



NGOs and Disaster in Nepal: Current Scenario and Prospects

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APPROVED

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By signing, I certify that the paper titled “NGOs and Disaster in Nepal: Current Scenario and Prospects” is entirely original with no previous submissions to academic institutions for different degrees.

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Abstract

This qualitative study aims to explore the perspectives of NGOs on Nepal's disasters, their roles in disaster management, and the challenges and opportunities they face. Through thematic analysis, it was found that NGOs have diverse understandings of disasters, including scientific and feminist perspectives. They play various roles in disaster management, such as capacity building, coordination, advocacy, impact assessment, and so on. However, NGOs also face challenges like limited resources, traditional approaches, and trust issues, while recognizing opportunities for collaboration, funding, and global recognition.

The significance of this research lies in addressing the increasing frequency and intensity of disasters in Nepal. NGOs are crucial in disaster response and recovery, complementing government efforts and providing specialized expertise. Effective coordination among NGOs, government bodies, and stakeholders is essential for efficient disaster management. NGOs have the potential to address gaps and vulnerabilities, focusing on marginalized groups and advocating for policy reforms. However, more comprehensive research is needed in this area.

Based on the findings, it recommends that future studies explore more deeply the perspectives of NGOs, conduct comparative analyses, and track the evolution of their roles. Identifying specific challenges and opportunities will help to improve NGO capacity and collaboration. Impact assessments and policy analyses are crucial for evaluating interventions and strengthening the legal framework.

In conclusion, this study contributes to our understanding of NGOs' perspectives and roles in disaster management in Nepal. However, limitations include limited geographic coverage, self-funding, time constraints, and a small number of participating NGOs. Future research should address these limitations and provide a more comprehensive understanding of the participation of non-governmental organizations in disaster management in Nepal, ultimately contributing to building nation resilient.

Keywords: NGOs, disaster management, Nepal, understanding of disaster, roles, challenges, opportunities

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. Background of the study

Nepal is a landlocked country situated between India to the east, west, and south, and China to the north, with it spans an area of 147,181 square kilometers, encompassing both the Himalayan region in the north and the plains in the south (Khanal, 2020). Ecologically, Nepal is divided into three regions as follows: Hilly, Himalayan, and Terai regions. Given its geographical structure and climate conditions, Globally Nepal is at high risk of different disasters and ranks 4th, 11th, and 16th in terms of climate change vulnerability, earthquakes, and multi-hazard susceptibility, respectively (Unicef). Furthermore, Nepal also ranks 30th in terms of flood risk (Dhakal, 2015). Disasters pose significant challenges to societies around the world, and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) play a crucial role in disaster management. In the context of Nepal, a country prone to various natural and anthropogenic disasters such as flood, landslides, pollution, and earthquakes, understanding the perspectives of NGOs is vital for effective disaster response and recovery. This study aims to examine the NGOs' understanding about disasters, roles, challenges, and opportunities for them in disaster management in Nepal. By exploring these aspects, the research aims to contribute to the knowledge base in disaster management and inform strategies to enhance the effectiveness of NGOs in this field.

1.2. Statement of the problem

Despite growing recognition of the importance of NGOs in disaster management, there is limited research on their understanding of disaster, their specific roles, and the challenges and opportunities they encounter in Nepal. This study addresses this research gap by exploring NGOs' perspectives on disaster, their roles in disaster management, and the challenges and opportunities they face. The findings will shed light on the current situation of NGOs in disaster management in Nepal and provide insight to improve their contributions to this critical sector.

1.3. Research Objectives

This study aims to:

- Explore how NGOs understand disasters and engage with disaster fields in Nepal.
- Explore their roles in disaster management in Nepal.

- Understanding their challenges and opportunities while working in the fields of disaster in Nepal.

1.4. Research Questions

- I. How are NGOs operating in the sector of disaster management in Nepal?
- II. What are the programs and activities of NGOs in disaster management in Nepal?
- III. What are the challenges and opportunities for NGOs in disaster management in Nepal?

1.5. Significance of the study

The study on NGOs and disasters in Nepal is significant due to several reasons:

1. **Increasing Number and Severity of Disasters:** Nepal faces a high risk of natural and human-caused disasters, such as earthquakes, floods, landslides, and climate-related events. Over the years, the country has experienced several severe disasters that caused significant loss of lives, damage to infrastructure, and disruptions to people's lives. Given this situation, it is crucial to understand how nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) contribute to managing these crises.
2. **NGOs' Role in Responding to and Recovering from Disasters:** NGOs play a critical role in responding to and recovering from disasters. They work alongside government agencies to provide immediate help, ongoing support, and long-term recovery assistance to communities in need. What makes NGOs important is their specialized knowledge, community-centered approaches, and ability to quickly gather resources.
3. **Importance of Cooperation and Working Together:** It is vital for NGOs, government entities, and other stakeholders to collaborate effectively to manage disasters efficiently. However, it needs to dig deeper into how well these collaboration mechanisms work and the difficulties NGOs face when working with different groups. By understanding these interactions, we can enhance disaster management practices.
4. **NGOs Potential to Address Challenges:** NGOs, with their focus on communities and flexibility, can fill gaps in disaster management. They can offer targeted help to vulnerable groups, push for policy improvements, and empower local communities. Thus, it needs to explore how much of these potential NGOs are currently fulfilling and identify areas where they can do better to manage disasters.

5. Research Gap: While there have been studies on disaster management in Nepal, we lack comprehensive research specifically looking at how NGOs are involved. We need to understand the viewpoints of NGOs themselves, how they handle disasters, and the results of their efforts. This knowledge can guide policy decisions, training, and better coordination.

1.6. Literature review

1.6.1. The Conceptualization of Disasters

Disasters are multifaceted phenomena that can be examined and understood from various perspectives (Baum, 1987). They manifest themselves in diverse ways, depending on the specific context in which they occur. Baum (1987) asserts that disasters encompass geophysical, climatic, meteorological, technological, and biological events, each distinguishable from one another. For instance, droughts can cause earthquakes, nuclear accidents could give rise to tornadoes, and plagues may induce other calamities. Thus, the nature of disasters encompasses all these analytical dimensions, which interact with one another, ultimately resulting in a catastrophic event and its subsequent impact. Because of these complex interactions, the definition and delineation of disasters prove to be formidable tasks (Baum, 1987).

1.6.2. Paradigmatic shifts in Understanding Disasters

The comprehension of disasters has evolved through various paradigmatic lenses, each offering different perspectives on their nature and implications. The following are key paradigms that have contributed to our understanding of disasters:

- I. Cultural/Religious Perspectives: Cultural interpretations perceive disasters as acts of divine punishment or retribution, attributing them to human sin or arrogance (O'Mathuna, 2018). According to this view, the occurrence of disasters is perceived as inevitable and beyond human control (Furedi, 2007).
- II. Social Psychology Perspectives: From a social psychological standpoint, disasters are regarded as a unique crisis characterized by societal breakdown, disarray, and displacement, which subsequently give rise to trauma, fear, stress, and shock (Baum, 1987). Fritz and Marks (1954) also emphasized the anxiety stemming from the separation of family members during disasters and the emotional distress caused by witnessing death or encountering severely injured individuals.
- III. Scientific Perspective: The scientific perspective perceives disasters as natural phenomena subject to scientific study and investigation (Furedi, 2007). This viewpoint emphasizes the application of rigorous scientific methods to understand the causes and impacts of disasters (Furedi, 2007).

- IV. Ecological Perspectives: Ecological perspectives approach disasters from an environmental and risk-conscious perspective, considering them as extreme events within the ecological framework (Furedi, 2007). This perspective acknowledges the complex interaction between environmental factors and the occurrence of disasters.
- V. Mental Health Perspectives: Mental health perspectives underscore the significant impact of disasters on mental well-being, as they contribute to heightened levels of stress, anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), panic disorder, and various other forms of psychological distress (Kannis-Dymland et al., 2022). Disasters can exacerbate existing mental health conditions and trigger the onset of new ones, often accompanied by elevated levels of uncertainty and fear.

1.6.3. Comprehending Disaster: An Overview

Understanding disasters varies depending on their temporal characteristics (suddenness or duration), spatial scope (extent or periodicity), and magnitude of impact. Various social scientists, researchers, institutions, and disciplines have developed their own theories, approaches, and perspectives to comprehend disasters, highlighting the absence of a universally accepted definition (Clausen & Lars, 1992).

However, Clausen and Lars (1992, pp., 182) offer a comprehensive description of disasters as *"Sudden and extreme events or a series of events that result in widespread destruction, loss of life, and significant harm to the environment, economy, and society. They often disrupt communities, strain resources, and challenge the capacity of governments and organizations to respond effectively."*

Disasters can be broadly classified into two types based on their origin, as outlined by Bates and Peacock (2003): natural and man-made. Natural disasters encompass sudden-onset events such as earthquakes, tornadoes, and hurricanes, which can have a significant impact on large populations; in contrast, slow-onset disasters such as droughts gradually unfold over time. Man-made disasters, on the other hand, result from human activities and include events such as explosions, plane crashes, train wrecks, building failures and so on (Bates & Peacock, 2003).

1.6.4. Overview of Disasters in Nepal

Nepal, a landlocked country located between India to the east, west and south, and China to the north, spans an area of 147,181 square kilometers, encompassing both the Himalayan region in

the north and the plains in the south (Khanal, 2020). Geographically, Nepal is divided into three ecological regions: the Hilly, Himalayan, and Terai regions. Due to its geographical context, Nepal is highly prone to disasters and ranks 4th, 11th, and 16th in terms of climate change vulnerability, earthquakes, and multi-hazard susceptibility, respectively (Unicef). Furthermore, Nepal also ranks 30th in terms of flood risk (Dhakal, 2015).

The steep slopes of Nepal's terrain, combined with the continuous growth of the Himalayan range and heavy monsoon rains, contribute to a variety of geological and hydrometeorological disasters across the country (Khanal, 2020). These disasters include landslides, debris flows, floods, glacial lake flash floods (GLOF), epidemics, and droughts. However, the most frequent disasters experienced in Nepal are landslides, floods, and earthquakes.

Nepal's susceptibility to these disasters poses significant challenges to the country's infrastructure, environment, economy, and the well-being of its population. Efforts to mitigate and manage these risks require comprehensive strategies that encompass disaster preparedness, early warning systems, infrastructure resilience, and community engagement (Khanal, 2020).

1.6.4.1. Floods in Nepal: Impact and Vulnerability

Nepal is highly susceptible to flooding due to its mountainous terrain, monsoon rains, and the presence of several major rivers such as the Koshi, Gandak, and Karnali (Nepal Disaster Risk Reduction Portal). Floods predominantly occur during the monsoon season, which typically spans from June to September (Khanal, 2020). Intense rainfall during this period often leads to rivers overflowing, leading to extensive flooding across various regions of the country. The Terai region, located in the southern part of Nepal, is particularly prone to floods (Khanal, 2020). Historical records indicate significant flood events in Nepal, such as those in the Tinao basin (1978), Koshi River (1980 and 2008), Tadi River Basin (1985), Sunkoshi Basin (1987), and a devastating cloud burst in the Kulekhani area (1993), which claimed the lives of 1,336 people (Nepal Disaster Risk Reduction Portal).

Annual monsoons bring heavy rainfall, leading to recurring landslides and floods in different parts of Nepal (Nepal Disaster Risk Reduction Portal). Dhakal (2015) documented 3,865 flood records from 1971 to 2012. These floods result in loss of life and damage to critical infrastructure, including hydroelectric power plants, irrigation projects, commercial and public buildings, agricultural land, livestock, loss of national economy, etc.

One of the most recent major floods experienced by Nepal occurred in 2017, inflicting severe physical, socioeconomic, and psychological impacts. Khanal (2020) reported that over 190,000 homes were destroyed, tens of thousands of people were displaced, and many were left homeless. Household belongings and food grains were damaged, leading to food and water shortages. Contaminated water sources caused infections and health issues among affected communities. Approximately 1.7 million individuals, comprising 866,993 men and 821,480 women, were affected across the 18 worst-hit districts. In summary, rugged mountainous landscape, fragile geology, and intense monsoon rains exacerbate Nepal's vulnerability to floods (Sharma et al., 2019).

1.6.4.2. Landslides in Nepal: Causes and Vulnerability

Landslides are prevalent and recurring natural disasters in Nepal and are therefore triggered by a combination of natural and human factors (Nepal Disaster Risk Reduction Portal). The country's steep slopes, fragile geology, high intensity of rainfall, deforestation, and unplanned human settlements are the primary causes of landslides (Nepal Disaster Risk Reduction Portal). Furthermore, anthropogenic activities, such as inappropriate land use practices, encroachment on vulnerable slopes, and unplanned development without proper protective measures, contribute to landslide risk.

Certain regions of Nepal are particularly susceptible to landslides due to their hilly terrain. These areas include the Siwalik range, Mahabharat Mountains, Central Plateau, and the upper and front Himalayas (Nepal Disaster Risk Reduction Portal). Upreti (2001) delves into the geographic structure of Nepal, highlighting the Terai zone, Siwalik zone, lesser and higher Himalayan zones, and their respective roles in landslide occurrences. Upreti (2001) further emphasizes that the weak geological properties of rocks and soil in the Himalayas render the mountain range highly vulnerable to landslides, with triggering factors such as rainfall and earthquakes playing significant roles weakening the soil grip capacity. Each physiological zone in Nepal has its own distinct characteristics regarding the occurrence of landslides, shaped by a combination of weak geology and the monsoon climate (Upreti, 2001).

Table 1: Incident of landslide from 2011 to 2021 (Nepal Disaster Risk Reduction Portal).

Years	landslides	Sum of Total Death	Sum of Estimated Loss in NRS
2011	126	110	45726800
2012	102	60	20597500
2013	97	87	169127458
2014	75	113	23665979
2015	62	138	642400
2016	234	148	810442200
2017	163	70	61543000
2018	320	91	130119000
2019	449	86	405186000
2020	493	303	50964900
2021	337	178	34635000
Grand Total	2458	1384	1752650237

Source: MOHA, 2023

Table 1 displays the occurrence of landslides in Nepal from 2011 to 2021, along with the corresponding total number of deaths and estimated economic losses in Nepalese Rupees (NRS). The data, obtained from the Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA) in 2023, provides an overview of the impact of landslides during this period.

Between 2011 and 2021, a total of 2,458 landslides were recorded in Nepal. Notably, the years 2018, 2019, 2020, and 2021 witnessed the highest number of landslides, with 320, 449, 493, and 337 occurrences respectively. These years reflect a significant increase in landslide events compared to previous years.

Regarding the consequences of these landslides, the cumulative data reveals a total of 1,384 deaths and an estimated economic loss exceeding one billion Nepalese Rupees (NRS 1,752,650,237) during the 11-year period. These numbers underline the severity of the impact, both in terms of human lives lost and the economic burden incurred.

1.6.4.3. Earthquakes and its impacts in Nepal.

Nepal, located in the active seismic zone between the Indian plate and Eurasian plate, is highly prone to earthquakes (Dhakal (2015)). Most of the earthquakes in Nepal are of magnitude 4 to 6, which typically do not pose severe threats or cause significant damage (Chaulagain et al., 2018). However, earthquakes with magnitudes above 6.5 have the potential to cause extensive damage at a large scale (Chaulagain et al., 2018).

Historical records of earthquakes in Nepal from the 12th to the early 19th century are not clear but building code development projects have provided insights into these events (Chaulagain et al., 2018). With reference that Nepal has experienced significant earthquakes in the 20th century, leaving a lasting impact on the country. These earthquakes have played a crucial role in shaping Nepal's understanding of seismic hazards and reinforcing the importance of earthquake preparedness and resilience (Nepal disaster management reference handbook, 2020). Some noted major earthquakes are Bihar-Nepal earthquake (1934), Bajhang earthquake (1980) Udayapur earthquake (1988) and the Gorkha earthquake (2015) (Chaulagain et al., 2018).

One of the most devastating earthquakes in recent history occurred on 25 April 2015, known as the Gorkha earthquake, with a magnitude (M_w) of 7.8 (Dhakal, 2015). The epicenter was located in Barpak of Gorkha district, with a hypocenter depth of approximately 15 km. The Gorkha earthquake resulted in significant damage and loss of life. It caused the death of 8,790 individuals, injured 22,300, and affected 8 million people across 31 districts of Nepal (Post Disaster Needs Assessment, 2015).

The impact of the Gorkha earthquake extended beyond loss of life. It caused extensive damage to buildings, roads, hydroelectric power projects, and water supply systems (Chaulagain et al., 2018). The Nepal National Planning Commission's post-disaster needs assessment estimated the total loss from the earthquake to be US\$7 billion (Post Disaster Needs Assessment, 2015). Immediately after the earthquake, the government declared 14 districts as crisis areas (Chaulagain et al., 2018).

Moreover, the earthquake triggered numerous landslides in districts such as Gorkha, Langtang, Dolakha, and Sindhupalchowk. For instance, landslides and avalanches in the Mount Everest area claimed the lives of at least 19 people, while a landslide in Langtang's Ghodabela area caused the deaths of hundreds, including security personnel (Dhakal, 2015). The Gorkha earthquake also led to changes in groundwater flow, resulting in the drying up of many wells. This, in turn, created water scarcity in several areas, including Kathmandu (Post Disaster Needs Assessment, 2015).

Table 2. Historical earthquake in Nepal between 1255 to 2015 adopted from (Chaulagain et al., 2018).

Year	Epicenter	Magnitude	Casualties	Structural Damage and Geotechnical Aspects
1255	No records	7.8	One third of the Kathmandu valley population along with the then King Abhay Malla	Severe damage in residential buildings, monumental and architectural heritage
1260	No records		Many people killed by the earthquake as well as the famine followed by earthquake	Damages in residential buildings, monumental and architectural heritage
1408	No records		No records available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Severe damage in residential buildings, temples • Lateral spreading/soil liquefaction
1681	No records		No records available	Damage on residential buildings
1810	No records		Some casualties in Bhaktapur	Significant damage in residential buildings and monumental constructions
1823	No records		No record available	Some residential buildings damaged
1833	No records	7.7	414 deaths in and around Kathmandu valley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In total 18000 buildings damaged

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Around 4000 in Kathmandu valley and Banepa.
1834	No records		No records available	Many residential as well as monumental constructions were damaged
1837	No records		No records available	Damage only in Indian state of Bihar
1869	No records		No records available	No records available
1897	No records		No records available	No records available
1917	No records		No records available	No records available
1934	Eastern Nepal	8.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8519 total deaths in Nepal • 4296 within Kathmandu valley 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More than 200,000 residential buildings, monuments and historical constructions were damaged. • About 81000 buildings collapsed • Almost 55000 buildings were damaged, and 12397 buildings collapsed in Kathmandu valley. • Soil liquefaction/lateral spreading is observed in the central part of Kathmandu valley and many other locations of central and eastern plains of Nepal. • Cascading effects like landslides, floods due to blockade in river course aggravated the damage
1936	Annapurna	7.0	No records available	No records available

1954	Kaski	6.4	No records available	No records available
1965	Taplejung	6.1	No records available	No records available
1966	Bajhang	6.0	24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6544 buildings were damaged. • 1300 buildings collapsed
1980	Chainpur	6.5	103	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 25086 buildings were damaged. • 12817 collapsed
1988	Udaipur	6.5	721	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 66382 buildings were damaged. • Several cases of liquefaction reported in eastern Nepal
2011	Sikkim-Nepal border	6.9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 deaths and 30 injuries in Nepal side (damage was intense in Indian side) • 2 casualties in Kathmandu valley 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 14554 buildings were damaged. • 6435 buildings collapsed
2015	Barpak, Gorkha	7.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8790 deaths and 22300 injuries • 8 million people displaced 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 498852 buildings collapsed. • 256697 buildings partly damaged • Approximately 3600 landslides and avalanches • Many cases of liquefaction and lateral spreading in Kathmandu valley • Severe damage in infrastructures and lifelines

1.6.5. Non-Government Organizations (NGOs)

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) play a significant role in addressing various societal, developmental, climate/disaster related issues and advocating for public policy (Karns, 2023).

They are voluntary groups composed of individuals or organizations that operate independently from governments and work towards providing services, promoting public welfare, and advancing specific causes (Karns, 2023). The scope of NGO activities can be local, national, or international, and they engage in a wide range of areas such as human rights, environmental protection, disaster relief, and development aid.

NGOs vary in size and structure, with many being grassroots organizations that operate autonomously without official affiliation to international bodies. However, they may receive funding from international organizations or governments to support their local programs (Karns, 2023).

NGOs serve several functions, including providing governments and international organizations with valuable information and technical expertise on various global issues (Karns, 2023). Moreover, their localized knowledge often offers insights that may not be readily available to governments. Karns (2023) further discussed that the NGOs can advocate for specific measures such as debt relief or the prohibition of landmines. Examples of such organizations include the Red Cross, Oxfam, and CARE. Furthermore, NGOs can monitor compliance with human rights standards or the implementation of environmental laws. Prominent organizations involved in these activities include the International Union for Conservation of Nature, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and Transparency International (Karns, 2023).

1.6.5.1. Table: 3 Evolution of NGOs from humanitarian to Disaster Risk Reduction

Adopted from: Lassa, 2018.

Note: UNDRRO is the office of United Nation Disaster Relief Coordination, IDNDR is International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, both are the framework for disaster management.

The approach and role of NGOs in disaster risk reduction (DRR) have evolved over different phases, reflecting changing priorities and perspectives. The table above outlines the key characteristics of each phase:

Phase 1 (1945-1970):

- DRR Regimes: Focus on relief and meeting basic needs before the establishment of the

United Nations Disaster Relief Organization (UNDRRO).

	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4	Phase 5
	1945-1970	1971-1989	1990-2005	2005-2015	Post 2015
DRR regimes	Relief/ basics pre-UNDRRO	UNDRRO	IDNDR and Yokohama Framework	HFA framework	POST HFA framework DRR with sustainability vision
NGO approach	Altruism/humanitarianism	Community development	Advocacy	Mixed approaches	Complexity collaborative
Time frame	Immediate	Project life	10-20 years	Open ended	Variable
Scope	Individual	Neighborhood	Region/nation	Nation	Ecosystem (natural/constructed)
Participants	NGO members	NGO/communities	Everyone	Networks	Super networks
NGO role	Primary/central	Mobilize/direct	Catalyze/innovate	Active/directly involved	Educational/technical support

- NGO Approach: Driven by altruism and humanitarian principles, with a primary focus on providing immediate assistance and relief.

- Time Frame: Immediate response to address urgent needs.
- Scope: Individual-focused, providing direct support to affected individuals.
- Participants: NGO members actively involved in delivering relief services.
- NGO Role: Central and primary in delivering assistance and aid.

Phase 2 (1971-1989):

- DRR Regimes: UNDRO established, shifting the focus towards community development and long-term project-based interventions.
- NGO Approach: Transition towards community development, involving NGOs in mobilizing and directing efforts.
- Time Frame: Project-based approach with a specific duration.
- Scope: Expanded to the neighborhood level, engaging communities in DRR initiatives.
- Participants: NGOs working alongside communities to promote development and resilience.
- NGO Role: Mobilizing and directing community-based initiatives.

Phase 3 (1990-2005):

- DRR Regimes: International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR) and the Yokohama Framework for Action (HFA) introduced, emphasizing regional and national approaches to DRR.
- NGO Approach: Advocacy becomes prominent, with NGOs advocating for policy changes and influencing DRR agendas.
- Time Frame: Long-term commitment with a focus on a 10–20-year timeframe.

- Scope: Expanded to the regional and national levels, addressing DRR at a broader scale.
- Participants: The involvement of various stakeholders, including governments, NGOs, and communities.
- NGO Role: Catalyzing and innovating approaches, pushing for policy changes, and influencing DRR agendas.

Phase 4 (2005-2015):

- DRR Regimes: Implementation of the HFA framework, emphasizing the importance of DRR in national policies and programs.
- NGO Approach: Mixed approaches, combining advocacy, direct involvement, and technical support.
- Time Frame: Open-ended, acknowledging the long-term nature of DRR efforts.
- Scope: National-level engagement, focusing on building resilience at the country level.
- Participants: Networks of stakeholders collaborating to implement DRR strategies and policies.
- NGO Role: Actively involved in DRR efforts, supporting communities, and providing technical expertise.

Post 2015:

- DRR Regimes: Post-HFA framework with a vision of integrating DRR with sustainability goals.
- NGO Approach: Emphasizing the complexity of DRR challenges and the need for collaborative efforts among diverse stakeholders.

- Time Frame: Variable, recognizing that DRR efforts require ongoing and sustained actions.
- Scope: Expanding to include ecosystem-based approaches, considering both natural and constructed environments.
- Participants: Super networks of stakeholders, including NGOs, governments, communities, and international organizations.
- NGO Role: Providing educational and technical support, contributing to the integration of DRR and sustainability goals.

1.6.5.2. NGOs in Nepal

Indeed, NGOs have played a crucial role in Nepal's development efforts, addressing various social, environmental, and economic issues (ADB & Mission). The emergence of NGOs in Nepal can be traced back to the Panchayat Regime (1960-1990), during which NGOs were closely monitored and supervised by the Social Welfare National Coordination Council (SWNCC). The government had strict control over NGOs, and engagement in development activities without official permission was considered illegal (ADB & Mission).

However, two significant changes took place after 1990. First the SWNCC was reorganized into the Social Welfare Council, which became a government agency under the Department for Social Sectors (ADB & Mission). Secondly, there was a shift in funding rules. Starting from 1991, foreign funds began to flow directly to NGOs, bypassing government channels. This change led to a dramatic increase in the number of NGOs operating in Nepal, with approximately 60,000 active NGOs present today (ADB & Mission).

NGOs in Nepal are actively involved in both development and advocacy work, operating at various levels from the national to the local level (Roka, 2012). At the local level, NGOs undertake a range of development initiatives to address pressing community needs. These initiatives include repairing schools, providing education support through the distribution of sports equipment and educational materials, facilitating access to healthcare services and medicines, promoting family planning, and distributing contraceptives, improving access to

sanitation facilities and clean drinking water, and implementing various other community development projects (Devkota, 1991; Dhakal, 2006).

Apart from development activities, NGOs in Nepal also engage in advocacy work. Roka (2012) asserts that NGOs strive to promote the rights and interests of marginalized and disadvantaged groups, particularly Dalits, and work to influence policies and programs at both the government and donor levels. NGOs advocate for social justice, equality, and inclusion, and they challenge discriminatory practices and policies that perpetuate social and economic disparities (Karki, 2004; Rademacher & Tamang, 1993).

One notable example of NGO advocacy in Nepal is the resistance to the construction of the Arun hydroelectric project, which was financed by the World Bank. Local NGOs, in collaboration with international INGOs, mobilized communities and used the agenda of local and indigenous rights to garner support and oppose the project (Karki, 2004; Rademacher & Tamang, 1993). This collective advocacy effort ultimately led to the cancellation of the project.

Having said that, Roka (2012) further discussed that NGOs play a crucial role in raising awareness, empowering marginalized communities, amplifying their voices, and advocating for their rights. NGOs act as intermediaries between the government, donors, and local communities, bridging gaps and promoting participatory decision-making processes. Through their development and advocacy work, NGOs contribute to positive social change, foster sustainable development, and empower marginalized groups in Nepal (Roka, 2012).

Roka (2012) further highlights some of the criticisms directed towards NGOs, including perceptions of them as agents of imperialism and promoters of Western ideology. Some communities view NGOs as entities solely focused on completing their projects without giving adequate attention to the needs and concerns of the target groups (Roka, 2012). NGOs have also been criticized for their perceived dependence on donors, neglect of marginalized communities, leadership dominated by elites, excessive focus on seminars and workshops rather than tangible outcomes, lack of specific targeting towards the poor and Dalits, low levels of commitment, self-preservation concerns, and weaknesses in monitoring and evaluating their programs (Khanal, 2006).

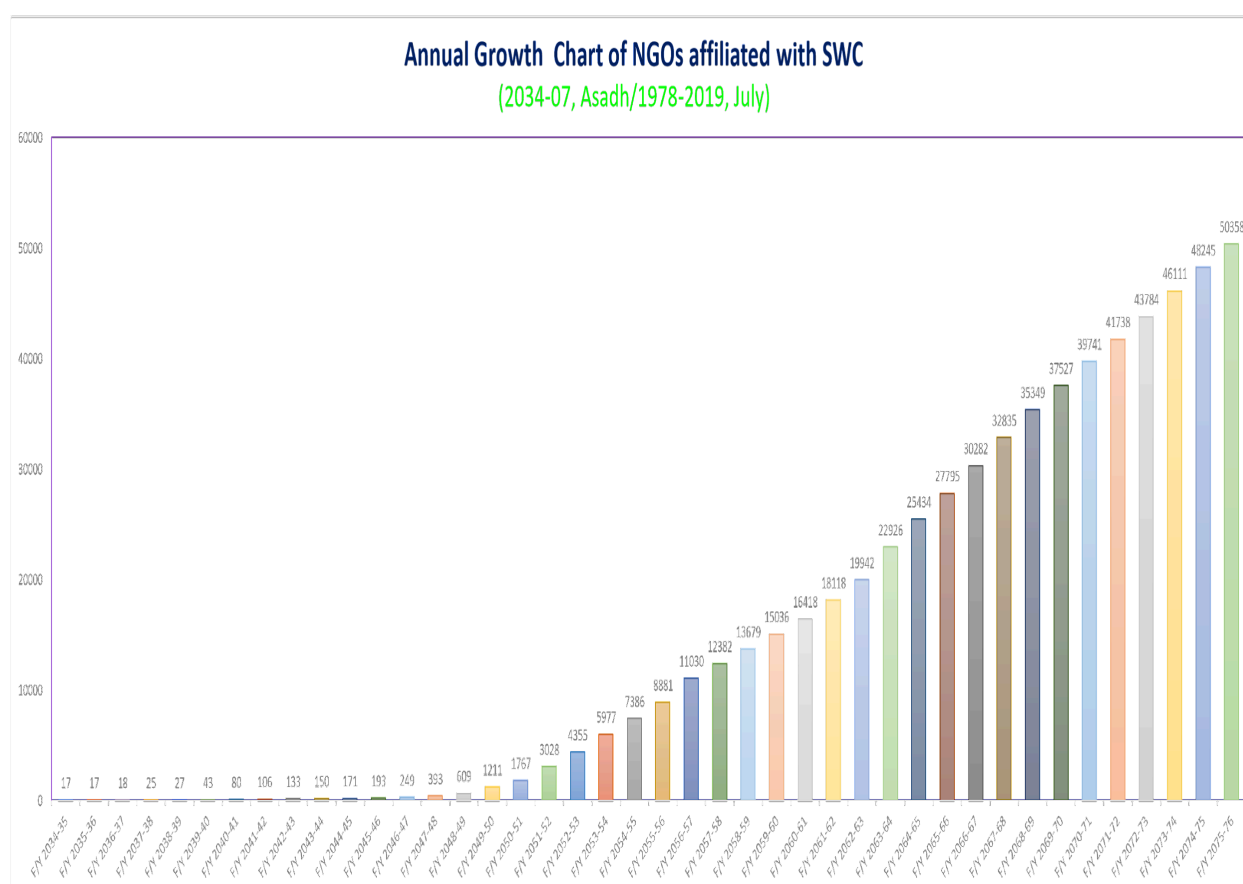
In the context of these criticisms, Roka (2012) argues that the NGO sector in Nepal has contributed to both development and underdevelopment at the community level. On one hand, NGOs have played a role in promoting democratic values and implementing projects that have

contributed to rural development. On the other hand, there are concerns that through their practices, such as the use of charitable funds and the implementation of projects, NGOs may inadvertently create dependency among certain communities (Wasti, 2004). Overall, NGOs in Nepal receive mixed reviews and face criticism from the public (Wasti, 2004).

It is important to note that these criticisms do not apply universally to all NGOs, and there are many NGOs in Nepal that have demonstrated effectiveness, community engagement, and positive impact. However, the criticisms highlight the need for NGOs to continually assess their approaches, address issues of transparency and accountability, and ensure that their actions align with the genuine needs and aspirations of the communities they serve.

1.6.5.3. Figure 1: Chart of NGOs affiliated with Social Welfare Council Nepal

Adapted from: Council, 2019



As shown in Figure 1, the total number of NGOs i.e 50,358 are affiliated with the Social Welfare Council in Nepal till 2019 of English year. According to this figure each year the number of NGOs in Nepal seems to be increasing rapidly since 2039 B.S.

1.6.5.4. Table 4: List of some national and international organizations working in the disaster sector in Nepal

Source: Dhakal, 2015

INGOs	NGOs
ICIMOD	Nepal Red Cross Society
CARE Nepal	Disaster Preparedness Network Nepal
Danish Christian Aid	Friends Service Council Nepal
Action Aid Nepal	Natural Disaster Management Forum
UNICEF	Nepal Geological Society
United Nations Development Program (UNDP)	Nepal Landslide Society
Practical Action	National Centre for Disaster Management
Oxfam	Jalshrot Vikash Sanstha
Lutheran World Federation	National Society for Earthquake Technology (NSET)
Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC)	National Centre for Disaster Management
United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN/OCHA)	Institute for Social and Environment Transition Nepal (ISET Nepal)
Asian Disaster Reduction Center (ADRC)	FAYA Nepal (Forum for Awareness and Youth Activity)
HelpAge Nepal	Friend Service Council Nepal (FSCN)
Handicap International	
World Health Organization (WHO)	

World Vision International, Nepal	
Save the Children Fund (SCF)	
World Food Program (WFP)	

1.6.6. Overview of Disaster Risk Reduction Policy and federalization of Nepal

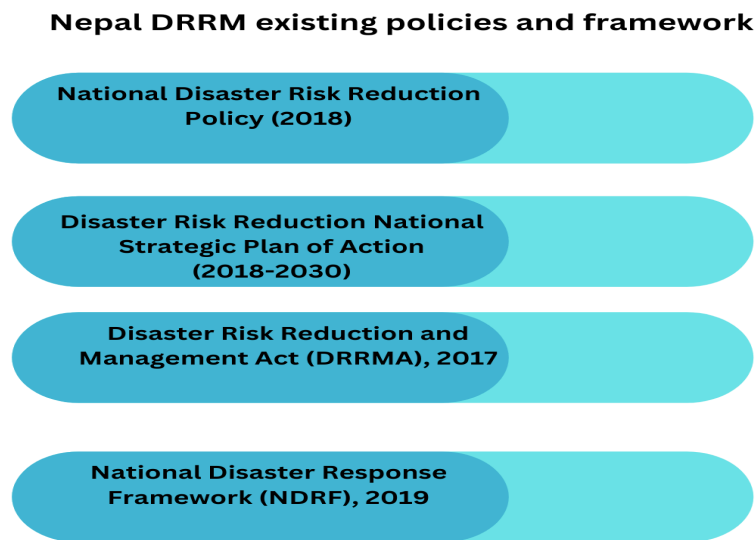
In 2015, Nepal underwent a constitutional transformation with the implementation of a new Constitution that serves as the fundamental law and policy framework for the country's governance (Bhandari et al., 2020). The Constitution delineates a federalized structure known as the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal, consisting of three levels: the Federation, the State, and the Local level, each exercising state power as prescribed by the Constitution and the law (Bhandari et al., 2020).

Within this constitutional framework, Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRRM) are incorporated into Schedule 7, Schedule 8, and Schedule 9 of the Constitution (Bhandari et al., 2020). This signifies that the primary responsibility for DRRM lies with local governments, while acknowledging the need for shared authority among the federal, provincial, and local levels. It is important to note that local government laws must be consistent with federal laws and laws established by the province or the National Assembly. To ensure effective coordination among these levels, Article 235 of the Constitution stipulates that the federal parliament will enact laws to facilitate efficient coordination, although these laws are currently in the process of formulation (Bhandari et al., 2020).

Furthermore, as outlined by Bhandari et al. (2020), the Constitution mandates the involvement of the Nepal Army in disaster management through relevant federal legislation. Article 273 of the Constitution confers upon the President the authority to declare a state of emergency based on the federal government's recommendation. Additionally, Article 273 (2) enables the declaration of a state of emergency in a province upon the request of the provincial government in the event of a natural calamity or epidemic (Bhandari et al., 2020).

1.6.6.1. Nepal disaster existing policies and key institutions

Figure 2: existing disaster policy and framework (Nepal disaster management reference handbook, 2020).



The Government of Nepal has put in place several policy and institutional frameworks to address disaster risk reduction and management (DRRM). These frameworks include the National DRRM Policy 2075 (2018) and the Disaster Risk Reduction National Strategic Action Plan 2018-2030, which provide comprehensive guidance for DRRM planning in Nepal (Nepal disaster management reference handbook, 2020). Additionally, the National Disaster Response Framework, established in 2070 (2014) and amended in 2075 (2019), ensures the active

participation of government bodies and the private sector in disaster response activities (Nepal disaster management reference handbook, 2020).

The National Disaster Risk Reduction Policy (2018) is Nepal's first dedicated policy aimed at establishing a sustainable approach to DRRM. Aligned with the Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act 2074 (2017), this policy aims to significantly reduce the losses caused by natural and non-natural disasters and protect the well-being and resources of the nation and its people (Nepal disaster management reference handbook, 2020).

The Disaster Risk Reduction National Strategic Plan of Action (2018-2030) on the other hand is a legally grounded planning framework that covers all aspects of disaster risk management in Nepal. It was developed in line with the Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act 2074 (2017) and considers lessons learned from previous strategies and recent significant disasters. The plan is based on Sendai Framework and structured in four priority areas, namely understanding disaster risk, strengthening disaster risk governance, investing in disaster reduction for resilience, and enhancing disaster preparedness. It outlines a series of priority actions to be implemented in the short, medium, and long term, assigning responsibilities to relevant government bodies at the federal, provincial, and local levels (Nepal disaster management reference handbook, 2020).

The Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act (DRRMA), passed in 2074 (2017) and subsequently amended in 2019, establishes the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority (NDRRMA) as the coordinating and implementing body for DRRM at the national level. The Act provides the framework for DRRM within the federal system and assigns specific roles and responsibilities to various government entities. The Ministry of Home Affairs leads the operationalization of the DRRMA Act, while the National Council issues directives and exercises control over disaster management, and the NDRRMA serves as the secretariat for the Council and the Executive Committee and carries out various DRRM (Nepal disaster management reference handbook, 2020).

The National Planning Commission (NPC) is responsible for developing regular development plans in Nepal. DRRM has been a key concern within these plans since the initial Five-Year Plan in the 1950s. Currently, the NPC is in the process of formulating its 15th Plan for the period of 2020 to 2025, where DRRM and climate change are identified as interconnected focal points (Nepal disaster management reference handbook, 2020).

Though Nepal has a strong documented policy, strategies, regulations, Jones et al. (2014) has argued that the Nepal government is extremely weak in the implementation part due to the nature of government structure. Jones et al. (2014) additionally explores the struggles encountered in governing disaster risk reduction and the processes involved in developing effective policies. Overall, it highlights the complexities and difficulties in managing disasters and emphasizes the importance of sound governance strategies (Jones et al., 2014).

Some of the policies related to disaster risk reduction and management in Nepal are (Nepal disaster management reference handbook, 2020).

- Natural Calamity (relief) Act 1982 (The Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act 2017 replaces the 1982 Act)
- Local Self Governance Act 1998 (note: Local Government Operation Act 2018 replaces the 1998 Act).
- Building Act 1998
- National Building Code 2004
- National Strategy for Disaster Risk Management 2009 (note: The Disaster Risk Reduction National Strategic Action Plan of Action 2015-2030 replaces the 2009 version)
- Climate Change Policy 2011
- Land Use Policy 2012
- Water Induced Disaster Management Policy 2012
- National Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Policy 2015
- National Disaster Response Framework
- Basic Guideline related to Settlement Development

- Urban Planning and Building Construction 2016
- National Urban Development Strategy 2016
- Constitution of Nepal 2015
- Local Government Operation Act 2018
- Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act 2017
- National Disaster Risk Reduction Policy (2018)
- Disaster Risk Reduction National Strategic Plan of Action (2018-2030)

Some key institutions at policy and coordination level are listed below.

The following government institutions have a stake in policy formulation and coordination for disaster management (Pradhan, 2007).

- National Planning Commission
- Water and Energy Commission
- Ministry of Home Affairs
- Ministry of Water Resources
- Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation
- Ministry of Environment, Science, and Technology
- Ministry of Health and Population
- Ministry of Local Development
- Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare

Key institutions at the implementation level

There are several departments entrusted with the responsibility of executing and implementing plans and programs related to disaster preparedness in Nepal. These departments also play a crucial role in providing policy feedback on disaster preparedness to the relevant ministries and work in coordination with other governmental and non-governmental entities to ensure effective disaster preparedness, response, and recovery in Nepal (Pradhan, 2007).

The departments involved include the following (Pradhan, 2007).

- Department of Water Induced Disaster Prevention
- Department of Soil Conservation and Watershed Management
- Department of Hydrology and Meteorology
- Department of Irrigation
- Department of Health Services
- Department of Mines and Geology
- Armed Police Force (Disaster Management Cell)
- Nepal Army
- Nepal Police

In addition to government departments, Pradhan (2007) numerous academic institutions in Nepal are actively engaged in researching disaster risk reduction, management, and mitigation measures. These institutions possess a wide range of expertise, covering areas such as earthquakes, landslides, glacial lake outburst floods (GLOFs), floods, and sedimentation. They have contributed cutting-edge research on risk reduction, risk management, mitigation strategies, and vulnerability assessments (Pradhan, 2007). Some prominent academic institutions involved in this field include:

- Central Department of Environmental Science, Tribhuvan University

- Department of Geology, Tri-Chandra Campus, Tribhuvan University
- Institute of Engineering, Tribhuvan University
- Nepal Engineering College
- Kathmandu University

These academic institutions collaborate with government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and international partners to generate knowledge, develop innovative solutions, and provide expert guidance for effective disaster risk reduction and management practices in Nepal (Pradhan, 2007).

Table 5: list of the Bilateral and Multilateral DRR donors in Nepal (Poudel & Blackburn, 2020).

S.N	Bilateral donor	Multilateral donor
1	United States Agency for International Development (USAID)	The World Bank
2	Department for International Development (DFID)	The Asian Development Bank
3	Deutsche Gesellschaft for Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)	United Nations (UN) UNDP
4	Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection Department of the European Union (ECHO)	Asian Disaster Reduction Consortium (ADRC)
5	Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)	
6	The Government of India	

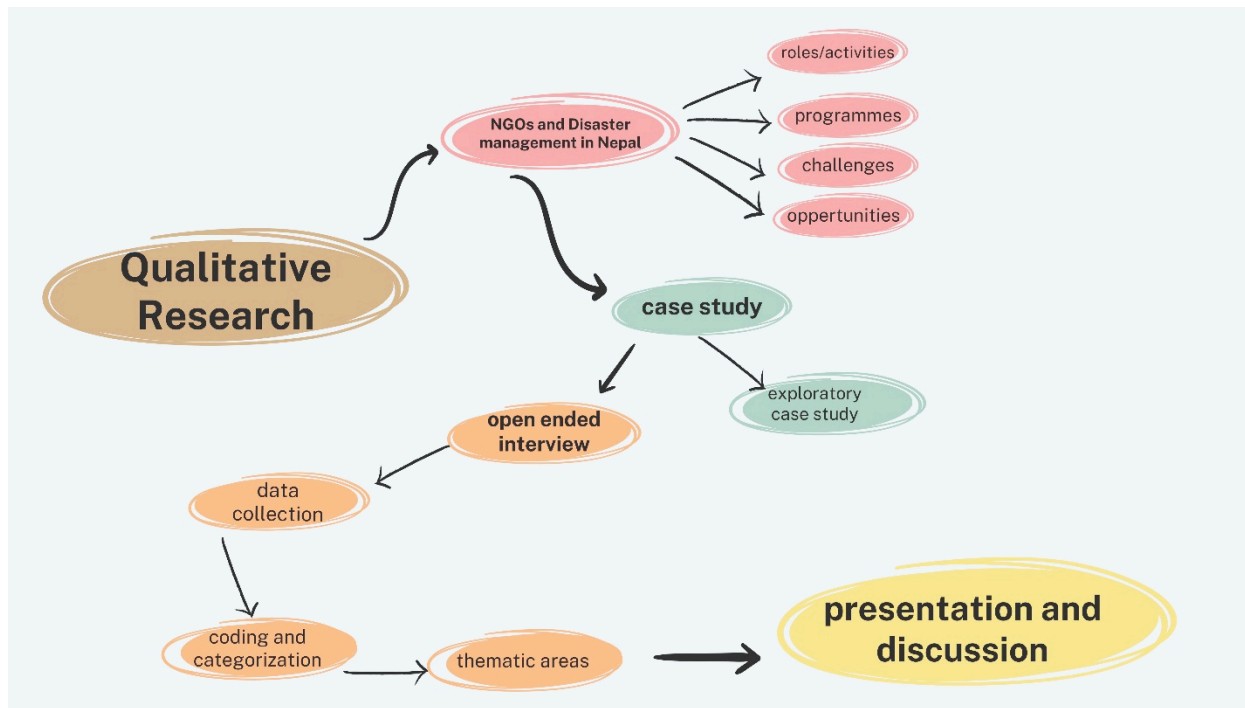
8	Australian Government's Department of Foreign Trade and Affairs (DFAT)	
9	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)	
10	Netherlands Development Organization Nepal (SNV)	
11	Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA)	

Chapter 2: Research Methodology

2.1. Research Design

The research is qualitatively designed and based on social constructivism. Given the flexibility and the nature of this research, it adopts exploratory case studies as a research method and uses snow-ball sampling techniques to identify the suitable NGOs as a research participant for this research. To understand more clearly, figure 3 helps to comprehend the research framework.

2.1.1. Figure 3: Research Framework



2.2. Study site and organizations

The study is carried out in Kathmandu valley especially in Lalitpur and Kathmandu districts of Nepal and the NGOs are the research participants who work in the areas of disaster management sector.

2.3. Data Collection Procedure

For data collection, an open-ended interview was conducted as a research tool and uses interview questions (see appendix) as a guideline to gather data on NGOs' perspectives on disaster and

what their activities, roles, challenges, and opportunities look like in disaster management in present context in Nepal.

2.4. Data Analysis

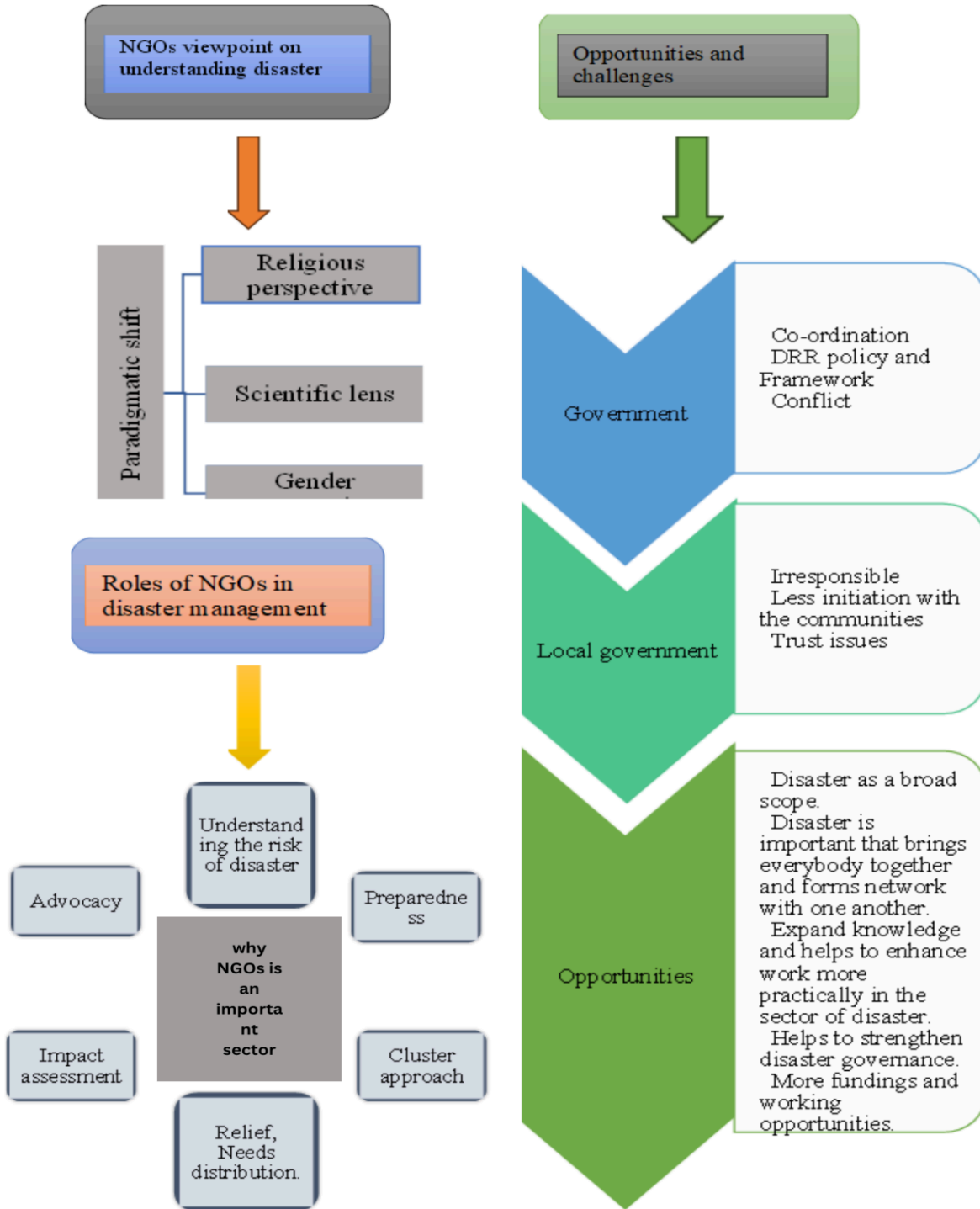
The recorded interviews with all nine NGOs were firstly transcribed manually in chart papers and followed the interview notes to identify the unique and common information regarding the NGOs roles, activities, programs, challenges, and opportunities. The analysis was done by marking with different colors in each transcribed file, where the identification of data was done by checking and matching with the same colors and representing them as thematic areas. The coding of data and name of NGOs included in the number format such as: Board member of NGO-1, Program manager of NGO-2 etc.,

2.5. Ethical Consideration

The researcher has maintained all the ethics in every process and part of this study. The literature review avoids plagiarism and provides credit or sources for all information extracted for the literature review. Likewise, the researcher has also avoided personal bias or forced interpretation of data and has maintained the confidentiality of participants' personal and professional information. Furthermore, involved organizations were fully informed of what is required of them, how the data will be stored and used, and the outcome of the study.

Chapter 3: Findings

3.1. Figure 4: key themes



3.1.1. Thematic Analysis

Highlighting the research objectives, this study explores the perspectives of nine NGOs operating in disaster areas in the context of Nepal, focusing on their understanding of disasters, roles in disaster management, and the opportunities and challenges they face. All the selected NGOs are affiliated with the Social Welfare Council of Nepal. The study reveals that these organizations differ in terms of their working approaches, funding partners, thematic areas, roles, and perspectives related to disaster management. Although not all NGOs explicitly include disaster as one of their thematic areas, they are found to be engaged in disaster-related projects. The key thematic areas extracted from the data are discussed in detail, encompassing the NGOs' understanding of disasters, their roles in disaster management, and the challenges and opportunities they encounter.

3.1.1.1. Understanding the Disaster

Various NGOs presented their unique perspectives on understanding disasters. Most NGOs explained their understanding of disasters through a scientific lens, viewing them as natural phenomena caused by either natural or man-made hazards. For instances, the program manager of NGO-2 expresses their opinion as:

“We understand disaster as such an event which occurs suddenly by natural factors or human activity and impacts on a large scale.”

Likewise, the board member of NGO-3 explains:

“Disaster is not only caused naturally but how human activities disturb the natural phenomena. For instance, developed countries like India and China produce large amounts of carbon related gasses as a result we Nepalese have to bear its impact for example, global warming such as rises in temperature and changing pattern of rainfall every year.”

Whereas the deputy general secretary of NGO-9 explains:

“We understand disaster after the impacts it has created.”

However, these NGOs also acknowledged that in the context of Nepal's geography, human activities and physical infrastructure development significantly contribute to the occurrence and impact of disasters. For instances, the program coordinator of NGO-8 has explained as:

“The way the human and Nepal government has built the foundation of infrastructure development is making Nepal more prone to disaster.”

Interestingly, some NGOs discussed their shift in understanding disasters from a religious perspective to a scientific lens. For instances, the program manager of NGO-1 shares his experience:

“Given my personal background as I am from Terai region of Nepal. Previously I used to believe that disaster occurs because God is now angry, and we should offer worship. Where I used to believe more to the side from religious myths but at present, I understand disaster as when the impact is on a very large scale, challenging the communities and when we tackle and require the assistance from outside.”

In addition to the scientific lens, some NGOs adopted a feminist perspective when considering disasters. These organizations focused on the multiple impacts of disasters, emphasizing the vulnerability of women and the need to address issues such as domestic violence, sexual harassment, reproductive health, and psychosocial therapy for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). As claimed by the program officer of NGO-6:

“Despite natural and man-made events, we see disaster as violence against women because if we see overall data in women's case, whenever a disaster occurs, it has multiple impacts on women such as in health, social, and security in terms of violence, sexual harassment and so on, where we provide for them a safe place for temporal shelter and the needs such as psychosocial therapy for PTSD, sanitary pads etc..”

With all the claims in regard to NGOs' perceptions and understanding about disaster, it shows that given their working focus areas, experiences and knowledge, shapes their perceptions to view disaster in different ways in Nepal.

3.1.1.2. Roles of NGOs in Disaster Management

The roles of NGOs in disaster management varied based on their visions, goals, and objectives. Most of the NGOs found to be collaborating with different funding partners including bilateral/multilateral agencies such as the WHO, UNICEF, STAR Network, US AID, Action Aid, CARE Nepal, The International Red Cross Society, ASIAN Disaster Preparedness Center, the Government of Nepal, and so on. For instances, the program manager of NGO-1 shared:

“Our organization currently has 13 supporting agencies like UNICEF, WHH, STAR NETWORK and Nepal government. These agencies help to utilize their resources in times of disaster.”

Similarly, the board member of NGO-3 shared as:

“For example, when we do a program on climate change, Action Aid sometimes becomes our partner, and we collaborate with other like-minded organizations. However, when we designed the programs, we involved our funding partners such as Nepal Red Cross Society, CARE Nepal and different levels of government, federal, local and provincial.”

Likewise, the program coordinator of NGO-8 claims that:

“We have formed a partnership and are collaborating with ASIAN Disaster Preparedness Center and with the Nepal government. Mostly we discuss with the government regarding the programs and activities, especially the ministry of home affairs. We are funded by and perform collaboration with different partners like LWS, OXFAM, Action Aid Nepal, CARE Nepal, WHO, Department of Water Induced Disaster Prevention, Nepal Army and Police and many more.”

However, these partnerships are crucial for the NGOs to secure resources and overcome the challenges they face in disaster management including operating the NGOs, their programs, projects, activities and so on.

Worth to note that the NGOs are actively involved in disaster management and have significant experience and expertise in understanding different types of disasters, their risks, and vulnerability groups. They engage in various activities, programs, and approaches contributing to disaster management. For instances, the president of NGO- 4 shares his experiences:

When we talk about the disaster, we have to understand the Nepal geography context in which we have Terai, Himalayan and Hilly and given this context we must understand that disasters vary accordingly. For example: the occurrence of floods in Himalayan and Terai may be different and so are the impacts. The way we understand disaster as something that comes all of sudden without any alertness but with the help of a forecast, we can anticipate it and implement precautions. For example, because of drought this year (2023) Terai is susceptible to flood and hunger crisis. The agricultural land is dry and as a consequence there will be less crop production. But our primary activities are that we do quick response and rescue work. If you see our organization’s profile, you’ll get information about how many people we have rescued from getting affected from different types of disaster so far.

For instance, we have successfully rescued 200 people in the tornado which falls in 2019 in Baraha and Parshahi. Since the occurrence of this disaster, we have completed building 16 shelters within 15 hours. Likewise, we have built and performed multiple responses in this disaster including making drinking water facilities.

In addition to this in COVID-19 we were the first to introduce the antigen test where we rescued 20 people from Sindupalchowk district by air lift. With the help of Nepal Army, we provide some relief distribution like cooked and packed food which were dispatched from Kathmandu. We even in the second wave of COVID-19, responded by rescuing 1200 families following up with an antigen test in Solukhumbu district and making isolated camps for them. If we hadn't made it in time the locals were in grave danger.

We also responded to the Koshi flood in 2022 and recent major floods i.e., Helambu at the same time, like we are quick in response as we successfully built 24 permanent houses within 3 months.

Regarding designing a program it's a process. For e.g., if we make any program on need based, we make a proposal and discuss it with our donors and then it goes for review. So, if it gets accepted then we go and make it based on a participatory approach. Yes, before we make any program we visit a community, hold discussions with different peoples and after assessing their needs we develop our projects and we believe that if we run any project for 5 years, the locals can revive back to their normal life. We have completed many projects like building a school, drinking water bodies, and 130 toilets in Terai. Some of our roles include making the public aware, advocacy, and informing locals about disaster related information. For example, in preparedness, we provide training to the local community volunteer groups, making them equipped. So first and foremost, when disaster happens it's about life saving so we start from rescuing after 24 hours since it's occurred period and after 72 hours, we start from relief distribution and services delivery works.

We also provide training to the volunteer group by Nepal Armed Police Force because they are the first responder to reach the disaster site secondly, they are trained groups. We also provide training to the locals about how to utilize their local resources and make use of their indigenous knowledge practically.

However, after identifying who are the vulnerable groups, we set the criteria for resource distribution. Sometimes we also get criticism from disaster victims like people complain about why not us/me and why them because we are also impacted by this disaster. So, for this we also provide them comprehensive planning, a program where we give consultancy on why we didn't provide you and why we provide them.

These NGOs play a vital role in preparedness by capacity building, including training local government officials, community groups, and disaster volunteer groups. They also adopt a cluster approach to coordination and engage in advocacy activities. For instance, the program manager of NGO-1 informed that:

“In preparedness- our organizations inform the local community by making them understand what disaster risk is, we make sure that local/communities

*first must know in what ways they are vulnerable and for what reasons.
Focusing on preparedness we mobilize youth, train them if any crisis happens
so they can respond immediately.”*

Whereas the program coordinator of NGO-8 shares his experiences as:

“Considering the focus on the present and future, I think being and to build capacity for all major important stakeholders like from local to federal government, communities, institutions and academics, and NGOs are important, which is what I see as lacking primarily. For instance, there is no awareness. When disaster is supposed to be taught in primary schools there is none of this part included. So basically, we firstly fail in making our education strong. So, we see one way to bring the disaster concept into mainstream and we have a program called Globally Comprehensive School Program which mentions how to deliver the studies and skills in making safe school and disaster resilient education. So, we have proposed the Ministry of Education and Government of Nepal to implement this program in all schools over Nepal. We follow the cluster approach which is a tool for assessing and delivering the services and needs to the affected community. For example, in the cluster approach there are two ways to work which is first after 24 hours of disaster. We perform a quick rapid response where we provide the emergency needs to disaster victims and secondly after 72 hours, we perform an initial response which means delivering the services and needs based on the overall impact assessment which covers the sectors like health, education, sanitation, infrastructure, electricity. Most of the organizations don’t know what to do before and after the disaster therefore we have Humanitarian Standard Training Manuals where NGOs provide training to other NGOs explaining how the NGOs can effectively work in disaster management based on this cluster approach which is also a part of capacity building. We also do advocacy to make the government prioritize disaster seriously by pressuring them to improve the disaster policies and strategies which are ineffective.”

Furthermore, the NGOs do not only design and implicate their programs, but they do measure the impacts of their programs and activities through periodic or annual reports, observing resource utilization by the local communities and beneficiaries. For instances, the president of NGO-4 claimed that:

*“We measure our activities by observing how the local or beneficiary groups
use our resources which were provided to them in post-recovery and
rehabilitation.”*

Similarly, the program coordinator of NGO-6 explained:

*“It is so hard to assess the impact of our programs because we are dealing
with the behavior, psychology, and beliefs of different people but if we have to
measure the impact in numbers and data, it is easy for all of us. More often we*

publish the reports of each activity, events, in the form of a case story and sometimes it's in the table or picture messages.”

Interestingly, the programs coordinator of NGO-8 also shared regarding how they measure their programs.

“This NGOs program is measured by the Social Welfare Council of Nepal, we hire consultants and publish the report of every event, programs, campaigns and project annually or periodically given its duration and nature.”

They also provide some insight into how their current role can be improved effectively. For instances, the program manager of NGO- 2 shared their experiences:

“There are some NGOs doing favoritism in a sense that some organizations in Nepal are run by their whole family. So, this limits the opportunities for those who deserve it. This type of practice completely needs to be stopped. Civil Society Organizations should work in their focused area without involving politics. Self-government, transparency, family networks, conflict of interest should firstly need to be addressed and only the role of an NGOs can be improved.”

Whereas the board member of NGO-3 explained:

“The current role of NGOs can further be strengthened by one must know what's going on in world geopolitics, do proper EIA, IA as a daily basis of monitoring part.”

With this it can be noted that the NGOs, by measuring their programs and activities, they too realize their weaknesses and focus on how their present role could be further improved and to make it accountable and sustainable.

Additionally, they emphasize the importance of collaboration with stakeholders such as community members, civil society organizations, local government, technicians, experts, and ministers in developing disaster-related programs. For instance, the program manager of NGO-2 shares their perspectives as:

“Our organization is an umbrella for all organizations and most of the time when we design any program for e.g., we make a program and there is a different process for making each of it like for federal level there are 4 to 5 ways and so for province and local level. Most of the time we make programs all by ourselves because it's for all organizations in Nepal where we focus from top to bottom. But I think all the major actors like Ministry of Home Affairs, Nepal

NDRRMA, Red Cross, community people and local government we think they are not important while designing the program, but we involve them in the implementation part.”

Whereas the executive director of NGO-5 provides her opinion:

“Being a program coordinator, I also don’t know many things about disaster management, so I participate in different events related to disaster which are organized by other NGOs, INGOs and government. However, the knowledge, skills and experiences I get from them helps me to improve our current way of working and then when I learn something then only, I deliver my skills into programs, organize campaigns and so on. Apart from this we believe Disaster and Climate change is such a sector where I think the collaboration and inclusiveness of different inter disciplinary measures is required and within our organization the working staff also represent different backgrounds in terms of their education, experiences and skills.”

The above claims strongly support the fact that our government and Disaster Policy is extremely weak in implementation and NGOs are well aware of how and where both the NGOs and government should play their roles for disaster management whereas NGOs personally thinking firstly that they should be knowledgeable about disaster and then only they can contribute to disaster management. Secondly, they emphasized the importance of collaboration which is significant to how networks are founded and formed, following present-day trends.

3.1.1.3. Challenges and Opportunities

The NGOs identified several challenges in their disaster management efforts. These challenges include the absence of standardized relief practices for risk assessment, inadequate early warning systems, as claimed made by the program manager of NGO-1:

“There are challenges after challenges in almost every sector and every phase of disaster management. Firstly, the relief standard is different, there is a lack of risk assessment in municipalities, we have natural challenges, such as the early warning system is not properly established because we can’t afford the costing price. It's very expensive. We talk about early warning, early warning. If there is no early warning, then how would people know and get pre informed about disaster. We have challenges in preparedness, response and post recovery level, in capacity building and advocacy level and so on.”

In addition to this, challenges such as delays in document submission due to pressure from donor agencies, lack of resources, knowledge, skills, and expertise in disaster risk reduction, and

traditional working approaches and perspectives. For instances, the program manager of NGO- 2 explains:

“Yes, we do have challenges. Sometimes we can’t submit our reports or documents timely to our donors.”

Whereas the board member of NGO-3 shared his experiences:

“We don’t have enough resources sometimes, especially since we don’t know exactly when and where disaster will occur. For instance, in the 2015 earthquake no one would ever imagine such a large-scale earthquake would occur, and we realized during that time that we didn’t have enough resources and at the same time we realized the importance of emergency funds. Being a civil engineer, I wanted to help people based on my skill, experience and knowledge. In the 2015 earthquake, I was in a civil mall. By just seeing the situations my mind becomes blank, I couldn’t do anything to help people, that’s how scary the incident was. Just looking at the people in panic there is no way you would volunteer to risk your life to save others and the lift and staircase was overcrowded with people jumping over each other. Furthermore, the situation gets worse when we see the collapsing of Dharara. Based on my theoretical knowledge I have done as far as I can but to be very honest the Nepal Army and Police force were the real heroes. Therefore, the experts, skills, knowledge, resources etc. in my opinion are equally important.”

Regarding the challenges, the program officer of NGO-7 also shared her experiences:

“There is practice of working traditionally, still I find like in 2017 floods and 2015 earthquake there were some organizations as soon as they came to the disaster site, they started to provide relief distributions because that’s what they know to do when it comes to disaster management. That’s not how we should understand and work. For example, in the 2015 earthquake I was focusing and busy with identifying and searching and rescuing the people who were trapped in the collapsed buildings. Though I am not a licensed medic holder I voluntarily went and rescued the people because at that time I could only think about saving people’s lives and alone. As humans we have our own limitations, and I couldn’t cover all the areas. The first to arrive at the disaster site were Nepal Army and Police Force with fully equipped gears and started rescuing operations. But there were some organizations who came with relief distribution without picturizing the situations. I believe NGOs should also change their perspectives not just for the sake of showing off their works and presenting in the media, but they should work with real intention for humanitarian purposes.”

Other challenges include limited government support and trust issues, delays in donor approvals for fund utilization, seasonal workforce, and dependency on foreign aid. Where the president of NGO-4 and program coordinator of NGO-8 shared their experiences regarding to present context:

“Where the government is supposed to support us, the present scenario is exactly opposite. The government thinks that we NGOs have lots of Networks and lots of funding partners where the government misunderstands that the funds for which the donor has provided us, we have to use and spend for only those projects or programs purposes only. And we have our own challenges like I told you at the beginning so what happens sometimes when disaster occurs, we quickly have to respond with rescue operations. During that time, we require the necessary and logistic supports like transportations cost, service like sometimes we need chopper for emergency rescue so in that time, government is just like that but the proposal we make for the fundings and other resources, the donors also delay in that process because the donors also have to discuss and sign with their other partners. They have their own process. There are these sorts of challenges we face considering our own works and experiences.”

“NGOs in Nepal are seasonal. When they have projects, they keep working on and when they don’t have any projects, they stop working. No NGOs can invest their personal funds for any programs or projects. On the other hand, the government doesn’t trust NGOs to work as the government thinks of NGOs as a consumer council. This is the reality.”

Despite these challenges, the NGOs proposed various measures to address them effectively. They emphasized the need for transparency, accountability, and need-based services from the government. For instances, the program manager of NGO-1, claims that:

“These challenges can be improved only when we all are including NGOs, local government, peoples firstly must change their perspectives and strict implications of all those policies, plans which must be practical and behavioral.”

Similarly, the program officer of NGO-7 provides her opinion:

“With the help of social media, social platforms where we raise our voice for the government. The Nepal government should fully utilize the funds that they allocate every year for disaster management. They should not only just allocate the budget for sports and activities but also for volunteering and for youths because no one wants to work for free these days. So, it will also make it easier for us to mobilize youth and create volunteer networks all over Nepal. Government should address the need and gaps and implement the policies accordingly.”

And likewise, the executive director of NGO-5 expresses her perceptions:

“Government should take the sole responsibility of disaster management because we are not here to take responsibility for everything. Our job is to just support the government as a supplement because we also understand that

sometimes the government might not have funds and allocate resources wisely based on situations where the government also needs to understand this from our side.”

In addition to this, based on NGOs knowledge and experiences they also called for a shift away from traditional approaches and a focus on preparedness for common disasters such as floods and landslides in Nepal. The NGOs highlighted the importance of advanced technology, broadening the perspective of disaster management, and allocating budgets accordingly. They stressed the importance of collaboration and good governance among all stakeholders, as well as the need for NGOs to avoid political involvement, conflict of interest and focus on capacity building. The NGOs practically acknowledged their role as facilitators and supporters, complementing the government's responsibility for disaster management.

In terms of opportunities, the NGOs identified plenty of funding, interdisciplinary experts and partners, resources, and global recognition related to disaster management and climate change issues. For instances, the program officer of NGO-2 claimed that:

“Speaking of opportunities, there are lots of funds, resources, especially if an NGO has good knowledge about disaster, they can build a broad international network and can perform good collaborations and partnership. NGOs can work with international agencies related to the disaster field. These types of opportunities we have from working and learning perspectives if we see.”

Whereas the president of NGO-4 shared:

“Our challenges are our opportunities.”

They emphasized that being located in a disaster-prone country like Nepal provides ample opportunities to raise funds, aid, and grants for their work. Furthermore, the NGOs believed that their local practices, experiences, and knowledge could be valuable contributions to the global platform, leading to policy reforms. As claimed by the program coordinator of NGO-6:

“In the present context, if we look at the disaster and climate change which is one of rising and emerging issues, where we have opportunities to work with different minded experts and besides this, we all know Nepal is a disaster-prone country right? In what ways can we contribute to disaster management in Nepal? Like we have opportunities with our local practices, experiences and knowledge which we have gained so far, now we have the

opportunities to address it on a global platform and can reform for policy changes.”

The NGOs broadly recognized that their services, knowledge, and resources in the field of disaster management present opportunities for them. For instances, As claimed by the program coordinator of NGO-8:

“By however and whatever we do work and the way we provide our services in various forms to the local communities or government, all those services, knowledge and resources we provide them, we consider as our opportunities in the disaster management sector.”

They also highlighted the potential for collaboration among non-profit sectors, private sectors, civil society organizations, government bodies, and international agencies. For instances, the deputy general secretary of NGO-9 shared his opinion:

“It brings all the important actors like non -profit sectors, private sectors, civil society organizations, government bodies, international multi and bilateral agencies to work in a specific framework and thus there are opportunities to work effectively in joint efforts.”

In conclusion, the findings of this study underscored the significant role of NGOs in disaster management. The participating NGOs, operating at the grassroots level, emphasized their importance in understanding and meeting the specific needs of local and indigenous communities. They highlighted their close connections with these communities, enabling them to effectively contribute to capacity building efforts by identifying and addressing the required resources and services. Additionally, the NGOs emphasized their commitment to supporting and strengthening government initiatives in capacity building, leveraging their long-standing relationships with community stakeholders to efficiently allocate resources. Overall, the study reinforced the crucial role played by NGOs in disaster management, particularly in terms of their knowledge of the community and their ability to provide targeted support. For instances:

Why is the Nonprofit sector important for disaster management in Nepal?	
The program manager of NGO-1 expresses his opinion as	“Disaster is not only important for NGOs but for all including government, private sector citizens, and NGOs. We have practical knowledge as we work with different communities because disaster is all about personal safety and security stuff. Therefore, we believe as a civil society, disaster should be our

	priority area. Whatever is mentioned in national priority including SDGs, we support those things to our government.”
Program manager of NGO-2 provides his perception as	“In so many situations the government couldn’t succeed. Sometimes they face fund crises, limitations, and delays where civil society organizations respond and react quickly. In disaster and climate, civil society organizations take quick action, we work from grassroots levels, and we work by prioritizing the consideration of community’s needs, we understand the context and peoples. During times of disaster, NGOs help in relief distributions, search and rescue operations, and livelihood management. So, considering these things, I think NGOs are important in disaster sectors.”
Whereas the deputy general secretary of NGO-9 opines	“ where the government couldn’t reach, where the government is lacking in terms of understanding and working, NGO helps and supports those things to the government because a NGOs have at least one or more expertise as an employer or staffs to operate in their main focusing areas for example, NGO working in health sector has health expertise, in education have education related experts and with the help of those, NGOs helps to capacitate the government in where and exactly which parts the government lacks.”

The statements provided by above NGOs shed light on a conflict that exists between the Nepal government and various non-governmental organizations (NGOs). This conflict reveals the complexities and differing viewpoints that these entities have towards each other. It also explains why disaster management is not a top priority for the Nepal government.

On the other hand, the Nepal government's response to disasters appears to be less prioritized. The NGOs' initiatives and achievements can be seen as a reflection of the gaps in the government's disaster management efforts. The government's lack of active participation and collaboration with NGOs and community volunteer groups suggests that they might not fully recognize the importance of involving different stakeholders for effective disaster management.

In essence, the statements also indicate that NGOs, with their resources and capacities, are working diligently to fill the gaps left by the government's limited involvement in disaster management. They are striving to make a positive impact on disaster response and relief efforts despite the challenges they may face. Overall, the situation highlights the need for better

coordination and cooperation between the government and NGOs to ensure a more effective and comprehensive approach to disaster management in Nepal.

Chapter 4: Discussion

The data suggests that there is a need for proper frameworks in working strategies, plans, programs, policies and consistency for all those actors who are operating in disaster management including NGOs. The findings represent the NGOs understanding of disaster from different perspectives, where the roles and their programs vary and are shaped up by the NGOs visions, missions and principles. The challenges highlight the collaboration with government, relationship with donors, resource management and emphasis to address them effectively whereas in emerging issues like disaster and climate change sectors there are lots of opportunities for NGOs including knowledge expansion, learnings, resource and grants availability.

The current situations of NGOs, the majority of them are found to be actively engaged in advocacy. For instance, the program manager of NGO-2 explained:

“Our main focus is, we do advocacy; we keep pressuring the government in terms of how to make any policies, strategies etc., and provide suggestions on how their decision impacts the citizens of this country because when it comes to implementation, our government is extremely weak.”

Whereas the executive director of NGO-5 shares her experiences:

“Sometimes we, along with our groups and networks, have to step on the road in peaceful protest with banners for human rights and justice, especially for women related issues which we did for the Nirmala Hattya Kanda case.”

The statement reflects the determination and dedication of the speaker and their organization to actively engage with the government, using advocacy as a means to drive positive change and address critical concerns. It highlights their commitment to making a meaningful impact on the policies and decisions that affect their cause or the broader society they serve. In addition to this the evidence directly claims that Nepal government is weak in policy implementation which relates to the claim and discussed in the previous study of (Jones et al., 2014; Karns, 2023; Lassa, 2018; Roka, 2012).

Likewise, another significant finding is that NGOs are found to be engaged in favoritism and politically compete to highlight their roles in Nepal's present scenario. For instance, the program manager of NGO-2 claims that:

“In Nepal some NGOs are like this also who favors their families, friends and relatives and some NGOs are found to exist which are operated by their whole family. There is nepotism.”

The issue of favoritism and nepotism mentioned by NGO-2 can be linked to studies on governance and accountability within NGOs. Research has shown that in some cases, NGOs may face challenges in maintaining transparency, accountability, and ethical practices. This can lead to instances of favoritism where resources and opportunities are distributed to individuals or groups based on personal connections rather than merit (Bebbington et al., 2008). The presence of family-operated NGOs mentioned by NGO-2 further supports the claim of nepotism, where familial ties influence the decision-making and operations of these organizations.

Another claim made by the president of NGOS-4 that:

“When we responded in rescue operations in flood 2018, there were lots of our pictures on the internet and we later found that one of the foreign NGOs had used our picture and raised billions of funds. This is the ground reality brother. There are some NGOs who still do this type of activity.”

The claim made by NGO-4 about the unauthorized use of their images and fundraising by foreign NGOs highlights the potential lack of oversight and regulation within the NGO sector. This can be related to the concept of accountability and the need for effective monitoring mechanisms to ensure that NGOs adhere to ethical standards and guidelines. It also suggests the possibility of opportunistic behavior by some NGOs in exploiting humanitarian crises for personal gain, which relates to previous research in Accountability in practice: Mechanisms for NGOs (Ebrahim, 2003, pp., 817-823).

Additionally, the program manager of NGO-8 opines that:

“There are some Nepali NGOs too that overreact sometimes. Some NGOs feel too proud of themselves that they think they have done such things which the government couldn't do or perform.”

Lastly, the statement made by the NGO-8 about NGOs feeling overly proud and assuming superiority over the government can be to some extent related to theories of NGOs, social movements and the neoliberal state: Incorporation, reinvention, critique (Ismail & Kamat, 2018). Some NGOs, due to their independence and perceived effectiveness, may develop a sense of

superiority and overlook the importance of collaboration and cooperation with government entities and other stakeholders.

Chapter 5: Recommendation

This study highlights the limited research conducted on the perspectives of NGOs in Nepal regarding disasters, their roles, challenges, and opportunities. To contribute to the existing body of knowledge and provide a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter, further exploration in this area is recommended. The following recommendations are provided for future research:

1. **In-depth Analysis of NGO Perspectives:** Future studies should delve deeper into the perspectives of NGOs operating in Nepal with regards to disaster management. This could involve conducting interviews, surveys, or focus groups to gather insights on their experiences, strategies, and recommendations for improving disaster response and resilience.
2. **Comparative Studies:** It would be valuable to compare the perspectives of NGOs across different regions of Nepal or even in other countries to identify similarities, differences, and best practices. This comparative analysis could shed light on the contextual factors that influence NGO engagement in disaster management.
3. **Longitudinal Studies:** Long-term studies tracking the evolution of NGOs' roles and approaches to disaster management would provide valuable insights. Examining changes over time can help identify emerging trends, challenges, and opportunities for NGOs in this field.
4. **Challenges and Opportunities:** Research should focus on comprehensively identifying the specific challenges faced by NGOs in Nepal in relation to disaster management. Additionally, it is important to explore the opportunities that exist for NGOs to contribute more effectively to disaster resilience efforts.
5. **Capacity Building and Collaboration:** Future research should explore strategies to enhance the capacity of NGOs in disaster management. This could include investigating training programs, networking initiatives, and collaborative partnerships between NGOs, government agencies, and other stakeholders.
6. **Impact Assessment:** It is crucial to assess the impact of NGO interventions in disaster management. Evaluating the effectiveness of their initiatives, policies, and advocacy efforts will provide insights into their contributions and areas for improvement.

7. Policy Analysis: Research should examine the existing policies and regulations governing NGO involvement in disaster management. This analysis can identify gaps, areas for improvement, and recommendations for strengthening the legal framework to facilitate effective NGO engagement.

Chapter 6: Limitations of the study

While this research provides valuable insights into the perspectives of NGOs in Nepal regarding disaster management, it is important to acknowledge certain limitations that may affect the generalizability and scope of the findings. The following limitations of the study are identified:

1. **Limited Geographic Coverage:** This study is conducted solely in two districts of the Kathmandu valley, namely Kathmandu and Lalitpur. Therefore, the findings may not fully represent the perspectives and experiences of NGOs operating in other regions of Nepal, where different contextual factors and challenges may exist.
2. **Self-Funded Research:** The researcher independently covered all the expenses related to this study, including transportation, food, and communication costs. As no external agency or funding was involved, there may be limitations in terms of resources and support available for data collection and analysis, which could have impacted the breadth and depth of the study.
3. **Time Constraints:** The study was constrained by a relatively short time frame of four months, from June to September 2023. This limited time frame may have affected the extent to which data could be collected, analyzed, and validated, potentially influencing the comprehensiveness of the research findings.
4. **Challenges in Scheduling Appointments:** Given the nature of the NGOs' work in the field of disaster management, scheduling appointments for interviews or discussions with the NGOs in Nepal posed challenges. These logistical difficulties may have resulted in a limited number of participating NGOs, potentially limiting the diversity of perspectives included in the study.
5. **Limited Number of Participating NGOs:** Due to time constraints and the aforementioned challenges in scheduling appointments, only nine NGOs were selected as participants for this study. The relatively small sample size may restrict the generalizability of the findings and may not fully capture the breadth of experiences and perspectives among NGOs working in disaster management in Nepal.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

In conclusion, this research study aimed to explore the perspectives of NGOs in Nepal regarding disasters, their roles in disaster management, and the challenges and opportunities they face. Through thematic analysis, the study revealed diverse understandings of disasters among NGOs, encompassing scientific and feminist perspectives. NGOs were found to play various roles in disaster management, including capacity building, coordination, advocacy, and impact assessment. They face challenges such as limited resources, traditional working approaches, and trust issues, while also recognizing opportunities for collaboration, funding, and global recognition.

Focusing on present scenario NGOs in Nepal are mostly found to be engaged in advocacy. It is because they knew exactly where and how Nepal's government struggling with policy and plans implementations. Due the government irresponsibility and less initiation with stakeholder and communities, NGOs enforce government to prioritize the disaster as when it comes to disaster it is linked to matter of life and death to all. Therefore, it sheds light on how government decisions in disaster management impact on large society as a whole.

In addition to this, some NGOs are political compete with government due to their sense of independency regarding working experience in disaster management which portrays the starting point of conflict/ trust issues and overlooks the importance of collaboration. As a whole such attitudes need to be improved for NGOs and work on more towards the bigger picture focusing on long term priorities.

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Appendix

Interview Questions

Name of the NGO	Establishment of the NGO	Number of Year Working in the Disaster Field	Major Activities/Achievement/Programs	District Coverage	Funding mechanism	Any Relevant Information

Understanding NGOs' viewpoint on disaster

1. Given you and your organization focus on disaster, would you like to explain about the disaster in Nepal?
2. In literature and theories, disaster has been understood in different ways – religiously, socially, economically, politically, technologically, and from a policy perspective, only to name a few. Given this, what sort of understanding does your organization align to?
3. In your views, why is disaster an important sector for NGOs in Nepal?
4. As you have already mentioned about the programs and activities, now can you please explain the nature of those programs and activities in detail.
5. How do you plan, design, and deliver your activities relating to the disaster in Nepal? Do you also engage beneficiary groups while designing any program? If yes, how? How do your funding bodies impact the development of any program relating to disaster?
6. Following the above questions, would you like to share what were the focuses of your programs - preparedness, response, or recovery? Would you like to also share some of your successful programs that you have implemented and how did they positively impact people?

7. Since you have already contributed to disaster response and recovery efforts, now could you explain some key steps you would take to assess the needs and vulnerabilities of communities affected by a disaster in Nepal?
8. What are the various partners or actors with which you engage while working in this field?
9. How do you form such a partnership? To what extent such partnerships have contributed to achieving your goals in the disaster sector.
 - Government - what does your partnership look like with the government?
 - Non-government – what does your partnership or collaboration with non-government bodies look like?
 - Community- what does your partnership or collaboration with communities look like?
 - Academic and Researcher- what does your partnership or collaboration with academic bodies look like?
10. To what extent your programs and activities are sustainable in nature? Likewise, to what extent your programs and activities contribute to empower peoples who face disaster in Nepal. Can you please explain about these?
11. To what extent is your agency involved in building the capacity of local communities that face disasters in Nepal? Can you provide examples of any activities that have contributed to building capacity of the communities?
12. How do you measure the impact of your organization?

Roles of NGOs in disaster management in Nepal

13. What are the various roles that NGOs play in disaster management in Nepal?
14. To what extent do you think NGOs roles have been crucial in disaster management in Nepal?
15. Do you think the roles that NGOs have played so far in disaster management is effective considering disasters and their impacts on people in Nepal?
16. In what ways can NGOs' roles be improved in the future to effectively deal with disaster in Nepal?

Opportunities and Challenges

17. What are the various opportunities for your organization to work in the sector of disaster in Nepal?
18. Likewise, would you also like to explain what are the various challenges for your organization to work in the sector of disaster in Nepal?
19. In your opinion, how can the current challenges be addressed so that NGOs can effectively contribute to the sector of disaster management in Nepal?
20. Would you like to share anything else that I have not asked, but that is relevant to this research?