Factbook 2014). Of that population 31.6% comprises of children between the ages of 0-14 years, 22.6% comprises of children/youth between the age of 15 – 24, and the medium age in Nepal is 22.9 years (2014). Thus, from this statistic it is apparent that the population of Nepal is composed largely of children and youth.

Geographically, Nepal is landlocked in between China, and India (2014). More specifically in the context of my research Mustang, Mugu, Dolpa, Jumla, Manang and Humla regions are known as the Trans-Himalayan region since they are bordered by Tibet (with the exception of Humla which is not bordered by Tibet but has a large Tibetan population due to the close proximity and migration patterns between the two regions) from the far northeast to the central part of Nepal. These regions all geographically fall under the Mid-Western and Western development regions of Nepal (Fig 1.1). Gurung (2005) describes that regional development approach was formalized in 1972 during the ruling of King Bihendra and was a new strategy for integrated development projects across all sectors of society (p.6).

Figure 1.1 Development Regions of Nepal

In addition, considering the evolution of Nepal's international border regulation Nepal shares with China, India and Tibet further contributes to migration pattern in Nepal particularly the trans-Himalayan region. To elaborate, due to the extreme geographical conditions the Nepal-China boundary has a “complete absence of border check posts…. Most of the border check posts are located at a distance of more than one day's walk from the actual border on either side” (Kansakar 2001, p. 17). Kansakar (2001) further acknowledges that Nepal-Indian borders:

> is unique in the world in the sense that people of both the countries can cross it from any point, despite the existence of border check posts at several locations. The number of check posts meant for carrying out bilateral trade is 22. However, only at six transit points out of them, the movement was permitted to nationals of third countries, who require entry and exit visa to cross the border. As the whole length of the border except police does not patrol the check posts or paramilitary or military forces of either country, illegal movement of goods and people is a common feature on both sides of the India-Nepal border (p.3).

Open borders is presented as an ambivalent topic since, some perspectives such as Kansakar

(2001) consider how open borders facilitate the free movement of people, goods and capital as leading to economic and socio-cultural benefits for Nepal; however, other perspectives such as Laczo (2003) consider how open borders lead to the forced migration of children due to concerns such as trafficking. Nevertheless, participants acknowledged that since their villages are from the trans-Himalayan regions, because of the open borders with China some of their relatives often went to trade yaks and salt, which contributed to the economic sustenance of their household. Furthermore, many of the participants were supposed to study in Buddhist monasteries that are funded in India if they did not come to the boarding schools in Kathmandu through a social network. They also did reveal that recruitment as child soldiers did influence migration decisions, as will be considered in the next chapter. Also, historically there was an open border shared between Nepal and Tibet; however, due to political conditions in relation to China, the border is now monitored. Many participants acknowledged that on certain exceptions such as big festivals like Loshar (Tibetan New Year) the border remains open for the day for trade and celebration. Nevertheless, with the closure and increased regulation of this border Kansakar (2001) states, “after the complete control over Tibet by China, Nepal witnessed a large influx of about 16,000 Tibetan refugees” (p.6). My participants provide further insight into this migration phenomenon by acknowledging that the closure of the border divided their families and Tibetan cultural enclaves, disrupted local trade and led not only to an influx of people claiming refugee status but also a displacement of trans-Himalayan persons in Nepal. Another factor that led to a large number of internally displaced persons in Nepal was the ten-year Maoist insurgency that officially ended in 2006, as will now be considered more in-depth in relation to education.

Maoist Insurgency and Education

1996 marked a start of Maoist revolt that wanted to abolish the political system in rule, which dragged on until 2006 and resulted in the deaths of thousands with many children/youth being

recruited as child soldiers. To elaborate, Basnett (2009) states that “the year 1996 marked the launch of the ‘People’s War’ against the Nepali state. The impetus behind the war was to fundamentally alter the ‘historical relation of oppression’ in Nepal (p. 4). The way of altering the historical oppression as Hachhethu (2007) states would be from the political and ideological factor of the Maoist insurgency to “overthrow the present polity based on multiparty parliamentary democracy and constitutional monarchy through armed revolution and its replacement with a new political system known as new people's democracy” (p. 139). This civil unrest resulted in the death of 1600 hundred people including Maoist guerrillas, police, alleged informers of police, and innocent civilians, and unofficial documents believe that casualties go as high as 4000 lives (Tiwari 2001). However, these casualties are not only to be only pinned upon the Maoist officials as there were poor government decisions made by the Nepalese governing body from the state level. For example, as Tiwari (2001) acknowledges:

> since the start of insurgency in 1996, different governments of Nepal have treated the Maoist war as a ‘law and order’ problem. The government has sought to contain Maoists by means of police operations….The state has justified authoritarian policies in the name of suppressing the insurgency, but without addressing the basic inequalities that plague Nepali society. These police operations have applied the policy of "encircle and kill" a policy similar to China’s Chiang Kai-shek’s "extermination" of communists campaign in 1930s. In the process of this "encircle and kill" policy the police operation has in many places actually killed more innocent civilians than the guerrillas, a fact noted by several human rights organizations including the Amnesty International (p.3).

Furthermore, the remoteness of the Himalayan regions played a crucial role in the uprising of the Maoist insurgency. For one it “facilitated the, possibility of initiating and developing guerrilla wars in different parts of the country by taking peasant revolution as the backbone, by centralizing activities in the rural areas and by relying on and uniting with the poor peasants”

(Hachhethu 2008, p. 138). Thus, as Hachhethu (2008) further considers, the 'peoples war' was largely fuelled by factors such as poverty, unemployment, underdevelopment, exclusion, corruption, and bad governance, which largely oppressed rural populations. (p.139). When considering 'rural populations' more specifically, the social group of relevance for my research is rural youth.

The Militarization of Education

During the Maoist insurgency the Maoists recruited children and youth as combatants. Often there was a strong element of force since some media reports stated that "the Maoists have taken hostages, tortured 'scores of people' and have recruited children as combatants" (Obe, 2002, p.18). However, an important point that Obe (2002) raises about discourses such as media reports is that communication sources were fragmented and created a bias (p.18). This bias perpetuated a 'good'/'bad' binary between the Maoist and the government, whereas government actions themselves can be questionable and lack structure. Furthermore, the element of force of recruitment diminishes the phenomenon of children/youth that voluntarily chose to join armed forces. In relation to school and rural youth Tiwari (2001) acknowledges that:

> Close to 100,000 rural youths failing high school examination every year have neither a job nor a school to go where they could be kept busy. These unemployed youths, 15 to 18 years in age, are joining the ranks of armed guerrillas. The Maoists, however, have problems of providing arms to these willing recruits (p.4).

The economic environment and lack of youth social/educational mobility is only one facet of illuminating young people's involvement in radical movements. To elaborate Zharkevich (2013) states:

> The Maoist movement in Nepal was self-consciously pedagogical, even if it was pursuing a goal opposite to that of formal schooling, i.e. creating committed revolutionaries. Arguably, in the context of war, and with a lack of opportunities for social mobility, a

> guerrilla movement can attract young people as an alternative provision for learning and a vehicle for social mobility…. in the context of Nepal, where books remain scarce in many rural areas, these literacy practices were pivotal in the instilment and democratisation of the culture of reading and writing…. (p. 108).

Thus, what Zharkevic (2013) considers which Tiwari (2001) does not in-depth is, illuminating deeper structural links shared among rural poverty, civil unrest, and educational by presenting how the Maoist insurgency was conceived as being an educational alternative that many youth were attracted to especially in rural localities. Nevertheless, my research will explore the lived experience of some my youth participants who migrated away from their rural Himalayan villages as a way of escaping recruitment to partake in educational alternatives in the urban settings of Kathmandu in the following chapter.

Educational Overview

The formal primary and secondary education system before higher education in Nepal is divided into five levels: 1) pre-primary or early childhood education for those between three to four years of age; 2) primary education (Grade 1-5), which is attended by students between the ages of five to nine 3) lower secondary education (Grade 6-8) for 10- to 12-year-old students; 4) secondary education (Grade 9-10) for 13- and 14- year-olds; and 5) higher secondary education (Grade11-12) for fifteen- and sixteen- year-olds. Secondary education generally refers to Grades 6 -12, covering three distinct levels of education – lower secondary, secondary, and higher secondary education (UNESCO 2014).

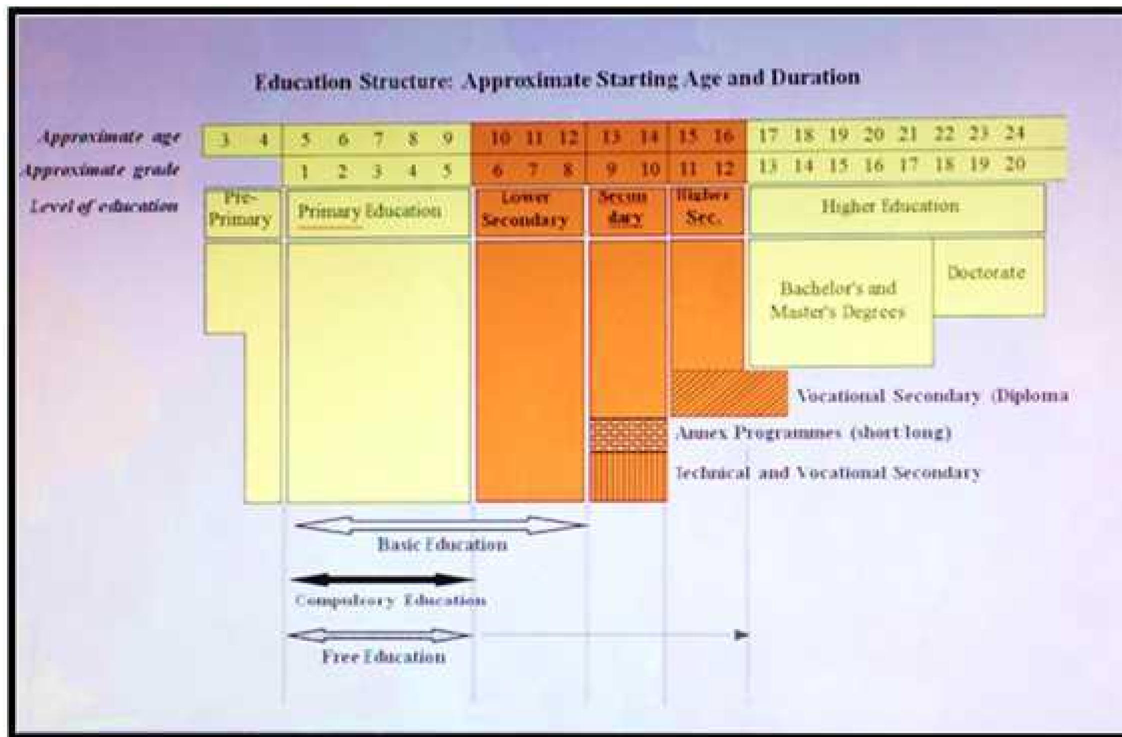

Figure 1.2 Educational Structure of Nepal (UNESCO)[1]

The Boarding school I volunteered at covers pre-primary education up to secondary education (class 10). Being involved in this school in the capacity of a volunteer teacher enabled me to observe the intersections of education, family separation, and Himalayan culture.

The historical development of the education system in Nepal is described by Mathema (2007) as being "one of the youngest in the world. In 1951 when Nepal emerged as a "new nation" after the fall of the Rana oligarchy, it had only 9,000 pupils in primary and 1,700 in secondary Schools….There was no university" (p.46). Since then, "primary school numbers grew significantly from around 400,000 in 1971 to 3.9 million in 2001. Over the same period, the combined numbers in lower secondary and secondary schools increased from 120,000 to 1.5

[1] Image retrieved from: "Secondary Education Regional Information Base: Country Profile – Nepal." (2008). *UNESCO Office in Bangkok*. 1-30.

million" (p.46). Nevertheless despite the increase in students over the years concerns of inequalities in relation to participation to education still remain. Regarding inequalities, Mathema (2007) states, "participation in school education is unequal across social, gender, regional, and income groups" (p. 48). These four factors will illuminate my research in which I will be exploring how concerns of social, gender, region, and income facilitate, pre-migratory educational experiences in rural Himalayan regions in Chapter Two, educational integration in Kathmandu in Chapter Three, and an exploration into the projected educational experience of my participants after visiting their villages after a prolong period of family separation in Chapters Four and Five.

1.3 Reconceptualizing Youth and Children's Geographies from a Nepalese Context

Social Construction of Childhood/Youth and Community Development Discourses

'Youth' itself is not a homogenized category; it is often conceptualized and constructed differently across time, space and cultures between the Global South and North or even within a country itself, like Nepal. For example, Ansell (2005) establishes how 'teenager' was a category created in the West in the 1950's, and later in time thorough globalizing forces such as the spread of magazines and media, was a concept imported into Nepal (p. 85). Some adults in Nepal consider "teenager" as a legitimate category whereas some, predominantly from villages in the Himalayas, do not recognize a transitioning stage between childhood and adulthood. In relation to development discourses, Ansell acknowledges that it is important to focus upon "the ways in which changes in development theory and practice have impacted on young people's lives …." (p. 2). Similarly, Jackimow (2013) suggests an increased need for more critical scrutiny in both development theory and practice. Jakimow further problematizes development by considering unequal power relationships between developers and "developees" (p. 21). For example, Jakimow draws upon the work of Pigg (1992) to illustrate how in Nepal the term "villager" has become a marked category in Nepal's national project of development which

postulates the village as a site of development and villagers have become "developees," which through the transformation in social identities resulted in a "politics of difference in the construction of a national society." (p. 23-24). Thus, by drawing upon this Nepalese example Jakimow illuminates how the relationship between a developer/developee is rooted in unequal power dynamics within Nepal's national project of community development since developers from a national level try to facilitate changes at the village level by characterizing villagers as 'developees.' Through this characterization, 'developees' (Nepalese villagers) are expected to make changes to better align with national development projects without the provisions of adequate spaces for the active input into development decision making processes by the villagers themselves. However, even though Ansell (2005) and Jackimow (2013) both problematize 'development,' it is done predominantly from a Western perspective with regards to ideas related to neo-liberal development and structural adjustment without adequately focusing upon how 'development' is conceptualized within Global South countries by Global South writers themselves.

The conceptualization of development from the perspective of a Nepalese writer, Shrestha (1995) acknowledges how development was a concept imported into Nepal through Western development projects. These projects introduced and conceptualized 'poverty' where it did not exist before since, prior to Western development discourses, 'poverty' was considered as being natural and tied to cultural ideas such as *karma* (p. 100). Shrestha further expresses how the framing of poverty through the juxtaposition of the word development and underdevelopment through Western development in Nepal essentially inscribed a definition upon the Nepalese communities they did not identify with, but nevertheless justified further development projects (p. 105). Furthermore, education began to be considered a key component essential to build human capital, but it created a tension in Nepal since many children was needed as labour in rural agriculture (p. 106). At the same time, Shrestha acknowledges that not all parents resented

"western education however since for the elites, the architects of national culture, modern education was the umbilical cord between themselves and the West. Since they cherished such linkage and wanted to be associated with *bikas* [civilized], educating in 'modern'[western] schools was very important to them" (p. 106). Therefore, with the hopes of potentially gaining social capital parents let their children migrate away from their villages to attend schools for prolonged periods of time. Thus, Shrestha (1995), similar to Ansell (2005) and Jakimow (2013), acknowledges how development influences educational experiences of youth through the consideration of how rural poverty and social capital help to better understand the migration patterns of Himalayan youth.

Nonetheless, Shrestha (1995) briefly mentions but does not substantively elaborate on how rural poverty, particularly within areas of the Himalaya, is measured and the subsequent influence it has upon gender dynamics, migration, and education. Regarding the conceptualization of measurements, Cohen (2010) considers that one way of measuring poverty is through the assessment of basic needs. These basic needs are: 1) food and nutrition security, 2) domestic water supply, 3) health and health care, 4) sanitation and hygiene, 5) housing, clothing, and energy, and, 6) education (p. 890). However according to Cohen, the basic needs approach is too basic to capture many context specific facets of poverty and thus four components were added to help gain a better understanding of contemporary rural poverty and poverty alleviation efforts. These four new additions were: 1) farm-assets, 2) non-farm assets, 3) exposure and resilience to shocks 4) gender and social equality (p. 891). Thus, these additions tied poverty not only to fundamental needs but rather expanded it to intangible conceptualizations such as, aspirations, dreams, ambitions and skills that illuminate the multi-dimensional and abstract nature of poverty.

In the context of my research, the sixth of the basic needs and the fourth of the additions to the basic needs can present an interesting dimension to ideas around education, development

and gender dynamics in Nepal. To elaborate, education measures – the quality of children's primary education, its availability, and children's access to it, and social equality measures the equality of access to education and health care for women and men, as well as equality across minority/ethnic groups (p. 890-891). Focusing on specific local Nepali contexts, such as the Himalayan regions of Nepal, can potentially problematize the universalistic promotion of a primary education as becoming a standard for measurement by considering how rural poverty restricts primary education in relation to phenomena such as family dynamics, culture, and political and economic structures. In addition, gender and social equality can be nuanced by considering the social dimension of age in relation to educational experience, which can further have an influence upon the migration pattern of youth. Nevertheless, since the basic needs approach is universalistic in nature, it does not adequately capture how geography influences the relationship among migration, education, and gender in the Himalayan regions of Nepal.

Gender and Education

When considering the relationship between geography and gender dynamics, Duberman and Azimi (1975) acknowledge that across Nepal in its entirety patriarchy influences the experiences of women and girls such as their access to educational opportunities (p. 1010). They explore that patriarchy influences women since Nepal is a "highly traditional and non-industrialized society [in which] membership in such categories as caste, occupation, and education serves as a more powerful determinant of sexism than sex itself, although shared norms and powerful differentials are also cooperative in maintaining social order. Findings suggest that social order is dependent upon shared norms and on an unequal distribution of power" (p. 1013). However, something that is important to keep in mind is that Duberman and Aziz's reading was written in November 1975. Thus, even though patriarchy is still prevalent in Nepal, a number of changes over the years has influenced gender dynamics and subsequently education. Tiwari (2006) explores the value of sons and daughters among the Gurungs in Nepal. The Gurungs belong to the Tibeto-

Burman groups of the Himalayans (p. 5). Unlike, Duberman and Aziz (1975) who present patriarchy as a fairly homogenous system in Nepal, Tiwari (2006) illuminate how the Gurungs try to place an equal as possible a value upon sons and daughters, whereas many of the families are considered as incomplete with a daughter (p. 4). Nevertheless, there is still more emphasis placed upon the value of sons since sons are expected to help socio-economically provide for their parents as they age, whereas daughters take care of their husband's parents (p. 6). The emphasis placed on sons to provide socio-economic capital for their parents is one of the major reasons why sons engage in migration away from their villages to study (p.7). For example, a 2005 survey reflected that the illiteracy percentage between Gurung males/females was 37% for males and 65% for females (p. 5). Nonetheless, something that Tiwari (2006) does not consider is the differences between rural and urban education systems and how systemic factors perpetuate unequal gender dynamics.

Rural and Urban Education in Relation to Gender Dynamics

When considering the difference between rural and urban education systems, Suzuki (2006), explores the strengths and weaknesses of multigrade settings in rural areas of Nepal. Multigrade settings refer to classrooms in which there are students who are heterogeneous in age. Due to the large population of Nepal in which a large section of the population comprises children and a lack of economic resources multigrade schools are prevalent all across the entire country, but more so in areas such as the Himalayas (p. 250). Nevertheless, Suzuki's consideration that even though sometimes multigrade teaching is conceptualized by the Global North as a challenge to learning, in some parts of the world like Nepal, "teaching in multigraded settings embrace it as the pedagogy of choice, offering equivalent, and sometimes superior, learning opportunities" (p. 243). At the same time, regardless of the structure of the educational system, often unequal gender representations are perpetuated systemically. For example, Rothchild (2006) considers that the school as an institution and in addition the institutionalization processes that occurs

within an institution itself, such as the teaching of gender-based curriculum, perpetuates gender norms around masculinity and femininity, which in turns influences a student's schooling experience and transitions into work (p. 117). In addition, when considering gender inequality Rothschild considers how the context of gender inequality in education is also reflected in the country's legal, political, economic, and family institutions that are predicated upon cultural and religious beliefs that maintain similar attitudes about gender. For example, when considering gender in relation to education and citizenship, Laczo (2010) acknowledges that often the process for gaining legal citizenship "is relatively straightforward for a young man, it is not so for a woman, whose application must [often] be supported by either her father or her husband" (p. 78). Furthermore, considering the relationship between citizenship and education, Laczo states that :

> current widespread lack of access to citizenship limits their options in every aspect of life, be it access to education, health services, or freedom of movement. In rural areas of Nepal, it is the norm for people to have limited information about their legal rights to citizenship, and little understanding of how citizenship could contribute to their independence and empowerment (p. 80).

Thus, when youth migrate away from their villages the ones who do not have legal proof of their citizenship often acquire precarious status which subsequently results in extremely limited opportunities for education. Furthermore as Rychmans (2007) explores, because of precarious status and limited pathways to citizenship and limited school and work opportunities, many youth end up turning to the streets while feeling a deep sense of guilt for not being able to actively contribute to the upward socio-economic mobility of their parents (p. 30). Rychmans explores the interviews of 430 street youth (3 female participants) between the ages of 8-26 (p. 23). His book considers the complex reasons why youth left their remote villages, how and why family separation occurred, challenges living on the street, aspirations, and the intersection of

education and work in their lives. My research builds upon the gap that Rychmans and others mentioned, especially with regard to the prolonged family separation of Himalayan youth, insights about boarding school experiences, and more active voices and participation of youth themselves within research.

Structure and Agency among Himalayan Youth: Invoking Youth as Subjects

I am interested in the access and dissemination of voice in my research as it relates to concerns such as researcher/participant power dynamics within educational structures; thus, the sociological conceptualization of agency and structure will guide my research. The general conceptualization of agency and structure used throughout my research will come from four main sources. The first source is the book *Cultural Studies: Theory and Practice*, which describes agency and structure as "agency is the capacity of individuals to act independently and to make their own free choice, structure is the recurrent patterned arrangements which influence or limit the choices and opportunities available" (Barker 126). This definition is easy to comprehend, and captures the ideational phenomena that influence agency and explains how structure(s) restricts agency. However, what is problematic about this simplistic definition is that it presents structure and agency dichotomously. Presenting structure and agency as a binary is problematic because it can potentially present agency *and* structure as agency *versus* structure. Thus, the problem with agency versus structure is that it does not illustrate ways, particularly in the context of my research, how youth voices/expressions can work in collaboration with structures like the boarding school the participants reside in to help negotiate changes. For example, changes such as suggestions made by my participants to help facilitate more positive boarding-school experiences as will be considered more in-depth in Chapter Three. A more comprehensive definition of structure and agency that does not present these two concepts as a dichotomy is found in the reading "Migration and Development: A Theoretical Perspective," by Hein de Hass. De Hass (2010) considers a nuanced relationship between structure and agency by

proposing how structures both enable and constrain agency, and how agency sometimes reproduces structures and on other occasions is able to change structures (p. 242). Furthermore, regarding structure and agency in relation to development and education, De Hass draws upon Sen's capability approach by considering development as the process of expanding the substantive freedoms that people enjoy by promoting expenditure in areas such as education, which can result in the recognition of individual agency (250).

Ideas proposed by De Hass can further relate to structure and agency and development discourses as explored in *Human Development and Social Power: perspectives from South Asia* by Ananya Mukerjee-Reed. When considering human development and discourses in relation to structure and agency, Mukerjee-Reed (2008) suggests the need for examining four interrelated elements of structure determined at four different levels. These levels are the global political economy: division of labour; material production and reproduction; the state: decision making process; the local community: norms/culture/values; and the family: ownership of knowledge/information (Mukerjee-Reed 128-129). From these four levels, Mukerjee-Reed presents how agency and structure are manifested on a progression from a macro-to-micro level while simultaneously illuminating individual agency not as an isolated entity but rather as it intersects with different layers and levels of structures. Furthermore, considering structure and agency with a focus upon social groups within a society, Mukerjee-Reed considers how social groups can be constituted by categories such as race, ethnicity, caste, and gender. Mukerjee-Reed further considers how the unequal power relationships shared between and among these groups perpetuates structural inequality and suggests that reducing or overcoming structural inequalities requires reconfiguration of the matrices of social power (25). The social group relevant to this research are (Himalayan) children/youth. Lam, Chi-Ming (2012) argues that institutions like schools influence the agency of children but also, the structure of childhood as social construction that perpetuates stereotypical, misrepresented, and universalized images of this

social group (Lam147). Lam further states, "justice can be restored to children through reconstructing the concept of childhood, stressing the importance of establishing a coherent public policy on promotion of agency in children and also the importance of empowering them to participate actively in education" (Lam 147).Therefore, the deconstruction and reconstruction of childhood to address unequal power dynamics supports Mukerjee-Reed's point above regarding the reconfiguration of the matrices of social power to consider structural inequalities that has an influence upon the agency of individuals, which subsequently influences the educational experiences of Himalayan youth.

Children's Geographies

The literature above has thematically explored the social construction of childhood/youth in a Nepalese community development context; gender and education; rural and urban education; and structure and agency among Himalayan youth in research and educational settings. To help create a coherent link among these themes to better contextualize migration, family separation, and educational experiences of my Himalayan youth participants, multiple sources engaging with the sub-field of children's geographies will be implemented throughout the succeeding chapters. For example, Horton et. al. (2008) creates a link between the Children's Geographies literature and the social constructions of childhood by acknowledging that scholars who unite about concerns with the social construction of childhood have often (perhaps implicitly) been concerned to uncover how discourses/representations of temporality can be of constitutive and political importance in contemporary societies and childhood…." (p. 342). The social dimension of time is important for my research since it will help to contextualize how participants articulate emotions and understanding of their family separation. In addition, Gill (2003) intersects the social dimension of time with the social dimension of space by exploring how the space of "childhood and adulthood is very difficult to define. Notably, it is blurred by the ambiguous [time] period of 'youth." The processes through which we make the transition from being

regarded as children to adults are therefore complex and fluid. (p.48). Thus, Skelton (2008) reiterates that "childhood is a social construct and consequently childhoods change over time and space" (p. 24). This time-space intersection will be revisited in Chapter Two and explored deeper in Chapter Four when youth narratives will revolve around participants who return to theirvillage after a prolonged period of family separation.

Holloway (2014) describes the sub-discipline of children's geographies "as an intellectual field [that] has not developed from a singular source, or in a linear fashion, but rather has involved multiple paths…" (p. 377). Furthermore, Horton et. al. (2008) challenge researchers to "articulate the ways in which…. work within the sub discipline of 'Children's Geographies' should be considered challenging in relation to broader contemporary contexts, such as Human Geography, Social Sciences and the New Social Studies of Childhood" (p. 337). Thus, one way the boundaries of Children's Geographies can be expanded which Holloway (2008) considers is by placing more emphasis upon Global South contexts in addition to increased interdisciplinary collaboration (p. 378). My research expands the boundaries of children's geographies by focusing upon the lives of Himalayan youth while drawing upon material from multiple disciplines/sub-disciplines including but not limited to, Children and Youth Studies, Sociology, Development Studies and other Children's Geography scholars. Furthermore, similar to Lam (2012) who stresses the agency of children and youth to actively participate actively in education, Horton et. al (2008) argue that "Children's Geographers could and should contribute understandings of (young) learners' own concerns and life worlds, to support the development of curricula and (especially active learning) activities which are more effectively and engagingly learning-centred" (p. 343). Similarly, in the context of research Holoway (2014) argues that children's and youth voices "have something valuable to add to debates about their lives and we need to continue to insist on the importance of listening to them, even (perhaps especially) where their views challenge conventional academic and activist wisdom" (p. 382). Thus, the following

chapters will continue to bridge the realm of education and research by drawing upon different facets of children's geographies while constantly expressing the testimonies of my youth participants to construct them as competent social actors within educational spaces, research spaces, and their own lived experiences.

1.4 Participants and Research Phases

All of the participants in this study are previously known to me through my NGO experience In Nepal dating from April 2010 to the present. I am aware that working with known participants ensures a level of familiarity but at the same time may potentially lead me to make common assumptions pertaining to their lives. Thus, I constantly engage in critical reflexivity in order to address researcher bias in my research. Funder (2005) acknowledges that relexivity and a reflexive process would "benefit from.… dedicated efforts to engage other actors' perceptions of the researchers' biases and interpretations" (p. 7).Thus, the active engagment of social actors/research participants helps to facilatate a space for participation and dialogue in which indivuduals can address potential misrepresentations and common assumptions directly. Nevertheless, often there is a lack of active Himalyan participation in recearch due to concerns of marginalization in Nepal. Due to the marginalization of Himilayan peoples, "the inequalities in different sectors and regions and neglect of the periphery contributed to the dissatisfaction among the rural people, especially the youth" (Lawoti 2007). Keeping this point in mind about marginalization of Himalayan people with an attention placed on youth, Krog (2011) acknowledges that "we have to find ways in which the marginalized can enter our discourses' in their own genres on their own terms so that we can learn to hear them.... we have a duty to listen and understand them through engaging in new acts of becoming" (p. 384). Thus, a new act of becoming involves recognizing my positionality and associated power dynamics, and engaging in research/research methods that promote the participation of research participants. This will be considered in more depth in relation to the phases and the methods I employed.

Research Participants

In Nepal I worked with 15 male Himalayan youth between the ages of 16 - 21; 7 female Himalayan youth between the ages of 16 - 21; 3 male non-Himalayan participants between the ages of 17-25 who are from the city (Kathmandu); 2 female non-Himalayan participants between the ages of 18 -25 who are from the city (Kathmandu); 2 parents (who are residing in urban and/or semi-urban areas; 3 Nepalese teachers (2 males/1 female); 3 Nepalese NGO workers (2 males/1 female) who do work predominantly in the education sector; and 4 international NGO workers working in Nepal (2 males/2 females) who do work predominantly in the education sector. As a side note, for the purposes of this study, "male" and "female" are often used over categorizations such as "boy" and "girl" because of the ambiguous space between childhood and adulthood. On occasion, when talking with participants, when I would refer to them as a "boy" or "girl" there was some discontent. Some of the participants felt that due to the social construction of childhood, being referred to as a 'boy' or 'girl' infantilized them, especially given the fact that many of the participants felt that they were taking on 'adult' responsibilities throughout their lives as a result of being physically separated from their families. As my research is predicated upon recognizing and challenging adult/child power dynamics the term "youth" is commonly used as a substitution for 'children' as it helps to provide more flexibility with regards to 'age.'

Starting from the West of Nepal to the East (fig 1.1 above) I worked with students from. Humla, Jumla, Dolpa, Mustang, Mugu, and Manang. Furthermore, Dolpa, Mustang and Mugu are geographically divided into a lower and an upper part in which the upper parts associate more with Buddhism and the lower parts associate with Hinduism. More specifically, I worked with 3 participants from Humla (2 males/1female); 4 participants from Mustang from which 2 participants (1 male/1female) are from Upper Mustang and 2 Participants (2 males) are from Lower Mustang; 10 participants from Dolpa from which 4 participants (2 males/2 females) are

from upper Dolpa and 6 participants are from lower Dolpa (4 males/2 females); 1 male participant from Mugu; 1 male participant from Manag, and 2 participants (1 male/1 female) from mixed Himalayan backgrounds: 1 male from a Humla-Jumla background and 1 female from a Upper Dolpa-Upper Mustang background. Later, I will illuminate regional specificity of the Himalayas in relation to educational concerns as will be considered more in-depth in the subsequent chapters of my thesis.

Research Phases and Methods

My research initiative has three interconnected phases. Each phase helps to contextualize different facets of my research predominantly in relation to education, migration, and family separation, which further helps to express my experiences of engaging in fieldwork through a community development lens. Regarding fieldwork, one point that Hyndman (2001) acknowledges in relation to critically exploring fieldwork experiences and knowledge is "that field experience does not automatically authorize knowledge, but rather allows us to generate analyses and tell specific kinds of stories" (p. 262). Thus, having the three phases within my research is a way for me to gain access to multiple stories from a wide variety of social actors.

In the first phase that took place over my four months in Nepal, I engaged in a multi-sited and/or multi-local ethnographic approach by familiarizing myself with Nepal's culture, structures, and customs from interning and/or volunteering at multiple different placements throughout Kathmandu. Furthermore, by drawing from multiple authors, Watson and Till (2010) acknowledge that multi-sited ethnographic projects within the field of geography "analyze the forms and effects of: globalization through networks and locales; the multiple space-times of consumption and production; tourism and whiteness; nature-society relations; transnational citizenship; and movements of peoples, including refugees and expatriates, across territories" (p. 124). All of these different facets of multi-sited ethnography that Watson and Till consider interlock with my research; for example, movements of people relates to the migration

patterns/journeys of Himalayan youth; transnational citizenship relates to Himalayan children who have a hard time integrating into education systems resulting from lacking access to citizenship documents; and globalization through networks and locales relates to concerns of family separation and reunification of my Himalayan participants. These links were further illuminated through the four site placements I participated in, predominantly in the field of education.

The first research site was with a local non-profit Nepalese organization at a rehabilitation school for children and adults with physical and mental disabilities. At this site I engaged in teacher training workshops; raising funds for wheelchairs and other necessary equipment for the students at the school; arranging cultural events for the students; and took part in community activities that raised awareness about how stigma around disabilities in Nepal negatively influences the access and educational experiences of students with disabilities.

The second research site was with an Australian non-profit organization that had three care homes for both Himalayan and non-Himalayan children/youth. The first care home specializes in assisting 30 Himalayan students ranging from the age of 15 -20 with school-to-higher studies and school-to-work transition. The second care home assists ten children (from one to ten years old) with disabilities in which the parents are no longer able to provide for them.[1] The third home has 30 children/youth (one to twenty years old) of both Himalayan and non-Himalayan backgrounds who have been rescued from vulnerable situations such as being born in jails, taken out of abusive situations, or rescued off the street. Nevertheless, vulnerability and age often prevent youth from engaging in research since they construct them of being incompetent of doing so. Thus, by engaging in research methods that emphasises participation Aldridge (2014) acknowledges that " participatory research methods places both the narratives and the rights of

[1] Children with disabilities (mental/physical) are sent from remote villages to study in schools in Kathmandu. However, disability in Nepal is a complicated topic especially in remote regions as there is not adequate care, resources, or alternative education options for those with disabilities. Often children with disabilities are treated as 'able'-bodied children despite potential challenges they may face.

participants centre stage in research agendas and processes by enabling then to speak or 'tell' their stories in their own way" (p. 116). The recognition and ethical incorporation of youth voices helps to facilitate both a meaningful and emancipatory space for them in research.

The third site was assisting a UK for-profit company that organizes volunteering opportunities in many different societal sectors internationally. As a volunteer educational coordinator, my primary role was to act as a liaison between incoming international volunteers and different educational placements throughout Nepal. Thus, working with this for-profit organization, in addition to the local Nepalese NGO and International Australian NGO from a development studies perspective, enabled me to better understand and experience how national and international politics, globalization, and westernization influence education among youth in Kathmandu, both positively and negatively.

The fourth site placement was volunteering at a Himalayan boarding/orphanage school I have been working actively with over the last five years. My primary role was teaching English, History, Science, Health Studies, Environmental Studies, Geography, Math, and Social Studies. In addition I organized many events such as a talent show, sports coaching, tutor sessions, a health and hygiene workshop, a medical camp, and a physiotherapy camp. This placement played an active role in exposing me to Himalayan culture and often gave me the opportunity to actively participate in it.

In phase two of my research which occurred two months into my four-month fieldwork stay in Nepal, I conducted semi-structured interviews and focus groups with Himalayan and non-Himalayan youth. Himalayan youth participants engaged in a series of one-on-one semi-structured interviews consisting of a set of open-ended questions (Appendix A). The interviews were dialogical, fluid, and ranged from one hour to four hours in length. Discussions revolved around a range of topic with a focus on migration, education, family separation and transnationalism. The strength of using interviewing as a research method as acknowledged in

McDowell (2010) is the ability to "probe an issue in depth: the purpose is to explore and understand actions within specific settings, to examine human relationships and discover as much as possible about why people feel or act in the ways they do" (p.158). Thus, using interviewing as one of my methods enables me to delve into ideas around migration, education, and family separation with my participants. However, one potential drawback to interviewing as McDowell considers is:

> rather than being a transparent, straightforward exchange of information, the interview is a complex and contested social encounter riven with power relations. To a large degree, the social researcher is a supplicant, dependent upon the cooperation of interviewees, who must both agree to participate and feel willing and able to share with the interviewer the sorts of information on which the success of the work will depend (p. 161).

On occasion, participants did present socially desirable answers by trying to engage in a fixed discussion in which they wanted me to ask a series of questions followed by a series of answers they provided that they thought I wanted to hear. However, continuous reminder that the space created was one for open, respectable, and comfortable conversation from which they could also withdraw at any given moment created a space which the participants ultimately enjoyed. Additionally, many of my participants expressed and critically recognized that they were not often provided with such emancipatory spaces throughout their lives. Thus, to further help mediate unequal power dynamics between researchers/research participants I chose to engage in focus-groups sessions which further expanded and/or created a space for increased dialogue and participation not just with me, but with/among other youth participants as well.

I engaged in three one-hour focus group sessions. The first focus group was held with a 17-year-old male youth from Manang and a 16-year-old male youth from Lower Dolpa. The second session was held with four Himalayan females (two 16-year-old youth from Lower Dolpa; a 17-year-old youth from Upper Mustang; and a 17-year-old youth from a mixed

background of Upper Dolpa and Upper Mustang). The last focus group session was held with two non-Himalayan male youth (a 17- and a 19-year-old from Kathmandu) and 2 Himalayan male youth (an 18-year-old from lower dolpa and an 18-year-old from Upper Dolpa). The Himalayan male focus group session focused on a comparative analysis of rural and urban educational experiences by drawing from their lived educational and migration experiences. The female focus groups session focused on issues of gender discrimination in education systems (both in rural and urban systems) historically and contemporarily. The final focus group with the mix of Himalayan and non-Himalayan participants helped to illuminate educational experiences Himalayan and non-Himalayan youth share and do not share, and also how they constructed the identity of the "other." Furthermore, I chose to use focus groups because, as Bosco and Herman (2010) allude to, within focus groups, "conversations (between researchers and participants, between participants themselves)…. permit placing more abstract research questions in different social contexts and, in some cases, even in the context of struggles for social change" (P. 207). Thus, focus groups is a method that acts as a bridge between research participants and researchers and can also potentially bridge research to social problems directly in a collaborative manner.

The third and final phase of my research was a multi-sited initiative which involved multiple site visits to Boudahnath Stupa and four site visits outside of Kathmandu. These site visits included 50 site visits to Boudah over a four-month period (in Kathmandu); three visits to Bhaktapur (one hour outside of Kathmandu); and one visit to Pokhara (eight hours outside of Kathmandu). Boudahnath Stupa is a "large Tibetan Buddhist monument that is both a UNESCO [United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization] world heritage site and a destination for Buddhist pilgrims from all over South Asia, is surrounded by affluent Tibetan monasteries [and] tourist shops…" (O'Neill, 2005, p. 281). The participants in this Study, regardless of being of Buddhist or Hindu backgrounds, chose Boudahnath Stupa as an

ideal place to conduct interviews. Boudahnath Stupa was a location that was easily accessible to public transportation and was often an area less busy than other areas around the city. Furthermore the many rooftop restaurants provided a space of privacy, openness, and tranquility for interviews to take place (fig 1.3 and 1.4).

Furthermore, as Boudahnath Stupa was a 15-minute walk from where I resided I was often invited by my participants to engage in cultural events and activities like the observance of

Fig. 1.3 Bird's eye view of Boudahnath Stupa

Fig 1.4 Buddhist Monk offering prayers

festivals; they traced back alleys and ethnic enclaves in the area that they remember visiting on their first ever visit in Kathmandu; and on many occasions let me try different cultural foods. Interestingly, the more visits to boudah the more the participants saw me as an 'insider' to Tibetan and Nepalese culture. One participant even gave me a traditional Nepalese cap to wear during many of the visits and even tried to encourage me into shaving my head and wear Monk clothing to engage even more deeply with the community.

My first visit to Bhaktapur with a mixed group of both Himalayan and non-Himalayan male students including a 17-year-old Newari native form Bhaktapur; a 17-year-old born in Kathmandu; a 16-year-old student from Lower Mugu (who has distant relatives residing there); an 18-year-old from Lower Dolpa; and a 17-year-old form Upper Dolpa and a 17-year-old from Humla who never visited Bhaktapur prior to our visits. During the visit we spent an ample

amount of time travelling around the city and observing the cultural differences between Kathmandu and Bhaktapur.

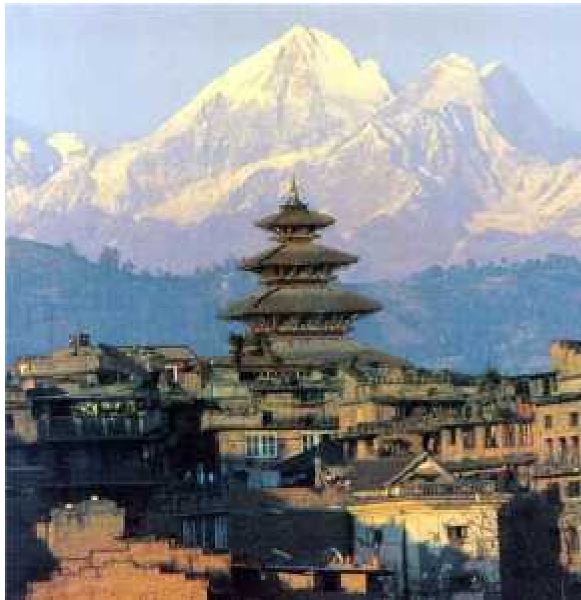

Fig 1.5 Bhaktapur

Fig. 1.6 Bhaktapur Durbar Square

Gautam (2014) acknowledges, "Bhaktapur being the culturally most preserved city in Nepal… is regarded to be the 'city of Devotees' … where more than 95% of peoples are Newars (p. 8-9). Gellner (1986) establishes that "the Neawars are the [original] indigenous inhabitants of the Kathmandu Valleys…" (p. 103). In addition, Charpentier (1973) argues that Newar society is divided into a Hindu and Buddhist section (p. 74). However, as Gellner further establishes, Newars do not " have a strong identity that excludes either Buddhism or Hinduism: they take part in the festivals and frequent the shrine of both religions.... the particular amalgam being determined by the tradition of each family's caste and locality" (p. 106). This amalgamation of cross-cultural experiences will be explored in Chapter Three in relation to the relatives of the participant from Lower Mugu choosing to live in Bhaktapur as opposed to Kathmandu. Over lunch with the group of research participants in Bhaktapur we engaged in rich discussions about how our experiences in Bhaktapur were similar and/or different to cultural experiences from our own personal lives. As the participants were fully aware of the fact that my thesis was largely

focused upon education they suggested a second visit to Bhaktapur to generally observe some potential similarities and differences between schooling in Bhaktapur and Kathmandu. My second and third trip to Bhaktapur were with the same participants as before in addition to a local educational NGO worker. Some of the general differences in education systems raised by the participants and NGO worker colleague in Bhaktapur were lower concentrations of schools in these areas compared to Kathmandu; Newari cultural programs often built into the curriculum of schools in Bhaktapur; and often increased migration of students from Bhaktapur to Kathmandu due to frequent water shortages, as Gautam (2014) further explores.

Lastly, my trip to Pokhara was with a 19-year-old Lhundup from Upper Mustang. This trip was unique since he asked if I wanted to see some of the locations in Pokhara that were emotionally significant to him in relation to his migration journey to Kathmandu when he was seven years old. Pokhara is the second largest city in Nepal and is situated at an altitude of 827m from sea level and 200km from Kathmandu Valley (Pokhara City, 2014). Furthermore, "Pokhara is part of a once vibrant trade route extending between India and Tibet. To this day, mule trains can be seen camped on the outskirts of the town, bringing goods to trade from remote regions of the Himalaya" (Pokhara City, 2014). Lhundup took along some of these trade routes and let me visit a Mustangie ethnic enclave where we spent nights in the hotel he stayed at during his migration from Mustang. We also explored some of the historical and religions sites of Pokhara where he remembered he went too to offer prayers for his family in Mustang (Fig 1.6 and 1.7).

Figure 1.7 Pokhara City

Figure 1.8 World Peace Pagoda (Buddhist Shrine)

In short, all the interactions with all participants were extremely useful in illuminating the lives, concerns, and experiences of Himalayan youth in relation to migration, education and family separation. However, since this research is predicated upon methodologically creating a space that stresses Himalayan youth voices, narratives of Himalayan youth will be the primary focus throughout the following chapters. I did also engaged in either participant observations and/or brief semi-structured interviews with other social actor groups such as parents, teachers, and NGO workers to help substantiate this study.

Data Analysis

With regards to data analysis, Youth Studies scholars such as Greig et. al. (2007) acknowledge that "the required unit of analysis includes both the individuals and the culturally defined environment which is grounded in a set of assumptions about roles, goals and means used by the participants in the activity setting" (p. 69). These Youth Studies scholars further acknowledge through the use of a grounded theory approach "in qualitative research, data analysis may involve defining categories, employing varying levels of content analysis, coding and so on" (p.88). Thus, these scholars illuminate the need to analyze data from different units of analysis ranging from the micro perspective of individual perspectives to a more macro cultural perspective, which can be mediated through inductive processes of analysis such as grounded theory. Therefore, in my analysis of findings I tried to engage in a collaborative process of analysis like collaborative coding with research participants. For example, regarding collaborative coding Charmaz (2006) states "in team research, several individuals may code data separately and then compare and combine their different coding" (48). Thus, from this initial phase of coding together with my participants we identified some prevalent themes which helped to facilitate a phase of focused coding and further analysis of the data for my research. Transcriptions for just Himalayan participants alone came to approximately 63 300 words which
equated to 115 single-spaced type pages. Upon the completion of my final thesis, I will provide a

copy of the transcriptions and the findings of the study to participants either verbally, in a form of written text, or ideally one day in person face-to-face. I believe this is important since the production of my thesis is an intellectual co-production that my participants have actively engaged in through sharing their emotional experience and investing their time. Furthermore, sharing my research with them will continue to build a relationship based on trust and reciprocity.

Overview of Chapters

The following three chapters trace different migration and educational experiences pertaining to the lives of my Himalayan youth participants. Chapter Two will explore pre-migration and migration journeys. This chapter will provide insight into the lifestyles of the participants while residing in their remote villages; the multiplicity of migration decisions; and the physical and emotional journeys to Kathmandu. Chapter Three will explore the educational and cultural experiences of students in Kathmandu. This chapter will provide insight into articulations of 'home' and homesickness and analysis of youths' positive and negative experiences of residing in boarding schools. Chapter Four will explore the (re)integration of students in home villages who had the opportunity to visit their villages after prolonged period(s) of family separation. This chapter will provide insight into how participants identify with their villages leading up to and upon return. This thesis will end with, first, problematizing the dominant ways that education is characterized and the ways in which these migration stories unsettle this prevailing discourse in research and beyond. Secondly, it will conclude with chronicling the future life projections that participants project for themselves and my plans for reciprocating the research findings with participants.

Chapter 2

Pre-migration and Migration Journeys

> To get to that school we have to cross far distance from our home, sometimes two hours in the morning to get there and two hours in the evening to get back, in dense forests by ourselves. We also have to do much work at home like heard our cows, goat, sheep…We have to get up at 5am to cut grass for them to feed and we move around region to region for long periods of time to graze them (Garkan, age 16, Mugu).

> It was so peaceful lying in the fields for hours and stare at the hills and trees around me while the goats ate. Things changed a lot once the Maoists came. My parents were in constant fear that they would take me, so they sent me to Kathmandu to study and be safe (Wangdak, age 17, Lower Mustang).

The participants in my study shared multiple reasons for migration to Kathmandu. The first section of this chapter will begin by reflecting upon some of the factors and reasons by exploring irregular schooling experiences of participants in rural Himalayan villages in relation to agricultural and domestic concerns and the rise of the Maoist insurgency. The second section will trace some of the migration journeys of participants by presenting what they recall through their memories in relation to their emotions.

2.1 Pre-Migration Educational Conditions and Migration Decisions

Of my 22 youth participants 13 never attended school during their time in the village. One student attended school for a month before deciding he did not like school and left. One student was expelled in preschool for not attending classes regularly. Three students attended one to two times a week until they migrated to Kathmandu. Four students did have 'regular' schooling experiences (attended a minimum of four of six school days per week).[1] Of those four students the first attended two years of primary schooling (class one and class two) before he migrated from lower Mustang; the second student from Upper Dolpa attended a boarding school in the headquarters of Dolpa (Dunai) for three years (primary class one to three); the third attended a government-funded school for four years (primary class one to four) before she migrated from

[1] Throughout Nepal a school and working week is from Sunday to Friday.

Upper Mustang; and the fourth student attended school for five years (primary class one to five) before he migrated from Lower Mugu. However, all four of these students were put into lower grades once they came to Kathmandu as will be considered more in depth in Chapter Four in relation to structural differences between rural and urban education systems.

Nevertheless, all participants, regardless of attending school or not, expressed that one of their top priorities was engagement in agricultural activities such as the herding of livestock and domestic activities such as caring for younger siblings, cooking, and cleaning. The particular agricultural and domestic activities children/youth engaged in differ across geographical regions of the Himalaya; however, the emphasis placed upon the communal participation of all members in a household as being crucial to the daily survival of the family was a common feature across livelihood experiences of the participants. For example, Jampa, reminiscing upon his herding lifestyle stated:

> We mixed the cows, goats and sheep among three homes in the village and from each house one member should be present. Then we go to another place for grazing. Sometimes we travel one day away, and we spend the night there. Other times we spend four or five months away from village since we stay in a particular place for about a month until the grass is finished, then we move to another where there is good grass and water. The small children like me use[d] to take care of the small animals…. (Jampa, 20, Upper Dolpa).

Furthermore, Rabten from Humla and Zenji from a village on the border of Humla and Jumla acknowledged that part of their routine daily activities from when they were the approximate age of five and six included traveling kilometres away from their home to fetch gallons of water from the local river for drinking, cooking, cleaning, and bathing for all family members. Thus, as Lee (1959) highlights about the connection between the participation of children and Survival, communal family structure is that "even a child of six will contribute to the family….

The family unit is so closely knit that if a child of five is ill or absent the family suffers because there is gap in the cooperative efforts….” (p.10). A point to be emphasized by Lee is that age is not explicitly tied to competence since emphasis is placed more upon the active participation of children in communal environments. Thus, the space between childhood and adulthood is often ambiguous in localities like Himalayan societies.

Interestingly, many of the participants in this study did not know their exact ages since at the time of their birth their age was either not recorded, and if it was recorded many of them did not have records with them in Kathmandu. For example, Poso states, “When I came to Kathmandu when I was six I was not given my birth certificate. I thought I was 16 but after returning to my village I found out that I was actually 18” (Poso, 18, Lower Dolpa). Also, as a community development worker who does work in the education sector of the Himalayas acknowledged, if numbers are used to depict age, when a child is born they are counted as one year old; some villages consider the number 13 as ominous so it is skipped once a person reaches that age; and because of leap years in the Gregorian calendar overlapping with the Nepalese calendar system, sometimes a birthday is celebrated twice in one year (Personal Communication, June 5, 2014). Furthermore, with regards to age, Clark-Kazak (2009) proposes that the concern with equating age only chronological is that it strips age of social meanings and “overlooks the fact that chronological age is itself socially constructed - employed primarily as a 'marker' of human development in societies ordered by chronological time. In many other cultures, people do not know their chronological age” (p. 4). To approach age more multi-dimensionally Clark-Kazak (drawing on the work of (Elder, 1975; Wulff, 1995; James et al., 1998; Lesko, 2001) proposes the concept of ‘social-age’ which ensures:

> that the social aspects and relationships related to age are adequately recognised and taken into account, we can employ the concept of 'social age' to indicate the socially constructed meanings applied to physical development and roles attributed to infants,

> children, young people, adults and elders, as well as their intra- and inter-generational relationships (Clark-Kazak, 2009, p.4).

In relation to transitions from 'childhood' to 'adulthood' Valentine (2003) reiterates that the transitions are "complex and fluid…. [Furthermore] these transitions are bound up with wider structures such as …. the family.…" (p.39). Nevertheless, as already established, even though the participation was important to the daily sustenance of the lives of my participants and their families, two factors from within the structure of the family that subsequently influenced the migration decisions of most of my participants' migrations to Kathmandu were composition and size. In the context of this research, composition of family will refer to *who* is in a family and size will refer to *how many* members make up a family. Despite the composition and size of a family being interconnected, for this study they are being separated for the analytical purposes of understanding power dynamics in relation to family dynamics and migration decision-making processes.

Contextualizing family structures too narrowly through western conceptualizations, such as the 'nuclear family,' is problematized through the nuanced family composition of several participants' living arrangements. For example, when I asked Khalama who her family was composed of she said:

> I have 13 members in my family. *I have two mothers, one big and one small*. They live and work together and both are housewives. One elder sister who is already married and has one son and one daughter and her husband is doing business. Two younger brothers, two elder brothers, my father, grandfather, and grandmother (Khalama, age 16, Humla, *emphasis added*).

Khalama includes all of her extended family as immediate family since there was a time when they all lived together in one home. Interestingly, later in the interview I found out that Khalama

has only one biological elder sister, one elder brother and one younger brother, whereas all the other brothers and sisters are the children of her second small mom. Before going to Nepal I did not hear the term “big/small mom” and came to realize that “big/small mom” and “big/small dad” refers to what we would consider as aunts and uncles, and therefore cousins are referred to as brothers and sisters. Khalama’s ‘small mom’ was her father’s younger sister. The complexity of Nepalese family structures as Turin (2010) illuminates is:

> in the Nepali-language kinship sphere, there are many different classes of 'uncles' and 'aunts': those younger than the parent versus those older; those from the mother's side as opposed to those from the father's side; and those who are blood relations versus those who have married in. Unsurprisingly, there are also specific kinship terms for many of these different uncles and aunts (p. 280).

Furthermore, extended family members often played a communal role in the migration decisions of a migrating member of the family. To elaborate, Khalama was six years old when she came to Kathmandu. She expressed to me that she felt that she did not personally have a large active role in the decision for her to migrate. However, at the same time she told me that she was not isolated from the conversation which was held among the extended family since she was sometimes asked to input her thoughts and feelings in the decision-making process. From a children’s rights perspective Skelton (2008) makes reference to Article 12 (respect for the view of the child) of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). This article stipulates that when adults are “making decisions that affect children, children have the right to say what they think should happen and have their opinions taken into account… This Convention encourages adults to listen to the opinions of children and involve them in decision-making.…” (UNICEF, 2014). By allowing children to enter discussions regarding decisions that involve their lives supports Skelton’s “notion of children’s competencies and …. that children are able to make informed decisions and demonstrate their agency to participate in society” (Skelton, 2008,

p. 26 -28). Khalama felt that she did not play an active role in the decision-making processes related to her migration to Kathmandu, but she acknowledges a space that was open for her to active participation in the process if she chose to. Nevertheless, unlike Khalama, some students explicitly expressed that they did play an integral role in the decision to migrate. To elaborate, 20-year-old Dhargey felt that when she migrated at the approximate age of seven, she had an active and crucial role in the decision for her to migrate to Kathmandu for schooling. When I asked her what factors contributed towards her migration to Kathmandu she said:

> My father wanted to send my younger sister to school in Kathmandu but on the same day I came from collecting firewood and I was feeling so-o-o-o irritated hearing this. I told my father that I wanted to go and he said he was sending my younger sister. I told him that my sister was quite young and would have to be carried the entire way but since I am older I can walk. I also told him that I didn't want to do farming anymore that I wanted to be a teacher. This really changed his mind and that is how I came. (Dhargey, 20, Upper Dolpa).

With regards to rural education, agricultural work and migration that Dhargey touches upon, Zharkevich (2010) states that rural education systems in Nepal limit "the choices of young people in rural parts of the country either to the option of remaining in the village to do agricultural work, or migrating elsewhere in search of…. another path of moving forward in life" (p.112). From a young age Dhargey emphasises her own competence to engage in decision-making processes that involves rationality of her own life experiences especially in reference to her future life projections of not wanting to be a farmer. Furthermore, her father simultaneously listened to her expressions and despite realizing that by sending Dhargey would result in a loss of household participation, he factors her views into the migration decision making process.

In addition, many participants acknowledged that the size of their family in relation to harsh

conditions of poverty made it increasingly hard for parents to ‘provide’ for their children. Thus, parents and caregivers were more inclined to send children to boarding schools since they felt children would have access to basic life necessities and increased chances to pursue life wants and aspirations. For example Sashi who resided with his father, mother, and younger brother in Manang acknowledged that providing economically for daily household needs was difficult from the very limited work prospects in Manang. Furthermore, after his father passed away from Tuberculosis when Sashi was five and his brother was one year old, it became even harder for his mother to economically provide for the family. His small dad (Father’s younger brother) suggested for Sashi to study in a boarding school in Kathmandu so he could have a greater chance to fulfill his aspirations (Sashi, 17, Manang). Similarly, large family size in relation to economic provision also play a factor in migrating decisions involving Himalayan children. For example Jampa states:

> I had a very big family, 10 siblings and there was difficulty with the expenditures. Two people providing for 10 other people is very difficult. So I was sent to Kathmandu to study in Monk school. Buddhist Monk schools are funded across Nepal and India as a way to help preserve beliefs and traditions. Parents feel more secure sending their children where they know they would have food, shelter, and clothes and can build on their trying to fulfill their dreams that may be limited here. In Dolpa there is no good education compared to Kathmandu….” (Jampa, 20, Upper Dolpa).

Jampa does not only acknowledge how a lack of necessary life provisions influenced his migration, but also refers to religion as a factor since his parent were trying to bridge cultural differences between the space of ‘here’ and ‘there’ by choosing a religious school for him to attend. Jampa also makes reference to a comparative difference between the quality differences between schools in rural and urban localities which was a factor in his migration. Furthermore, both Jampa and Sashi referring to attending school in Kathmandu as a way to help fulfill dreams

and aspirations. These experiences illuminates a multi-dimensional approach to understating rural poverty since migration decisions were taken in relation to non-needs such as for children/youth to have better life opportunities, while simultaneously mitigating risk in the family of not being able to provide everyday needs such as food. To elaborate, Cohen (2010) argues that poverty alleviation efforts in rural contexts should aim at creating "an enabling environment within which people are sufficiently free from immediate needs, and therefore in a position to more successfully pursue their higher needs and, ultimately, their wants (p. 889). Two way of creating pathways for more successfully pursue of higher needs and ultimately their wants, participants stated the need for more emphasis upon the quality of education over the quantity of schools, and increased transportation and communication facilities within Himalayan regions and to other Himalayan and non-Himalayan localities. This will be explored in chapter four in relation to participants who returned to their village after their prolonged period of family separation and their efforts of trying to facilitate sustainable community development projects predominantly in the field of education.

The dynamics presented above within the family household/structure regarding elements of 'scale' such as the size of the family illuminates how the social context of *space*, both in sense of the complex transitioning space between childhood and adulthood and a key space for the expressions of participants to be heard and express their wishes around migration is a very important to overall migration decision-making processes. Nevertheless, the social context of *time* reveals insight into the migration processes of my Himalayan-youth participants as well. The cultural specific understanding of time in this study predominantly relates to how particular historical events, such as the Maoist upraise beginning 1996, influenced migration decisions as explored below. As Holloway (2014) states history and time are important since "an understanding of our history does not tie us to the past, but it can contribute to less excessive

geographies which are open to new ideas…. in the present (p. 388). Likewise, in the context of my research, participants are thinking back historically to express their migration experiences by reflecting upon past events and memories that shed light upon their understanding of their current migrant and life experiences. All of the participants in this study migrated 10 to 18 years ago (approximately 1996 – 2006) which parallel the Maoist civil war that lasted from 1996 – 2006; an event that certainly shaped many decisions to send children to boarding schools in cities such as Kathmandu.

The uprising of the Maoist Revolution is not the only reason for the migration of participants, but was a major factor for many of the youth involved in my project. Eighteen of the twenty-two participants openly made reference to either direct and/or indirect contact with the Maoist as will shortly be considered. Nevertheless, the problem with denouncing the Maoist revolution by characterizing it as inherently negative for youth is that it often underplays the way in which it was seen as an attractive alternative to education for many rural youth. I am not trying to justify the insurgency, as, thousands of lives were lost in the uprising, but I am trying to capture views of a particular space and time. As Boe (2002) proposes, media outlets captured recruitment as rooted only in violence, which is problematic since it does not consider non-violent methods of recruitment. For example, Zharkevich (2010) states in rural locations "Maoist district committee members would come to the school, speak with the director, and then go and speak to students, encourage them to form a Maoist Student Union and organise informal classes for the study of Maoist theory," with the intention of later recruiting interested students at a later date (p.112). The insurgency was seen as a potential option and/or pathway for youth (especially in rural regions) who were limited in school. work, and other life opportunities. Zharkevich further outlines that "carrying books in backpacks, compulsory independent study for several hours per

day, and learning the basics of Marxist social theory and propagating it to Nepali villagers were common practices among Maoist youth" (Zharkevich, 2010, p.106). Similarly, 16-year-old Ghephel recalls that when he was approximately seven years old he had an encounter with one of his friends when he was returning from grazing the cows and sheep, he met one of his friends dressed up in Maoist clothes. Ghephel asked him why he was wearing such an outfit, and his friend told him that the Maoist army came to his school and gave it to him and promised a good education. The fear of losing his life was too scary for Ghephel to even think of joining the Maoists, even though he did contemplate the option of education (Ghephel, 16, Lower Mustang). Ghephel reveals the intersection of political ideologies of the Maoists with the education system by expressing how the Maoists were able to use rural schools as a space for recruitment without the use of violence. Ghephel also expresses how from a young age he was able to extrapolate his thinking by recognizing that despite the recruitment in his village as not being forceful in that particular moment, it did provide an educational alternative to his agricultural lifestyle, the potential of having to fight and lose his life factored into his decision not to become a part of the insurgency.

On the other hand, there were experiences of violence and force relating to recruitment that my participants experienced that increased the spontaneity of migration decisions to Kathmandu. To elaborate, as Temba acknowledged:

> We are three siblings, one elder brother who is already married and one younger sister who is younger than me….The Maoists came and took one child from every home in our village, most of the times boys. My parents knew I had a good chance of being taken so they sent me to Kathmandu to study. But the Maoists still took my sister. She trained for a few years and then escaped with a boy who they also captured. She married him and

> they came to Kathmandu for hiding. She got married when she was 14 and had one divorce already. But as I know I think she went back to the village because she could not find proper work in Kathmandu. She doesn't contact me much out of fear that someone may track her (Temba, age 17, Humla).

Similarly as Skamar acknowledged, at the age of four, the Maoists came to his village and his family's house. The Maoists set it on fire because his parents sent him out of the back door out of fear of him being recruited. Not having enough money for the entire family to migrate to Kathmandu, his parents sent him to a distant relative and told him to stay there for safety and not to return. He also mentioned that his little brother, who was one year old at the time, did not migrate, and he recalls that during that time many young people migrated from his village and neighbouring regions (Skamar, age 20, Lower Dolpa).Thus, both Temba and Skamar relate to the social context of the Maoist insurgency by revealing the importance of contextualizing migration experiences as a child-specific phenomenon. The dynamics between and/or among siblings and other children in the village relate to factors such as gender and birth order. These social variables play a crucial factor in migration decisions. Factors of gender and birth order will be further considered in Chapter Three and Four where participants elaborate further on why families send children away to school. These reasons include the need for increased family income; family problems like spousal abuse, alcoholism, abandonment; and the death of parents or caregivers. Furthermore, some children and youth left their villages permanently once they had the opportunity to visit their families after prolong periods of separation. The emotions and memories of participants during migration journeys are explored.

2.2 Migration Emotions and Memories

> I was seven years old when I came to Kathmandu on my own. While migrating I was often afraid of robbers and that fear kept me indoors as much as possible…. (Jampa, age 20, Upper Dolpa).

> It was a magnificent journey travelling from my village to Kathmandu. At times it was scary but it was surely an adventure that I will carry around with me for my entire life and use it as personal motivation when needed (Ngawang 21, Upper Dolpa).

Regarding Himalayan migration, Kumar (2002) acknowledges that "important causes of internal migration in Nepal have been poverty, inequitable distribution of income, unemployment, difficult livelihood, and food insecurity" (p.130). Despite these factors resonating with the research participants in my study, their testimonies provided a more nuanced perspective of internal migration. Furthermore, their rural-to-rural migration differed from their experiences with their rural-to-urban migration journeys to Kathmandu. The Trans-Himalayan villages from which the participants migrated are located at high altitudes that range from 3000 to 8000 metres on the plateaus of the Himalayan Mountains. Some of these villages are in regions that remain some of the least populated and least developed in Nepal (see Appendix B for population census). Furthermore, because of the remote nature of the villages, homes are often built in close proximity to one another and are often few in numbers. My participants noted that small villages and close proximity of neighbours, such as in Rabten's village of Humla where there were only 5 to 10 homes and a population of approximately 70-100 people, helped to create strong community bonds. Thus, communities would often migrate together during different agricultural seasons and harsh weather conditions. Bannerji and Fareedi (2010) states, "agriculture is the dominant occupation for most Himalayan communities… of very high altitudes ….who follow nomadic pastoralism. Different patterns of cultivation are however followed, depending on the nature of the terrain and soil in a particular Himalayan region" (p.2). Many of the participants in my studies engaged in a nomadic and semi-nomadic pastoral lifestyle

during their time in their village by caring and following their sheep, goats, cows and yaks for grazing. For example 16-year-old Opame revealed that she did not have a permanent settlement during her time in Lower Dolpa since her family and community would travel from place to place across the region. They would take their livestock to graze in an area and plant crops for food that was favourable to the location and season, and after a few months they would move to another location to give the soil enough time to replenish itself. At the same time, this worries Opame because she is afraid that she may not be able to locate her parents if she decides to visit them, since she has had no contact for the last 10 years.

Regarding the effects of seasonal and weather conditions on migration, Garkan outlines how in his district of Lower Mugu they have two home settlements. He refers to these two homes as an upper home that is used during the summer season and a lower home used during the harsh winter season. These homes are approximately one day's walk from each other through rigid, hilly terrain and dense forests. He also acknowledges that there was enough land for all his villagers in both settlements so there were no land disputes upon return to either of the two locations. Garkan refers to his favourite memories of this migration pattern. Annually he was able to travel with his entire family and villagers, including his favourite baby calf, and as they walked the community would share many stories. Similarly, Dhargey reflecting on migration in Upper Dolpa, acknowledged that many families would migrate to Lower Dolpa during winter to stay with extended kin. As Bannerji and Fareedi (2009) state, the Tibetan "semi-nomadic *Bhotiyas* live in… their villages only for short periods in the year. They go either to high altitudes with their herds during the summer months, or to the…. plains for trade during the winter" (p.4). However, since Dhargey had no family in Lower Dolpa, her family was one of the few to stay in Upper Dolpa. They took on care for livestock as well as elders in the village who

were unable to migrate, which reinforced the communal relation among the village community. Furthermore, Dhargey acknowledged that when their neighbours migrated away from Upper Dolpa for the winter, families from the Tibetan side of the border, where the weather was also Harsh, would occupy the vacant homes and take care of the livestock as a seasonal form of labour. The migration from the Tibetan region to Upper Dolpa and Upper Dolpa to Lower Dolpa also helped to foster trade relations while simultaneously building trusting bonds and even kinship relationships. For example, Dhargey's brother married a woman from the Tibetan side of the border [i.e China] and has resided there for the last twenty-five years. Furthermore, since teachers and other school officials were also migrating back and forth between regions, it was extremely difficult for regular schooling experiences to exist in many Himalayan villages.

The migration journeys that participants described were physically demanding and were journeys that involved the entire family, often extending out to the entire community. Despite participants' migration to Kathmandu for education also being a migration journey, the experiences were quite different. They included an unknown period of family separation in an unfamiliar place. Furthermore, some participants engaged in travel to Kathmandu independently, rather than communally with their family and/or extended community members.

Five participants migrated to Kathmandu approximately between the ages of four to five; ten approximately at six to seven; six approximately at eight to nine; and one approximately at the age of ten. Sixteen of my participants travelled to Kathmandu with an adult family member and/or family friend and six participants travelled with no adults. Four of those six participants (Champo, Amrita, Akar, and Zenji) travelled together in a group with no adults.

Number of Participants	Approximate Age when Migrated
5	4 to 5 years old
10	6 to 7 years old
6	8 to 9 years old
1	10 years old

Table 1.1 Approximate age During Migration

Number of Participants	Travelled With
16	Family or Caretaker
2	Alone (No adults)
4	Together as a group with no adults

Table 2.2 Accompaniment during Migration

Champo, Amrita, and Akar are from different villages in Lower Dolpa approximately one hour away from each other. Zenji's father is from a village bordering Humla and Jumla knew the parents of Champo through trade relations. After Zenji's father found out that Akar's children along with a group of children from the regions were going to study in a Himalayan boarding school in Kathmandu he decided to ask Zenji if he wanted to migrate as well. Zenji who was expelled from school (during his pre-primary studies) because of not having regular attendance, recalls that he was confused to have the opportunity to study in Kathmandu and agreed to the offer since he was optimistic that he would fully dedicate himself to studies. A week later his father began the journey to Lower Dolpa to meet the other children he would migrate with. What Zenji recalls about his journey to Lower Dolpa was rich in details and emotions. Zenji states:

> I was able to walk but not too much because of the many hills so my father used to carry me with a cloth *doko* [cloth tied around a person's waist to carry a child on the back]. After crossing many rivers after about three to four days we stayed at an area that my dad knew. It was a physically hard journey but at the same time very exciting. After a good night's rest we walked many more days. We finally reached Zenji's village. My father gave me a big hug, he could not continue the trip with me to Kathmandu since he had to return back to the village for work. He left me with as much money as he could for expenditures. I didn't miss my father until he turned around and walked over the hill and at that moment I felt like going home (Zenji, 16, Humla-Jumla).

Zenji's testimony captures the exact moment he recognizes that he is in a place of unfamiliarity from wanting to return 'home' to his village with his father. Zenji's experience also reflects the interconnection of migration and education as will be considered below.

Structural factors such as limited rural educational opportunities intersect with specific family to shape constraints to shape migration decisions. However, this was done without much consideration of a direct emphasis upon the emotions of my participants. As Erdal and Oeppen (2013) state, "at times structural constraints limit actors' agency…. Whatever the case, the choices are the individual actor's own, as are the lived consequences including emotional ambivalence towards what used to be 'home' (p.877). They further acknowledge in relation to transnationalism, migration, choices and emotions, that "the personal and human nature of these choices, which are affected by practical and emotional factors but are also pragmatically considered, should be integrated in any analysis of…. transnationalism [and migration]" (p.877). Thus, Zenji's testimony above illuminates the interconnection among structural educational constraints, agency and migration through the articulation of a spectrum of different emotional responses. To elaborate, Zenji's particular structural constraint was being expelled from school that made him feel that agricultural work would be his life's occupation. He expressed a sense of confusion when offered the opportunity to study in Kathmandu, which quickly gave him a sense of optimism to dedicate himself to studying. His migration journey physically exhausted him, but filled him with excitement and adrenaline. Not until the moment he is separated from his father and placed in a unfamiliar environment does he begin to feel emotional ambivalence towards leaving home.

The conceptualization of home for some participants changed throughout their life course. For Zenji, home was in his village with his family with whom he was familiar. Nevertheless, the long

period of family separation he endured with no contact changed him, and eventually he felt more 'at home' at the boarding school as will be explored more in the following chapter. A fascinating feature of participants' rural-to-rural migration, as well as their migrant journeys to Kathmandu, was the traversing of geographical regions through processes of mental mapping. Rosenberg (2014) states that a "person's perception of the world is known as a mental map. A mental map is an individual's own internal map of their known world" (para. 1). For this study mental mapping will be considered in relation to the way Himalayan students spatially perceive their villages before migrating; migrating to Katmandu; time spend in Kathmandu; and their return to their villages after a period of time. Holloway (2014) draws a link between the sub-discipline of Children's Geographies and mental mapping abilities of children by acknowledging that:

> one of the sub-discipline's roots lies in research on children's spatial cognition and mapping abilities. This strand of research sits at the boundaries of children's geographies and developmental psychology, and was shaped by a core group of researchers who refined Piagetian models of child development to suggest that children as young as 3 in urban and rural environments in the Global North and South have some map-reading abilities (p. 378).

Evidence of young children's cognitive mapping abilities of their environments helps to challenge scientific understandings about the limits to children's developmental potential. It shows that they are more competent at younger ages than was previously conceptualized through psychological and biological constructions of children/childhood. Holloway (2014) adds that there has been a lack of consideration pertaining to how children's "changing socio-spatial organisation impacts upon children's spatial cognition, their awareness of and abilities to mentally map their neighbourhoods, or indeed their competencies in navigating the cities, towns

and villages where they live” (p. 378). Additionally, “despite a steady stream of research from diverse nations across (parts) of the Global South, Majority World [i.e Global South] children remain under-represented in children’s geographies, much as research on the Global South is under-represented in human geography as a whole” (Holloway, 2014, p.386). My particular study aims to fill this gap in a modest way and builds upon the underrepresentation of Global South children and youth.

Depending upon the geographical location of their home villages the journeys of many participants to Kathmandu lasted for months. For example, to contextualize the distance, from Upper Dolpa to Kathmandu the distance is 9476 kilometres. Thus, if it were possible for a vehicle to travel in a straight line, it would take 95 hours at 100 km/h to get from Dolpa to Kathmandu.[1] Ngawang, who came from one of the most remote villages of Upper Dolpa, described his journey lasting over two months. He travelled with his grandparents, an uncle and five other children from his village. At the time of the trip Ngawang was approximately ten and was entrusted with the task of carrying a two-year-old child in a *doko* (cloth tied around a person’s waist to carry a child on the back) for majority of the journey. He walked seven days to Dunai, the Headquarters of Dolpa than another three days to an area called Jufal where there was an airport and the intention of taking a cargo plane to Kathmandu. Upon arriving in Jufal and waiting two days for a cargo plane, he found out that the plane did not have any space to accommodate his group and therefore, they all decided to continue the rest of the journey to Kathmandu by foot. The group walked a week to a large river (Karnali River), another week to Surkhet, then another two weeks to Kathmandu. As Ngawang states, “since it was nearly winter season there was soft mud that could set off an avalanche at any time and the rivers were high.

[1] Retrieved from the interactive website: http://www.howmanyhours.com. Website can be used to find the approximate distance between other Himalayan regions to Kathmandu.

The journey was adventurous but during the night I was always scared of thieves" (Ngawang, age 21, Upper Dolpa). Ngawang articulates both positive and negative emotional expressions since he expresses excitement in his journey to Kathmandu, but at the same time expresses fear regarding thieves. Robberies did pose a threat to some participants such as Ketu who was robbed of some family mementos he was carrying in his pockets and he was chased out of many homes when he was looking for shelter since people *assumed* that he was a thief. Interestingly, parents and caregivers used fear as a mechanism to try to keep children safe during their migration journey if they could not accompany them. For example, Jampa told me that an aunt told him that once he was in a safe home he must not go and roam outside. The consequence of doing so his aunt told him would be, child thieves stealing him and put him inside of a box. They would then take him to a jungle and hang him by his feet so oil will come from his nose that they would take it to sell in the market as fuel (Jampa, age 20, Upper Dolpa). Jampa told me that this frightening story emotionally resonated with him during his migration journey, which he undertook alone at the age of seven. For example, he recounted that one night:

> I fell under the cot I was sleeping. When my eyes opened I remembered in my village we had wooden box and we store rice and wheat, it is very big, maybe 8 feet in length and 8 feet in width. When I found myself under the bed I thought one thief was stealing me as my aunt said… and I started to scream like ahhhhhh …. then one man came into the room and put on the light and put me on the bed and said I was having a nightmare" (Jampa, Upper Dolpa, age 20).

He told me that the fear did keep him indoors most of the time which now makes him sometimes feel a sense of regret from not being able to explore the geographical landscape of the regions through which he migrated. On the other hand, by staying indoors he was able to focus upon his

mental mapping abilities and remember the directions that his parents gave him verbally to reach Kathmandu.

I was fascinated by the children's ability to travel to places they had never been. Jampa for example, had never been to Kathmandu prior to his migration, and yet was able to navigate multiple geographical regions with just directions passed on verbally to him. As a researcher I wanted to engage in a mental mapping exercise with the participants. Jampa assisted me with mapping my way from the Himalayan Boarding school to a care home where I worked, run by the non-profit Australian organization. In total, the distance between these two locations was a 1.5 hour walk. This experience enabled Jampa to transmit to me the methods he used during his own journey. Jampa stressed what was crucial was for me to use my senses (he placed emphasis on sight, smell, and sound) to create an imprint in my mind while blurring out unnecessary distractions. While walking, he offered directions like 'left at the monastery at the bottom of the hill with the cracked roof,' 'right at the pungent smelling stream,' 'listen for the main road and you will know you are going in the right direction.' These sensory mapping experiences paralleled his own journey to Kathmandu. He remembers his family giving him directions such as, 'make a right when you smell the yak farm that has a small hill with a bigger hill behind it,' 'listen for the river and when you get to it follow it down stream,' 'listen to the sound of the plane landing and you will be able to locate the airport in Jufal.' In essence, parents and care givers pass on directions that they use from either trade route they or other members from the village were familiar with. When considering the connections among childhood memories, memories of childhood, and children's geographies Valentine (2003) states:

> Our experiences as children, and memories of this period, can shape who we become. Children's geographies should not therefore just be about the lives of those defined by a

> particular age. Rather than conceptualising childhood as a fixed or static category that we grow out of, it is important instead to understand childhood as a process that shapes us throughout the life course (p. 39).

Thus, memory plays a very important role in the migration process among research participants. First, memory acted as a mechanism for participants to mentally map their trips to Kathmandu. Secondly, memories acted as bridge to connect them to their past village experiences to their present conditions, which in turn actively contributes to the identity formation of my participants. The themes of village memories and identity formation will now be explored in Chapter Three in relation to the separation participants endured away from their family and villages.

Chapter 3

Moving to School in Kathmandu

> My aunt brought me to Kathmandu when I was five years old. I stayed at my grandparents' home for two to three years. Then one day my aunt took me to a school and told me to go play with some of the children there. I went but at first I was a little shy to go since I did not speak much Nepali, but after some time I was having lots of fun. My aunt was off to the side with the founder of the school. After some time I went to look for my aunt but she was gone. They said this was my *new home* now. I was quite scared and cried a lot…. My aunt came five years later with a woman who said she was my mom. I didn't recognize both of them and after five years I could no longer speak my mother tongue. I was very confused.… (Sashi,17, Manang, *emphasis added*).

The first section of this chapter will begin by reflecting upon where the participants in this study went after migrating from their villages. It will also explore the intersections of family separation in relation to how children conceptualize 'home' and feelings of homesickness, related to lack of communication with their families. The second section will focus upon the boarding school experiences of the participants by exploring their narratives of residing in such an environment.

3.1 'Home' and Homesickness

Upon arrival to Kathmandu nine student research participants spent time in a family or family's friend home before enrollment into the Himalayan boarding school. One student spent five months in Bhaktapur before studying in Kathmandu; two students spent one year in monk schools before switching institutions; and ten other students came directly to the Himalayan boarding school. The migration away from their rural villages was a major cultural and emotional shift for all of the participants. Despite initial feelings of awe about busy, big cities such as Kathmandu and Bhaktapur, many students experienced an "emotional ambivalence towards what used to be 'home' (Erdal and Oeppen, 2013, p. 877). While residing in Kathmandu, emotional ambivalence towards their village homes derived from not having active communication with families throughout their experiences of family separation. Furthermore,

across testimonies, students expressed ambivalence about ideas of 'home' in relation to physically being in cities such as Kathmandu or Bhaktapur, but wanting to be back in their rural villages. Along the same lines, Hyndman (2001) acknowledges that when researchers engage in doing fieldwork, across space and cultures, such as my work across different localities in Nepal, 'the field' is simultaneously manifested as "both here and there, a continuum of time and place" both home and away (p.265). In addition, regarding the relationship among researchers, fieldwork, and ideas around 'home' spaces, Hyndman (2001) states the idea of "a separation of home and field…. is untenable. Instead, as researchers who study the processes, patterns, and peopling of the world, we are always in the field" (p. 269-270). Through my long-term working relation in Nepal, I have personally experienced home in the 'the field,' and in turn this changes my understanding of home in North America. Hyndman (2001) conceptualizes 'the field' as a continuum of time, place, and space, and refusing a here/there binary. Instead lived experiences of participants traverse different spaces, creating new and multiple homes. Their active engagement in conceptualizing 'home' can be traced to feelings of homesickness and distance and time from being away from their villages.

With regards to 'home' within a migration context Ahmed (1999) asks, what does it mean to be at home? How does it affect home and being at-home when one leaves home? (p. 399). Ahmed (1999) explores these questions:

> .... Home is here, not a particular place that one simply inhabits, but *more than one place*: there are too many homes to allow place to secure the roots or routes of one's destination. It is not simply that the subject does not belong anywhere. The journey between homes provides the subject with the contours of a *space of belonging*, but a space which expresses the very logic of an interval, the passing through of the subject between apparently fixed moments of departure and arrival (p. 330, *emphasis added*).

Thus, Ahmed (1999) and Hyndman (2001) illuminate how the social dimensions of place, space

and time influence how a person constructs an understanding of home and identifies with it, and how those constructions can often be fragmented, abstract and span multiple localities simultaneously. In the context of this study, feelings of familiarity and belonging to the school to which participants migrated facilitated how participants conceptualized home. For example, home was often shaped by participants' experiences from community bonds within ethnic enclaves in large cities.

Garkan lived in Bhaktapur before coming to boarding school in Kathmandu. Hugo (2012) states that ethnic enclaves try to connect "network linkages between the diaspora community and their homelands both through ethnic and national formal associations in destinations and through informal interaction with family and others in the homeland" (p. 40). Garkan spent five months with distant relatives of his father in Bhaktapur. Garkan acknowledged that originally the family he stayed with had migrated to Kathmandu but moved to Bhaktapur since they felt more at home with an extended group of migrants from Upper and Lower Mugu, as well as the strong Newari culture in Bhaktapur that reminded them of Mugu culture. Garkan himself states that in Bhaktapur, "there were more vehicles and the culture was slightly different from Mugu. But for the most part I felt like I was in a third home away from my homes in Mugu, that I would later return to…." (Garkan, 16, Lower Mugu). As presented in the previous chapter, in Lower Mugu, Garkan and his extended community would stay at *lower homes* during the winter and migrate to *upper homes* during the summer. Garkan's sense of belonging and home in Bhaktapur reflects how his construction of 'home' in Bhaktapur was constructed in relation to his feeling of home and migrant lifestyle in Mugu, while his idea of home traverses borders in two separate geographical regions. Furthermore, Bhaktapur became a place for urban-rural cultural exchanges to occur since it was a space in which members from Mugu formed an ethnic enclave, while physically residing in a city away from home. This exposed Garkan to urban lifestyles around him.

On the other hand, for participants who did not strongly identify with ethnic enclaves or kinfolk from home village, home was experienced as more emotionally ambivalent in cities. For example, strong emotions were expressed by Purnima who came to Kathmandu at the age of nine and stayed in the home of an elderly couple, who were originally the landlord of the home her parents rented in Mustang. Upon arrival she tried to familiarize herself with Kathmandu. Purnima recounts that she cried often so the family would try to calm her down by letting her watch television or taking her on trips around Kathmandu. However, Purnima always insisted on wanting to see her family and wanting to return to Upper Mustang; Kathmandu reminded her of nothing from her village. About a month in from her arrival, she felt that her family was never going to come to meet her again. A month and a half later she received a phone call from her mother. During that first phone call with her mother since leaving the village, Purnima remembered crying loudly and telling her mother that she did not want to stay in Kathmandu. She wanted to come 'home' to her village. Purnima's mother told her that she would come and visit, but Purnima thought that she was lying. Often promises her mother had made had not materialized. Nevertheless, her mother promised her that she would come after harvest season and bring her back to Mustang. She advised Purnima to respect the family with whom she stayed with. Purnima admitted that the host family had two sons and three daughters around her age, and after spending three months with them, she did eventually feel like a part of the family and started to feel "kind of at home in Mustang despite being in the city of Kathmandu" (Purnima, 17, Upper Mustang/Upper Dolpa). However, three months later when Purnima was placed in boarding school she experienced, yet again, another round of emotions:

> The first time I came to school I saw some students staying on floor and eating food and I thought all the children had one parent but a teacher said, they are your friends, they are also studying here.… my grandfather lied to me. He said stay here I will come to bring you in the afternoon. So I said okay, but he didn't come to visit until four months later.…

> Dhargey showed me around the school. Then all the girls came to see me when I sat on the bed. I got so nervous I started to cry and Dhargey scolded them. At that time she was the captain and the other girls were breaking so many rules so she started to scream at them. I got scared as I could not speak much Nepali so I started to cry even more. When she asked me if I want food and came close to me, I ran. I began to question if coming to this school was a punishment for something I did wrong in the village.… This school was not my home. I tried to escape three times and go back to my home. First I wanted to say goodbye to my family who I stayed with, then straight to my village I would try to go …. (Purnima, 17, Upper Mustang/Upper Dolpa).

Purnima's emotional ambivalence towards her new home at school has parallels with her migration from Upper Mustang to Kathmandu where she moved in with her host family. Purnima feels a sense of betrayal from her mother who lied to her about the romanticized image of Kathmandu and repeatedly said that she would come to Kathmandu to reunite with her, but did not. Through these strong emotions and feelings, Purnima begins to question the reason behind her exile, wondering if she was sent to school as a punishment for something she may have done wrong. She quickly replaces these feelings with one of determination of wanting to escape from school and ultimately return to her home in her village. Similar to Garkan, Purnima places her idea of home upon a spectrum of belonging to more than one place. She did not associate with the school as her home because she did not speak the language and felt like a stranger, while the time with her host family made her feel more at home than being at school, but still not as much as being in Mustang.

Unlike Purnima, who did not feel at home initially in the Himalayan boarding school, Temba and Jampa are two students with more positive experiences. They had stayed in Buddhist Monk schools for a year before switching to the boarding school. Both Temba and Jampa noted an

artificial sense of home when residing in monk school, which was articulated largely in relation to their nomadic lifestyles and emotional bonds to their rural villages. Temba and Jampa saw 'home' as embedded in everything around them, thus as more than just a physical space. For example, in my interview with Temba I asked him if he felt a sense of home during his residency in Monk school. He responded by sharing:

> Monk school was sort [of], well what to say, a *nakali* [fake] home. The monks kept telling us that it was our home, but this is not home. Home is being with your family. Home was sometimes moving from one place to another with the livestock. Home was lying by the river and falling asleep to the sound of the birds. Here we only live in a concrete building, they speak to us only in Nepali, and the emotions are often cold.… (Temba, 17, Humla).

Similarly, Jampa also referred to the importance of emotional bonds towards him identifying with a sense of home. Jampa recalls during his time in monk school:

> I stayed a year in monk school. I came because my parents had a difficult time providing for ten children. But here it was difficult because there was no one caring for us.…we were responsible for our mugs, cups, plates on our own. During that time I lost my plates, cups so sometimes I didn't have lunch and it was difficult. Of course this was done as a form of discipline, but it often made me think that this could never be my home because everyone was emotionally separate from each other. In my village if I lost my cup and plate of course I would get a scolding but I would never feel hungry. I even wondered if I really had to leave Dolpa …. (Jampa, 20, Upper Dolpa).

Despite Jampa providing the rationale for his migration journey was due to rural poverty constraints, like Tampa and Purnima, he questions if migrating to Kathmandu was actually necessary. Thus, Jampa positions the emotional poverty experienced in monk school and separation from his family and village as being worse than the materialistic poverty in his

village. Nevertheless, upon arrival to school Temba and Jampa instantly began to find ways to fill emotional voids and felt a stronger sense of home and belonging rather than feelings of homesickness. Jampa shares his first experiences at the boarding school after leaving monk school was:

> the first time when I entered the school Dhargey and Ngawang greeted me very friendly in a Tibetan language similar to my village mother tongue! That night I slept in Ngawang's room with a few other boys from the Dolpa region. They were very kind and caring and we talked a lot about our village and our culture. Even though I missed my village, I enjoyed it here and felt at home more than monk school…. (Jampa, 20, Upper Dolpa).

Similarly Temba described his first day at the boarding school:

> there was surely more students from Dolpa than Humla, but that was no problem because together we are all Himalayan students. I got along equally with the students from the different regions from my first day. I felt like at home with a family more than I did at monk school. Best of all I was finally able to eat similar foods from my village and was able to engage with familiar cultural events like *Lhosar* [Tibetan New Year]…. My classmates were very supportive and encouraging of me over the years that I didn't get from my own family. They are also now my family…. (Temba, 17, Humla).

For both Jampa and Temba, Himalayan cultural factors such as language, food, and a sense of family, made them feel more at home at the school compared to their previous place of residence in monk school. Furthermore, through a feeling of belonging and the building of strong friendships the boarding school helped to facilitate a space that encouraged both students to take up leadership roles. For example, Jampa became the school captain from class seven until graduation from the school in class ten and Temba did fundraising initiatives in his school community, Humli ethnic enclave, and other Nepalese communities to raise funds for sports

equipment and library books at the school. Jampa expressed that being in school in Kathmandu gave him the opportunity to engage in leadership roles as he states:

> I am kind of happy not living in Dolpa because it is all about farming. In the Himalayan region, there are not many schools, and no time to attend school. You have to work mainly by farming, even on holidays like Saturday, which means even less time to study. Here we are able to give priority to our studies which give us more opportunities than jobs in agriculture. Even being the captain in school is something that doesn't really exist in our villages. Being captain really helped me to gain confidence and learn how to interact with others…. (Jampa, 20, Upper Dolpa).

Similarly Temba states:

> I did not get a chance to study in Humla because I had to help care for a *bhai* [younger brother]. Also, job opportunities and jobs prospects in Himalayan regions are very limited and often tied to some family connection. Coming here, there is more opportunity but also the students who get the chance to get better school opportunities are the ones whose family background is financially good. Many Himalayan families are not able to afford tuition fees. That is why I do Fundraising. I want to help those from the Himalayan region feel comfortable in Kathmandu…. (Temba, 17, Humla).

Thus, both Jampa and Temba express how engaging in leadership roles was possible from being in schools in Kathmandu since their lifestyles in their rural villages would have prevented them from doing so. Further contrasting points between rural and urban educational experiences will be made throughout.

3.2 Boarding School Experiences

The participants in this study migrated away from their villages between the years of 1996 – 2006, when transportation and communication facilities were sparse to virtually non-existent. In the last few years, developments in the communication and transportation sector have improved

but rural regions still often lack such facilities. Aitkin (2002) lists multiple reasons for a lack of investment of information and communication technologies in mountainous regions of Nepal. These include the sparse population; high installation costs given the poor road conditions, extreme distance from the main grid; frequent lack of reliable electricity; economies tend to operate at a subsistence level; villagers are often illiterate and unskilled in the use of even the most basic telecom services; and many mountain people are from minority groups, isolated as much by geography as by their language and culture (p. 225). The lack of facilities often limited the frequency participants were able to communicate with their village or had family come and visit them during their period of study in Kathmandu. With regards to phone calls, seven students acknowledges that they had no phone call access with family since migration from their villages; three students had only one phone call since their departure; five students have phone communication one time every two to three years; five students communicate once every year; one student has the opportunity to communicate four times in a year; and one student has the opportunity to have phone communication once a month.

Number of Students	Number of Phone Calls Since Migration
7	None
3	1time only
5	1 time every 2 – 3 years
5	1 time a year
1	4 times a year
1	1 time a month

Table 3.1 Number of phone calls since migration

Any potential visits from family and friends from village localities often remain few and sporadic in nature due to lack and cost of transportation. Families were often unable to locate the school upon arrival and others could not come because of a need by family as labour in the villages.

The Perks of Boarding School

According to participants, one particular benefit of residing in boarding school is daily

engagement in a disciplined lifestyle that cultivated independence and responsibility. This was achieved with very little adult intervention. With regards to child and adult interaction, drawing on a children's geographies, Holloway (2014) states these interactions "extend not only beyond micro-analyses of children's everyday lives, but also beyond analyses of how other institutions or agents shape young people's lives, to explore the ways adults' lives are shaped by the presence (or absence) of children" (p. 384). The unique intersection of multiple institutions incorporated within the children and youth systems within the boarding school has a resonating influence upon the lives of adults (teachers, volunteers, NGO workers, and staff) associated with the school, as will be elaborated more below.

The previous chapter illuminated how the participation of children and youth in everyday activities was crucial for the daily sustenance of the entire household in rural Himalayan villages. The boarding school is also predicated upon the Himalayan cultures and values and encourages the active participation of each student who plays an integral role in creating harmonious living and schooling spaces. Furthermore, the sharing of responsibilities in the school creates a unique, intricate and empowering system for the students. As a senior teacher at the school stated, "I have taught at many schools in Nepal, but the responsibility sharing system at this particular boarding school uses, *recognizes the ability of children to make changes in their lives and the lives around them*…." (Personal Communication, July 15, 2014, *emphasis added*). As an international NGO worker associated with the school stated, "advocacy work and research around boarding school's residency is limited and framed from a pessimistic perspective and often does not capture the moments that we as adults can learn from children themselves" (Personal Communication, June 30, 2014). These expressions by both the senior teacher and an international NGO worker support a children's geographies framework that recognizes children's agency and subjectivity. Focusing on the narratives of children and youth themselves expands insights about the boarding school while challenging conventional academic and activist

wisdom (Holloway, 2014, p. 382); expanding on how young people's lives are constrained by space but also how they actively produce their own space (Gill, 2003, p. 39); and the ability for children and youth to be seen as competent social actors both in educational and research spaces (Skelton, 2008, p. 27).

At the Himalayan boarding school there are many interlocking systems which reflect the intersection of schooling and living spaces; the negotiation between adult and youth power dynamics; and the competency of children and youth to make decisions that affect their daily lives. To elaborate, at the school, one school captain and three vice-captains are chosen to govern all of the interlocking systems that occur within the school (see fig. 3.1). The captains and vice-captains are usually chosen from either class (grade) seven, eight, or nine, at approximately the age of 14 to 16, who take on the role until they reach class ten in which they graduate and subsequently change schools. Interested captains and vice-captains put their names forwards as candidates who prepare speeches to present to their peers and teachers, who then vote after listening to all of the speeches. For the most part, the votes are fair, but if a concern does arise the principal of the school has the ultimate power to choose the captains and vice-captains. Nevertheless, the system in place tries to train the students in learning civic responsibilities such as voting in a fun and interactive way. Once a captain and three vice-captains are chosen, approximately 150 students are divided into *four home*s distinguished by colour: red, blue, green and yellow. Each home elects two senior students (one male and one female) from secondary level (class nine or ten) to be the house leader. Furthermore, two students from each home (one male and one female) from lower secondary (class six to eight) are chosen to be vice-captains. Each home is in charge of different responsibilities such as leading the morning and evening assembly; distributing plates and cutlery for meals; the chopping of vegetables for meals etc. Within each house the senior boys and girls (class seven to ten) take care of the junior boys and girls (pre-primary to class five) by pairing up one senior student to approximately two to five

junior students. These senior students are in charge of ensuring that the junior students get into a routine of hygienic activities such as showering, brushing their teeth, washing their clothes, and also tutor then after formal classes, thus blurring household and schooling spaces. Any concerns that arise from within a house are usually taken to the house vice-captain who tries to sort it out before taking it the house captain. If the house captain cannot sort it out, the concern is then taken to the school vice-captains or captain. If the issues still persists, they are taken to the level of the teachers and school administrators. In addition to the system of house captains and school captains there are four other systems that are crucial to the coordination of the overall functioning of the living and studying environment of the school.

The first system is the room captain system. Each bedroom nominates one student to be a room captain for a week and each week the captaincy responsibilities shifts to another student. The room captain is responsible to keep track of ill students and assign cleaning tasks to the other room members. The captain then shares any concerns with a house captain who then takes the concerns to one of the three vice-captains or head captain of the school if needed. Secondly, there is the health check system in which three students (one student from primary, one from lower secondary, and one from secondary) trains alongside a staff nurse to ensure that they can cope with daily medical concerns, as well as any potential medical emergencies. As the secondary student nurse graduates from the school the responsibilities are passed down. The health check student has a routine of visiting each room during the morning and evening to enquire with the room captain if any student is in need of any potential medical care. Moving closer towards the realm of education spaces, there is the system of classroom captains. The responsibilities of classroom captain and vice-captain shifts student-to-student on a monthly basis. The classroom captain assigns individuals to sweep the floors and wipe the desks and chairs of the classrooms; keeps track of attendance; tries to prevent arguments from starting or escalating; and does a general check of homework completion/concerns. Lastly, after school

there is a self-study and tutoring system in which class six to nine pair up with students from one to eight to assist with homework and build a sense of family and home.

Figure 3.1 Breakdown of interlocking systems at the Boarding School

All of the interrelated systems are carried out in a way that tries to distribute power as evenly as possible in which the system itself keeps an abuse of power from existing while enabling each student to recognize their importance in the overall functioning of schooling and living spaces as a whole. For example as Lhundup who has now graduated from the boarding school in 2013 acknowledges:

> Yes the school captain and vice captains were in a higher position than the other students but they don't show their power over you in a discriminatory way. I don't think it is a problem respecting someone who is higher position than you because when it comes down to it the respect is mutual. If power is exercised wrongly it is usually sorted out through the rebellion of the other students. The system is self-regulating. The school considered each of us as an integral person to the environment around us. It helped us to grow as a family and feel at home. On many occasions I miss my early schooling days…. (Lhundup, 19, Upper Mustang).

Building from Lhundup's point, the school captain and vice-captains act as a bridge between the adults associated with the school and the students concerns. The school captain and vice captains are permitted and encouraged to participate during staff and administrative meetings. Lam and

Skelton stress the importance of educational facilitators respecting and promoting the agency of children to participate actively in education spaces. The captain/vice-captain systems accomplish this. This enables children and youth to recognize their competencies and make informed decisions about matters that directly influence their lives (Lam, 2012, p.147; Skelton, 2008, p.27). In addition, the fluid space among children, youth, and adult interactions made many students feel comfortable to voice opinions about ways to better boarding school experiences. The adult teachers are more receptive to students' requests and issues when there is a representative student body.

During my fieldwork in Nepal, students voiced the need for a drama program at the school, which was subsequently implemented. The drama program acted as a medium for students to express and engage with their migration journeys and voice their views to other children, youth, and adults in a creative, artistic, and emotion way. Regarding voice and expression, Skelton makes reference to Article 13 of the UNCRC (Freedom of expression) that states:

> [c]hildren have the right to get and share information, as long as the information is not damaging to them or others. In exercising the right to freedom of expression, children have the responsibility to also respect the rights, freedoms and reputations of others. The freedom of expression includes the right to share information in any way they choose (Skelton, 2008, p.27;UNICEF, 2014).

The implementation of a drama program at the school helps to facilitate a space for the children and youth to actively participate; express their voices and concerns; and develop their talents and abilities. The drama program also created a link among the different Himalayan cultures present at the boarding school as well as other non-Himalayan cultures the dramatic presenters come into contact with, such as teachers and volunteers.

The students used drama as a way to understand and interpret their migration, educational, and family separation experiences. Seventeen-year-old Wangdak from Lower Mustang, who is a

strong supporter of drama, acknowledged that:

> Drama helps to increase knowledge about the world around us and also about who we are. Drama class also helps to build confidence and helps us to express ourselves in a way that makes the audience think differently and deeply. For me personally, drama helps me to think about why I came to Nepal. I was about three or four when I came here and I don't remember anything at all. Until now while I was in this school I try to remember but I remember very, very little about migrating and my time in the village. I often think that there is something wrong with my memory. Drama has helped me to fill in some of those blanks. I know that my father left my mother soon after my birth. My mother sent me to Kathmandu because she was having a hard time to care for me - she did that out of love I feel. I can use drama to express a thin line between abonnement and love to reflect why I am studying in Kathmandu.…" (Wangdak, age 17, Lower Mustang).

Wangdak refers to drama as a tool that has value both within and outside schooling experiences since it creates a space for knowledge sharing; self-discovery; and emotional articulation about his feelings of abandonment, confusion with his lack of memories from his time spent in his village and migrating to Kathmandu. Wangdak also acknowledged that drama helped him to build a sense of inclusion, home, and family since he had only two phone calls from his family in his village over his 12 years in Kathmandu.

Similarly, Lasya who is generally shy, said that being involved with the drama program helped her discover aspects of her own identity and migrant experience. She states that drama has the power to "link us to our history and big social issues as well" (Lasya, 16, Upper Dolpa). By social issues Lasya later tells me how, in her village, spousal abuse related to alcoholism was a big problem, and was partially a reason why she was sent to Kathmandu to study. Through drama she feels as if she is able to present this issue to audiences and raise awareness about it. This allows other students with similar stories to know that they are not alone. She also uses

drama as a way to create a link between her past memories and experiences and her present life.

The Perils of Boarding School

In addition to the perks of residing in boarding school, research participants also illuminated challenges, especially in relation to family separation. One major concern related to cultural integration in the boarding school. For example, as all of the students came from different Himalayan regions they all spoke various regionally specific dialects of Tibetan and/or Nepali. To create a mutual understanding and common language among the various groups at the school, 17 participants acknowledged that they have lost the ability to communicate using their village dialect. They can only communicate in the Nepalese and English medium used in Kathmandu. For example as Ghephel stated, "being in this school is nice because of the opportunity to study, but the downside is we completely lose our mother tongue and cultural identity. I think the school itself can make more effort to have cultural programs…." (Ghepel, 16, Lower Mustang).

Nevertheless, the school does try to implement several cultural and language programs as a way of creating spaces for indigenous practices and languages for Himalayan students studying in Kathmandu. Sometimes however, there is a mismatch between what the cultural programs claim to provide and what the students themselves who experience family separation feel the programs should provide. Zenji told me that in the 11 years since he migrated to Kathmandu he had no visits or phone communication with his family. Furthermore, he acknowledged that it would be at least two years (after graduating class ten) before he would have the chance to visit his family. Coincidentally however, one week after the interview Zenji randomly met his parents and a brother. During a follow-up interview he said:

> that day was very strange for me. My father looked similar to how I remembered him but my mother looked very old. They took me to a school one hour away to meet my brother. He was studying in Kathmandu for the past 11 years and I did not know he was there! He called me brother but I told him not to because I felt like a stranger…. My

parents gave me a phone number to contact them, but I told them from today not to try to contact me that I will contact them. It is not that I don't love them, but I can't relate to them. It will take time. At school they have cultural programs such as learning traditional dancing from our villages.[1] It is fun and reminds me of my past, but it did not provide me with any skills that would have prepared me for meeting my family after such a long time. Even a simple program that would let us express and plan how to manage our emotions and identity changes from being in Kathmandu for so long would be very useful.… (Zenji, 16, Humla-Jumla).

Zenji's sentiments of feeling like a stranger to his family and village of birth were shared among many students as will be explored more in the next chapter in relation to the students who had the opportunity to visit their families after prolonged periods of family separation. Similar to Zenji's expressing the need for programs that deal with emotional and identity shifts of students, Bhoshay strongly stated that she felt:

> this school needs to have more programs where we can teach people who are not from the Himalayas how their negative views about us make us feel very bad. It irritates and makes me very upset when people find out we are from the Himalayan region and they say oh-h-h-h but you don't look like backwards villagers. You are not dirty, and you speak pretty well. Yes there is poverty there but we are also rich. We are rich in culture, traditional knowledge, and hard work. There should be an exchange programs for students from Kathmandu to go to our villages to study then their perspectives will change…. (Bhoshay, 16, Upper Mustang).

Similarly, Khalama shared her concerns in a semi-humorous tone by acknowledging that:

> Many people from here don't know about the Himalayan regions since it is very far from here. Lots of people think we are villagers who don't know anything, so when they ask

[1] At one time there was a Tibetan language program at the school but unfortunately in 2011 was discontinued due to limited funding.

me where Humla is sometimes I tell them you look on the map and you will find it ha- ha-ha. But I don't blame them. There is not enough knowledge and access to knowledge for them to learn about this area. I believe this school should increase our opportunities to try to share our experiences with them. If we tell them how it is there, then they will know how their thoughts negatively affect us.… (Khalama, age 16, Humla).

Both Bhoshay and Khalama recognize the importance of using cultural exchange to address and challenge stereotypes and stigma. Furthermore they both see educational spaces as being places to raise awareness about Himalayan concerns. In relation to education and children's geographies Horton et. al (2008) state that "Children's Geographers' whose work has specifically concerned spatialities…. should contribute understandings of (young) learners' own concerns and lifeworlds, to support the development of curricula and (especially active learning) activities which are more effectively and engagingly learning-centred (p. 343).

As a community-based researcher engaging with children's geographies I was interesting in further delving into proposed solutions and concerns that youth participants suggested regarding ways of bridging their geographically disparate lifeworlds to create more active learning spaces. For example, Opame and Lasya suggested the need for Himalayan school officials to work with non-Himalayan schools, to incorporate Himalayan cultural lessons into the curriculum of non-Himalayan schools to create a space for more recognition of Himalayan lifestyles. However, students such as Akar and Sashi felt that curriculum changes would not have adverse effects since it would feel like 'homework' rather than positive cultural engagement. Akar suggested that more children and youth could focus themselves to address these concerns since the direct contact would help to address concerns such as stigma. Sashi suggested that programs to enhance communication would allow students to deal better with long term periods of family separations. Sashi states:

there needs to be more coordination between school administration, parents and children

> themselves. The school administration cannot replace the deep emotions like the love of parents and family. The school administration should think strategically how to increase contact between children and parents and work on the emotional development of children with the help of the family and students themselves (Sashi, 17, Manang).

Sashi emphasises the importance of active communication and coordination among school officials, parents, and the students themselves in decision-making processes is telling. This would help facilitate stronger relationships between children, parents and larger communities. Overall, one major drawback to residing in the boarding school was the uncertainty of when students could return to their villages. How this separation shapes their identities and family relations is the focus of the next chapter.

Chapter 4

Return Journeys to Villages

> When I was separated from my parents I felt like they had forgotten and abandoned me. 11 years with no communication is very hard. But when I went back to my village my thoughts changed. It is not that they have forgotten me or they care less for me, but it is that they live in very difficult conditions. Now I won't say that they don't care for me. I would even thank them for giving me more opportunities, but I also believe that it is essential to reduce the gaps between communication…. (Dhargey, 20, Upper Dolpa).

> ….I totally forgot my mother tongue and my parents were finding it very difficult to communicate with me. I only smiled and my parents began to complain about that. I felt confused but they did not understand that. They even questioned if I was really their own daughter. (Amrita, 16, Lower Dolpa).

This chapter will explore the return and reception of students who had the opportunity to visit home villages after prolonged periods of family separation. The first section will provide insights into how participants identify with their villages leading up to and upon return from these family visits. The second section will explore participants' accounts and comparisons of urban and rural education.

4.1 Cross-Cultural Experiences and Identity Construction

Since migrating to Kathmandu, one student had the opportunity to visit his family in his village four times over a ten-year period of family separation; one student visited her village three times over nine years; one student visited his village two times over twelve years; nine students had the opportunity to visit their village after completing their class ten School Leaving Certificate exams after six to thirteen years of not visiting; and ten students have never visited their villages ranging from six to twelve years since migrating to Kathmandu.

Number of Student(s)	Visits to Village	Time of Separation
1	4	Over 9 years
1	3	Over 10 years
1	2	Over 12 years
9	1	Over 6 to 13 years
10	0	Over 6 to 12 years

Table 4.1 Number of visits to village since migration

Students who had the opportunity to return to their villages engaged in reflexive thoughts throughout different points of their migration experiences. To elaborate, students first had expectations in relation to what their village would be like from an emotional perspective. Their time spent in their villages also either confirmed or refuted their expectations. The time spent in their villages facilitated a space for participants to reconsider their migration to Kathmandu, and consider their relationships with their family and Himalayan villages.

In preparation for a return visit to their villages and reunions with family, many participants recounted their conceptualizations and expectations of 'home.' In relation to feelings of home, familiarity and unfamiliarity, Sara Ahmed (1999) states:

> Interestingly, it is the 'real' home, the very space from which one imagines oneself to have originated, and in which one projects the self as both homely and original, that is the most unfamiliar: it is here that one is a guest, relying on the hospitality of others (p.330).

For students such as Dhargey, it was not until time came closer for her first visit to her village in Upper Dolpa after eleven years of no family contact, that she had deep thoughts about home and feelings of familiarity and unfamiliarity. While contemplating her decisions about her decisions to return to Dolpa to visit, Dhargey stated:

> upon completing my secondary studies [class ten] I was excited as I was going to see my family and hometown after a very long time…. On the other side I was quite tense. I wasn't sure about a trip to Dolpa. I didn't have any idea about my financial situation to travel. Some of my friends got money offers from distant relatives, but I didn't have contact with my family for eleven years. I came to Kathmandu when I was six years old. I felt like an abandoned orphan who doesn't have anybody.... in this long time away, I didn't lose my mother tongue and know I would be able to communicate and relate to my villagers, but I was afraid of seeing my family since I would be a stranger to them. I was afraid of going back home because I was not sure if it really was my home

anymore…. (Dhargey, 20, Upper Dolpa).

While curious to find out more about her village, Dhargey felt and feared that the experience would be unfamiliar. She is still able to communicate using her Tibetan village dialect; however she expected an emotional disconnect with her family and associated 'home' with her feelings of abandonment. When Dhargey met her family for the first time she did experience an emotional disconnect. During that first encounter Dhargey recalls:

> after walking for nine days I met my family on the way as they were returning home. They had spent the winter at lower Dolpa. I didn't expect them to be there since we didn't move around much when I was in Dolpa. I was so surprised and couldn't recognize anybody. Actually, it was someone else who introduced me with my family. It was such a strange feeling, my sisters were holding my hands and hugging me but I couldn't say hello to them as I didn't remember anyone's name. I actually felt quite annoyed and did not want to embrace them, not even my mom and dad. At that moment I realized how much school and the children there [in Kathmandu] had become my family…. (Dhargey, 20, Upper Dolpa).

Thus, Dhargey felt a sense of confusion and unfamiliarity with reuniting with her family.[1]

From research on long-term family separation, Scheyvens and Storey (2006) drawing from the work of Wolf (1991), Hyndman (2001), and Till (2001) acknowledge that moving between spaces such the school and home, how we identify with ourselves and our relationships with others deeply, "changes us and we never return 'home' quite the same… and we do not know

[1] To elaborate as explored earlier, in Dhargey's village in Upper dolpa, many families in her community would migrate to lower Dolpa during the winter due to harsh weather conditions. However, since her family did not have any family in Lower Dolpa, her family never migrated during the winter. As she later found out, one of her sisters got married to a man from Lower Dolpa which enabled her family to migrate to Lower Dolpa during the winter. As Dhargey did not have any communication with her family over eleven years, she was unaware of such details.

who we will become during the… process (p. 220). Dhargey spent four months in her village. She realized how her time spent in Kathmandu had changed her and thus required her to construct and represent herself in ways that would allow her to feel a sense of belonging in her village. To elaborate, upon her arrival in the village Dhargey recounts:

> on my first night back my father became drunk and started fighting with mom, again. I started crying and my sisters just laughed, they told me that it is daily activity. But, I didn't like it and felt guilty. When they saw me crying, they asked me not to cry and complained about each other's bad habits to me. The next day I went to join community work. It was road construction. The roads were so hard to dig. I did my best to level it and I got lots of appreciation from people and my dad was so happy to get compliment as I am his daughter. *From that day, I did everything that they did*. I collected firewood, construction, farming, and grazing animals. I put so much effort that my fingers were cracked and I got many wounds on my fingers with severe knee pain. Everyone appreciated my hard work and dedication to Dolpa's development…. (Dhargey, 20, Upper Dolpa, *emphasis added*).

Dhargey's effort to fit into her family and village was emotionally draining and uncomfortable. She felt guilt about her parents' fighting, and was physically challenged by everyday rural activities that she was not accustomed to doing. Furthermore, she wanted to feel a sense of belonging in her village (similar to other participants) and engaged in everyday community activities and work, despite its dangers.

Near fatal experiences during such rural activities and work were recounted to me in- depth by Dhargey, Ghephel, Akar, and Jampa with a great deal of emotion. The experiences reflected a mismatch between what participants knew, and what family members and villagers expected the participants should know in a potential time of crisis. To elaborate, Dhargey said, one night there was a need for firewood. To get the wood, a trek over a large hill to a small forest

was necessary. Going up the hill was challenging but manageable. However on the way down, Dhargey lost her footing and began to slide faster and faster at an alarming rate. She was about to crash into some large boulders when at the last possible moment she changed her posture and managed to save her life. She said that on-looking villagers at the bottom of the hill had covered their eyes with the expectation that she was not going to survive. However, the villagers present also told her that she was not properly following the pattern of footsteps of the villager in front of her which could have prevented her injury. Dhargey was severely bruised from the lower back down and injured her knees; this required her to spend a few weeks in bed recovering (Dhargey, 20, Upper Dolpa). Similarly, Ghephel recalled that after meeting a family member, his father sent him back home and told him if he was to cross the stream be careful of the 'soft spots.' Ghephel said okay, but as he travelled back he recalls:

> there was one stream and I tried to cross by jumping. At that time my feet were not as long as they are now, so I fell in the stream and it started to pull me down under the surface. At that time I reached out and got a branch. It was too cold to scream, and I didn't know how to swim. I tried calling for my father but he was too far. After some struggle I managed to pull myself out and went home. That day was life or death for me…. (Ghephel, 16, Lower Mustang).

As Ghephel arrived home his family was thankful he was safe, but at the same time cautioned him for not being careful of the 'soft spots' that are clearly visible in streams. Ghephel, however, acknowledged that he did not know what 'soft spots' looked like, and therefore could not avoid them. The life and death experiences of Akar also reflect this lack of 'expected knowledge' in the part of villagers and families. Akar's close call occurred when he was returning to his home for the first time in eight years. Once Akar reached Dunai (the headquarters of Dolpa), his sister-in-law met him to guide him back to his village, which was one day horseback ride from Dunai. As his sister-in-law was guiding the horse on a small narrow and slippery path, Akar recalls:

> I became scared so I began to squeeze the horse tightly on the ribs with my feet. All of a sudden it became mad and jumped. I fell to the ground and broke my arm. There were no medical facilities around so one drunk villager on the roadside tied my hand up. If the horse had fallen on top of me there was a high chance I would not have survived…. My sister-in-law was very worried but also began to tell me that I was not supposed to kick the horse in that spot since that makes them startled. She kept saying that I should have known that, but I could not have known that because I didn't ride a horse in eight years!" (Akar, 16, Lower Dolpa).

Along the same lines, Jampa was asked to go and visit a relative in a neighbouring village; the relative lived one day away by horse. On his way Jampa expressed that he was very uncomfortable riding a horse since had not ridden one in the twelve years he spent in Kathmandu prior to returning to visit his village. While going up a hill the horse became hesitant so Jampa got off and tried to coax the horse to go forward with some food, as he saw people in his village doing when he was younger. The horse took two or three steps then the edge beneath Jampa's foot gave way. Luckily Jampa had his hand wrapped around the reigns which prevented him from plummeting to his death. Upon telling his story to his brother, his brother became somewhat agitated and told him that he did not properly read the body language of the horse and was not actively engaging with environment indicators around him (Jampa, 20, Upper Dolpa). What the near fatal experiences of these participants reveal is a deep disconnect between what research participants themselves knew in relation to what family members and villagers expected them to know. Participants returning to their villages after a long time often found themselves negotiating a space between familiarity and unfamiliarity in relation to what they knew and did not know. Past lived experiences in their villages gave them some sense of familiarity. For example, Jampa trying to coax the horse to go forward with food which he remembered from his childhood in his village and tried to apply to his 'present' situation. At the same time, Dhargey

did not realize that she had to walk up and down a mountain in a particular pattern; Ghephel did not know what ‘soft spots’ in a stream meant; and Akar did not think squeezing a horse with his feet would cause it to panic. All this local knowledge was assumed by family members and villagers and/or expected to be preserved within participants.

Participants acknowledged that many villagers articulated a ‘timeless’ element in relation to their migration experiences. There was often an expectation that participants ‘know’ the ins and outs of rural life, even though being physically separated from their families and absent for prolong periods of time. Despite long-term family separations, some participants like Ngawang felt immediate connection, familiarity, and belonging with family and community although not having any contact with his village in thirteen years. This experience was shaped by the expectation that all migrant members would at some point reintegrate back into the community in Ngawang’s village in Upper Dolpa (one of the most remote villages in the entire Himalayan region). With regard to migration and return migration, King and Christou (2011) states, “collective memory of migration, exile and the homeland produces both a profound sense of ethnic consciousness and identity, and a narrative of return which is shared by the community (all or some members) and is transmitted across the generations” (p. 457). Furthermore, on collective memory, migration, and spaces of familiarity and unfamiliarity, Sara Ahmed (1999) states:

> The gap between memory and place in the very dislocation of migration allows communities to be formed: that gap becomes reworked as a site of bodily transformation, the potential to remake one’s relation to that which appears as unfamiliar, to reinhabit spaces and places…. It is the role of community in the recreation of migrant selves that is so important. The community comes to life through the collective act of remembering in the absence of a common terrain (p. 344).

Both King and Christou (2011) and Ahmed (2009) place emphasis on the dislocation migration

produces. Ngawang's migration and return to his village demonstrates how young people's lives are constrained by place and memory but also how they actively produce their own space (Valentine, 2003, p. 39). For example upon reuniting with his family after thirteen years Ngawang recounts:

> honestly, meeting them after so long I did not feel an emotional gap. Even though there was a large gap of time it was quite easy to integrate. *A large reason for this integration was from my ancestors also engaging in such migration away from Dolpa and return to Dolpa*…. I even recognized all of the faces of my aunties and uncles ha-ha-ha. I exchanged hugs with my family and we spent the night sharing stories. The next day I helped in the agricultural work the same way I did before I left…. after about two weeks my villagers asked me if I could teach since I completed schooling in Kathmandu and there was a shortage of teachers in the village schools. I took up the role of a substitute teacher but quickly realized that *being away for so long I was not too familiar with all of the cultural content of the history lessons I was expected to teach*. But, overall I was a*ble to fill gaps with my experiences from Kathmandu.* Overall I found the teaching experience quite rewarding…. (Ngawang, age 21, Upper Dolpa, *emphasis added*).

Ngawang narrates how his expectation of return is shared by the community and transmitted across generations. By ancestors, Ngawang refers to relatives such as a great-grandfather, a grandfather, a grandmother, uncles, aunts and his father who migrated away from Dolpa throughout their lives for trade and work, and who returned home at a later date. This migration norm had been transmitted through generations and provides a space of familiarity for Ngawang since he knew there was an 'expectation' for him to return. Nevertheless, there was also a space of unfamiliarity that Ngawang experienced when he was asked to teach. He realized that not being physically present in the community for thirteen years, meant he was not actively up-to-date on cultural knowledge and shifts. Even though Ngawang did feel comfortable in his village

this did not “necessarily result in a final decision to stay or to return. Migrants weigh the pros and cons of settlement and return in constantly evolving reflections on opportunities and a sense of belonging ‘here’ and ‘there” (Erdal and Ezzati, 2014, p.5). By having the opportunity to return to his village Ngawang and other returning students were able to reflect upon their migration, education, and family separation more deeply. Despite feeling a sense of belonging in his village Ngawang decided to return to Kathmandu and study due to the limited educational opportunities in his village, a point explored further below.

Some students who initially did not feel a sense of belonging when returning to their villages were able to connect with/to their villages after some time. Lhundup, who migrated to Kathmandu in 2003, had two opportunities over eleven years to visit his village in Upper Mustang. On his first return visit in 2007, he was excited to visit his family. Upon arrival however, he found that his father, an older brother and an older sister were somewhat cold towards him. A week later his father told him that he had to return to Kathmandu since they (Lhundup’s father, older brother and older sister) were migrating to Lower Mustang for work. Lhundup felt agitated that he spent so much time preparing to spend at least two months with his family and they told him he had to leave after a week. After his return to Kathmandu his agitation turned into deep frustration, and eventually feelings of abandonment. In 2014, seven years later, after completing his secondary level of studies (class ten) Lhundup had the opportunity to visit his family once again. He was deeply conflicted about the visit and contemplated if he really wanted to go. Eventually he did decide to visit. On that occasion he recalled:

> when I was returning I often had to use a tractor. Just think of how physically hard it is, with the dust and wind, for about six hours at a time for two days without sitting. In these moments I was really regretting going back and vowed that I never will. I was with some other villagers on the tractor, and when I told them my emotions, they said, that

> tourists were coming to our village by spending lots of money so I should be happy to have the opportunity to live there. But I was thinking, even I would like to go to other countries to visit, same like the tourist, but there is a different with visiting a place and wanting to live there permanently. However, when I saw the condition of my village and my family my thoughts completely changed and it made me want to come back again. That day I came to a realization…. Whatever the situation in life, good or bad, events will happen that you cannot control. Whatever the outcome, it helps you to learn. I don't know what I will do in my future but I will try my best to keep and expand my relations with my village and family.… (Lhundup, 19, Upper Mustang).

Lhundup's self-discovery changed his feelings of abandonment to feelings of acceptance. Specifically Lhundup came to terms with his family's distant behaviour with him during his prior visit in 2007. Ultimately, his family wanted him to be safe from the Maoist insurgency.

The Maoist insurgency started in 1996 and formally ended in 2006 (Basnett, 2009, p. 4). Lhundup at the approximate age of seven was enrolled in boarding school in Kathmandu. Lhundup remembered at the time (2001) his father telling him that he was going to take him to visit Kathmandu, where he would get the chance to study in a boarding school. Lhundup was excited to see Kathmandu but did not engage with the fact that boarding school would result in long-term family separation. Thus, over his time in Kathmandu the only reason he felt he was placed in school was because his family no longer cared for him. He later came to know that the Maoist uprising had affected his village. Not until his visit in 2014 did he personally understand the effect of the insurgency on his life course. During his trip in 2014, his father began to cry and told Lhundup that putting him in boarding school in 2001 was a heart-breaking decision. Because, the Maoists insisted that one child join the Maoist movement from each household, out of fear that Lhundup would have been recruited his father felt that schooling in Kathmandu, far away from Upper Mustang, was the safest option. Furthermore, his father had to make the

emotional decision to send Lhundup's two younger sister and two older brothers in a school in India. Lhundup's youngest brother was sent to a school in Lower Mustang to also avoid recruitment. Only Lhundup's eldest sister and brother remained in Mustang, as they were much older than the other siblings and therefore were not at risk of being recruited by the Maoists. As Lhundup's father recalled each experience of placing his children in various boarding schools was hard and emotional. He also apologized for the lack of emotions expressed when Lhundup visited in 2007, and acknowledged that despite the official end of the Maoist revolution in 2006, there were still some small-scale Maoist activities throughout the Himalayas. His father had to yet again send him to school in Kathmandu with the intention of protecting him. Even though Lhundup states that he still experiences a disconnect with his village because he cannot fluently speak his local language, he has already been trying to relearn his village dialect. Furthermore, he is creating new spaces for cultural exchange by working with an international NGO to facilitate communication, bridging programs between villages in Mustang (and neighbouring Himalayan regions) with youth migrants in Kathmandu and Pokhara. Lhundup's efforts of trying to facilitate community development projects predominantly in the field of education and communication can extend Ager and Strang (2008) ideas around social connections (Social Bridges/Social Bonds/Social Links) from a global-south, youth, perspective. Social Bonds occur with family, co-ethnic, co-national, co-religious groups such as ethnic enclaves that share cultural practices and maintain familiar patterns of relationships to help to facilitate a sense of community(Ager and Strang, 2008, p 178). For example the Mustangie ethnic enclaves Lhundup works in Kathmandu and Pokhara. Furthermore, Social Bridges connect one community with other host communities, which can facilitate social harmony and wider community participation and potentially better educational, employment and economic opportunities (p.178). Lhundup creates social bridges among different Himalayan and non-Himalayan groups through his NGO engagement. Social Links create connections between individuals and structures of the state,

such as government services(p.181). For example, the communication services Lhundup stresses are important towards enriching the lives of youth from Himalayan regions in Kathmandu.

The importance of communication between rural Himalayan villages and Kathmandu, especially between children and their parents., is important since it helps to "confirm the relationship itself…. [Furthermore,] family relationships are actively re-created [and/or]…. require active maintenance simply in order to avoid losing their social meaning" (Carling et. al., 2012, p. 2-3). For some students the lack of communication during their period of family separation resulted in participants feeling like a complete stranger when reuniting with their family for the first time. Sixteen-year-old Amrita's testimony at the outset of this chapter illuminated a strong emotional disconnect between her family and herself based on an absence of communication. Upon returning to her village after eight years of separation, Amrita was hardly able to speak her village dialect. Also, as she grew, a lot of her physical features changed that made her quite unrecognizable to her family. Her parents insisted that 'their' daughter in Kathmandu had sent her as a scam to try to get money from them (Amrita, 16, Lower Dolpa). There were multiple impeding factors in emotional disconnects between students and their family ranging from poverty and infrastructural constraints (such as transportation) preventing visits; lack of consistent communication; and separation of active Himalayan culture while residing in Kathmandu. Similarly, Poso had a very hard time after arrival in his village. He found out that he was an older brother to a brother, and two sisters who were born during his time away from his village. As Poso states:

> I meet my father, mother, elder sister, elder brother and a new brother and two new sisters. I recognized my mom, father, and sister but I found it difficult to recognize my elder brother. One day my brother was going this way and I was going that way and I did not even know that was my brother until my mom said he is your brother! .... I have almost completely forgotten my mother tongue so it was very difficult to communicate

> with them. Overall, I felt like a stranger in my own family.... (Poso, 18, Lower Dolpa).

Both Amrita and Poso told me that they were not able to feel a space of familiarity in their villages and referred to their reunion with their family as being uncomfortable and emotionally traumatic. With regards to transnational relations and trauma Carling et. al. (2012) state that, "emotional trauma can limit the strength and health of transnational connections between parents and children (p. 195). Exploring how trauma influences the lives and relations of children and youth from a children's geographies perspective, Horton et. al (2008: 341) and Skelton (2008:23) acknowledge that it is important to capture how emotional/affective experience and their diverse factors (manifestations, for example, nostalgia, reverie or trauma) indecision-making processes of children and youth about their own life course. Given both Amrita and Poso's traumatic emotional distance with their families, they have taken decisions to cut all ties with their villages and build *new* lives in Kathmandu.

4.2 Urban and Rural Education: A study in Contrasts

> I chose to come back and continue my studies in Kathmandu. As much as I miss Mustang, if I stayed longer in my village it would increase my chances of getting married early and having to leave school altogether, similar to my younger sisters (Bhoshay, 16, Upper Mustang).

> After now graduating from class ten and visiting home, I really wanted to stay in my village but my parents say that I should go back to Kathmandu and get more degrees. They say the schools are better in Kathmandu and that I can always come home during big holidays…. (Ketu, 19, Lower Dolpa).

Up to this point, the discussion has revolved around how children who become youth conceptualize ideas around 'home,' and how factors such as migration, longterm family separation, and boarding school residency shape and change the perceptions of 'home'. Nevertheless, an important point from the children's geographies literature is made by Valentine (2003):

> although children's lives are often focused on the home, school and the neighbourhood,

> these geographies are contained within much wider structures such as the economy, the state, etc. While social studies of childhood have highlighted children’s agency (Prout and James, 1990) we need to acknowledge the social structures and agencies that also shape children’s and young people’s lives, and the way that other social identities such as gender, class, race, sexuality and so on intersect with the identity child (p.39).

Many participants reflected how social variables such as gender, age, ethnicity, and location (being from remote Himalayan regions) intersect with larger structures such as the economy to shape their educational experiences. Mukerjee-Reed (2008) considers how the unequal power relationships constituted by these social variables perpetuate structural inequality across communities (p.128-129). Also, Mukerjee-Reed suggests that reducing or overcoming structural inequalities requires reconfiguration of the matrices of social power (Mukerjee-Reed, 2008, p.25). Participants mentioned one structural inequality in particular: how gender affected educational experiences across rural and urban education systems. Participants such as Bhoshay who had the opportunity to visit her village four times over nine years, felt a deep connection to her Mustang community and contemplated staying permanently after her last visit in 2012. However, she chose to engage in a transnational relation with her village since she felt increased pressure to get married if she were to reside permanently in her village. As Bhoshay states:

> girls have a harder time integrating back into their community because they are often still expected to get married and have children. When we study in Kathmandu we sacrifice so much and put lots of dedication into our studies. To go back and have to get married and not go to school is not really fair…. (Bhoshay, 16, Upper Mustang).

On top of feeling an emotional disconnect from her village, Amrita acknowledged that her father openly practiced gender discrimination at home which intensified Amrita’s negative feelings. Amrita expressed:

> many parents in my village believe that boys will help them in the future. My father

> thinks this as well. You know, I only got chance to study in school [in Kathmandu] because of my mother. My father gave good education to my brother who is studying in Nepalgunj, but you know my younger sister is saying sometimes my father is discriminating against the girls because he got her married instead of sending her to school. Sometimes I don't like my father and never even try to talk with him. It is sad to know that my younger brother is drinking alcohol and gambling but my father continues to give him money because he says those are boy habits.... (Amrita, 16, Lower Dolpa).

Both Bhoshay and Amrita reveal how gender assumptions in their villages dictate what girls 'should' do and not do, have implications for them. Educational opportunities in rural settings only led to marriage. The city and schools there represent an opening for girls to do something more. The boarding school experience not only disrupts village norms for girls, but provides an emancipatory space for them, at least in the short term. Bhoshay's rural educational experiences were limited since there was a pressure for her to get married and leave school altogether. Amrita experienced gender discrimination both in a rural context and an urban context since her brother was sent to a better school than she because of her father's views on gender. Nevertheless, participants who suggested problems with gender discrimination also explored the need to raise awareness about it. For example, Opame strongly acknowledged that:

> often village people think that education of children is a waste of money and time, especially for girls. There is lack of awareness to challenge this belief. I consider education as being the light of life. If the government provides good education for students both in Himalayan villages as well as cities like Kathmandu, then the entire country can develop even faster. Also schools need to increase the importance of the education for girls since often people think that women should only have domestic roles like caring [for] children. I think this problem is linked to following the past culture. It is not that the culture says it is okay to discriminate against gender, but it is still quite

masculine. Men dominate and there are not many spaces for social justice outputs. Schooling for girls can help to increase the recognition for girls and let us know that we can achieve more than we believe we can achieve…. (Opame, 18, Lower Dolpa).

In other words, education for girls is seen by girls as genuine development. Opame is in her last year of secondary studies and will be graduating in March 2015. She is actively thinking about what she wants to do after graduation. Nevertheless, from her strong passion for educational gender rights, Opame has taken the initiative of contacting an educational specialist who does NGO work specifically to raise awareness about unequal gender issues within education systems throughout Nepal. Opame plans to take her knowledge and construct some community-focused workshops in her village to discuss the importance of educational equality for girls when she visits in April 2015.

As Opame mentions, many participants suggested the need for more government interventions in both rural and urban educational development. For example, Ngawang spoke of how education systems in many villages in the Upper Dolpa region are not properly funded or supported by the Nepalese government. He states there are six primary schools that only go up to class five in the Upper Dolpa region where he is from. These schools are largely funded by foreign money which makes the region dependent upon the outside charity. Ngawang also acknowledges that since facilities such as electricity and water are extremely limited, what often happens when the government does try to appoint teachers in the region is that they go to Lower Dolpa to register their names and take the salary without actually going to Upper Dolpa to teach when their teaching term is supposed to begin. Ngawang explains that "there needs to be increased coordination between urban and rural educational system to increase more opportunities in Himalayan regions and for Himalayan students studying in cities like Kathmandu" (Ngawang, age 21, Upper Dolpa). Increased coordination between rural and urban schools is important since the credentials of students who study in rural schools are sometimes

not recognized in urban schools. Also, students applying for scholarship opportunities in Kathmandu often are disqualified through not having sufficient documentation such as identity cards, birth certificate records, and citizenship to qualify for urban schools. For example Jampa wanted to pursue higher levels of studies in the field of medicine. He applied for a scholarship, received it, and then shortly thereafter had it revoked. Reflecting on that experience Jampa states:

> the criteria for the scholarship was for us to complete our class ten exams with high distinction and have to be from the Himalayan region. I qualified since I received one of the highest marks on the exam in the whole of Nepal and also I am from Dolpa. I even had a copy of my father's birth certificate to prove it. I applied and received the scholarship! Upon going to pick it up they said they had to give it to another candidate since I did not have a proper identification card and citizenship…. In Dolpa lots of parents do not keep birth records of children since they have to trek to the headquarter to do that and lots of time children do not survive to be adults …. I don't even know if my birth certificate exists! (Jampa, 20, Upper Dolpa).

With regards to identity cards, Beazley (2003), during her fieldwork with street children in Indonesia, acknowledges, "to obtain an identity card, a child needs a birth certificate, a family registration card and an address, which most…. children do not have" (p. 198). This is the same in the Himalayan region of Nepal. Without identification cards and citizenship in Kathmandu, students are unable to buy vehicles; have a hard time seeking medical care; cannot compete in national sports competition and events; and are very limited when applying for higher education and work. This causes many Himalayan participants to find themselves in a space of precariousness. Revisiting the social relations of gender, Laczo (2010) considers how citizenship can act as one possible way to help increase access to greater educational and work opportunities for women and girls throughout Nepal. When considering citizenship historically in Nepal, particularly in relation to children, Laczo states:

> Citizenship is awarded on blood rights – that is fathers pass citizenship to their sons and daughter. After the age 16 both men and women much apply for a Certificate of Citizenship, to ensure that their citizenship rights are protected. While this process is relatively straightforward for a young man, it is not so for a woman, whose application must be supported by either her father or her husband (p.78).

With regards to structure and agency, De Hass (2010) conceptualizes structure and agency by considering ways in which agency can become a way of reconstructing social structures. Lam (2012) and Mukerjee-Reed (2008) consider the agency of children as being an important factor in the reconstruction of structures. The ideas of these scholars can be considered in relation to how national and international collaborative development initiative can work together to positively influence citizenship acquisition and subsequently education opportunities. Women and girls from different classes, castes, ethnicities, and localities (such as those from the Himalayan regions) in Kathmandu found themselves in spaces of precarious legal status with very few pathways to citizenship and access to education (p. 80). International initiatives helped to promote advocacy initiatives in a national Nepali context with international advocacy groups placing stress upon international political discourses such as the United Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), United Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and with direct partnership with Shakti Samuha, a local Non-profit Kathmandu predominantly working against female trafficking concerns. These initiatives promote the importance of equal citizenship rights for women and girls. Through the advocacy groups, girls and women exercised their agency by engaging in feminist movements for change (Laczo, 2010, p. 76). The advocacy of these participating girls and women was a major influencing factor in the passage of the Nepal Citizenship Act 2006. Since the passing of the Act, Nepali mothers can transmit their citizenship to a child, while simultaneously opening more transparent pathways for girls to access school

and work opportunities (Nepal Citizenship Act 2006). This initiative stresses the role international discourse can play in the facilitation of national and local community development. Through North-South collaboration networks, these initiatives did open a space for girls' and women's agency to be heard and practised, that subsequently influences the educational structures and experiences. More emphasis (both in research and outside of research) is needed to increase and enhance pathways for Himalayan children and youth. For example the participants in this study desire more access to, and transparency in, applying for identity cards, citizenship, and educational opportunities in both rural and urban contexts.

The narratives of participants in this study only begin to delve into local, national, and international discourses around education, migration and family separation. Nevertheless these narratives acts as entry points to considering how social variables such as gender, age and ethnicity shape educational access and experiences of Himalayan children and youth both in their remote villages and/or when they migrate to Kathmandu to study. Their testimonies illuminate how ideas around structure, agency, and citizenship are connected to educational opportunities of migrant Himalayan children and youth. Furthermore, this research study in its entirety recognizes Himalayan youth as competent, knowledgeable subjects themselves. This research study documents and promotes the creation of spaces and processes that are child- and youth-centric. Child- and youth-centricity both within and outside of research is important since it helps to identify and address negative stereotypes, common but often inaccurate assumptions, and myths pertaining to the lives of migrant Himalayan children and youth. This research also seeks to understand and highlight actual voices and experiences related to their migratory, family separation and educational experiences of Himalayan children and youth in Nepal.

Chapter 5: Conclusions

> This research project was definitely very useful. The process of working with you helped me to build my confidence with speaking and to draw attention to important details in my life. The most important thing this research has done is give me the ability to spread knowledge about Nepal and its Himalayan region's tradition, culture, living styles and religion. It was my pleasure to share lots of information with you and learning from you *Dhai* [older brother]. Thank you very much for giving me such an opportunity to speak and learn.… (Lhundup, 19, Upper Mustang).
>
> We need more research like this that lets us express freely and feel comfortable doing so. Expressing our views is important but often when people ask us to express our views, the questions kind of already limits what you are going to say.… (Amrita, 16, Lower Dolpa).

This thesis will end with a brief problematization of how the migration stories featured in this study unsettle prevailing discourse around migration, education, and research experiences. In addition, the current and potential life projections the participants see for themselves will be presented in relation to my plans of reciprocating the finding of the study with them.

5.1 Problematizing Migration, Educational, and Research Experiences as Linear

This study began by exploring the pre-migration experiences of Trans-Himalayan children and youth. What followed was an exploration into the narratives of participants during their migration journeys away from their remote villages. Then, participants' experiences in Kathmandu and residing in a boarding school, in relation to narratives around long term family separation and associations with 'home,' were considered. Lastly, there was an exploration of how students felt upon returning to their village for the first time after a significant time of absence. Despite this linear organization that traces pre-migration, migration, and return visits to villages, migration as well as educational and research experiences are more dynamic in nature. To elaborate, many participants described their life course by recalling their return visit experiences before their initial migration to Kathmandu, while other participants chose to focus more on their boarding school experiences since they could not recall many details from their

time spent in their villages prior to migrating. With regards to education, some participants who had schooling experience in their village had to restart once they came to Kathmandu as their credentials were not recognized, while other students had a hard time continuing post-secondary studies because of not having identification cards, birth certificates, and/or citizenship documents fromtheir respective villages.

Furthermore, migrating to Kathmandu and residing in a boarding school for prolonged periods of time, participants felt a tension between being in Kathmandu and wanting to be in their villages simultaneously. As the literature on children's geographies throughout this study, and scholars such as Wolf (1991); Ahmed (1999); Till (2001) and Hyndman (2001) described, time, place and space are fragmented and on a continuum rather than being simple here/there or now/then binaries. Through my longterm working relation with Nepal, I have personally experienced the blurring of here/there, now/then binaries and also a transcendence of the boundaries of 'the field.' The in-depth engagement of countless hours spent reading, writing and communicating with Nepal on a daily basis makes me feel as if I am *there* in Nepal despite being physically *here*, in Canada. Similarly, right at the start of his interview Champo stated, "I do not want to start by sharing with the word firstly, and end with the word lastly, because my experiences is more than just one beginning and one end…. Actually, sometimes there is an end before a beginning…." (Champo, 16, Lower Dolpa). Champo's sentiment, similar to the rest of the participants' testimonies, reflects the fluidity of migration, villages, education, and family separation experiences.

What was crucial to gaining access to and engaging with youth testimonies was creating a comfortable and ethical space that participants knew that they could share what they chose to, and also withdraw from the research at any given time with no repercussions. From the creation of a comfortable and sensitive space participants shared rich details about understanding the reasons for their migration to Kathmandu. Some of the reasons for migration from Himalayan

villages explored were parents sending their children away to Kathmandu during the rise of the Maoist insurgency due to the increased chances of recruitment in rural villages; parents facing economic challenges of providing for large families; domestic problems such as divorce and death of parents; and participants wanting more career and education options rather than just agricultural prospects. While in Kathmandu participants explored their boarding school experiences and family separations by considering how their associations with 'home' changed over time; the influences Kathmandu had on their identity constructions; and experiences of residing in a boarding school in relation to concerns of communication with family. Experiences in Kathmandu transcended into exploring how expectations students had were either confirmed or refuted once visiting their villages after prolonged periods of separation. From visiting their villages students were also able to articulate their emotions about their reunions; express feelings of familiarity and unfamiliarity with family and the culture; and propose comparisons between rural and urban educational systems in relation to concerns of more government funding for rural education, more coordination between rural and urban schools, and the intersection of education and social variables such as gender ethnicity and age.

Throughout this research, I found it important for me to constantly be reflexive about my intersecting social identities, for example being a researcher while also being recognized as a *Dhai* [older brother] by my Nepalese participants. Being recognized as an older brother allowed be to further engage in a trusting environment with my participants. Furthermore, an unexpected outcome of engaging in research *with* my participants was not only my participants feeling a sense of emancipation, but also a personal validation that my research was 'more than work' as it empowered my participants to think critically as the testimonies by Ketu and Lhundup at the outset of this chapter illuminated. Similarly, as Sashi also ended his interview by saying:

> thank you brother for always being there and inspiring and motivating me. Your love makes me strong and dedicative. I started feeling that I am here because of the love and

support that you are pouring on to me. Now I feel more responsible and that I should be a role model to my small brothers and sisters like you are too me. Thanks for giving me the opportunity to share my feelings (Sashi, 17, Manang).

Even though all of the participants thanked me for the opportunity to be a part of this study, the time they took our of their busy schedules to participate by sharing their memories, feelings, and stories was a life-changing experience for me personally, both as a researcher and as a brother figure for the participants. The narratives of these participants throughout this thesis were rich in details and emotions. To gain access to these accounts did not happen just within a four-month fieldwork placement, but more from relations developed over five years and ongoing continuous contact.

5.2 Current Lives and Potential Projections

> Memories are very powerful because it helps us to understand what you did, how you did it and when you did it. Memories helps us with building our future. Memories are also a powerful tool to maintain all the habits, living style of our Himalayan regions to assist in economically, socially and personal development…. (Ketu, 19, Lower Dolpa).

> Everything I am doing now is with the high hopes of making changes for the future. I hope for changes for me, changes for you, changes for Nepal and the Mountain regions, and maybe even changes for the world…. (Bhoshay, 16, Upper Mustang).

This section will briefly chronicle the current livelihoods and potential life projections of each participant (in alphabetical order) and will end with my plans for reciprocating the findings of this study with the research participants.

Akar's father and elder sister passed away in the last two years. Unfortunately, because of distance and funding he could not attend either funeral in his Lower Dolpa village. Akar will be entering his last year of secondary studies (class ten) in March of 2015. After completing secondary school he plans to visit his village. He is contemplating either staying in his village to assist his older brother with a small family hotel, or returning to Kathmandu to pursue post-secondary studies in the field of medicine.

Amrita will also be entering her last year of secondary studies (class ten) in March of 2015. Due to great educational progress, in 2014 Amrita was promoted from class eight directly to class ten. Despite her village being in the same general area as Akar, she is firm about not returning to visit anytime soon. She hopes to study to either become a chartered accountant or a primary level school teacher.

Bhoshay is currently in class eight. She hopes to continue a transitional relation in which she can continue to visit family and friends in her village in Upper Mustang while continuing her studies in Kathmandu. She hopes to visit her village in the summer of 2017 once completing secondary studies. Bhoshay actively teaches younger students from the Mustang region some of the local village dialects.

Champo retuned to Lower Dolpa in 2012 (shortly after my last visit) when he was in class seven. He returned to help to care for his father who was having some health difficulties. His plans were to study in Dunai until class ten, and depending on the health of his father, return to Kathmandu for post-secondary studies. During an event run by the Australian NGO I met a relative of Champo and asked her how he was doing. She said he is good and is in Kathmandu. I asked her if there would be a possibility for me meet him and she said of course he is smiling at you from across the room! Both of us had a random but pleasant reunion that day. Currently Champo is in class nine and will enter his last year of Secondary studies in the spring of 2015. His father, who was suffering from tuberculosis, is doing much better and is under the care of one of Champo's elder brothers. I am currently one of Champo's sponsors for post-secondary studies in Kathmandu.

Dhargey, who is one of the first ten students to study at the boarding school featured in this study, has successfully completed a two-year teaching certificate in 2014. Over the past year she was teaching class one to class ten. I had the absolute pleasure to co-teach with her in the summer of 2014. She is currently enrolled in a Double Major Bachelor of Arts Degree in Social

Work and Sociology. For the placement component of her degree, Dhargey has decided to continue teaching at the boarding school and assist the graduating students with their school-to-higher education and/or school-to-work transitions. Since visiting her village in 2012 she has not had the chance to visit. She hopes to visit after the completion of her degree.

Garkan is currently in class seven. Due to great educational progress in 2014 he was promoted from class five directly to class seven. Garkan unfortunately revealed that his mother has been diagnosed with a tumor in her chest; his father has been diagnosed with Alzheimer's in which he goes to the local market everyday looking for Garkan; and his nephew (elder brother's son) fell off a roof and suffered permanent brain damage. The separation that Garkan endures makes him continuously anxious, as he is unsure when the next time he will get to visit his village in Lower Mugu. After our four-hour interview Garkan asked if he could please borrow my cell so he could try to call his village. Luckily, he was able to contact his brother and father. His mother was ill at the time and could not speak. The call is something that resonates with Garkan. Garkan wants to become a social worker to help other students who endure family separation to deal with their emotions and problems.

Ghephel is currently in class eight and is excelling in English and Social Sciences. His mother came last year to meet him, but he was unable to communicate with her since he could no longer speak his village dialect. Unfortunately, his younger brother drowned in the same river where he had his near-death encounter. Due to the distance and cost of travel he was not able to attend the funeral. He hopes to visit his village in Lower Mustang after completing his secondary studies in 2017. He aspires to be a teacher who specializes in disability studies.

Jampa, who is one of the first ten students to study at the boarding school featured in this study, completed a certificate in business administration in 2014. He recently secured a scholarship (through international funding) to pursue his dreams in the field of medicine. He is now completing his MBBS (Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery) in Pokhara. He is also

currently the co-editor of his school magazine. His article analyzing medicinal development in Upper Dolpa was recently picked for publication in the magazine. Unfortunately, Jampa's father passed away last year. After the completion of his degree Jampa hopes to return to Upper Dolpa to meet his family and expand medical facilities.

Ketu, who is also one of the first ten students to study at the boarding school featured in this study, completed a certificate in business administration in 2014. He is currently enrolled in a BBA (Bachelor of Business Administration) with a minor in Hotel Management. Ketu had the opportunity to visit his village in 2012. He is hesitant to return because of his father's addiction to alcohol. However, he misses the open environment and Dolpa Culture. It was not until a week into my stay in Nepal in 2014 that we found out that our homes were only a one-minute walk apart! Thus, the proximity allowed frequent visits from Ketu. We were able to explore and engage in religious celebrations, visit different cultural sites, and try many local foods. His help was crucial towards understanding a lot of insights about the educational and cultural systems of both Kathmandu and various Himalayan regions, often from first-hand experience.

Khalama is currently in class eight. Her elder brother who completed his secondary studies last year retuned to Humla to visit, and is now in India looking for potential work. Khalama says that she is also considering to visit her family in Humla in 2017 and also going too India to start a career in the field of fashion design. She does not want to remain in her village for a long period of time due to the pressure of getting married.

Lasya is currently in class seven. She avidly practises drama and is starting to raise awareness about Himalayan concerns through student-led stage shows at Boudah Stupa. She hopes to visit her village with her twin sister after graduating in 2018.

Lhundup is completing a certificate in business administration and is in the process of applying for a BBA (Bachelor of Business Administration) with a minor in Accounting. After his studies, Lhundup may return to his village to care for his aging father if alternative care

cannot be arranged. Lhundup and I keep in contact on a daily basis. He keeps me updated on many daily events occurring in Nepal and even started to provide me with some basic Nepali and Tibetan language training.

Ngawang, who is one of the first ten students to study at the boarding school featured in this study, is completing his MBBS (Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery) in Kathmandu. He had the choice of studying medicine at Kathmandu or Pokhara but chose Kathmandu so he could continue to visit the boarding school daily to tutor the younger students there. He is specializing in the field of community medicine, and hopes to help expand the medical sector in Upper Dolpa. He recently received high distinction for the completion of his first- and second-year medical exams.

Opame is in class ten and will be completing her secondary studies in March of 2015. She is trying to arrange a trip to her Lower Dolpa village in April of 2015; however, she has a deep fear of not being able to locate her family upon return. Regardless of the outcome, Opame has high hopes of having informal workshops to raise awareness about gender equality in her village. She is preparing applications to apply for a Double Major B.A degree in Education and Gender studies.

Poso is currently working in an automobile mechanic shop. After his uncomfortable family reunion with his family in the summer of 2014 he strongly feels that he does not want to return to his village anytime soon. However, he does realize that if he wants better work and educational opportunities he will need his birth certificate records. Thus, he plans to go to Dunai to inquire if it is possible for him to receive his birth certificate without the presence of a parent. If not he will try to convince his father to accompany him. He hopes to pursue further education and/or a career in dramatic arts.

Purnima will be entering her last year of secondary studies (class ten) in March of 2015. She is unsure of what she wants to pursue after the completion of her studies. Her parents recently

migrated to Upper Dolpa from Upper Mustang. Purnima hopes to visit both regions in the near future. Purnima keeps in regular contact with during her holidays.

Rabten is in class ten and will be completing his secondary studies in March of 2015. He is trying to arrange a trip to his village in Humla in April of 2015, which he has not visited in approximately nine years. He is excited but a little nervous to meet his family as he can no longer speak his village dialect. Nevertheless, he cannot wait to visit some of the temples he remembers visiting when he was a child. He hopes to apply for a certificate in the field of economics.

Sashi will be entering her last year of secondary studies (class ten) in March of 2015. Since the passing of his father a few years back, his mother makes frequent trips to Chitwan where she engages in the trade of medicinal herbs she collects in Manang. Sashi hopes to visit both Chitwan and Manang after the completion of his studies. He has asked me to accompany him when he visits these places for the first time. Sashi keeps in regular contact with me during his holidays.

Skamar completed a certificate in Advanced Accounting in 2013. During my time in Nepal he applied to study in Melbourne, Australia. In October he was granted the visa, and is now studying Business Administration. He is staying at the home of a distant family friend.

Temba will be entering her last year of secondary studies (class ten) in March of 2015. Shortly after his graduation he hopes to visit his village in Humla. He is starting to relearn his village language during his holidays. He is passionate about raising awareness about Himalayan concerns in Kathmandu.

Wangdak, is currently in class eight. He recently found out that his mother moved from Lower to Upper Mustang. He hopes to visit his village and mother after the completion of his secondary studies. Wandak is a big supporter of drama and visual arts. He independently trains younger students at the school who have an interest in art. He hopes to continue studies and/or

pursue a career in dramatic arts.

Zenji is also currently in class eight. Prior to meeting his family during this study, Zenji was excited to visit his village (located in the middle of Humla and Jumla). However, after the uncomfortable reunion, he is contemplating visiting after the completion of his secondary studies. Zenji loves to use visual arts, mainly painting, to express his emotions in relation to education, migration, and family separation.

In sum, this research study was motivational, remarkable, and life-changing for me. However, none of this would have been possible without the time all participants spent assisting me. The findings of this research without a doubt will be reciprocated with the participants. One way of doing so will be in the form of a booklet for each participant. Each booklet will be personalized to contain a copy of the participant's transcription; a summary of the findings of this study; and images reflecting his or her interests. The summary of the findings will also be translated and provided in Nepali text. Participants will have the option of reading the complete study if they choose to do so. Personally, reciprocating the finding of the research is important since it may further help to create a space of emancipation for participants and myself and give credit to the research participants for their intellectual contributions towards the completion of this study. Doing so will not be 'the end' of this research, but more will help to validate a continuing relationship both within and outside of the realm of academia for many years to come.

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Appendix A

Himalayan Migratory Youth, Family Separation, and Education in Nepal

Adrian Khan (Development Studies M.A)

Research Questions

Himalayan Youth	• Where are you from, what is the name of your village and/or region? • Do you have any brother or sisters? • Does your family still reside in the village? • Is it possible to keep in contact with family living in your village? • Approximately how old were you when you came to the city? • Did you undertake this journey alone or with someone? • What do you remember about your first journey to the city? • Did you get to visit your village during your time living in the city? How many times? • What did/do you miss the most from your village? • What did/do you not miss the most from your village? • Did you attend school in your village? • Are schools in villages different from schools in the city? • Is school important (to you)? • What do you expect from schooling? • What are some issues Himalayan students and non-Himalayan students face when migrating/attending residential school?
Non-Himalayan Youth	• Where are you from, what is the name of your village and/or region? • Do you have any brother or sisters? • Does any of your family reside in villages? • Is it possible to keep in contact with family living in your village?

	• Did you attend school in the city? • Are schools in villages different from schools in the city? • Is school important (to you)? • What do you expect from schooling? • Were you taught Himalayan culture, history, geography etc. in school? • What are some issues Himalayan and non-Himalayan students face when migrating/attending residential school?
Parents	• What would be the influence if (more) schools were to be built in your community? • Did you attend school? • How has education changed over time? • Are schools in villages different from schools in the city? • Why is education important? • Why are your children in residential school? • Should children/youth migrate away from their villages? • Should children/youth migrate back to their villages?
Nepali Teacher/ NGO Workers	• Compare and contrast rural and urban education. • What factors need to be taken into consideration in regards to Himalayan youth studying in urban schools? • Do educational systems in Nepal need to go through any changes? • What are your perspectives of SLC (School Leaving Certificate) testing? • What are strengths and/or weaknesses with local organizations? • What are strengths and/or weaknesses with international organizations?
International Teachers/ NGO	• Compare and contrast Nepalese schools with your schooling experiences. • Compare and contrast rural and urban education. • What factors need to be taken into consideration in regards to Himalayan

Workers	youth studying in urban schools? • Do educational systems in Nepal need to go through any changes? • What are your perspectives of SLC (School Leaving Certificate) testing? • How do you interact with the community you work in? • What are strengths and/or weaknesses with local organizations? • What are strengths and/or weaknesses with international organizations?

Appendix B

Nepal Population Report

District	HASC	Pop-2011	Pop-2001	Pop-1991	Pop-1981	Area(km.²)	Capital	Sec	Zone
Achham	NP.SP.AC	257,477	231,285	198,188	185,212	1,680	Mangalsen	H	Seti
Arghakhanchi	NP.PM.AR	197,632	208,391	180,884	157,304	1,193	Sandhikharka	H	Lumbini
Baglung	NP.PM.BG	268,613	268,937	232,486	215,228	1,784	Baglung	H	Dhawalagiri
Baitadi	NP.SP.BT	250,898	234,418	200,716	179,136	1,519	Baitadi	H	Mahakali
Bajhang	NP.SP.BH	195,159	167,026	139,092	124,010	3,422	Chainpur	M	Seti
Bajura	NP.SP.BU	134,912	* 108,781	92,010	74,649	2,188	Martadi	M	Seti
Banke	NP.MP.BN	491,313	385,840	285,604	205,323	2,337	Nepalganj	T	Bheri
Bara	NP.MM.BA	687,708	559,135	415,718	318,957	1,190	Kalaiya	T	Narayani
Bardiya	NP.MP.BR	426,576	382,649	290,313	199,044	2,025	Gularia	T	Bheri
Bhaktapur	NP.MM.BK	304,651	225,461	172,952	159,767	119	Bhaktapur	H	Bagmati
Bhojpur	NP.PW.BJ	182,459	203,018	198,784	192,689	1,507	Bhojpur	H	Kosi
Chitwan	NP.MM.CH	579,984	472,048	354,488	259,571	2,218	Bharatpur	T	Narayani
Dadeldhura	NP.SP.DD	142,094	126,162	104,647	86,853	1,538	Dadeldhura	H	Mahakali
Dailekh	NP.MP.DL	261,770	225,201	187,400	166,527	1,502	Dailekh	H	Bheri
Dang Deokhuri	NP.MP.DA	552,583	462,380	354,413	266,393	2,955	Ghorahi	T	Rapti
Darchula	NP.SP.DR	133,274	121,996	101,683	90,218	2,322	Darchula	M	Mahakali
Dhading	NP.MM.DH	336,067	338,658	278,068	243,401	1,926	Dhadingbesi	H	Bagmati
Dhankuta	NP.PW.DK	163,412	166,479	146,386	129,781	891	Dhankuta	H	Kosi
Dhanusa	NP.MM.DN	754,777	671,364	543,672	432,569	1,180	Janakpur	T	Janakpur
Dolakha	NP.MM.DO	186,557	* 204,229	173,236	150,576	2,191	Charikot	M	Janakpur
Dolpa	NP.MP.DP	36,700	* 29,545	25,013	22,043	7,889	Dunai	M	Karnali
Doti	NP.SP.DT	211,746	207,066	167,168	153,135	2,025	Dipayal	H	Seti
Gorkha	NP.PM.GO	271,061	288,134	252,524	231,294	3,610	Gorkha	H	Gandaki
Gulmi	NP.PM.GU	280,160	296,654	266,331	238,113	1,149	Tamghas	H	Lumbini
Humla	NP.MP.HU	50,858	40,595	34,383	20,303	5,655	Simikot	M	Karnali
Ilam	NP.PW.IL	290,254	282,806	229,214	178,356	1,703	Ilam	H	Mechi
Jajarkot	NP.MP.JA	171,304	134,868	113,958	99,312	2,230	Jajarkot	H	Bheri
Jhapa	NP.PW.JH	812,650	* 688,109	593,737	479,743	1,606	Chandragadhi	T	Mechi
Jumla	NP.MP.JU	108,921	* 89,427	75,964	68,797	2,531	Jumla	M	Karnali
Kailali	NP.SP.KL	775,709	616,697	417,891	257,905	3,235	Dhangadhi	T	Seti
Kalikot	NP.MP.KK	136,948	* 105,580	88,805	87,638	1,741	Manma	M	Karnali
Kanchanpur	NP.SP.KN	451,248	377,899	257,906	168,971	1,610	Mahendranagar	T	Mahakali
Kapilvastu	NP.PM.KP	571,936	481,976	371,778	270,045	1,738	Taulihawa	T	Lumbini
Kaski	NP.PM.KS	492,098	380,527	292,945	221,272	2,017	Pokhara	H	Gandaki
Kathmandu	NP.MM.KT	1,744,240	1,081,845	675,341	422,237	395	Kathmandu	H	Bagmati
Kavrepalanchok	NP.MM.KV	381,937	385,672	324,329	307,150	1,396	Dhulikhet	H	Bagmati
Khotang	NP.PW.KH	206,312	231,385	215,965	212,571	1,591	Diktel	H	Sagarmatha
Lalitpur	NP.MM.LL	468,132	337,785	257,086	184,341	385	Patan	H	Bagmati
Lamjung	NP.PM.LM	167,724	177,149	153,697	152,720	1,692	Besisahar	H	Gandaki
Mahottari	NP.MM.MH	627,580	553,481	440,146	361,054	1,002	Jaleswor	T	Janakpur
Makwanpur	NP.MM.MK	420,477	392,604	314,599	243,411	2,426	Hetauda	H	Narayani
Manang	NP.PM.MN	6,538	9,587	5,363	7,021	2,246	Chame	M	Gandaki
Morang	NP.PW.MO	965,370	843,220	674,823	534,692	1,855	Biratnagar	T	Kosi
Mugu	NP.MP.MG	55,286	* 43,937	36,364	43,705	3,535	Gamgadhi	M	Karnali

Mustang	NP.PM.MS	13,452	14,981	14,292	12,930	3,573	Jomosom	M	Dhawalagiri
Myagdi	NP.PM.MY	113,641	114,447	100,552	96,904	2,297	Beni	H	Dhawalagiri
Nawalparasi	NP.PM.NA	643,508	562,870	436,217	308,828	2,162	Parasi	T	Lumbini
Nuwakot	NP.MM.NU	277,471	288,478	245,260	202,976	1,121	Bidur	H	Bagmati
Okhaldhunga	NP.PW.OK	147,984	156,702	139,457	137,640	1,074	Okhaldhunga	H	Sagarmatha
Palpa	NP.PM.PL	261,180	268,558	236,313	214,442	1,373	Tansen	H	Lumbini
Panchthar	NP.PW.PN	191,817	202,056	175,206	153,746	1,241	Panchthar	H	Mechi
Parbat	NP.PM.PB	146,590	157,826	143,547	128,400	494	Kusma	H	Dhawalagiri
Parsa	NP.MM.PR	601,017	497,219	372,524	284,338	1,353	Birganj	T	Narayani
Pyuthan	NP.MP.PY	228,102	212,484	175,469	157,669	1,309	Pyuthan	H	Rapti
Ramechhap	NP.MM.RM	202,646	212,408	188,064	161,445	1,546	Ramechhap	H	Janakpur
Rasuwa	NP.MM.RS	43,300	44,731	36,744	30,241	1,544	Dhunche	M	Bagmati
Rautahat	NP.MM.RT	686,722	545,132	414,005	332,526	1,126	Gaur	T	Narayani
Rolpa	NP.MP.RO	224,506	210,004	179,621	168,166	1,879	Livang	H	Rapti
Rukum	NP.MP.RK	208,567	188,438	153,554	132,432	2,877	Jumlikhalanga	H	Rapti
Rupandehi	NP.PM.RP	880,196	708,419	522,150	379,096	1,360	Siddharthanagar	T	Lumbini
Salyan	NP.MP.SL	242,444	* 213,500	181,785	152,063	1,462	Salyan	H	Rapti
Sankhuwasabha	NP.PW.SS	158,742	159,203	141,903	129,414	3,480	Khadbari	M	Kosi
Saptari	NP.PW.ST	639,284	570,282	465,668	379,055	1,363	Rajbiraj	T	Sagarmatha
Sarlahi	NP.MM.SA	769,729	635,701	492,798	398,766	1,259	Malangwa	T	Janakpur
Sindhuli	NP.MM.SI	296,192	* 279,821	223,900	183,705	2,491	Sindhulimadhi	H	Janakpur
Sindhupalchok	NP.MM.SP	287,798	* 305,857	261,025	232,326	2,542	Chautara	M	Bagmati
Siraha	NP.PW.SR	637,328	* 572,399	460,746	375,358	1,188	Siraha	T	Sagarmatha
Solukhumbu	NP.PW.SO	105,886	107,686	97,200	88,245	3,312	Salleri	M	Sagarmatha
Sunsari	NP.PW.SN	763,487	625,633	463,481	344,594	1,257	Phidim	T	Kosi
Surkhet	NP.MP.SU	350,804	* 288,527	225,768	166,196	2,451	Birendranagar	H	Bheri
Syangja	NP.PM.SY	289,148	317,320	293,526	271,824	1,164	Syangja	H	Gandaki
Tanahu	NP.PM.TN	323,288	315,237	268,073	223,438	1,546	Damauli	H	Gandaki
Taplejung	NP.PW.TP	127,461	134,698	120,053	120,780	3,646	Taplejung	M	Mechi
Terhathum	NP.PW.TR	101,577	113,111	102,870	92,454	679	Terhathum	H	Kosi
Udayapur	NP.PW.UD	317,532	287,689	221,256	159,805	2,063	Gaighat	H	Sagarmatha
75 districts		26,494,504	23,151,423	18,491,097	15,022,839	147,181			

- **HASC:** Hierarchical administrative subdivision codes. The middle two letters identify the province. For key, see Regions of Nepal page.
- **Pop-2011:** 2011-06-22 census.
- **Pop-2001:** 2001-06-22 census. Asterisk (*) denotes districts in which some of the villages or wards could not be enumerated, so their populations were estimated.
- **Pop-1991:** 1991-06-22 census. One of the districts in NP.MP is probably low by 2,000 (for explanation see top of page). The total is correct.
- **Pop-1981:** 1981-06-22 census.
- **Sec:** Section (H = Hill, M = Mountain, T = Tarai).

Other names of subdivisions:

1. Bardiya: Bardia (variant)
2. Chitwan: Chitawan (variant)

3. Dadeldhura: Dadheldhura (variant)
4. Dang Deokhuri: Dang (variant)
5. Dhanusa: Dhanusha (variant)
6. Dolakha: Dolkha (variant)
7. Kapilvastu: Kapilbastu (variant)
8. Kavrepalanchok: Kavrepalanchowk, Kavreplanchok (variant)
9. Lalitpur: Patan (variant)
10. Mahottari: Mahotari (variant)
11. Makwanpur: Makawanpur (variant)
12. Panchthar: Panchathar (variant)
13. Parbat: Parwat (variant)
14. Ramechhap: Ramechap (variant)
15. Solukhumbu: Solukhombu (variant)
16. Syangja: Syanja (variant)
17. Tanahu: Tanahun (variant)
18. Terhathum: Terathum (variant)
19. Udayapur: Udaypur (variant)