WOMEN AND PHILANTHROPY: PERSPECTIVES FROM NEPAL

by

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DISSERTATION

Presented to the Swiss School of Business and Management Geneva

In Partial Fulfilment

Of the Requirements

For the Degree

DOCTOR OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

SWISS SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT GENEVA

MARCH 2025

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to Florence, whose unwavering support has been my anchor through the most challenging times of this journey. Your belief in me never wavered, even when I doubted myself. You have stood by me with patience and understanding, offering a listening ear when I needed to vent my frustrations, and a voice of encouragement when I needed to stay on course. You have been my sounding board, my confidant, and my unwavering source of strength throughout this demanding process of completing my Doctoral Degree.

This work is as much a testament to your resilience and kindness as it is to my perseverance. Thank you for being my constant companion in this endeavour and for always reminding me why I started this journey in the first place.

With deepest gratitude and love, this dissertation is for you.

To my incredible network—you know who you are—thank you for your support, guidance, and encouragement.

To every individual and organisation in Nepal tirelessly advancing equity, empowerment, and social change—this work stands as a tribute to your vision and dedication.

Finally, I pay tribute to the many remarkable women and men who participated in this research study. Your openness in sharing your perspectives, experiences, and stories has enriched this research study with depth and authenticity. Your contributions have been invaluable in shaping the relevance and impact of this research study, and I sincerely hope I have done them justice.

Thank you.

ABSTRACT

WOMEN AND PHILANTHROPY: PERSPECTIVES FROM NEPAL

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2025

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Natural disasters such as the 2015 earthquake, recent floods, high cost of migrations, and the COVID-19 pandemic have exposed the fragility of Nepal's social and economic systems, highlighting the critical need for philanthropic interventions to build resilience, support vulnerable communities, and invest in long-term recovery and sustainability. Hence, why it is important for women to play a central role in philanthropy. Women bring unique perspectives, foster inclusive solutions, and often focus on grassroots initiatives that directly impact families and communities. Empowering and supporting women in philanthropy not only strengthens resilience but also ensures that resources are allocated to areas that address systemic inequalities and promote sustainable development in times of crisis.

The culture, religion, and patriarchal society in Nepal dictate Nepalese women's roles. Traditionally, women's roles entail vast household and farm chores, caring for her parents and siblings as a daughter, serving her husband and parents-in-law, and providing for her children's needs, including education. Despite this, an increasing number of

women in Nepal aspire to assume leadership positions and combat the daily obstacles they face.

Evidence shows women in Nepal are making significant contributions and impacts within the philanthropic sector, including Bidya Devi Bhandari, Nepal's first female president; Pasang Lhamu Sherpa, the first Nepalese national heroine to successfully climb Mount Everest; Hima Bista, executive director, Nepal at Womankind Worldwide, who protested against the government's policy violating women's rights by stating, 'My vagina will vote you out'; and Bonita Sharma, co-founder, SOCHAI, named one of the most influential women in the world in 2019 by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC). Her nonprofit organisation, a youth-led initiative focused on improving health and nutrition for vulnerable women and people. Their desire to make a difference in their community stems from a deep commitment to fostering positive change, empowering others through leadership and role models, and creating opportunities for growth and equity through philanthropy.

Therefore, the objectives of this qualitative research study are not only to highlight their works and achievements but also to contribute to the expanding body of literature on women and philanthropy in Nepal and encourage generations of Nepalese women to take up an active role in caring for our people as a whole through philanthropy. By shedding light on their impact, this research aspires to inspire a cultural shift—one where more women step forward as changemakers, leveraging their resources, networks, and influence to create a more equitable, sustainable and compassionate society. It is a call to action for individuals, institutions, and policymakers to recognise and support the vital role of women in shaping Nepal's philanthropic landscape.

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS, ABBREVIATIONS, AND ACRONYMS

GLOSSARY OF TERMS, ABBREVIATIONS, AND ACRONYMS	DESCRIPTION
Bikram Sambat (BS) also known as Vikram Sambat (VK)	Nepali calendar is known as the Bikram Sambat calendar. Nepal Sambat is the national lunar calendar of Nepal. The current Nepali year is 2081 Bikram Sambat. BS calendar is approximately 56 years and 8 months ahead of the Gregorian calendar (Datta, 2021).
Caste	According to the Special Rapporteur on minority issues, the term "caste" refers to "a strict hierarchical social system that is often based on the notions of purity and pollution, in which individuals placed at the bottom of the system may face exclusion and discrimination in a wide range of areas. The concept of "caste system" is primarily associated with the South Asian region, where its existence is linked to the religiously sanctioned social structure of Hinduism, which identified four original and endogamous groups, or castes, called varnas. At present, the term "caste" has broadened in meaning, transcending religious affiliation. Caste and caste-like systems may be based on either a religious or a secular background and can be found within diverse religious and/or ethnic groups in all geographical regions, including

	within diaspora communities", (United Nations Network on Racial Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, 2017).
Chhaupadi and menstruation	Chhaupadi is a form of menstrual taboo which is practised predominantly in some parts of Karnali and Sudurpaschim Provinces of western Nepal. It is a longstanding religious and cultural tradition deeply ingrained in society for centuries. Women and girls are considered impure, unclean, and untouchable in the menstrual period or immediately following childbirth. During menstruation, women are supposed to avoid touching male family members, crops, livestocks, communal water taps, temples and fruit-bearing plants. In Chhaupadi practice, women and girls are isolated from a range of daily household chores, social events and forbidden from touching other people and objects. Chhaupadi tradition banishes women and girls into menstruation huts', or Chhaupaudi huts or livestock sheds to live and sleep. These practices are guided by existing harmful beliefs and practises in western Nepal, resulting in poor menstrual hygiene and poor physical and mental health outcomes. The Chhaupadi has been abolished since 2005 by the Supreme Court of Nepal but it is still practised in many communities in Nepal. According to a study by the UN Harmful Practices Working Group in Nepal, 89% of girls and women in the country experience restrictions during menstruation, (United Nations Nepal, 2023).

COVID-19 Pandemic	According to the World Health Organisation (WHO) (2024), the "coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic is a global outbreak of coronavirus – an infectious disease caused by the severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2)".
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
GoN	Government of Nepal
Gurkhas	Special Nepalese military soldiers, and they have been fighting for the British since 1815.
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
Horizontal Wealth Transfer	Horizontal Wealth Transfer was coined by UBS to refer to the transfer of wealth within the same generation (between spouses, partners and siblings). For example, in the case of MacKenzie Scott and Jeff Bezos of Amazon.
Nepal	The Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal
Nepali/Nepalis Nepalese	Referred to the people Nepal Predominantly used by the British
NRS	Nepali Rupees currency US$ 1 = NRS 133 EURO 1 = NRS 145 GBP 1 = NRS 169 Exchange rate date: May 2024
Panchayat	AKA, Panchayat system, era, Panchayat regime, Panchayat rule. The Panchayat era was established by King Mahendra

	(11 June 1920 – 31 January 1972) from 1961 – 1990 following the 1960 coup d'état. The Panchayat system is a partyless political system of village, district and national councils (Thapa, 2019), which governed Nepal for 28 years until the introduction of multi-party democracy in 1990 following a popular prodemocracy movement. It is also a system of governance based on repression and coercion rather than responsiveness, persuasion and democratic participation. Such systems usually centralise authority in persons and groups and exhibit intolerance to dissent. Many experts consider the Panchayat system in Nepal to have been an authoritarian system of governance International IDEA and Forum of Federations (2009).
Private Patriarchy	This form of patriarchy is found in the household. In this view, one individual patriarch (the dominant male, usually the husband) dominate and oppress the subjugated female (usually the wife, but also daughters). Walby (1990) believes this acts as an exclusionary tactic as women are prevented from taking part in public discourse outside the home.
Public Patriarchy	This form of patriarchy operates in the public world. It is most often associated with the ways in which oppression operates in working world. In public life, Walby (1990) argues, women are more collectively separated from power, wealth, and influence than men are, such as in the

	greater difficulty they face in finding higher paid work or gaining promotions.
Rana Dynasty, regime, era	The Rana dynasty was a Chhetri dynasty that imposed authoritarianism in Nepal from 1846 until 1951, reducing the Shah monarch to a figurehead and making the Prime Minister and other government positions held by the Ranas hereditary.
SARS	Severe acute respiratory syndrome
Sati	Sati means sacrifice of widows (by sitting atop her deceased husband's funeral pyre).
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SWC	Social Welfare Council Nepal
Terai	Terai AKA Tarai, is the plains of Nepal and they occupy 17% of the land, stretching from the far-west to the far-east covering the entire southern part of the country.
Tharu	The Tharu are the most populous ethnic group in the Terai region. They are distributed along the entire length of Nepal's plains and also stretch to the west into the Kumaon foothills. The Tharu are likely the most ancient and indigenous residents of the Terai region (Nepal Tourism Board, 2024).
The Mulukī Ain of 1854	The Mulukī Ain of 1854 - the law code with constitutional features drafted at the initiative of Prime Minister Jaṅga Bahādura Rāṇā - is the foundational legal text for modern Nepal. It covers almost every aspect of public, criminal,

	private and religious law, ranging from the organisation of the state and courts to murder and other delicts, the workings of the caste system and the joint family, matters of purity and penance, customary law, widow-burning and witchcraft. As such, the Mulukī Ain is a unique source not only for the political, social and economic life of 19th-century Nepal, but also for the place of traditional Hindu jurisprudence in South Asian legal cultures (Khatiwoda et al., 2021).
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
Widow	Woman whose husband has died.
Women's rights' organisation (WROs) and women-led organisations	WRO encompasses women-focused and women-led organisations, such as organisations with a focus on sexual and gender minorities, or whose focus area is ethnic minorities or persons with disabilities, can raise the voices of women in an intersectional way (Pant et al., 2023).

CHAPTER I:

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 Women and Philanthropy

Historically, the notion of women's philanthropy was seen as a novelty as it was considered a man's world (Mesch and Pactor, 2010). In the United States (US), women have been contributing and making impacts for hundreds of years, towards philanthropy by 'investing their intellectual, financial, social, and cultural capital' (Shaw-Hardy, Taylor, and Beaudoin-Schwartz, 2010, p. xiii) so that they can make a difference within their community. As Mesch and Pactor (2010, p. xvi) espouse, 'Women's philanthropy has become an important component of the philanthropic landscape'.

For decades, American women have had access to education and financial means. They have also benefitted from the historic women's movement that began in the 19th and 20th century, giving them the right to vote, equal pay and opportunities. As the women's movement began to take momentum, they also became more organised. Their approach to philanthropy developed to become 'intentional and strategic' (Shaw-Hardy, Taylor, and Beaudoin-Schwartz, 2010). Furthermore, they also created innovative models of engagement.

In 1972, the first women's fund was established, which came from the Ms. Foundation for Women, creating a historic milestone in women's funds (Shaw-Hardy, Taylor, and Beaudoin-Schwartz, 2010). Additionally, women's funds predominately founded by and for women supporting women's causes - especially feminist causes - have historically been underfunded (McCarthy, 1995).

Another model which became popular was the giving circles. Schweitzer (2000, p. 32) defines giving circles as 'pooling their resources in support of organizations of

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mutual interest'. Women came together to pool funds and decide where the funds were allocated (Eikenberry, 2006, p. 517). Giving circles became popular with women members as it connected them to their causes to 'a greater degree than other forms of philanthropy' (p. 518). In fact, the premise of the giving circle came about as women donors wanted more control over how they give and what causes they give to.

According to the Charities Aid Foundation (2024), there is a shift taking place in the philanthropic landscape today. Women are likely to inherit up to $9 trillion from their partners (horizontal wealth) in the next 25 years (Frank, 2024). Therefore, wealthy female philanthropists will be directing funds toward causes that have been previously overlooked or underfunded. This makes the topic of women and philanthropy important and relevant (Shaw-Hardy, Taylor, and Beaudoin-Schwartz, 2010).

1.1.2 Women and Philanthropy in Nepal

The Global Gender Gap Insight Report (March 2021, p. 27) by the World Economic Forum highlighted a small but positive progress towards gender parity in Nepal compared to other South Asian countries that have registered either slightly reduced or stagnant performances. The Nepal Financial Inclusion Report (International Finance Corporation, 2023) also revealed that the gender gap has improved and is narrowing through economic participation and opportunity for women in Nepal from 116th in 2013 to 107th in 2021 and 98th in 2022.

A similar shift can be seen taking place in Nepal, just like the women in the US or the Global North. Nepalese women are progressively accessing education and gaining financial independence. Access to education and financial freedom as change agents are likely to influence Nepalese women's role in society, and their approach to philanthropy. Studying Nepalese women, their impact, and how they are contributing philanthropically also challenges the assumptions that they are passive participants. Furthermore, it will

likely recognise Nepalese women as active agents of change in societal development at home and in public spaces.

In conclusion, the study of women and philanthropy is important. The Nepal Constitution (2015) recognises gender equity as a fundamental right to all. However, the reality is that women's rights and women's issues remain an ongoing challenge. Further research is vital to understand and leverage women's motivations, their philanthropic impact, their contributions, and the causes that they support and why. Women-focused philanthropy is necessary to play an important role in advancing women's and social causes. Studying women and philanthropy will further help in identifying funding opportunities and strategies required to amplify women's voices in Nepalese civil society.

1.2 Research Problem

The patriarchal system culminated by the religious and cultural practises in Nepal has limited women's role in private, and public life. This has a profound impact on the daily life of almost every woman in Nepal. According to Hamal Gurung (2014, p. 175), 'Nepal is a patriarchal, patrilineal, and patrifocal society; its norms are heavily patriarchal'. Therefore, patriarchy is a societal structure that means 'rule of the father' from the Greek word patriarkhēs, one where men have advantages over women in terms of position, property, and moral standing; therefore, a system where men control a disproportionately large share of social, economic, political, and religious power. Furthermore, Johnson (2005, p. 5) confirms that a 'society is patriarchal to the degree that it promotes male privilege by being male-dominated, male-identified, and male-centred'. It also revolves around a fixation on control, with the subjugation of women serving as one of its primary facets. Furthermore, it is 'generally reserved for men', and those who are considered 'head of household' all 'tend to be male under patriarchy'.

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Kandiyoti (1988, p. 278) states that 'classic patriarchy' is characterised by servitude and manipulation and is widespread in patrilocally extended homes in agrarian countries, such as the 'Muslim Middle East (including Turkey, Pakistan, and Iran), North Africa, and South and East Asia (specifically, India and China)'. In a patriarchal society, the male head of the household, along with their brothers, uncles, and male cousins, expects women and girls to submit, perform domestic duties as a wife and mother, and safeguard the honour and welfare of the family (Benstead, 2020).

Private patriarchy is form of patriarchy found in the household. In this view, one individual patriarch (the dominant male, usually the husband) dominates and oppresses the subjugated female (usually the wife, but also daughters). Walby (1990) believes this acts as an exclusionary tactic as women are prevented from taking part in public discourse outside the home.

Public patriarchy operates in the public world. It is most often associated with the ways in which oppression operates in the working world. In public life, Walby (1990) argues women are more collectively separated from power, wealth, and influence than men are, such as in the greater difficulty they face in finding higher-paid work or gaining promotions.

Many feminist views have relied heavily on the concept of patriarchy. It is an attempt to explain the gendered stratification of power and privilege. All ethnic groups, of which there are 126 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs Nepal, n.d.), are reported to exhibit patriarchy, according to a 2011 consensus (Path and Kathmandu, 2014). Furthermore, the caste systems exacerbate this, complicating the patriarchal system and the role of women within the culture. The expected roles of Nepalese women and girls are generally subordinate to men and are considered inferior. They are frequently considered and treated as second-class citizens, seen as liabilities, denied their human rights, and valued

less simply because of their gender. However, men (particularly the eldest) are considered the family's leaders and decision-makers. Cultural, historical, economic, and social norms and values continue to heavily favour men (Mittra and Kumar, 2004). Consequently, society perceives men as superior to women, granting them privileged positions both at home and in society.

The strong biases favouring 'chhoras' (sons) mean that 'chhoris' (daughters) and females are discriminated against from birth, with unequal access to opportunities (Bhattarai, 2014). This discrimination deprives women and girls of numerous fundamental rights. They are seen as others' property (belonging to their father's, brothers', husband's, and in-laws) and are thus considered liabilities (Mittra and Kumar, 2004). Educating sons is considered more beneficial than investing in daughters, as the latter are expected to leave their parents' home once married. Once married, a daughter's value becomes even less. Their circumstances can deteriorate; previously, they were subject to the authority, influence, and possessions of their fathers and brothers, which now belong to their husbands and in-laws. This includes educated women from the middle to upper echelons of Nepalese society who, once married, may face work restrictions. Despite many obstacles and challenges, Nepalese women are increasingly overcoming the status quo. They are challenging the traditional roles of women and are trying to create a new norm by making an impact in the philanthropic landscape as donors, volunteers, founders, entrepreneurs, and community leaders.

1.3 Purpose of Research

The focus of this research study is to extensively study women and philanthropy and how they contribute to the Nepalese context. Therefore, to achieve these, the below highlights the steps to be undertaken:

- Examine historical and current literature relating to women and philanthropy, how the concept of philanthropy is defined from the Nepalese perspective, and how Nepalese women are making impacts and contributing.
- Interview a select group of women who have made significant contributions to the field of philanthropy in Nepal. In examining these women's endeavours (case study), the researcher seeks to:
  - challenge the traditional assumptions of women in Nepalese society,
  - examine if and how philanthropy is carving the way forward in Nepal,
  - add to and/or show gaps in the literature on women and philanthropy.
  - Interview select group of men working in philanthropic sector.

As confirmed by Pragya Karki, the country head for Nepal at the TRQSE Foundation, who stated that 'in order to change the mindset of our brothers, fathers, and husbands, we must involve our Nepalese men in various activities and programmes. Only by doing this will they begin to understand why it is difficult to be a woman in Nepal and the barriers they face, and so we will change the views of women slowly but surely' (Karki, 2022). Hence, engaging male allies to fight for gender equity within the Nepalese cultural context is a challenge and yet an essential task. Furthermore, male allies, as mobilisers, have the potential to forge new partnerships in the political, cultural, and economic arenas, fostering effective and valuable collaborations and amplifying voices to advance gender equity.

1.3.1 Hypothesis

The hypothesis of this research study is that Nepalese women are contributing and making impacts in their communities. The assumptions being that they play vital roles on the current philanthropic landscape as more women than before have access to education and financial freedom. For the purpose of this research study, an impact is not

measured quantitatively but rather understood through qualitative research methodology. This includes the analysis of primary and secondary data: interviews, desk research, social media, local news, journal articles and reports. The researcher sought to use a qualitative hypothesis as this study was exploratory and the researcher was free to explore the data in a more natural and open-ended manner. Additionally, from the data collected, the researcher analysed and interpreted it to answer the research questions as well as to test the hypothesis.

1.4 Significance of the Study

1.4.1 Country Context

The Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal (Nepal) is considered one of the world's poorest nations, with a population of approximately 29 million people (GoN). Landlocked, Nepal shares its borders with influential neighbours, China to the north and India to the south. Nepal is also home to the world's tallest mountain (Mount Everest), the Gurkhas (Nepalese military soldiers considered the bravest of the brave), and the birthplace of Gautama Buddha. Hinduism is the dominant religion in the area, followed by Buddhism (mofa.gov.np, n.d.). Kathmandu is the capital city. In 2015, with the enactment of the Constitution, Nepal became a secular state, see below for a map of Nepal.

Figure 1: Map of Nepal
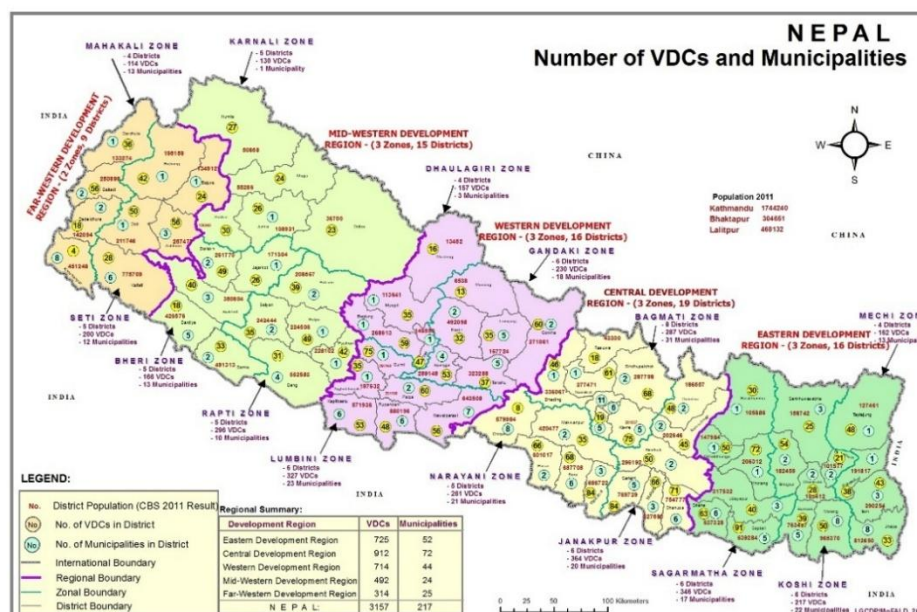
Local Governance and Community Development Programme and Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development (2015).

Table 1: Literacy rate for adult population

17,844,418 persons between 15 and 64 years old (8,555,843 males / 9,288,575 females)
Literacy rate for adult male population is 75.58% (6,915,053 persons). 2,234,747 are illiterate.
Literacy rate for adult female population is 55.11% (5,491,752 persons). 4,474,045 are illiterate.

Source: (International Labour Organization & countrymeters.info, 2019)

1.4.2 COVID-19 Natural Disasters, Socio-Economic and Political Upheavals

1.4.2.1 Introduction

Nepal emerged from its self-imposed isolation after the fall of the Rana regime in the 1950s. Since then, it has attempted to leapfrog into the 21st century. However, Nepal

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has been faced with a myriad of challenges over the past few decades, from natural disasters, socio-economic and political upheavals, and the transition from a 240-year-old monarchy to the current federal state, which is only 15 years old.

1.4.2.2 COVID-19 Pandemic

In 2019, the COVID-19 pandemic swept the world without regard to borders, race, gender, or economics. The World Health Organisation (2024) states that the global casualties of the pandemic have reached more than 7,061,330 people thus far. In May 2021, the hybrid of Indian and UK COVID-19 variants struck hard in India, leaving an enormous impact in Nepal. Tens of thousands of Nepalese migrant day workers returned home due to a sudden lack of employment in India. According to BBC News (25 May 2021), 'Nepal has the highest COVID-19 transmission rate in the world', which caused a massive humanitarian crisis. Nepal's inadequate and poor-quality infrastructure led to a higher death toll than initially reported. Many people lack access to a basic healthcare system, and those living in rural areas face numerous challenging obstacles. An inadequate supply of essential drugs, corruption scandals, political mishandling of vaccines, and weak government campaigns prevented many ordinary people from receiving vaccinations during the COVID-19 pandemic.

1.4.2.3 Natural Disasters

Nepal has faced numerous challenges in the form of natural disasters, including earthquakes, landslides, floods, thunderstorms, glacial lake outburst floods (GLOF), avalanches, fire, drought, and epidemics (Chitrakar, Nepali, and Manandhar, 2021).

A 7.8-magnitude earthquake struck Nepal in April 2015, triggering 120 aftershocks that 'affected 31 of the country's 75 districts' (United Nations, 2018, p. 16). As a result, nearly 9,000 people lost their lives, with women accounting for over half of the deaths (United Nations, 2018, p. 16), and approximately 22,000 sustained injuries.

The Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (World Bank, 2024, p. 26), confirmed that 'women and other vulnerable people generally have less well-developed or no coping strategies to manage these shocks'. The Government of Nepal's Ministry of Home Affairs and Disaster Preparedness Network-Nepal in 2015 stated this was the 'worst and deadliest earthquake in 81 years, with 1 million homes either destroyed or damaged' This resulted in another 2.8 million people being homeless across 14 districts of Nepal' (Bull, Ruszczyk and Robinson, 2018). The Ministry of Home Affairs (2015b, p. 15) confirmed that the estimated financial value was Rs. 706 billion (U.S. $7 billion), 'which includes damages and losses; of that amount' 'Rs. 517 billion (76% of the total effects) is the value of destroyed physical assets'.

1.4.2.4 Socio-Economic and Political Upheavals

In September 2015, while Nepal was still recovering from a major earthquake, India imposed a trade embargo on Nepal. This resulted in a significant economic and humanitarian crisis, significantly impacting Nepal's fragile economy from September 2015 to early February 2016 (Sharma, Mishra, and Kaplan, 2017). Lack of fuel, basic and staple food and goods, medicines, vaccines, and in some remote areas it took more than two months for basic supplies to reach. According to the World Bank (2015), Nepal will remember 2015 as the year of twin shocks. For many years, people have felt the impact of the dual disasters (Bull, Ruszczyk, and Robinson, 2018) and the deadly COVID-19 pandemic lockdown from 2019 to 2021.

Politically, Nepal is a country in transition that has seen many changes over the years (World Bank, 2015). In 2015, it was a constitutional monarchy that transitioned to a federal system with seven provinces, 77 districts (World Bank Group, 2020), and 753 local levels. Where previously it was a Hindu state, in 2017, Nepal became a secular country (Sherpa, 2021).

(Human Rights Watch, 2004) The Maoists officially withdrew from the ceasefire after unsuccessful negotiations with the government in August 2003. To mark its end, they shot two Royal Nepalese Army colonels, fatally killing one. In the weeks that followed, over 500 people lost their lives in the escalating violence (International Crisis Group, 2003).

In November 2001, four days of violence claimed over 100 lives, leading to the declaration of a state of emergency (BBC News, 2018). King Gyanendra commanded the army to crush the Maoist rebels. The following months saw many hundreds killed in rebel and government operations. Following a massacre of the royal family in 2001, Gyanendra succeeded King Birendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev (1972–2001). Political instability grew as a result of Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba's defeat in a 1997 vote of no confidence. There were frequent changes in appointing prime ministers on the political landscape (Human Rights Watch, 2004).

Nepal's civil war commenced on February 13, 1996. Nepal plunged into intense conflict, marked by escalating violence, political instability, human rights violations, and mass displacement, ultimately leading to the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2006. The Maoist insurgency lasted a decade of violence until 2006 (Human Rights Watch, 2004). According to (TRIAL International, n.d.), more than 17,000 people died, with more than 1,300 people 'forcibly disappeared during the Nepalese civil war'. This took place mostly throughout rural Nepal.

1.4.2.5 Current Socio-Economic Challenges

Much of Nepal's population lives below the national poverty line, and its economy remains undiversified (National Planning Commission's Fourth Plan, 1970, p. 22). According to Child Rescue Nepal (2023), for every 1,000 babies born in Nepal in 2020, 28 of them died before reaching their fifth birthday. Data from the World Health

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Organisation (WHO, 2017, p.1), states that 'preterm birth complications, pneumonia, birth asphyxia, intrapartum complications, congenital anomalies, diarrhoea, and malaria' are the main causes of death. In addition, among the 1.1 million children, over 200,000 are involved in hazardous work. Girls account for 60% of children engage in hazardous work. Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic caused schools to close for approximately 70 weeks.

The (National Planning Commission and UNDP, 2014)) states that 'a significant portion of the rural population still relies on subsistence agriculture for their livelihood. As a result, they are particularly vulnerable to drought and other climate change-related events. It is women and girls who face the brunt of these challenges'. Interviewee 10 states that the communities living in the remote Karnali Zone in western Nepal are among the most isolated in the world. Access is only by foot and this takes several days. These communities are so isolated that they lack basic amenities (schools, health and medical care, etc). Due to extreme poverty, they struggle to provide for their families every day. In this region, children succumb to illnesses caused by contaminated water and poor hygiene. It is from these types of rural communities that young men between 25 and 35 years old seek out employment in foreign countries, leaving women to fend for themselves (Shah, 2023). Moreover, an estimated 1,700 Nepalese travel abroad for work. Not only does this lead to socio-economic challenges, but it also leads to the breakdown of once tight-knit families.

Nepal is highly dependent on foreign remittances, which make up the largest source of foreign exchange income and contribute to the development financing in the country (International Labour Organisation, 2016, p. 1). During the COVID-19 pandemic, Nepal experienced a decline in foreign currency and depleted its currency reserves, leading to an economic crisis (Republica, 2022). The heavy reliance on foreign

remittances has massive consequences. Jahjah et al. (2003) further emphasises that there is an adverse relationship between remittances and GDP growth rates. Docquier and Rapoport (2005) agreed that remittances could discourage (domestic) labour supply and encourage decreased work effort. The overreliance on remittance can also lead to lower productivity and delayed development. Furthermore, women become more vulnerable as they head both the household and manage agriculture in rural areas.

On a positive note, the role and status of women in traditional, patriarchal Nepal are changing. They are responsible for financial management and decision-making. Mothers are able to educate girls and send them to schools, building the next generation of accomplished women. As Interviewee 12 stated, 'education is important' and 'it will change the next generation'.

Even though Nepalese workers (for example, labourers, domestic helpers, and day workers) abroad contribute to remittances at home, it is not considered a noble profession from a cultural and social perspectives (Pandey, 2022). The caste-based society of Nepal regards certain types of labour as lower in social hierarchy, even though they are essential. Therefore, potential workers face challenges both before and after their employment, and the government offers minimal support, for instance, when it comes to accessing information about salaries, health and safety, the social and cultural norms of the host countries, and training programmes. Furthermore, the Nepalese government has yet to implement robust labour diplomacy initiatives which may be beneficial to those working abroad (Pandey, 2022). Therefore, nonprofit organisations—such as Aaprbasi Mahila Kamdar Samuha Nepal (AMKAS), the Returnee Women Migrant Workers' Group, Plan International Nepal, Tukee Foundation Nepal and other civil societies—have important roles to play within the landscape of philanthropy in Nepal.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, many Nepalese migrant workers were left stranded in foreign countries. Barun Ghimire, Senior Legal Officer at iProbono Nepal, asserted that 'every citizen has a fundamental right to return to their home country, and the government must facilitate this process and offer necessary assistance to its citizens. The COVID-19 crisis underscored the need for a comprehensive policy and framework to effectively enforce the right to return, extending beyond emergency or crisis scenarios. "We" advocate for the recognition of the right to return as a fundamental right for its citizens' (iProbono, 2022).

1.4.2.6 Caste System and Discrimination

It is illegal to practise the caste system in Nepal as it has been abolished, however, discrimination still exists for many. From a socio-cultural perspective, 'the caste system still dominates much of everyday life in Nepal, with Dalits, often referred to as 'untouchables', facing the most severe discrimination,' according to Mission East (2024). Furthermore, community activities frequently exclude individuals with disabilities. Women also face significant discrimination, which is evident in practices such as child marriage, high illiteracy rates, and burdensome domestic workloads.

Moreover, according to Interviewee 5, 'There are many girls and women in Nepal who lack nutrition, education, employment, and health care'. This is not due to lack of resources. Indeed, traditional social structures deny them the power to make basic decisions about the course of their lives. In rural areas, women are confined to the domains of household chores and childrearing. Traditional views have kept rural women away from formal education and careers. Low levels of education form a vicious cycle with a lack of decision-making power, each reinforcing the other to suppress the social position of rural women. Without education or training, these women struggle to compete in the job markets of Nepal. They often seek income in the informal sector, where wages

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are low and they do not have access to health or child care facilities are non-existent. As a result, rural women lack the leisure time and self-sufficiency to represent themselves in their local communities, let alone the national government. While women in urban areas face a slightly better situation. Even they face daily discrimination and may have little input in policy development. Despite being a tiny fraction of the population, more than 85 percent of Nepalese women live outside of cities, entangled by social and economic systems that often leave them uneducated and underprivileged (Góra, 2024)).

1.4.3 Conclusions

1.4.3.1 Women, Philanthropy, and Nepal's Development Challenges

Nepal faces a complex myriad of challenges, including natural disasters, political instability, economic hardship, and systematic gender inequalities. Despite its strategic position between China and India and its rich cultural heritage, these issues have hindered the country's developmental progress. Women, girls, and marginalised communities bear the brunt of these challenges, particularly as male family members migrate abroad for employment, leaving women responsible for households and community well-being.

Understanding the evolving role of Nepalese women is crucial to fostering global discussions on gender, equality, and development. The growing presence of women in philanthropy presents an opportunity to secure funding for initiatives that address societal gaps, particularly where government support is insufficient.

1.4.3.2 Nepal's Commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

In an effort to tackle its socio-economic challenges, Nepal has committed to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly in education and gender equity, with the aim of becoming an inclusive middle-income country (MIC) by 2030. The Nepalese government demonstrated its dedication by being the first country to

publish an SDG Country Report (National Planning Commission, n.d.). However, progress has been significantly disrupted by natural disasters, high migration rates, and the COVID-19 pandemic (2019–2022).

Despite these ambitious goals, achieving MIC status remains uncertain, especially for rural populations. Reports such as the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2018–2022 for Nepal (United Nations Country Team, 2017) highlight these ongoing challenges. As a result, research on women and philanthropy in Nepal is not only timely but also vital in understanding how gender, cultural, economic, and political factors shape women's participation in philanthropy and their broader role in social development.

1.5 Research Purpose and Questions

The purpose and objectives of this qualitative research study is not only to highlight philanthropic works and achievements but also to contribute to the expanding body of literature on women and philanthropy in Nepal.

The below highlights research questions for an interview:

- Why do women and philanthropy matter?
- What leadership roles did women play during the COVID-19 pandemic? What were the impacts (if any)?
- What are women's motivations for giving?
- How can women and philanthropy address the root cause of social problems in Nepal?

1.6 Research Design

The research design for this research study used a qualitative research methodology to answer the research questions on pages 22. The researcher chose to adopt a qualitative design as presented by Creswell (1998, p. 17) as the current study

explored a new field where little is known on this research study within the context of Nepal. The researcher seeked to use a qualitative research methodology to ensure more personal and human interactions between the researcher and the interviewees (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Notwithstanding, as described by Marshall and Rossman (2014, p. 2), it is 'naturalistic, draws on multiple methods that respect the humanity of the participants in the study, focuses on context, is emergent and evolving, and is fundamentally interpretive'.

Primary data were collected using purposefully selected samples from online semi-structured interviews conducted via Zoom, WhatsApp messages, and document analysis. A total of 15 individuals, comprising 11 women and four men, were interviewed for the current study. All interviewees work and volunteer in the philanthropic space. The majority of the interviewees are primarily located around the Kathmandu Valley, except for two, one who is based in Pokhara, second largest city in Nepal, and another interviewee who is based in Dang, western Nepal. Purposive sampling was conducted 'to select respondents that are most likely to yield appropriate and useful information' (Kelly, 2010, p. 317). It would also be extremely difficult to interview a large number of the population randomly which may not yield the necessary results. It has also to be noted that Nepal is a very diverse country in terms of socio-economic, languages, castes, ethnicities, and level of education. While some people understood the concept of philanthropy, for others, this unknown conceptualisation was difficult to comprehend. Thus, strategising purposefully selected samples helped to use limited research resources effectively (Palinkas et al., 2015).

The interviews took place between 2022 and June 2024 and ranged in length from an hour to 2.5 hours long. Interviews were conducted via Zoom online, recorded, and transcribed. News articles, reports, books, newsletters, websites, and other documents

written about women and philanthropy, gendered giving and motivations, volunteering, etc were searched, gathered, and analysed. The various vehicles used were Academic Search Premier, Elsevier, Google Scholar, HIMALAYA (The Journal of the Association for Nepal and Himalayan Studies), JSTOR, Martin Chautari Online Library, ProQuest Dissertations and Thesis, PsycINFO, PubMed, ResearchGate, Sage Journals, Scopus Preview, Springer Nature, Nepal Journals Online, The Joseph and Matthew Payton The Philanthropic Studies Library, the University of Hong Kong Libraries (HKUL), and Tribhuvan University Central online Library (TUCL), etc.

1.7 Structure of the Dissertation

The research study comprises six chapters, and the following chapters frame the structure of this dissertation.

Chapter one provides an introduction on women and philanthropy. This section furthermore outlines the research problem including the purpose, hypothesis, the design, and the significance of the research study. Moreover, an introduction to the country context has been provided to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the socio-cultural, economic, and political factors that influence the role of women and philanthropy within Nepal. This context seeks to set the stage for analysing the interplay between cultural practises and traditions, societal norms, and contemporary philanthropic practices.

Chapter two examines the review of literature by first providing an introduction to the history of philanthropy. It also delves into the diverse definitions of philanthropy and what steps were taken to identify key literature. The section also identified the gaps in literature and ended with a conclusion on page 92 to 93, that connected with the aims and the formulation of the research questions. Furthermore, bell hook's feminist theory on pages 41 to 42 was used to scrutinise this research study, conceptual framework, and the pervasive influence of patriarchy. By employing feminist theory, the study critically

interrogates the ways in which patriarchal structures and norms have historically shaped and continue to influence women's roles, agency, and contributions within the context of Nepal. To that end, equally relevant and important was the introduction of history of feminist movement in Nepal to give contextualisation, on page 42 (History of Feminist Movements in Nepal). The objectives of this qualitative research study are not only to highlight philanthropic works and achievements but also to contribute to the expanding body of literature on women and philanthropy in Nepal.

Chapter three examines the methodology and conceptual framework underpinning this research study. A qualitative methodology was adopted lending to a qualitative research design. The chapter also discusses the research purpose and questions, the population sample, biases, how data was collected and analysed, etc.

Chapter four provides the results or the findings of the semi-structured interviews conducted for the research study. This section answers the research questions on page 22 and the hypothesis. It highlights the importance of Nepalese women who play a central role in philanthropy by bringing their unique perspectives.

Chapter five discusses the results of the findings highlighted in chapter four. This section seeks to bridge between the research results and their implications. Moreover, the discussion section helped to interpret the raw data and make sense of what the findings mean in the context of the research question and objectives.

Chapter six concludes by providing the summary, examining the implications and making recommendations for possible future research studies.

CHAPTER II:

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Conceptual Framework

2.1.1 Introduction

A conceptual framework is a structure that the researcher believes best explains the natural progression of the phenomenon to be studied (Camp, 2001). It is associated with concepts, empirical research, and key theories that systemise the knowledge advanced by the researcher (Peshkin, 1993). It also justifies the significance and relevance of the study while demonstrating how the study design—including data collection and analysis methods—rigorously addresses the research questions on page 22. Additionally, a conceptual framework 'situates the study within broader contexts, including the overarching methodological approach (e.g., critical race theory, poststructuralist theory, feminist theory, new materialist theory, queer theory) and the researcher's positionality in relation to the research' (Ravitch and Riggan, 2016). Thus, it serves as the researcher's explanation of how the 'research problem will be examined and provides an integrated perspective for understanding the problem under investigation' (Liehr and Smith, 1999).

The researcher utilised feminist theory to scrutinise this research study, conceptual framework, and the pervasive influence of patriarchy. By employing feminist theory, the study critically interrogates the ways in which patriarchal structures and norms have historically shaped and continue to influence women's roles, agency, and contributions within the context of Nepal. The conceptual framework, grounded in feminist principles, provides a structured approach to analysing the intersections of gender, power, and societal expectations, enabling a deeper understanding of the barriers and opportunities faced by women. This perspective challenges traditional assumptions,

offering a reimagined narrative that centres women's voices and experiences while advocating for more equitable and transformative practices of philanthropy and Nepal. However, prior to arriving at the feminist theory, it is logical and important to site feminism and its four waves. This is to provide context to the feminist theory and the feminist movements.

2.1.2 Feminism

Patricia Fernandez-Pacheco, country representative for UN Women Nepal said, 'Feminism is about individual empowerment and collective advocacy. And this fight isn't against men, but against the patriarchal mindset' (Fernández-Pacheco, 2024).

Feminism is an umbrella term for a number of cultural phenomena related to women's oppression under the patriarchy (Dicker, 2016). In 1837, the French utopian philosopher and radical socialist Charles Fourier (1772-1837) coined the word 'feminism' to indicate 'the illness of womanly qualities appearing in men' (Delap, 2007). Walby (1990) defines it as 'the belief in full social, economic, and political equality for cisgender and transgender women and girls and nonbinary people. To achieve meaningful gender equality, feminism seeks to shift power to those who resist exploitation or oppression based on their gender, sexual orientation, race, religion, nationality, class, caste, ability, or ethnicity'.

In contrast, Finlayson (2016, p. 4) defines it as 'a form of theory and it condemns against patriarchy, sexism, and other forms of gender inequality, insofar as it also challenges against the struggling of the status quo, and according to some feminists, feminism is a 'practical struggle'.

It was not until the 1970s that terms such as 'feminism' and 'feminist' gained momentum and became popular, even though these were already being used during the public discourse. Feminism is not just about advancing women's rights and equality;

while that is important, it is also about bringing both sexes to an equal level in terms of political power, economic power, social equality, social freedom, and social liberation, thereby achieving long-term gender parity (Arat, 2015).

For instance, feminism now encompasses the struggle against gender-based expectations and the broader gender stereotypes that stem from these expectations. Women's increased power and access to education, jobs, and financial and social freedoms have led to a gender divide in society, where gender-based expectations and stereotypes negatively impact both men and women (León and Aizpurua, 2023). It enables the audience to view literature from a feminist perspective, examining the relationships between men and women, power dynamics, social, economic, and cultural freedom, as well as gender-based experiences. This perspective is informed by feminist theory and the oppression of women within the patriarchal system. Therefore, feminism is not just about advancing women's rights and equality, which is very important; it is about bringing both sexes to an equal level in terms of political power, economic power, social equality, social freedom, and social liberation. This is further asserted by bell hooks in her book 'Feminist theory: From margin to centre' (2000, p. 26), who defined feminism as 'a movement that aims to end sexism and sexist oppression'. She maintains that 'feminism is a movement for everyone'. Therefore, the aim 'is not to exclusively benefit any specific group of women, nor any particular race or class. It does not prioritise women over men. hooks' definition seeks to broaden the scope of feminism beyond gender to include all forms of oppression that intersect with sexism. It shifts the focus from individuals to systemic issues, encouraging collective action to dismantle oppressive structures (2000, p. 26).

Indeed, as a global movement with a long history, and according to Kelly (1982, p. 6-7), there were three fundamental positions of feminism from 1400 to 1789. Firstly,

feminism takes a proactive stance against the defamation and mistreatment of women by men, forming a dialectical opposition to misogyny. Secondly, feminism holds the belief that the sexes are not only biologically, but also culturally formed; it believes that women are a social group that has been shaped to conform to male notions of a defective sex. Ultimately, this perspective surpassed the prevailing value systems of the era, revealing and challenging bias and exclusivity, and striving for a comprehensive understanding of humanity. And according to Billington-Greig (1911), it 'may be defined as a movement seeking the reorganisation of the world upon a basis of sex-equality in all human relations; a movement which would reject every differentiation between individuals upon the ground of sex, would abolish all sex privileges and sex burdens, and would strive to set up the recognition of the common humanity of woman and man as the foundation of law and custom'. According to Jaggar (1983)There are four theories of feminism: liberal feminism, Marxist feminism, socialist feminism, and radical feminism (Jagger, 1983).

2.1.3 The History of the Feminist Movement

The history of the feminist movement, from which feminist theory emerged, is characterised by four temporal 'waves'. The first wave emerged in the nineteenth century, and it is characterised by suffragette movements. The aim was to secure women's right to vote in public elections (Evans and Chamberlain, 2015), which actually originated in 1848 at the Seneca Falls Convention.

The second wave, which came about in the 1960s, fought for social and personal rights such as equal pay, choice over bodily issues, sexual liberation, and resistance to the gendered double standard in society (Evans and Chamberlain, 2015). It was also during the second wave that women of colour and other ethnic minorities came to the forefront.

The third wave began in the 1990s, and it is primarily a continuation of and reaction to second-wave feminism. Younger generations perceive it as an attempt to

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broaden the scope of feminism by emphasising the struggles of queer and non-white women. American poet Natasha Sajé wrote that '[It] is an amalgamation of many different streams of theorising—including that of women of colour and younger women disillusioned with what they perceive to make up the body of 'second wave' feminism—in intrinsically different formulations than the theorising coming from anti-feminists', (Sajé, 1995; Evans and Chamberlain, 2015). According to Iannello (2010), 'it has the power to employ women by helping them to shatter the glass ceiling in politics, business, and other fields to which women have limited access, whether it be the presidency of the United States or chief executive officer of major corporations. From first to third wave, women have made—and continue to make—legal, economic, and political progress'.

Parry, Johnson, and Wagler (2018) debate that the fourth wave is so recent that some individuals doubt its very existence. According to Baumgardner (2011), the assertion that the fourth wave exists validates its existence (p. 250). Kaplan (2003) was among the first to recognise the potential for fourth-wave feminist action. According to Kaplan (2003), fourth-wave feminist initiatives must be capable of expressing the brutality and radicalism that women face, both domestically and internationally, as a result of imperialism under the guise of global capitalism. In this regard, Kaplan (2003) suggests that the collective efforts of second- and third-wave feminists, which confront a novel and highly destructive reality that affects all of us, not necessarily in the same manner but rather simultaneously, should distinguish the fourth wave. This emerging paradigm ideally transcends racial, ethnic, and national boundaries. No matter which era or the stages of waves, hooks (2000, p. x) confirms that the 'feminist movement continues to be one of the most powerful struggles for social justice taken place in the world today'.

2.1.4 The Waves of Feminism

2.1.4.1 The First Wave of Feminism (1848–1920)

Journalist Martha Weinman Lear first used the term 'the first wave of feminism' in her article 'The second feminist wave: What do these women want?' in the New York Time Magazine in March 1968. The first wave centred on the struggle for women's political power (Lear, 1968), emphasising that women needed to earn their political rights to effect the desired change. The first wave of feminism is considered the 'pioneering stage of feminist activism that spread in Europe and North America, Egypt, Iran, and India between the early 1800s and the first decades of the 20th century' (Malinowska, 2020, p. 1). Forestell and Moynagh (2012) posit that it is considered one of the first international movements and was 'largely centred in Western Europe and the United States' (Bhandari, 2024).

From the 1820s to the 1940s, liberal feminism, which represents women treated as second-class citizens in male-dominated societies, took place primarily in the USA and the UK. The primary goal of liberal feminism was to secure equal rights for women, including the right to vote (Rampton, 2015; Malinowska, 2020). It is an important era of history that makes a significant contribution to social change and equality for women in every field, such as the right to citizenship and vote, the right to education, the right to own a father's property, and so on. It aims to bring about social reformation from the patriarchy and liberate women from the oppression of racial bias (Jepsen, 2000; (Dicker, 2016).

The first wave began with (Liberal) Mary Wollstonecraft's 1792 essay 'A Vindication of the Rights of Women' (Trier-Bienik, 2020), written in the 'wake of the French Revolution and still regarded as seminal text' (Krolokke and Sorensen, 2005, p. 6). These essays sparked discussions about women's place in history and society, and

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they further contributed to the work of women's suffragettes. Wollstonecraft's work, along with the efforts of movement organisers such as Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucretia Mott, Martha Coffin Wright, Mary McClintock, and Jane Hunt, led to the holding of the First Women's Rights Convention in Seneca Falls, New York, on 19-20 July 1848, to advocate for women's social, civil, and religious rights. The attendees signed the Declaration of Sentiments, which declared women's equality with men, and passed a dozen resolutions calling for various specific rights, including the right to vote (Trier-Bienik, 2020). Elizabeth Cady Stanton began her speech at the First Women's Rights Convention by outlining the convention's goals and purpose:

'We are assembled to protest against a form of government existing without the consent of the governed—to declare our right to be free as man is free, to be represented in the government which we are taxed to support, to have such disgraceful laws as give man the power to chastise and imprison his wife, to take the wages which she earns, the property which she inherits, and, in case of separation, the children of her love' (Beach and Wayne, 2020).

Reflecting on the initial wave of feminism, this terminology emerged post-second wave, characterising a feminist movement that prioritised combating social and cultural injustices over political inequalities. Virginia Woolf's A Room of One's Own (1929) and Simone de Beauvoir's The Second Sex (1949) set the scene for radical second-wave feminism. Woolf introduced the concept of female bisexuality, highlighting the unique voice and writing of women. Beauvoir, on the other hand, presented the notion of women's radical otherness, the cognitive and social process of 'othering' women as the second sex in patriarchal societies, thereby introducing an authoritative definition of patriarchy (Krolokke and Sorenson, 2006, p. 6).

2.1.4.2 The Second Wave of Feminism (1963–1980s)

As mentioned above, the first wave of feminism took place in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, which focused on legal issues, mainly on gaining women's suffrage (Freedman, 2007). Trailblazers like Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, as well as other women from The First Women's Rights Convention, were instrumental in organising and advocating for these rights, creating a legacy that would inspire later feminists today to continue fighting for gender equality (Evans, 1980).

Some examples of second-wave feminism are pioneers like Betty Friedan (The Feminine Mystique), Gloria Steinem, one of the best-known feminists active in the U.S. today, and bell hooks (her writings on race, feminism, and class), Simone de Beau (her groundbreaking ideas surrounding feminism; her book, The Second Sex, is said to mark the beginning of second-wave feminism across the globe), to name a few (Duncan, 2023).

Shift in Focus and Expansion of Issues

While the first wave focused on institutional changes, the second wave, which emerged in the 1960s and lasted through the 1980s, sought to address a broader range of issues, including workplace discrimination, reproductive rights, and sexual liberation (Tong, 2018). This shift was partly a response to the recognition that legal equality did not necessarily translate into social and economic equality (Freeman, 2000).

Intersectionality and inclusiveness

Middle-class white women led the first wave of feminism, frequently ignoring the particular struggles faced by women of colour and those from diverse socio-economic backgrounds (Davis, 1983). The second wave began to embrace a more intersectional approach, with activists like Audre Lorde and bell hooks emphasising the interconnectedness of race, class, and gender oppression (hooks, 2000).

Activism and Methods

The first wave's activism was characterised by peaceful protests, petitions, and legal campaigns, such as the suffragists' marches and the lobbying for legislative change (Flexner and Fitzpatrick, 1996). In contrast, the second wave adopted more radical methods, including sit-ins, consciousness-raising groups, and public demonstrations (Echols, 1989).

Literary and Theoretical Links

Works like Mary Wollstonecraft's 1792 'A Vindication of the Rights of Woman', which argued for women's education and rationality, provide the theoretical foundations of the first wave. Simone de Beauvoir's 1949 The Second Sex, which offered a critical analysis of women's oppression and contributed to feminist existentialism, significantly influenced the second wave.

Continuity of Struggle

Despite the significant legal victories of the first wave, many issues of gender inequality persisted, necessitating the more comprehensive approach of the second wave (Freeman, 2000). The ongoing struggle is evident in the continuation of themes such as the fight against patriarchal structures and the pursuit of economic independence (Freeman, 2000).

Global Perspective

The success of the first wave in Western countries had a ripple effect, inspiring women in other parts of the world to fight for their rights (Basu, 2018). The second wave fostered international solidarity, with global conferences and networks forming to address women's issues worldwide (Morgan, 2016).

2.1.4.3 The Third Wave of Feminism (1990s to 2000s)

American writer, feminist, and activist Rebecca Walker coined the term 'third wave feminism' in her renowned article 'Becoming the Third Wave' in 1992. The third wave emerged as a response to the backlash against the second wave, which focused on individualism and diversity (Baumgardner and Richards, 2010). The scholars and activists of Generation X, who were born in developed nations at that time, led the third wave of feminism. It represented diverse modes of thought, and the feminists of this era wanted to demonstrate the wide array of exploitation and oppression by considering factors such as age, colour, and class (Hesse-Biber). Also known as 'power feminism', the third wave of feminism is characterised by the strength and rebellion of women. This movement strives to confront the sexist patriarchy and prevent gender-based discrimination against women in various professions (Wolfe and Goldberg, 2000; Iannello, 2010). Moreover, the third wave began with changes around the world, such as the end of colonialism and the rise of neoliberal ideas.

It provides a comprehensive analysis that garners global recognition, encompassing various forms of feminism such as cultural feminism, black feminism, and postmodern feminism. It emphasises the idea of 'universal womanhood', which means shifting the focus from group goals to individual rights (Gülderen, 2020). The third-wave movement also supports reproductive rights and fights against sexual violence, workplace harassment, rape, gang rape, and unfair maternity leave policies. It further supports 'women from many colours, ethnicities, nationalities, religions, and cultural backgrounds' and celebrates sexuality in a positive way (Fisher, 2013). Moreover, there are variations of feminist approaches within the third wave of feminism, including lipstick feminism (girlie feminism), riot grrrl feminism (grrrl feminism), cybergrrl

feminism (netgrrls, netgirls), and transfeminism, (Ferriss and Young, 2006; Stermitz, 2008; Lankford, 2009).

Third-wave feminists, born into a world where the rights and privileges fought for by earlier generations of feminists had already established, generally perceive themselves as capable, strong, and assertive individuals in society (Krolokke and Sorensen, 2005, p. 15). They are confident in their abilities, believed that they have more opportunities, and face less sexism compared to previous generations (Baumgardner and Richards, 2010). They also embraced the term 'girl' in an effort to appeal to a younger demographic, while also adopting a more assertive and even aggressive, yet humorous and less pretentious form of feminism (Krolokke and Sorensen, 2005, p. 15). Karen McNaughton asserted in her 1997 statement that 'G.r.r.l.s' is cyber jargon for 'Great-Girls'. Grrl is a concept that is not restricted to anyone under the age of 18 and is characterised by a youthful spirit (Krolokke and Sorensen, 2005).

2.1.4.4 The Fourth Wave of Feminism (2012–Present)

Some argue that the fourth wave of feminism is a continuation of the third wave, and others find it difficult to define. However, many journalists, scholars, and activists (Peay, 2005; Wrye, 2009; Munro, 2013; Cochrane, 2013b; Chamberlain, 2017; Rivers, 2017) have recognised the movement in the 2000s as the fourth wave of feminism. The central tenets of the fourth wave of feminism are sexual harassment, rape culture, and intersectionality (Villesèche et al., 2018). Prudence Chamberlain, a feminist scholar, further asserts that the fourth wave's focus is also on women's justice and opposition to sexual harassment and violence (Chamberlain, 2017).

The emergence of technology, including the Internet and social media platforms such as Facebook, X, and Instagram, has given rise to a new form of activism. Dimond et al. (2013) and Shiva and Nosrat Kharazmi (2019) further confirmed that 'internet

activism is a key feature of the fourth wave'. Furthermore, as noted by Cochrane (2013a), Chamberlain (2017), Munro (2013), and Rivers, 2017, the fourth wave of feminism stands out from previous waves due to the significant role of online presence in activism.

(The Guardian, 2018) In 2007, an American activist from New York City, Tarana Burke, launched the #MeToo movement to primarily help women who have faced sexual harassment, domestic violence, and rape to stand up for themselves. (Williams, Singh, and Mezey, 2019) Ten years later, the #MeToo movement gained momentum in 2017 following the exposure of influential film producer Harvey Weinstein's sexual misconduct. The #MeToo movement became an international viral hashtag when Alyssa Milano and other women began using it to tweet about the Harvey Weinstein sexual abuse cases. ('me too.' Movement, n.d.) The phrase 'MeToo' and the hashtag '#' quickly developed into a far-reaching movement, eventually gaining an unprecedented international following. Moreover, the fourth-wave feminists hold influential men including women, such as Ghislaine Maxwell (Jackson, 2022), accountable for their actions and systems to prevent misconduct. Like the feminists before them, the fourth-wave feminists work to understand intersectionality and how the movement can include and represent people of all sexualities, colours, races, classes, and genders, as well as further promote their increased societal participation and power (Munro, 2013). Additionally, it supports equal pay for everyone, no matter their gender, and challenges traditional gender roles for men and women, which it sees as harmful. The movement also fights against sexual assault, objectification, harassment, and violence based on gender (Phillips and Cree, 2014).

2.1.4.5 Conclusion

First-wave feminism primarily focused on securing women's right to vote and addressing legal inequalities. Activists sought to reform property laws, gain access to higher education, and improve workplace conditions. The movement culminated in significant achievements, such as women's suffrage with the 19th Amendment in the U.S. in 1920, which granted women the right to vote. Prominent figures included Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Emmeline Pankhurst, who played crucial roles in advocating for women's rights (Freedman, 2002). The initial wave of activism mainly excluded women of colour, working-class women, and other marginalised groups from its agenda, despite significant legal victories (Evans, 2003). However, the emphasis was primarily on legal and political liberties, frequently disregarding more extensive social and economic disparities (Freedman, 2002).

The second wave of feminism expanded its focus to a broader range of issues, including reproductive rights, workplace equality, and sexual liberation. This wave addressed systemic inequalities and cultural norms, leading to significant legal and societal changes. Key achievements included the implementation of the 'Equal Pay Act' in 1963 and 'Title IX' in 1972, promoting gender equality in the workplace and education (Bailey, Helgerman and Stuart, 2024). Notable figures such as Betty Friedan, Gloria Steinem, and Simone de Beauvoir were instrumental in advancing these causes (Evans, 1998). The movement was successful in increasing awareness and altering cultural attitudes regarding gender roles and sexuality, resulting in a greater acceptance of women's rights (Evans, 1998).

However, the movement frequently concentrated on the experiences of middle-class white women, occasionally neglecting to adequately address the intersectional issues encountered by women of colour, LGBTQ+ individuals, and other marginalised

groups (hooks, 2000). Critics contend that second wave feminism did not entirely dismantle the patriarchal structures it aimed to transform, and issues such as wage disparities and reproductive rights continue to persist (hooks, 2000).

Third-wave feminism embraced diversity and individuality, emphasising intersectionality and addressing issues related to race, class, and sexual orientation (Gillis, Howie, and Munford, 2007). This wave sought to challenge and expand feminist discourse, including greater representation of women of colour, LGBTQ+ individuals, and other marginalised groups. Key achievements included advocacy for sexual and gender identity rights, as well as the integration of feminist ideas into popular culture. Influential figures during this period included Rebecca Walker, bell hooks, and Judith Butler, who contributed to redefining feminist thought and practice (Gillis, Howie, and Munford, 2007). In addition, the third wave also 'includes many stories that praise sex work, advocate sexual assertiveness, and revel in the use of vulgar sexual language' (Snyder, 2008). By including a diversity of views on sexuality and not judging any of them, third-wave feminists hope to avoid contentious splits (p. 189). The movement successfully integrated feminist ideas into popular culture, promoting a more inclusive and individualised approach to feminism (Gillis, Howie, and Munford, 2007).

Critics have argued that third-wave feminism's focus on individualism and personal empowerment sometimes takes away from collective action and structural change (Baumgardner and Richards, 2010). The emphasis on diversity and decentralised nature of third-wave feminism presents challenges in maintaining a cohesive movement (Gillis, Howie, and Munford, 2007).

The fourth wave of feminism is characterised by digital activism and the use of social media platforms to advocate for gender equality. This wave has been marked by the #MeToo movement, which has brought widespread attention to sexual harassment

and assault. Additionally, there has been a continued emphasis on intersectionality and advocacy for transgender rights and non-binary identities. Prominent figures include Tarana Burke, the founder of the #MeToo movement, Malala Yousafzai, and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, who have all contributed to advancing the global feminist agenda through their activism and writing (Cochrane, 2013a). There has been significant progress in advocating for transgender rights and recognising non-binary identities, promoting a more inclusive feminist agenda (Cochrane, 2013a).

However, the reliance on digital platforms has led to criticisms regarding the sustainability and depth of online activism compared to traditional grassroots organising (Banet-Weiser, 2018). The movement faces ongoing challenges in addressing persistent issues such as economic inequality, reproductive rights, and systemic sexism (Cochrane, 2013a).

2.2 Theory of Reasoned Action

2.1.1 Feminist Theory

2.1.1.1 Introduction

Jackson and Jones state that 'feminist theory focusses on understanding the fundamental inequalities between women and men and analysing the dominance of women by men'. They assert the premise of men dominating women is based on 'social, economic, and political arrangements specific to particular societies' (1998, p. 5). In the context of this research study, Nepal is the specific society in question. According to Bunch (1983), feminist theory is also 'a way of viewing the world', that it 'provides a basis for understanding every area of our lives', and, according to bell hooks (1991) it is also a way 'to grasp what is happening around and within us'. Feminist theory also proposes strategies for activism and action to ameliorate the conditions in which women live and work.

Feminist theory emerged from feminist movements, and its goal is to understand the premise of gender inequality by studying women's social roles and lived experiences. Lengermann and Niebrugge-Brantley (2001) assert that as feminist theory is 'female-centered', therefore, the research study must commence with 'the experiences of women in society, as women are the central focus of the theory, and that it is critical to producing 'a better world for women'. Consideration must also be made with regard to the intersectionality aspects 'such as such as age, race/ethnicity, and social standing' (hooks, 2000; Lengermann and Niebrugge-Brantley, 2001).

2.1.1.2 bell hooks' Feminist Theory

hooks (2000) asserts that 'a significant portion of feminist theory is shaped by privileged women at the centre, whose understanding of reality often excludes the experiences of women and men living on the margins. As a result, feminist theory tends to lack completeness and fails to provide a comprehensive analysis that embraces diverse human experiences'. In fact, the feminist discourse, predominantly shaped and articulated by white women, often reflects a limited or absent understanding of white supremacy as a racial construct, the psychological implications of class, and their own political positioning within a system defined by racism, sexism, and capitalism (p. 4). In her book, Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center, several points can be linked to her concepts and ideas in her work and the research study (2020).

Centre and Margin Dynamics: hooks (2000, p. xvi) discusses the experience of being at the margin while observing the centre, explaining how this positionality provides unique insights into societal structures. This idea resonates with the marginalised positions of Nepalese women and their contributions to philanthropy, which often remain outside mainstream narratives but are essential for community development and at national level.

Collective Empowerment: hooks (2000, p. 30) emphasises the importance of collective action over individualism in feminist movements. This aligns with the collaborative nature of Nepalese philanthropy, where community-based models led by women reflect collective empowerment (based on the findings).

Intersectionality: hooks (2000, p. 15) highlights the interconnectedness of race, class, and gender oppression. Similarly, Nepalese women's philanthropy operates within the intersections of caste, ethnicity, and gender, requiring a nuanced understanding of these overlapping forms of marginalisation.

Resisting Patriarchy through Philanthropy: Hodge, Struckmann, and Trost (1975) (cited in hooks, 2000, p. 37) stresses that 'family in our society', both 'traditionally and legally,' 'reflects the Dualist values of hierarchy and coercive authoritarian controls,' referring to 'parent-child' and 'husband-wife relationships'. hooks critiques patriarchal systems and advocates for practises that challenge hierarchical domination (2000, p. 37). Nepalese women engaging in philanthropy challenge traditional roles, in private and public spaces, acting as agents of social change and resistance. Therefore, 'challenging sexist oppression is a crucial step in the struggle to eliminate all forms of oppression' (hooks, 2000, p. 37).

2.3 Human Society Theory

2.3.1 An Introduction to the History of Feminist Movements in Nepal

To give context to the feminist movements in Nepal, it is essential to understand some of the historical, cultural, and socio-political influences that have shaped gender dynamics in Nepal. The traditional patriarchal systems, the role of women's movements, and the influence of global feminist waves in women's struggles for equality and empowerment have also impacted the landscape of philanthropy, social activism, and policy reforms, shaping the ways in which women engage in and benefit from socio-

economic and political advancements. Giri (2024, p. 1) states that although women had been both active and indirect participants in earlier political movements, their formal involvement in mainstream politics only began when the autocratic Rana regime fell in 1951. Giri (2024, p. 1) states that although women had been both active and indirect participants in earlier political movements, their formal involvement in mainstream politics only began when the autocratic Rana regime fell in 1951.

More than a century ago, Nepal was under the absolute control of the Rana regime, who were staunch supporters of British colonial rule in India (Singh, 2004). The Rana oligarchy, which lasted from 1846 to 1951, reduced Nepalese kings to figureheads, with the Rana Prime Ministers serving as de facto and hereditary rulers (Poudyal, 1989). The Ranas came to power in 1846 when Jung (Jang) Bahadur Kunwar Rana (1817–1877) seized control through violent massacres, establishing himself as the permanent Prime Minister. This period in Nepal's history is considered to have been a time of darkness.

Tyranny, debauchery, economic exploitation, and religious persecution characterised the Rana rule. According to Livy (1990), the Ranas' primary goal was to retain power within their own family by preserving the status quo in all areas. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, they made rigorous efforts to isolate Nepal from the growing influence of Western ideas and changes that were spreading across Asia. The Ranas' policy of isolation was further facilitated by Nepal's geographic location and challenging terrain. The Ranas not only prevented the Nepalese people from exposure to Western ideas but also discouraged them from interacting with neighbouring communities in India. The Ranas viewed any form of change as a threat to the stability and preservation of their rule. During their regime, educational progress was minimal, with very few high schools and colleges, while public infrastructure, particularly transportation and communication, was severely lacking. Many educated Nepalese

people lived in exile in India. Despite Nepal's non-colonisation, the Rana regime endured for more than a century, fostering strong ties with the British Raj. However, following the British withdrawal from India in 1947, the Ranas faced increasing threats, leading to the revolution of 1950. Under pressure from India, the exiled King Tribhuvan regained the throne in 1951, restoring Nepal's sovereignty.

The Caste System in Nepal

The process of arranging social differences using a single or a group of criteria to unite the distinct strata into a system is known as social stratification (Gupta, 2000). The traditional social stratification system in Nepal is known as the caste system. With four main social classes, or 'varna', the Nepalese caste system is based on the traditional Hindu Chaturvarnashram model: Brahmin (e.g., so-called higher castes; jobs: priests and teachers), Kshatriyas (so-called higher caste; jobs: warriors and rulers), Vaishyas (middle caste; jobs: farmers, traders, and merchants), and the Shudras (e.g., lower castes; menial jobs: labourers, servants, and peasants). Today, it is against the law to practise the caste system in Nepal. (International Dalit Solidarity Network, 2011) The 'Caste Discrimination and Untouchability (Crime and Punishment) Act', which was enacted in 2012 seeks to address caste discrimination as a criminal offense. However, the reality is that caste-based discrimination remains deeply ingrained in societal structures, with many individuals, particularly women and those from Dalit and marginalised communities, continuing to face exclusion, violence, and systemic inequalities despite legal protections. According to Shrestha (2023), even though the caste system remains a pivotal part of Nepalese culture, there is a gradual shift taking place, and the caste system is losing its relevance, especially in urban areas. This change is driven by factors such as increased access to education, economic mobility, migration, and the influence of modernisation and globalisation, which challenge traditional caste-based hierarchies.

The Muluki Ain (1854) and the Caste System

Jung Bahadur Kunwar Rana enacted the Muluki Ain (the first country code, civil code in Nepal) in the year 1854, legalising the caste system in Nepal (Khanal, 2020). The purpose of the Muluki Ain was to create social relationships amongst the various caste groups in Nepal. The caste system granted special privileges and moral superiority to the so-called higher caste, such as the Brahmin. However, individuals belonging to the so-called lower caste categories, such as Dalit and impure, face discrimination, lack access and rights, are relegated to the lowest jobs, and are not permitted to drink from the same wells or attend the same temples, among other restrictions.

Figure 2: Nepalese caste pyramid according to the Muluki Ain of 1854
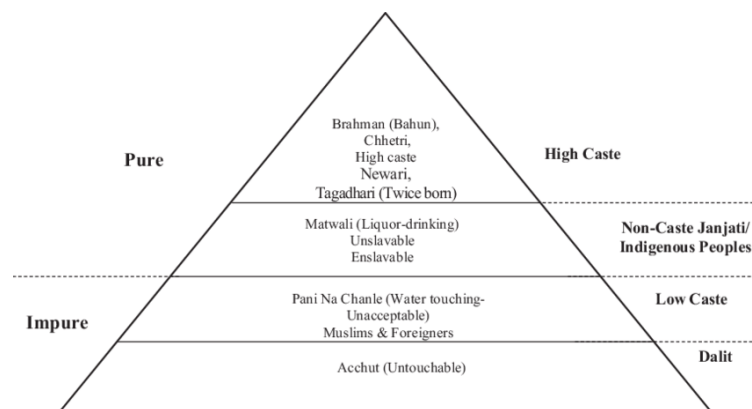
The Source: (Bennett et al., 2006)

2.3.2 Feminist Women Leaders in Nepal

In 2016, the Government of Nepal declared Yogmaya Neupane the first Nepalese feminist posthumously in recognition of her social and political contributions. She was an activist, a rebel, a poet, a religious leader, and a political and social thinker. She introduced various ways to fight against all kinds of discrimination—oppression, injustices, and cultural practices—in Nepal during the time of the Rana's autocratic

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regime (Sangraula, 2011). According to Shrestha (2023), 'the elite historians did not document the resistance history of Yogmaya Neupane', and it 'remained invisible for a long period of time'. Today, the suppression and deletion of women's contributions from history are well known. Furthermore, because only the Ranas, Brahmins, and so called high-caste men were permitted to pursue education, many women, including Yogmaya Neupane, remained illiterate.

Yogmaya Neupane (1867–1941)

Yogmaya Nepaune was born into a high-caste Brahmin family (Hutt, 2013). She was married off at a very young, 7, to a Brahmin (Koirala) boy from Bhojpur (Sharma, 2020, p. 94). 'Her husband died after two years', and she ran away from her husband's family (Shrestha, 2023). This was a defiant act that was culturally and socially unacceptable, considering that Nepal was a Hindu society. At the age of 14, Yogmaya Neupane eloped with another Brahmin (Kandel) boy, despite the Rana regime's and the law's disapproval of widows getting married. Unfortunately for Yogmaya Neupane, her second husband died too. As a widow, Yogmaya Neupane faced the prospect of 'sati', which involved burning alive at her husband's funeral pyre or facing stigmatisation. Against the social, cultural, and Muluki Ain (country law), she married again for the third time to another Brahmin (Aziz, 2001).

Despite being born into a high caste, she actively fought against various social injustices such as early child marriages, discriminatory treatment of women, the caste and patriarchal systems, widespread corruption, religious practices, and unequal wealth distribution. In 1936, she travelled to Kathmandu, where she demanded a 'dharma bhikshya' (truthfulness, duty, alms) and presented a list of 268 demands to the Rana government. The 'demands were social upliftment of women, an end to Rana-Shah atrocities and the abolition of inhumane religious practices' (Women's Caucus et al.,

2011, p. 31). Some of her demands included widow's rights, including widow marriage, educating girls and equal rights for women and other marginalised groups, and the end of practises that create social disharmony and disorder, such as superstition, the caste system, and untouchability, and bringing an end to the tradition. The Ranas firmly believed in the systematic Hindu religious practice of 'sati', which involves burning widows onto their husband's funeral pyre after his death (Aziz, 2001). The Prime Minister Chandra Shamsher Jung Bahadur Rana (8 July 1863–26 November 1929) eventually abolished the practise of 'sati' on 8 July 1920, due to Yogmaya and her followers' relentless activism. Her activism was 'collective, versatile, and powerful (Dahal, 2070 BS).

The Rana regime was a period in Nepal's history, whereby women were classed as second-class citizens and denied political and legal rights. Under the Hindu legal system, or Muluki Ain, which Jung Bahadur Kunwar Rana enacted in 1854, child marriage was both legal and common practice. Yogmaya Neupane used her status as a Brahmin high-caste woman to threaten the Rana government and the political system. Being a Hindu, it was a sin to kill or force a Brahmin to take her own life, which was punishable by the Muluki Ain (civil law, country law). On November 12, 1938, Yogmaya Neupane, along with her 240 followers, organised a self-immolation (by fire). (Shrestha, 2023), 'they were ready to jump into the burning fire of a 'kotihom' (a religious Hindu practice with a bonfire) for social transformation. However, Yogmaya and her followers were arrested and imprisoned for several months. '500 Rana soldiers were deployed' in order to arrest Yogmaya and her followers (Neupane, 2070 BS).

The autocratic regime would not listen to Yogmaya Nepane's demand. Yogmaya Neupane tried various methods such as meditation and went on a 32-day hunger strike (Rai, 2070 BS), but her efforts were unsuccessful. According to Aziz (2021, p. 144),

Yogmaya finally confronted the Rana Prime Minister, with an ultimatum: 'If you do not grant us justice, we will die'. The Prime Minister, Juddha Shumsher Rana, refused her demands. Yogmaya and her followers staged another protest by self-immolation (by water). On July 5, 1941, at 4 a.m., Yogmaya and her followers committed mass suicide (jal-samadhi) by jumping into the Arun River, reciting, 'Let the unjust Rana regime be destroyed! May dharma be established!' The mass suicide was to protest against inequality and injustice inflicted on women: 49 women and 19 men, including children and mothers carrying babies (the youngest was only less than a year old). Moved by the sacrifices made by Yogmaya and her followers, people have come to recognise and accord them an important milestone in the history of women's movements in Nepal (Women's Caucus et al., 2011, p. 32). Sadly, as stated by (Aziz, 2021, p. 144), 'The tragedy that resulted—the sacrifice of the leader and her many followers—remains a stain on the government, even to this day'. The 'authorities covered up the episode and banned all mention of the leader. Her campaign was thoroughly expunged from the nation's historical record and almost lost to the nation's political consciousness'.

Mangala Devi Singh (1925–1996)

According to Women's Caucus et al., Mangala Devi Singh was a key player in Nepal's political and women's rights movements. She was one of the women who initially addressed Prime Minister Padma Sumsher Rana (Rana regime) to advocate for women's equal suffrage. She endured incarceration and torture for her efforts as the leader of the democratic faction of Nepal Mahila Sangh. Between 1951 and 1985, she spearheaded initiatives to resist the autocratic Rana dictatorship, advocated for democracy, and protected women's rights. The Nepali Congress political party organised 'Satyagraha' (civil disobedience) in 1985, leading to her and other leaders' incarceration for approximately ten months. Furthermore, Mangala Devi Singh actively participated in the

1990 People's Movement and contested the initial parliamentary election following the restoration of democracy in Nepal (2013, p. 37).

Sahana Pradhan (1927–2014)

According to Sapkota (2018), Sahana Pradhan is one of the most prominent 'female leaders in the political history of Nepal'. She was a teacher and member of the CPN's Central and Political Bureau (UMP) and played a key role in organising women to oppose the Rana regime. She fought for 'democracy, civic rights and rights for women education in Nepal' (Sahana Foundation, n.d.). During the Rana regime, access to education to the public was forbidden and women were particularly marginalised, as they were denied opportunities for formal education and confined to traditional domestic roles, perpetuating gender inequality. This was the modus operandi of the regime to maintain control, suppress dissent, and perpetuate the hierarchical power structure during that period. She mobilised women and students during the democratic movement in 2007 BS, playing a significant role in the fight for democracy in Nepal. Her struggle continued throughout her life as she actively opposed the suppression brought by the single-party Panchayat system after 2017 BS (Sahana Foundation, n.d.). Furthermore, during the Panchayat era, she was detained and confined in the military barracks for participating in the democratic movement in 1961. Barred from teaching, she staged a protest against the Panchayat system. Sahana Pradhan was responsible for effectively spearheading the United Left Front during the historic People's Movement of 1990. She went on to hold the position of Minister for Industry and Commerce in the interim government after the movement of 1990. Furthermore, she also served in the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation, Ministry of Women and Social Welfare, and Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In 1995, she headed the Nepali delegation to

the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing to support the women's movement (Sahana Foundation, n.d.).

2.3.3 Nepalese Women's movement

The Nari Samiti—First women's coalition (organisation)

In 1918, Yogmaya Neupane and her sister-in-law, Dibya Devi Koirala set precedence by founding the first women's coalition called 'Nari Samiti' in Siraha District with the aim of organising and uniting women (Aziz, 2020; Hutt 2020; Punarjagaran Samaj Nepal, 2009). The Nari Samiti is considered an important landmark in Nepal's history because of the role it played in the early 1900s (Tamang, 2017). Not only was it instrumental in abolishing 'sati', but it was also the first formal organisation of the women's movement in Nepal (Aziz, 2020). According to (Women for Human Rights, n.d.), the coalition's primary goal was to advocate for and secure women's rights, which was seen as the primary initiative behind the abolition of the Sati System in 1920, representing Nepali women. Yogmaya Neupane's protest raised awareness, which led to the women's movement in Nepal. In 1945, women in Nepal initiated a movement to secure their right to vote and participate in elections, which they achieved in 1951, marking a significant achievement (Women's Caucus et al., 2011). However, it is important to note that true gender equality was still a distant goal at that time.

Prior to 1950 and during the Rana regime, women's participation in politics was essentially naught (Women's Caucus et al., 2011). The Nari Samiti changed that and gave impetus to expanding the women's movement in Nepal (Thapa, 2007, p. 23). In 1947, during the Biratnagar Jute Mill Strike (Majdur Hartal) the Rana government arrested women who participated in the strike (Punarjagaran Samaj Nepal, 2009, p. 19).

(Women's Caucus et al., 2011) In 1947, 'over 22 educated and conscious women from Kathmandu established the Nepal Mahila Sangh. The primary aim of this

organisation was to advance women's consciousness and combat injustice, oppression, gender inequality, and discriminatory behaviours against women, such as child marriage, polygamy, and marriages between individuals with significant age disparities (Singh, 1995, p. 65 cited in Women's Caucus et al., 2011, p. 35). Mangala Devi Singh guided the officials, who formed the inaugural working committee and prioritised education and voting rights for women. The organisation consisted of Kamakshya Devi, Shree Maya Devi, Rajani Champa Devi, Sahana Pradhan, Sadhana Pradhan (Adhikary), and other individuals (Punarjagaran Samaj Nepal, 2009, p. 19 cited in Women's Caucus et al., 2011, p. 35).

According to Women's Caucus et al. (2011), 'In 1951, during the announcement of municipal elections, the Rana-led government opposed granting women the right to vote. In response, women organised protests advocating for the right to both vote and stand as candidates. A delegation of 21 women from the Nepal Mahila Sangh, led by Mangala Devi Singh and including figures like Sahana Pradhan, met with Prime Minister Mohan Sumsher Rana. They presented an appeal demanding equal voting rights for women, among other requests. Despite attempts made by the Rana rulers to intimidate and suppress their demands, the women remained resolute. Consequently, Prime Minister Mohan Shumsher Rana was forced to grant women equal voting rights. The first municipal elections in Nepal took place in 1951. This marked for the first time in which Nepalese citizens were able to vote. Sadhana Pradhan (Adhikary) was one of the women elected in this historic election'.

Marginalisation of Women post-Rana regime

(Punarjagaran Samaj Nepal, 2009, p. 19 cited in Women's Caucus et al., 2011, p. 35), despite the active involvement of Nepalese women in the struggle against the Rana regime, they did not have sufficient opportunities to access and participate in the elected

and nominated state structures following the Rana regime's downfall in 1951 (Hutt, 2020). The 35-member Advisory Assembly that was established in 1950 to facilitate the state after the fall of the Rana government did not include any women. Once again, women were marginalised. In response to the protests and demands from women organisations against the absence of female participation and representation, four women were included in the reformation of the Assembly in 1954. In 1954, five women were nominated to the Advisory Assembly and these included: Mangala Devi Singh, Punya Prabha Dhungana, Maya Devi Shah, Bidhya Devi Devkota and Pratima Jha. Subsequently, Mangala Devi Singh, Punya Prabha Dhungana, Maya Devi Shah, Bidhya Devi Devkota, Pratima Jha and Sushila Thapa were nominated to the Advisory Assembly constituted in 1956 (Punarjagaran Samaj Nepal, 2009, p. 19 cited in Women's Caucus et al., 2011, p. 38).

Table 2: Timeline of First Elected Nepalese Women

Year	Name
1952	Sadhana Pradhan (Adhikary) representing the Nepal Mahila Sangh was the first elected woman as a member of Kathmandu Municipality.
1958	Kamal Rana was nominated as a member of the Advisory Council and was elected as Vice Chairperson of the National Assembly.
1959	Dwarika Devi Thakurani was affiliated with the Nepali Congress political part and the first female Minister in Nepal. She was also the only woman to be elected in the general election of 1959.

Source: (Hutt, 2020)

The Panchayat System (1961 to 1990)

The Panchayat system, era, Panchayat regime, and Panchayat rule were established by the late King Mahendra (11 June 1920 – 31 January 1972) from 1961 – 1990 following the 1960 coup d'état and the fall of the Rana regime. The Panchayat system is a party-less political system of village, district, and national councils (Thapa, 2019), which governed Nepal for nearly 30 years until the introduction of multi-party democracy in 1990 following a popular pro-democracy movement. It is also a system of governance based on repression and coercion rather than responsiveness, persuasion and democratic participation. Such systems usually centralise authority in persons and groups and exhibit intolerance to dissent. In this instance, power was in the absolute hands of the monarchy (Khadka, 1991). Many consider the Panchayat system in Nepal to have been an authoritarian system of governance. However, the Constitution of 1962 'theoretically granted freedoms of speech, publication, association, and organization', yet the 'sub-section 2(a) of Article 11 prohibited organisations inspired by political parties, effectively curtailing citizens' freedom to engage in independent political activities' (Giri, 2024).

According to the Women's Caucus et al., during the Panchayat Era, Nepalese women's organisations played a crucial role in advocating for women's rights and fighting against social injustices, while also participating in the movement to dismantle the autocratic panchayat system. The Akhil Nepal Mahila Sangh, established in 1976 under Parijat's leadership, gained momentum after the 1975 World Conference on Women. By 1980, under Shanta Manavi's leadership, the organisation staged protests advocating for civil rights, addressing issues such as domestic violence and human trafficking. Other organisations also emerged during this period, such as Mahila Kanuni Sewa, founded by Shilu Singh to provide legal aid to women. The Nepal Mahila Sangathan, with the late Queen Aishwarya as its patron, focused on women's prosperity

and development. Additionally, the Legal Assistance and Consultation Centre (LACC), established in 1987, worked towards legal reform and property rights for women, providing free legal aid to rural women experiencing violence (2011, p. 49).

In 1990, the Panchayat system, which culminated a total of 39 years after the Rana regime, came to an end (Srivastava and Sharma, 2010). Democracy was then declared by the People's Democratic Movement, also known as Jana Andolan I. Sahana Pradhan represented women on the Democratic Movement's negotiation team, which aimed to pressure the late king (Birendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev) into reinstating multi-party democracy. The team successfully persuaded the late king to relinquish his authority and transfer sovereignty to the people. Sahana Pradhan served as a senior member of the seven-member cabinet, forming an interim government (Pfaff-Czarnecka, 2005). A combination of factors, including the country's underdevelopment, gender inequality, income disparity, regional imbalances, ethnic and caste-based discrimination, suppression of opposition voices, and the ban on political parties, drove the widespread participation in the 1990's People's Movement's street protests (Khanal, 2007). Representatives from both the monarchy and an alliance of political parties established a committee after the late king agreed to draft a new constitution. This resulted in a new constitution that granted greater democratic rights and increased opportunities for women to participate in politics (Thapa, 1999).

The Maoist Insurgency (13 February 1996 – 21 November 2006)

According to Human Rights Watch, the civil war in Nepal began on February 13, 1996, when the Maoist faction of the Communist Party of Nepal (CPN-Maoist) initiated a series of attacks on police stations in three districts. The Maoists declared a 'people's war' and advocated for the 'rule of the proletariat'. Although the attacks were surprising, militant communist factions had been discussing the possibility of armed rebellion for

years. The CPN Unity Centre, the Maoists' predecessor, had announced a 'people's war' as early as December 1991, aiming for a democratic revolution. In 1994, the party split, with the Maoist faction, led by Prachanda, deciding to begin armed conflict. The Maoists went underground, ceased government involvement, and prepared for rebellion. Despite initially targeting a communist state, the Maoists espoused radical and rigid ideologies, often accusing other parties of being reactionary or fascist. Before the Maoists launched their rebellion, the government undertook Operation Romeo in Rolpa district, resulting in human rights abuses. Eventually, when the government ignored their demands for a secular republican state and constituent assembly, the Maoists launched an armed struggle. Initially, the government, with only a poorly equipped police force, struggled to contain the Maoists. By 2001, the Maoists controlled a significant portion of Nepal. Peace talks in 2001 and 2003 failed to end the conflict, with violations by both sides continuing, including executions, disappearances, and the recruitment of child soldiers (2004).

Women's movement during the Maoist Insurgency

(K.C. and Van Der Haar, 2018) The Nepalese women's movement gained momentum after the CPN (Maoist) initiated an armed struggle that called for women's liberation, the abolition of the monarchy, and the establishment of a republic with a new constitution. The Maoists viewed women's liberation as a key issue, which led to significant participation from rural women. Rural women took the movement as an opportunity to escape from traditional gender roles that affected their daily lives (Thapa 2003; Manchanda 2004; Goswami 2015). Over the course of the civil war, women's involvement in the CPN (Maoist) grew substantially in both political and military capacities. The involvement of women in the People's Liberation Army (PLA) helped

shift traditional gender roles in Nepalese society, as women took on tasks previously reserved for men (Pettigrew and Shneiderman, 2004).

There were many reasons why women chose to join the movement. According to (Kantipur, 2004, cited in Parashar and Shah, 2016),

'Women are the most deprived in the existing feudal system despite their role in Nepal's agro-economy. They are denied parental property although they run rural households on their own when their husbands are away earning money. When the men return, they marry other women, and the wives are forced to leave…If the women marry someone else, they become outcastes…The CPN Maoist is reversing this feudal practice through its People's War. It is leading the new revolution to implement ideas like equal rights for parental property and tillers as landowners. Women are fascinated with this change. The People's War has liberated women who otherwise had to spend their lives solely on domestic matters. Because of Hindu philosophy, girls are married off at an early age. They become grandmothers even before they reach menopause. The People's War has brought women out of the vicious cycle of living as reproductive machines . . . Rural women who were once deprived of their rights are now at the forefront of the People's War fighting as commanders. Now women are deciding not only when they live but also when they die'.

Furthermore, many young Nepalese girls were empowered and preferred to 'carry automatic rifles' (Thapa, 2003, cited in Parashar and Shah, 2016, p. 244) instead of 'sickles and grass' on their hands, breaking gender and cultural norms.

In 2006, following the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), which sought to end the conflict between the Government of Nepal and the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), (K.C. and Van Der Haar, 2019, p. 444) 'female ex-combatants had hoped to carry the Maoist gender-equality agenda forward into the post-war period'.

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However, they revealed that the peace process was a significant regression for them in both their private and public life. In their private lives, they lost the sense of empowerment they had experienced during the insurgency, as the progress towards gender equality eroded. Additionally, they became politically disillusioned, feeling that the Maoist commitment to eradicating gender discrimination had diminished (p. 445).

Despite their significant contributions during the war, yet again, women remained under-represented in leadership roles within the Maoist party and affiliated organisations,, with men dominating these positions of the CPA. Although women's political participation has increased, they continue to face challenges in establishing themselves in Nepalese politics.

The International Women's Movement in Nepal

The international women's movement has impacted the Nepalese women's movement. Since 1975, Nepal has celebrated the first International Women's Day, also known as 'Nari Dibas'. Each year on 8 March, this day is represented as a platform to launch campaigns, to engage in activism, and to raise awareness on women's issues.

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) is a landmark international treaty adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1979, aimed at eliminating discrimination against women in all forms. Nepal ratified CEDAW on 22 April 1991 without any reservations, committing to uphold gender equality and women's rights (UN Women (n.d.a).

Nepal is obligated to submit periodic reports to the CEDAW Committee, detailing measures taken to implement the Convention. Nepal's sixth periodic report was reviewed in 2018, during the Committee's 71st session. The Committee's concluding observations

acknowledged Nepal's progress, including legislative reforms and policy initiatives aimed at enhancing women's rights. CEDAW has helped raise awareness about women's rights and gender equality among policymakers, civil society, and communities. Legal reforms addressing gender-based violence, property rights, and citizenship have been implemented to align with CEDAW principles (United Nations, 2018). The Constitution of Nepal (2015) mandates 33 percent representation of women in Parliament, a significant step towards political empowerment. However, there are still many persistent challenges. Deep-rooted patriarchal practises and traditions continue to hinder progress. Limited legal literacy and systemic barriers prevent many women from accessing justice. Women in remote regions face greater challenges in accessing education, healthcare, and legal services.

2.3.4 Patriarchy

Introduction and Overview

Finlayson (2016) asserts that central to the purpose of feminism is that of 'opposing the system of patriarchy', by way of improving the quality of women's lives and liberating them. There are basically two components to feminism: the first one acknowledges or states that 'patriarchy is a fact' and secondly, it disagrees with and challenges the situation described by that fact. The word 'patriarchy', as Finlayson (2016, p. 6) describes it, is 'a system in which men rule or have power over or oppress women, deriving benefit from doing so, at women's expense'. To that end, many feminists believe that this is deeply enrooted and embedded into the very fabric of our society and 'that it is real'.

Rich (2021) defines it as, 'a familial-social, ideological, political system in which men - by force, direct pressure, or through ritual, tradition, law, and language, customs,

etiquette, education, and the division of labour, determine what part women shall or shall not play, and in which the female is everywhere subsumed under the male'.

According to Sultana (2010, p. 2), 'patriarchy refers to the male domination both in public and private spheres'. Moreover, feminists primarily use the term 'patriarchy' to describe the power dynamics between men and women. Therefore, patriarchy is more than just a word; feminists treat it as a concept, and like all concepts, it is a tool to help us understand women's experiences.

Walby (1990) defines 'patriarchy as a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women'. She explains patriarchy as a system because this helps us to reject the notion of biological determinism (which says that men and women are naturally different because of their biology or bodies and, are, therefore assigned different roles) or 'the notion that every individual man is always in a dominant position and every woman in a subordinate one'.

Patriarchy, in its wider definition, means the manifestation and institutionalisation of male dominance over women and children in the family and the extension of male dominance over women in society in general. It implies that 'men hold power in all the important institutions of society' and that 'women are deprived of access to such power'. However, it does not imply that 'women are either totally powerless or totally deprived of rights, influence, and resources' (Lerner, 1986).

Walby (1990) stated that there are 'six key patriarchal structures'. The 'patriarchal mode of production, patriarchal relations in paid work, patriarchal relations in the state, male violence, patriarchal relations in sexuality and patriarchal relations in cultural institutions including religions, media, and education'. Furthermore, Walby argues that 'the different aspects of gender inequality are sufficiently interrelated to be understood in terms of a system of patriarchy' (p. 177). Therefore, the structures can be

applied in the context of Nepal to explore how patriarchy shapes women's engagement in philanthropy and their societal roles.

The Application of Walby's Patriarchy Theory to Women and Philanthropy in Nepal

Paid Work: Walby discusses the gendered nature of employment and economic opportunities as a key site of patriarchy. In Nepal, women often face economic marginalisation, which limits their capacity to engage in philanthropy. The reliance on male-dominated financial systems especially in rural areas can hinder women's independence in both their philanthropic activities and broader societal roles (Walby, 1990).

Household Production: The patriarchal division of labour within households restricts women to caregiving roles, reducing their visibility and influence in the public sphere. In Nepalese society, traditional norms often confine women to domestic responsibilities, which limits their ability to take on leadership roles in philanthropy (Walby, 1990).

Culture: Cultural practices in Nepal often reinforce patriarchal values, such as prioritising male inheritance, celebrating the birth of a male child and decision-making within the family. These cultural norms can undermine women's participation in philanthropy by limiting their control over resources and societal influence (Walby, 1990).

State: Walby emphasises how state policies and practices can reinforce patriarchal structures. In Nepal, historical and existing policies often fail to address gender disparities effectively, creating additional barriers for women in leadership and philanthropy (Walby, 1990).

Sexuality and Violence: Sexual violence and patriarchal control over women's sexuality, or menstrual taboo, as discussed by Walby, are relevant in understanding societal restrictions on Nepalese women. These restrictions can deter women from stepping into public roles, including philanthropic leadership (Walby, 1990, pp. 110-117).

Transition from Private to Public Patriarchy: Walby describes the movement from private to public patriarchy, where women move into public life but remain constrained by patriarchal structures. In Nepal, women engaging in philanthropy face challenges both from traditional norms and from systemic barriers within public institutions (Walby, 1990).

Therefore to conclude, by employing Walby's theoretical lens, the researcher sought to critically examine the intersectionality of gender, cultural norms, and structural inequalities that shape the experiences of women in philanthropy in Nepal. This approach highlights the need to dismantle these patriarchal structures to enable greater participation and leadership by women.

2.4 History of Philanthropy

Philanthropy is neither a new concept nor a new idea. It has a long and rich history, dating back thousands of years. Almost all cultures practice it, and people have contributed resources to improve society in every known human civilisation (Jung, Phillips, and Harrow, 2016). Its etymological origin derives from ancient Greece, and it is defined as 'the love of humanity' and first appeared in the Greek tragedy 'Prometheus Bound' (Vallely, 2020, p. 18). In the first edition of an American Dictionary, Noah Webster, 1828 defined it as 'the love of mankind; benevolence towards the whole human family; universal beneficial will. It differs from friendship, as the latter is an affection for individuals'.

Ancient Romans, mediaeval aristocrats, and Victorian industrialists all practised philanthropy, as do modern-day Chinese billionaires and Brazilian nuns (Jung, Phillips, and Harrow, 2016). It also means 'different things to different people', and 'in practice it is often used to refer to significant donations of money to charitable causes' (Moody and Breeze, 2016). However, it must be acknowledged that philanthropy extends beyond financial resources; contributing our time, knowledge, and expertise to charities and nonprofit organisations holds equal value.

2.4.1 The Theory of Goodness as a Philanthropy Concept

The second half of the Zhou dynasty, in c. 1040-221 BCE, was considered a period of great social and intellectual furore, Mencius, a Confucian philosopher, defined philanthropy as the act of giving and supporting the less fortunate, either financially or through volunteer work, with the aim of promoting social causes and enhancing the wellbeing of communities. Mencius' theory on original goodness was that human nature (renxing) is good (Pengwei and Qiyong, 2008), and 'all humans have innate but incipient tendencies toward benevolence' (Van Norden, 2019). Based on his theory of goodness, 'all humans feel compassion for the suffering of other humans and animals, at least on some occasions, and this is a manifestation of benevolence'.

2.4.2 The Theory of Trusteeship as a Philanthropy Concept

The great Mahatma Gandhi espoused a distinctive take on philanthropy—which he called the 'theory of trusteeship'. Gandhi created the socio-economic and political doctrine of trusteeship, rooted in his ideas of social fairness, self-sufficiency, and non-violence. Even though the definition of 'philanthropy' from a Western perspective may not yet recognise it as such. The trusteeship aimed to eliminate wealth and power concentration in the hands of a few, promoting social and economic equality for all. The concept of trusteeship was triggered by the injustices and economic and social inequality

prevalent during the British colonial rule (1757–1947) over India. This was during the time when India was striving for independence from the British Empire. In fact, his concept of philanthropy transcends traditional charity contributions, emphasising its focus on the overall well-being and empowerment of all individuals, especially the marginalised and oppressed (M.K. Gandhi Institute for Non-violence, 2024).

Gandhi believed that true philanthropy should not rely solely on monetary donations and values, but should also include selfless service, social justice, and the eradication of poverty, inequality, and injustice. He advocated for a decentralised and community-based approach to philanthropy, encouraging individuals and communities to take charge of their own development and upliftment. In Gandhi's view, philanthropy was not a privilege reserved for the wealthy; it was a duty that every individual, regardless of socio-economic status, must accept. He believed that individuals should live a basic and frugal lifestyle, dedicate themselves to the service of others, and work toward the overall improvement of society. The principles of non-violence, social justice, and self-reliance profoundly rooted Gandhi's concept of philanthropy, aiming to establish a more just and equitable society for all (M.K. Gandhi Institute for Non-violence, 2024).

2.5 Contemporary Philanthropy

The real founders of American philanthropy were the English and European men and women who crossed the Atlantic to establish communities that would be better than the ones they had known at home. During the Industrial Revolution which took place in the 18th and 19th centuries, these individuals were instrumental in making their mass fortune which gave rise to modern philanthropy and the emerging trends in US philanthropy (Owen, 1964).

According to Jung, Phillips, and Harrow (2016), individuals possess varying interpretations or understandings of philanthropy. As a result, philanthropy can take

many forms, such as charitable giving, fundraising, donor involvement, volunteering, and women's giving circles. It impacts daily lives, ranging from arts and culture to serving those affected by global pandemics and wars, such as vaccine donations, homelessness, job loss, and the war in Ukraine. Its aim is to enhance the quality of human life (Bremner, 1988), and it is expected to be a 'problem-solving' approach to addressing society's challenges (Sciortino, 2017, p. 129). It is no surprise that, according to Jung, Phillips, and Harrow (2016, p. 5), 'philanthropy is increasingly being called upon to help solve some of the most serious social, economic, and environmental issues of our times'.

Moody and Breeze (2016) confirm that 'philanthropy is essential and everywhere', and it is 'both timeless and timely'. Global income and wealth inequalities (Stiglitz, 2012) create opportunities for the wealthy to voluntarily support the poor (Barman, 2017; Reich, 2017; Pharoah, 2016). Samuel Johnson, a celebrated lexicographer, first published his dictionary in 1755, in which he defined his version as 'love of mankind; good nature'. Johnson (1979), Gurin, and Van Til, (1990) stated that the purpose was to help increase the quality of life of others.

Payton and Moody (2008) defined theirs as 'voluntary action for public good' and as one mechanism that can be used as a solution to help solve social issues. Payton, (1988) further stated that 'philanthropy is essential to a free, open, democratic civil society'. It 'is moral action in response to the human problematic' (p. 6) and extends beyond grant-making and almsgiving (p. 148). According to Ford, Charles Stewart Mott, Rockefeller, and Kellogg, philanthropy has the 'power and potential to address problems as well as strengthen civil society and democracy' (Ambrose, 2005, p. 2)

Salamon (1992) defined philanthropy as 'the private giving of time or valuables (money, security, property) for public purposes'. While philanthropy is called upon to

solve the world's social problems as that of being public good and voluntary (Payton, 1988), there have been challenges made by various scholars.

Schervish and Havens (1998) assert that certain aspects of philanthropy, such as government assistance and market transactions, are not entirely voluntary. Often, governments are obligated to provide social services, such as the National Health Services (NHS) in the UK, 'mutuelle' compulsory state medical care services in Belgium, and health programmes for severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) and COVID-19 pandemic worldwide, including Nepal. For example, the Government of Nepal (GoN) is instrumental in providing free education up to class 10, 'scholarship programmes for girls and boys, mid-day meals, school uniforms', and 'books and stationery in community schools' (kathmandupost.com, n.d.). Furthermore, the Nepalese government, as an agrarian society, provides assistance in the form of fertilisers, seeds, farming tools, and equipment that the private sector may not necessarily offer (kathmandupost.com, n.d.). In this context, philanthropy is not always voluntary but can be obligatory as define as 'a social relation governed by a moral obligation that matches a supply of private resources to a demand of unfulfilled needs and desires that are communicated by entreaty' (Schervish and Havens, 1998).

Bishop and Green (2008) and McGoey (2012) introduced their version of an alternative definition of philanthropy as 'philanthrocapitalism,' as a new 'entrepreneurial private sector-led approach to solving public problems' to describe a novel approach to addressing public issues, characterised by the active involvement of the private sector and an entrepreneurial mindset. Proponents of pro-philanthrocapitalism, such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Mark Zuckerberg, and Priscilla Chan, firmly believe that it has the potential and capacity to address the world's biggest and most urgent issues, including polio, malaria, tuberculosis, and HIV/AIDS in the developing world.

Philanthrocapitalism, as opposed to traditional philanthropy, adopts a capitalist and market-orientated approach that focusses on generating profits. It also challenges the ineffective and unsustainable practice of simply distributing money, which fails to promote innovative problem-solving. This is an aspect that traditional philanthropy may overlook (Bishop and Green, 2008).

Philanthrocapitalism has faced criticism, and McGoey (2016) states that it has 'limited transparency and accountability involved', highlighting 'concerns that private philanthropy erodes support for governmental spending on public services'. Another criticism of large private foundations such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and Chan-Zuckerberg Initiatives (CZI) is that they can dictate where their donations go and which programmes to support that may not necessarily be within the realms of immediate needs in terms of global social problems priorities. This brings to question whether elite philanthropy (Maclean et al., 2021) is truly about doing good or is it primarily driven by the exercise of power, the promotion of personal agendas, or even self-preservation. Beth Breeze, an advocate of elite philanthropy, asserts that philanthropy holds positive potential and emphasises that 'defending the reputation of philanthropy is not about protecting the thin skin of rich givers, but rather about ensuring the viability of a philanthropically funded space in which people can do things for each other—for strangers and for future generations' (Breeze, 2021b). However, Phillips and Jung (2016) critic that this form of 'philanthrocapitalism' bears a strong resemblance to Andrew Carnegie's 'vision' of a 'more scientific approach to philanthropy'.

To conclude, Sulek (2010, p. 193) states that there is no 'well-thought-out definition' of philanthropy that exists, and in fact, scholars often explore various facets. As a result, it is not surprising that the idea and definition of philanthropy differ among scholars from classic to contemporary philanthropy views as well as across regions.

2.6 Asian Philanthropy

According to Shapiro et al. (2018), it is only recently that Asian philanthropy has 'developed as a widespread, systematic practise', and notes that it 'is not well understood'. The absence of data collection presents significant obstacles to the study of Asian philanthropy, with the exception of certain countries such as Japan, Singapore, South Korea, Hong Kong, and China. Until recently, Asia has been quite poor economically. However, this is changing, particularly in Beijing, China, where there are 'more billionaires than any other city in the world' (Harper, 2021), and it hosts 100 billionaires ((BBC News, 2021), beating New York City, which was in the top rank for the last seven years (2020). The current landscapes of Asian philanthropy or philanthropic work are predominantly dominated by the Asian Tigers, from Singapore, Hong Kong, Japan, and most recently China with the growing of wealth, and Indonesia, the 'fourth most populated country in the world and the largest nation of Muslims' (Hartnell, 2020, p. 3).

Sciortino (2017, p. 133) highlighted in her journal article 'Philanthropy, giving, and development in Southeast Asia' that rarely is the discussion on 'giving in Southeast Asia' included on the global philanthropy platform from an academic and a practitioner's perspectives. Yet, there are rich philanthropic events taking place in this region. As an example, Natalie Phaholyothin, Chief Executive Officer at World Wide Fund Thailand, opines that local philanthropy is defined as 'a home-grown repertoire of socially conscious forms of giving' (2017, p. 134).

Dove (2017) in her article 'Giving trends in Myanmar: More than merit making', highlights that 'Myanmar, as one of Asia's poorest countries,…has a reputation for generosity' (p. 205). In 2023, Myanmar ranked number six (out of 142 countries) just below the USA on global generosity (helping strangers, financial donations, and

volunteering), based on the Charity Aid Foundation's 'World Giving Index 2023'. For the sixth consecutive year, Indonesia has ranked as the most generous country in the world. In 2023, Nepal ranked number 63 compared to number 56 in 2022 and 27 in 2021.

2.7 Philanthropy in Nepal

In the developing country of Nepal, where government intervention is perceived as rife with 'corruption and bribery' (Interviewee 3), and lacking in solving poverty, hunger, health, education, gender equalities, and many other social issues faced by many third-world nations. Therefore, private individuals and foundations, local and international non-governmental organisations (INGOs), and community-based organisations are stepping up to deliver philanthropic services, and programmes by giving financial and non-financial resources.

The word philanthropy, or परोपकारी (Parōpakārī), as it is called in the Nepalese language, is embedded within the Nepalese society (religious giving, donation 'dhana', 'daan', 'dan' (charity), culture and festivals, and religion. In the 'cultural traditions of the society' (Yadama and Messerschmidt, 2004, p. 104), 'dhana' (charity) holds significant importance and is closely linked to the Hindu religion, as it is believed to ensure a positive afterlife (karma) experience (Adhikari, 2012; Chapagain, 2010; Limbu, 2001) (Knoop, n.d.). Nepalese people willingly fund and donate to schools, temples, rest houses, and orphanages (Adhikari, 2012; Chapagain, 2010), and most recently during natural disasters, such as the Nepal Earthquake 2015, and during the COVID-19 pandemic.

2.7.1 The Role of Religion and Philanthropy

Hinduism and Buddhism are two major religions in Nepal, and they are closely intertwined. Buddhism is believed to have originated from Hinduism around 2,500 years ago (Barua, 2015; Jacobson, 2010). Similarly, both Hindu and Buddhist traditions can be

traced back to over two millennia in Nepal. Prior to the Constitution of Nepal in 2015, Hinduism was the de facto religion in the country. Many scholars regard it as 'the world's oldest religion' (Gellman and Hartman, 2011; Fowler, 1997), with roots and practises dating back more than 4,000 years (Knoop, 2014).

Consequently, giving, charity, and volunteering are integral practises that deeply embed Hinduism in Nepalese society. In some households, both Hindu and Buddhist traditions are interlinked and practised. This further reinforces the concept of giving, charity and benevolence. For instance, Hindu rituals often dictate the performance of charitable acts during life events like childbirth, 'bartabanda' - a coming-of-age ceremony involving the wearing of 'janai' (holy thread), marriage, and death. Similarly, Buddhists in Nepal celebrate a festival known as Five Summer Gifts, or 'Pancha Daan', which means 'Five Offerings'. The five offerings typically include wheat grains, rice grains, salt, money, and fruits. Today, Nepalese people may offer other items based on their financial capacity and often come together to support those who are less fortunate. This is a time when the elders pass down teachings to the younger generation, fostering a sense of interconnectedness and keeping with tradition and culture.

In addition to Hinduism and Buddhism, there are other religions in Nepal: Kiratist (an indigenous ethnic religion), Christianity, Sikhism, and Jains (Minority Rights Group International, 2024). To that end, they also play an important role in encouraging acts of kindness, charity, and service to the less fortunate. Having religious freedom as their constitutional right also encourages individuals and religious organisations to carry out charitable services. The enactment of the Constitution, Article 26 guarantees that every Nepalese citizen has the 'right to freedom of religion' that states 'every individual has the freedom to profess, practice and protect his or her religion according to his or her conviction (Nepal Law Commission, 2015). Therefore, there is interconnectedness

between philanthropic organisations, the religions practised in Nepal, and the Constitution. These components reflect the relationship between law, civil society, and religious influence in promoting philanthropic work in Nepal. For instance, religious organisation such as like Christian Aid Nepal was an important actor during the aftermath of the April 2015 earthquake. The organisation was founded for the sole purpose of providing humanitarian aid. In fact, Christian Aid Nepal immediately 'implemented a response in 8 districts, working with local partners and giving a credible voice to the vulnerable communities' (Christian Aid, 2024).

2.7.2 The Role of Nonprofit, CSOs, I/NGOs and Philanthropy

Nonprofits, CSOs, and I/NGOs play critical roles within the framework of providing philanthropic support in Nepal. To that end, the Constitution of Nepal 2015, Part 3 of Fundamental Rights and Duties, under the 'Every citizen has the freedom to form unions and associations', further asserts the important roles that these organisations play in the social and developmental sector in Nepal.

The Social Welfare Council Nepal (SWC) recorded a total number of 50,358 NGOs from 1978 to July 2019. Moreover, there were up to 245 INGOs affiliated with SWC in July 2019. There was an exponential increase in the number of NGOs created in 1978, from 7 to 2,113 in 2019 (Social Welfare Council Nepal, 2019). Indeed, these increases clearly indicate a need for formal philanthropic organisations. These organisations play crucial roles in improving the education system, providing health care, promoting gender equality and women's empowerment programmes, addressing climate change, providing disaster relief and humanitarian aid, and alleviating poverty.

2.7.3 The Role of Diaspora and Philanthropy

According to the International Organisation for Migration (2013), 'diaspora members are migrants, ex-migrants, or migrants' descendants, and they are also

inhabitants, often workers, who contribute to the society in which they live'. From this perspective, the resources they can mobilise bear similarities to those of any individual, with the exception of their ability to establish direct or indirect links between two or more countries. These resources, or capitals, are human, social, economic, and cultural. Policies and programmes aiming to engage, enable, and empower diasporas share the objective of better harnessing these resources. Adhikari (2012) states that 'the diaspora's developmental and charitable efforts in Nepal reveal that the diaspora's strength is increasing both in number and its resource potential. Despite the relatively recent phenomena, the Nepalese diaspora is rapidly evolving and growing'. Furthermore, Adhikari (2012) confirms that, 'the economic power of the diaspora community is significant and growing'. This can be attested by the high volume of foreign remittances that make up over 25% to 30% of Nepal's GDP (Nepal Rastra Bank, 2020; Nepal Rastra Bank, 2024). The diasporas community around the world has the potential to harness their financial prowess to support charitable programmes and causes, especially during humanitarian crises.

In 1999, Rabindra Mishra founded the Help Nepal Network (HeNN) in the United Kingdom and Nepal. The goal was to promote 'practical philanthropy' among Nepalese diaspora. According to HeNN, 'One Dollar a Month Fund for Nepal is a global, entirely volunteer-run charity'. They define practical philanthropy as 'providing aid in the fields of health, education, and disaster relief in rural Nepal'. They envision a society in which every relatively able person contributes a small portion of their earnings for the benefit of those who genuinely need assistance—a method that will not interfere with an individual's normal daily life but will benefit disadvantaged communities (Help Nepal Network, n.d.).

Nirmal Purja MBE is the founder of Nimsdai Foundation which was established 'to give back to the mountain communities of his homeland' because 'my brothers and sisters in the Himalayas have given me so much support down the years, it's nice to be able to give something back'. The Nimsdai Foundation 'supports educational, technological, and capacity-building initiatives, helping guide the way for the climbers of the future'. See APPENDIX E STATEMENT FROM A SPOKESMAN FROM THE NIMSDAI FOUNDATION, Pages 172 to 174 (August 2024).

2.7.4 Home Grown Philanthropists

2.7.4.1 Krishna Prasad Kandel

Krishna Prasad Kandel, the founder of the Indreni television programme Indreni.com, exemplifies the connection between local and diaspora philanthropy. He has developed a popular entertainment platform in Nepal that promotes Nepalese culture, traditions and philanthropy. The programme, known for its focus on 'Lok Dohori' (Nepalese folk song), features performances by both established and new and upcoming artists. Beyond fostering and encouraging musical talent, Kandel also uses this platform for social good. Donors who come from all walks of life contribute financial assistance to support disadvantaged Nepalese. Furthermore, with a YouTube channel of over 3.26 million subscribers and 4.3K videos, Kandel effectively mobilises charitable giving and donations locally and from the diaspora community (Indreni.com, 2024).

2.7.4.2 Rita Thapa, Tewa

Rita Thapa, the founder of Tewa - Philanthropy for Equitable Justice and Peace, has garnered widespread recognition for her pioneering contributions in the field. A dedicated feminist and philanthropist, she has been actively involved in community philanthropy since September 1995. Tewa's philosophy is to cultivate community philanthropy both in terms of minimising social costs associated with rapid transition,

self-sufficient development, and empowerment of emerging groups of women in Nepal. Keeping this philosophy in mind, Tewa conducts local fund-raising, provides grants to women's groups throughout Nepal (Philanthropy for Equitable Justice and Peace, n.d.). One of Tewa's core principles is to 'tap into the philanthropy and altruism inherent in Nepali culture by urging men and women to donate on a regular basis for its grant-making program' (www.tewa.org.np, n.d.).

Indeed, as Sadhana Shrestha, previous executive director (2013-2016) and current member of Tewa stated at the 2016 Global Summit on Community Philanthropy, 'Tewa is a women's fund in Nepal that has grown out of feminist politics; its genesis is in philanthropy for equitable justice and peace'. Philanthropy is indeed inherent in Nepalese society, but while funds have traditionally been given for religious and cultural reasons, such giving is increasingly shifting to address social causes affecting Nepalese citizens. Tewa believes that such local resource mobilisation—building, protecting, and mobilising local assets and indigenous knowledge for the betterment of communities—is the only way 'development' really happens and social change is possible'.

2.7.4.3 The Chaudhary Foundation

A local philanthropic giant in Nepal is the Chaudhary Foundation, which the Chaudhary family established in 1995 as the Chaudhary Group's social initiative. The Foundation focuses on activities aimed to improve lives, strengthen communities, and sustainably develop Nepal (Chaudhary Foundation, n.d.). It seeks to address some of Nepal's most important social, economic, and environmental concerns through partnerships with local and international stakeholders. Due to its strong sense of responsibility toward enhancing livelihoods, the Chaudhary Group has actively invested in community projects for more than two decades and believes that the relationships it builds with employees, customers, partners, and the community at large will contribute to

the development of a stronger society. Their premise is to address social issues through their corporate social responsibility (CSRs) programmes to help reduce Nepal's poverty level (Chaudhary Foundation, n.d.).

2.7.5 The Industrial Enterprises Act 2020

The Industrial Enterprises Act 2020 mandates the allocation of funds for CSRs to specific sectors, as outlined in Rule 43 of the Industrial Enterprise Rules. Execution of this allocation entails formulating an annual plan and programme. (Department of Industry, 2020) In coordination with local-level governments, the Industrial Enterprise Rules have elaborated eight broad areas for the use of those funds. In accordance with the Act, industries can deduct the amount they spend to meet their CSR obligation from their income tax calculation. However, the Act prohibits the use of CSR funds to generate profits or benefit the business.

The National Business Initiative (2024) posits, 'There can be no successful business without successful society, and there can be no successful society without successful business'. In 2005, fourteen major Nepalese business associations and individual companies established NBI as a nonprofit organisation with the aim of formalising and organising corporate social responsibility in Nepal. Today, it has seen an increase in the number of business associations and individual memberships. Moreover, the Inland Revenue Department of Nepal, under the Ministry of Finance, recognises NBI as an income-tax-exempt organisation.

2.4.5.1 Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

It is no longer acceptable for large corporations and businesses to focus solely on their bottom line in Nepal. Many major organisations are now integrating strategic CSR programmes and philanthropy into their overall business strategy. This shift is evident

across various sectors, predominantly banking, hospitality, and tourism. These sectors are some of the largest industries in terms of foreign income and revenue.

CSR (in Nepali कर्पोरेट सामाजिक उत्तरदायित्व Karpōrēṭa sāmājika uttaradāyitva) refers to an organisation's responsibility or obligation, which may also be required by law, to pursue long-term goals that are beneficial for society and nations (Upadhyay-Dhungel and Dhungel, 2013). In fact, CSR is recognised as organisational qualities for contributing to society as well as nations (Chapagain, 2010). The Nepal Rastra Bank issued Circular no. 11/073/74 and the Industrial Enterprise Act (section 48) in 2020, mandating that 'medium or large industry, or cottage or small industry with an annual turnover of more than one hundred fifty million rupees (1,129,814.54 Euros as of June 2022) set aside at least one percent of its annual net profits in each financial year for the purpose of performing the corporate social responsibility' (Government of Nepal, 2020, p. 59).

2.8 Purpose of Literature Review

2.8.1 Introduction

Conducting a literature review is an important aspect of any dissertation, and according to Hart (1998, p. 13), it 'is integral to the success of academic research'. Furthermore, Hart defines it as 'the selection of available documents (both published and unpublished) on the topic, which contain information, ideas, data and evidence written from a particular standpoint to fulfill certain aims or express certain views on the nature of the topic and how it is to be investigated, and the effective evaluation of these documents in relation to the research being proposed'.

According to Randolph (2019, p. 2), a literature review demonstrates the researcher's 'knowledge about a particular field of study, including vocabulary, theories, key variables, and phenomena, and its methods and history'. It is a 'legitimate and

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publishable scholarly document' (LeCompte and Schensul, 2010). The document's guiding concept or topical focus defines it, providing an overview of previous publications on a specific subject. This calls for a reliance on one single research study that may not align with findings from other previous studies conducted (Dunst, Trivette, and Cutspec, 2002). Gall, Borg, and Gall (1996) espouse that the literature review plays a role in 'delimiting the research problem, seeking new lines of inquiry, avoiding fruitless approaches, gaining methodological insights, identifying recommendations for further research, and seeking support for grounded theory'. Additionally, Hart (2018) emphasised the importance of 'distinguishing what has been done from what needs to be done, discovering important variables relevant to the topic, synthesising and gaining a new perspective, identifying relationships between ideas and practices, establishing the context of the topic or problem, rationalising the significance of the problem, enhancing and acquiring the subject vocabulary, understanding the structure of the subject, relating ideas and theory to applications, identifying the main methodologies and research techniques that have been used, and placing the research in a historical context to show familiarity with state-of-the-art developments'.

2.8.2 Steps Undertaken to Identify Key Literature Review

2.8.2.1 Pilot Searching

The researcher conducted an initial pilot search utilising keywords associated with the research study. These included pertinent synonyms, relevant keywords from books, journals and reports, as well as relevant references from works cited in related books, journals and reports. Online academic libraries, Google Scholar and various other mediums were also used to identify a set of key related works for a rigorous academic and grey literature search.

2.8.2.2 Literature Searches

After identifying keywords and synonyms, the researcher conducted searches across various databases to encapsulate a diverse range of sources. These included both academic (peer-reviewed journals and books) and grey literature (programme reports, evaluations, news articles, government articles, websites, etc.). To include them in the review, the researcher conducted searches on women and philanthropy from Western perspectives. The researcher reviewed anthropological, sociological, development, policy, and gender-related journals and databases to capture the variety of applications of women and philanthropy across multiple disciplines.

2.8.2.3 Academic Literature

Searches were conducted in the following academic databases to identify literature: Academic Search Premier, Elsevier, HIMALAYA (The Journal of the Association for Nepal and Himalayan Studies), JSTOR, Martin Chautari Online Library, Nepal Journals Online, ProQuest Dissertations and Thesis, PsycINFO, PubMed, Scopus Preview, Sage Journals, ResearchGate, Springer Nature, The Joseph and Matthew Payton The Philanthropic Studies Library, The University of Hong Kong Libraries (HKUL), Tribhuvan University Central Library (TUCL), etc.

2.8.2.4 Grey Literature

Searches were also made on various reports and newspaper articles. Inputs were gathered from key agencies and experts working on women, gender, economic empowerment, and sociocultural issues, such as the Nepali Times, UN Women, UNFPA, GoN, The Kathmandu Post and experts who have extensive experience in Nepal. Next, the researcher used the list of keywords to search Google and Google Scholar for reports or articles.

2.8.2.5 Data Management and Analysis

An Excel document was used to log relevant documents, and articles, books, reports, etc., were saved in the library in the cloud using Tresorit Drive. Each document was further categorised in folders based on the subject matter. The below highlights one prime example,

T:\Teg\LIBRARY\Philanthropy

T:\Teg\LIBRARY\Philanthropy\ARTICLE

T:\Teg\LIBRARY\Philanthropy\BOOKS

T:\Teg\LIBRARY\Philanthropy\Literature Reviews

2.9 Limitations of the Review

Due to the gap in Nepalese literature, the review only included books, journal articles and reports, and newspapers written and published in English. Searches using the Devanagari script failed to yield any academic research or scholarly works in Nepalese. Recently, there has been an emerging literature on Asian philanthropy, primarily from developed markets like Hong Kong and Singapore, as well as emerging markets like China, Indonesia, the Philippines, and India. Notable examples include Asian Venture Philanthropy (AVP), Asia Philanthropy Circle (APC), The Centre for Asian Philanthropy and Society (CAPS), and The Asia Foundation (AF), among others. Unfortunately, the available information from Nepal is sporadic and primarily focuses on corporate social responsibility (CSR), community philanthropy (executed by TEWA, a nonprofit in Nepal), and philanthropy and law in South Asia by (Sidel and Zaman, 2020). While this research study looks at women and philanthropy and examines perspectives from Nepal, it is important to research, examine, and understand the role of philanthropy from a current/global perspective and to add this research study on a plain-level playing field.

2.10 Review of Literature

2.10.1 Introduction

This research study is significant due to the fact that it fills a gap in the literature on women and philanthropy in Nepal. From an empirical research perspective, this study holds relevance and importance for those working in the field. Just as women in the Global North are making an impact in philanthropy, women from the Global South have just as much to contribute.

September 2021 data from the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division shows that the current male population (49.6%) accounts for 14,615,385 and the female population is 14,850,920 (50.4%). Life expectancy is 64.9 years for men and 67.4 years for women.

While the literacy rate for females is still lower than for males (see Table 1: Literacy rate for adult population, page 14), women in Nepal play a significant role in everyday, day-to-day life, and one factor may have contributed to high male migration overseas in search of employment. According to the Annual Media Monitoring Report 2018, a significant proportion of Nepal's population continues to rely on foreign employment opportunities (Centre for Social Change, 2019, p. 3). Because Nepalese women have a longer life expectancy than men, they may also need to play a bigger role in shaping economic participation, education, political empowerment, etc. Moreover, Kamas, Preston, and Baum (2008) state that increasing women's role in traditional male decision-making processes may result in more altruistic economic behaviour. The more we understand the landscape of philanthropy from an Asian and Nepalese gender perspective, we will be better informed and can take further action, for example, in advocacy, policy, and further research work.

2.10.2 The History and Evolution of Women's Philanthropy

2.10.2.1 Women's Role in Philanthropy

History books have often overlooked and failed to record women's philanthropy (Hickey and von Schlegell, 1993) and 'women's philanthropy has received little systematic attention within the field of non-profit studies' (McCarthy, 1996, p. 332). However, women's involvement in philanthropy began as early as the 18th century. Sadly, public institutions had excluded women and prohibited them from voting, holding office, or working in most professions. Despite these limitations, women played an important role in developing civil society through their volunteer efforts, and eventually, financial contributions. One of the earliest documented instances of a woman contributing financially to education was in 1643, when a wealthy woman donated £100 to Harvard College for scholarships to support poor students (Gaudiani, 2005). This set the precedence for many philanthropic efforts by women.

2.10.2.2 Perceptions of Women and Philanthropy

Women in philanthropy was once considered 'an oxymoron' (Mesch and Pactor, 2010). Philanthropy was almost exclusively associated with white men, as they were typically the ones with financial power. When women made contributions, people often assumed they were supporting causes their husbands and families supported (Shaw-Hardy, Taylor, and Beaudoin-Schwartz, 2010). However, in the last few decades, this has changed due to the rise of large philanthropic giving by women.

In 1995, Shaw-Hardy and Taylor published their groundbreaking book, Reinventing Fundraising: Realising the Potential of Women's Philanthropy (Shaw-Hardy and Taylor, 1995). At the time, the idea of women as philanthropists was considered a novelty. Despite women gaining education and economic independence through their careers and businesses, the perception of philanthropy as a 'man's world' persisted.

People underestimated women's philanthropic capacity and impact, a perception that still exists to some extent today (Shaw-Hardy, Taylor, and Beaudoin-Schwartz, 2010).

2.10.2.3 The Changing Landscape of Women's Philanthropy

In the modern era, women are transforming the landscape of philanthropy and reshaping societies worldwide (Mesch et al., 2006; Shaw-Hardy, Taylor, Beaudoin-Schwartz, 2010). By 2025, the conversation around women in philanthropy have gained momentum, becoming more visible and bold (Shaw-Hardy, Taylor, Beaudoin-Schwartz, 2010). Access to education, healthcare, child support, employment, and economic empowerment have drastically changed women's roles compared to previous generations.

Today, women are as likely as men to be philanthropists, a stark contrast to the scenario a century ago (Mesch et al., 2006). In addition, UBS has identified the 'horizontal wealth transfer' (Frank, 2024) where women could inherit up to $9 trillion from their partners in the next 25 years. A report from Julius Baer further highlights that women now make up 11% of the world's millionaires (Chua, 2024), nearly double the share in 2016. Boston Consulting Group (BCG) also reports that women now control 32% of the world's wealth (Beardsley et al, 2016).

2.10.2.4 Prominent Women Philanthropists of the Global North

Significant strides have been made by women, particularly in the Global North, where their contributions to philanthropy are increasingly recognised. Notable examples of powerful and elite women philanthropists include Melinda Ann French, MacKenzie Scott, Oprah Winfrey, Priscilla Chan, and Taylor Swift. These women are at the forefront of modern philanthropy, demonstrating the potential of women to influence social change on a global scale. In summary, the evolution of women in philanthropy reflects broader changes in societal norms, economic empowerment, and recognition of

women's contributions. Today, women are not only participating in philanthropy but also shaping its future in profound ways (Charities Aid Foundation, 2025).

2.10.2.5 Women's Giving Circles

Women's giving circles play a crucial role in empowering women through collective philanthropy. The collective impact these circles can achieve complements this empowerment, demonstrating that they not only educate members on philanthropic issues but also foster robust communities and advance gender equity in the philanthropic sector (Bearman et al., 2020).

In their 2010 book 'Women & Philanthropy: Boldly Shaping a Better World', Shaw-Hardy, Taylor, and Beaudoin-Schwartz examined strategies for enhancing women's involvement in philanthropy and cultivating female leaders within the non-profit sector. They conducted extensive interviews and researched some key topics in women's philanthropy. Based on their findings, women's giving is defined and motivated by the six C's: create, change, connect, commit, collaborate, and celebrate. Furthermore, from 1991 to 2000, they observed a shift in the women's giving movement and developed three additional Cs: control, confidence, and courage (Shaw-Hardy, Taylor, and Beaudoin-Schwartz, 2010, p. 57) to reflect these changes. The authors conducted extensive interviews, and with their combined experiences, they brought further information on philanthropy and the non-profit sector. They discuss approaches to encouraging female giving, ideas for fostering female leadership, women as potential donors, fundraising, etc. Bekkers and Wiepking (2011) conducted a comprehensive literature review and identified eight specific mechanisms as key determinants of individual philanthropy. These mechanisms are awareness of need, type of solicitation, costs and benefits, altruism, reputation, psychological benefits, values, and efficacy. Other researchers (Cnaan et al., 2011b; Hurvitz, 2010; McAlexander and Koenig, 2012, ;

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Payton and Moody, 2008; Sargeant and Hilton, 2005; Sawhill and Williamson, 2001; Taylor and Martin, 1995) also focused on the effect of specific factors that contribute to giving and volunteering.

2.10.3 Why Women and Philanthropy Matter

2.10.3.1 A Historical Shift in Wealth and Financial Influence

The growth of women's economic empowerment has influenced and reshaped the philanthropic landscape practices globally. Women's involvement in philanthropy has traditionally been informal, characterised by contributions mostly confined to volunteer labour or modest donations made through religious or social networks. However, in recent years, women have acquired substantial financial influence as a result of their higher levels of education, greater involvement in the workforce, and inheritance (Shaw and Taylor, 2010a).

Based on a report by Baghai et al. (2020), 'an unprecedented amount of assets will shift into the hands of US women over the next three to five years, representing a $30 trillion opportunity by the end of the decade'. Furthermore, 'younger affluent women are getting more financially savvy'. Research based on affluent consumer demographics further highlights that '30 percent more married women are making financial and investment decisions' and 'more women than ever are the family breadwinner' (McKinsey, 2015). The increasing accumulation of wealth allows women to make decisions about large-scale philanthropic contributions (Andreoni and Vesterlund, 2001). Unlike prior older generations where male family members dominated financial decisions, women today are shaping the philanthropic sector through significant contributions to various causes, particularly those related to social justice and gender equity. According to Women's Philanthropy Institute (n.d.), gender matters when it

comes to women's philanthropic giving. The research reveals key gender differences in charitable giving (Mesch et al, 2015, p. 3):

- Likelihood to donate: Single women have a higher propensity to make charitable donations in comparison to single males.

- Amount given: Women often tend to give a higher proportion of their income than men when they do make a donation.

- Distribution of donations: Women tend to allocate their donations among a larger number of organisations and contribute to a wider variety of charitable causes, whilst males tend to focus their giving in a smaller number of areas.

The increase in women's 'economic power and education' (Mesch, 2009) has facilitated their growing participation in high-net-worth philanthropic networks and foundations. For example, some of the largest individual contributions to philanthropy have come from women such as MacKenzie Scott, who donated over $4 billion to charities in just four months (Gamboa, 2022). Scott in 2022 confirmed that she has provided support to '465 non-profits, converting $3,863,125,000 into meaningful services for others'. Such contributions exemplify a paradigmatic shift in giving, where women are no longer playing supporting roles in philanthropy but rather transitioning to central figures directing funds and initiatives toward specific causes that they believe in (Fidelity Charitable, 2017).

2.10.3.2 Focus on Community, Social Issues, and Gendered Giving

Gates (2018) states, 'When money flows into the hands of women, everything changes', advocating that women are more likely to invest in their families, communities, and social good. Krotz (2009) further asserts that women have a strong sense of obligation to serve those who are less fortunate than them (p. 15). Therefore, based on several studies conducted, women are more likely to make a donation than men (Greer,

2000; Harvey, 1990; Jones and Posnett, 1991; Mesch, 2010; Weyant, 1984). Importantly, women's philanthropy also tend to focus on community development and addressing social inequalities. Research also shows that women, as philanthropists, prioritise causes that directly benefit families, children, healthcare, and marginalised populations, demonstrating a gendered pattern of giving (Mesch and Pactor, 2010). This contrasts with historical male-dominated philanthropy, which often prioritised legacy-building initiatives like infrastructure or large endowments for elite educational institutions (Odendahl, 1990). Women's philanthropy is more likely to be inclusive, focussing on under-represented and vulnerable communities, thereby playing a crucial role in the advancement of equity and social change (Osili, Clark, and Han, 2019). 'But as always, our aim has been to support the needs of under-represented people from groups of all kinds' was further attested by Scott (2022). 'The cause of equity has no sides'.

(Mesch, 2009, p. 5) empathy and a desire to make meaningful, long-term impacts on communities form the foundation of women's giving (Shaw, Taylor and Beaudoin-Schwartz, 2010b). According to Skoe et al. (2002), women are more likely to engage in helping and focussing on relationships and individual care, while men are generally inclined toward non-relational actions, often prioritising justice as their motivation for assisting others. This is often referred to as 'relational philanthropy' (Petzinger and Jung, 2024), emphasising the importance of relationships and personal connections as central to philanthropic endeavours. This community-orientated approach fosters inclusivity and engages a diverse range of voices in decision-making processes, which helps ensure that funding aligns closely with the needs of beneficiaries (Gill and McMains, 1994). Furthermore, women donors are more likely to give to causes that address gender-specific issues, such as reproductive rights, education for girls, and maternal health (Mesch et al., 2016). This implies that women's giving is influenced by their lived

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experiences and a desire to address social inequities directly affecting women and children.

2.10.3.3 Collaboration and Strategic Approaches

A defining characteristic of women's philanthropy is one based on mutual collaboration and strategic giving. They often tend to give strategically by seeking to maximise the social return on their investment. This is because strategic philanthropy differs from transactional or charity giving in that it seeks to tackle the underlying causes of societal issues and instigate lasting, systemic transformation Shaw-Hardy, Taylor and Beaudoin-Schwartz, 2010a). Hence, they tend to engage collectively and not as solitary figures as members of larger, cooperative networks (Mesch et al., 2015). Giving circles are one prime example of why it has become a popular model for women philanthropists (Eikenberry, 2006; 2007). By using giving circles, women pool their resources, collectively decide where to allocate funds and focus on shared values and goals. This collaborative model not only enhances the impact of their donations but also fosters a sense of community and mutual accountability (Bearman, 2007).

Several female philanthropists, for example, prioritise their efforts on strengthening advocacy, reforming policies, and implementing capacity-building programmes that empower marginalised communities and promote sustainable development. Strategic, impact-oriented philanthropy facilitates the transition of the sector towards more outcome-oriented forms of social transformation (Fremont-Smith, 2008).

2.10.3.4 Empowerment and Representation

Women's participation in philanthropy also plays a critical role in empowering other women and fostering greater gender representation in leadership. Through their philanthropic efforts, women contribute to a wider movement for gender equity, funding

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initiatives that support women's leadership development, access to education, and economic empowerment (Osili, Clark, and Han, 2019). In contexts where traditional philanthropic institutions have historically underfunded or marginalised women's issues, this trend holds particular significance (Brunet-Bélanger et al., 2024).

Philanthropy offers women a platform to challenge patriarchal structures and advocate for systemic change (Girard, 2019). The literature highlights that feminist organisations have been instrumental in enhancing the influence of feminism (Ferree and Martin, 1995). Acting as extensions of the feminist movement (Bunjun, 2010; 2013; Ferree and Martin, 1995), these organisations contributed to confronting patriarchy and driving social change (Shaw-Hardy, 2005). Women, as philanthropists, are not only funders but also advocates for policy reform, human rights, and justice (Barajas-Roman, 2023). According to Shifman et al. (2022), many women philanthropists see their role as part of a broader feminist movement, using their resources to tackle structural inequalities and create opportunities for women and girls. This advocacy-driven approach underscores the connection between philanthropy and social justice and highlights the power of women's philanthropy to address global inequities.

2.10.3.5 Women-Led Giving Circles and Grassroots Engagement

The emergence and rise of women-led giving circles demonstrates the grassroots nature of women's philanthropy (Eikenberry, 2006). Giving circles can be compared to a cross between a book club and an investment group, which involve individual members to 'pool their resources in support of organisations of mutual interest' (Schweitzer, 2000, p. 32). These circles incorporate social, educational, and engagement elements. These elements connect participants to the community, potentially more so than other forms of philanthropy (Eikenberry, 2006, p. 518). They enable individuals to pool their resources for greater collective impact and have become particularly popular among women

philanthropists. Not only do these circles democratise the giving process, but they also enable women to deeply engage with the communities they support, often concentrating on localised or niche issues that larger foundations might otherwise overlook (Bearman, 2007). Giving circles empowers women to lead in philanthropy and encourages collective decision-making, amplifying the impact of their contributions (Eikenberry, 2006; 2007). Furthermore, giving circles tend to draw women under 40, which adds 'new money' to the organised philanthropic scene, according to data. Members of giving circles are also more focused, and they are strategic givers both inside and outside of the circle. Because of their involvement in their community, they understand their needs and donate, hoping to make a difference. Therefore, their contributions are focused, which results in members making bigger but fewer gifts (Eikenberry, 2006, p. 523).

2.10.3.6 Economic and social impacts

The economic and social impacts of women's philanthropy are far-reaching and their 'philanthropic work have clear impacts across various fields' (Aloufi and Weinberg, 2023). By funding initiatives related to education, healthcare, and economic development, women philanthropists contribute to broader societal well-being. For example, investing in girls' education leads to improved health outcomes, increased income levels, and greater economic stability for communities (UN Women, 2017). Women's economic empowerment means giving them equal access to markets, decent work, social protection, and control over their own time, money, and bodies. It also entails giving them more agency, voice, and meaningful participation in economic decision-making at all levels, from home to international institutions. The broader economic benefits that result from empowering women and investing in social infrastructures demonstrate the multiplier effect of these philanthropic efforts (World

Economic Forum, 2021). Duflo (2011) asserts that investment in women and girls creates a positive change within their families, communities, and countries.

2.10.4 Women's Motivation for Giving

2.10.4.1 Personal Values and Identity

Eisenberg (1992), Mills, Pedersen, and Grusec (1989) assert that women typically demonstrate more prosocial behaviour than men. Empirical studies also suggest that women tend to exhibit higher levels of charity compared to men (Andreoni and Vesterlund, 2001). Thus, women's philanthropic behaviour is closely tied to their personal values and sense of identity due to their experiences as women encountering gender inequalities and/or gender discrimination and desiring to provide their children with equal opportunities (Dale et al., 2018, p. 253). Women view giving as a reflection of who they are and their core beliefs, often driven by empathy, compassion, and a desire to help others (Andreoni and Vesterlund, 2001, 294). They are selfless, empathetic, and generous than men. Weyant (1984) concur that 'women are more likely to make a donation than men' and men tend to focus on providing in comparatively fewer areas (Yörük, 2010). Their personal connection to causes is pivotal; women frequently align their giving with causes that resonate with their individual experiences or aspirations. Consequently, they select charities that align with their interests and concerns (Burgoyne, Young, and Walker, 2005). In contrast, men view philanthropy through the lens of financial investment (for instance, income and tax incentives) or prestige, and their tendency is to give more money to fewer charities, unlike women, who tend to give less money to a greater variety of charities (Allen, 2018).

2.10.4.2 Desire for Social Impact

Research suggests that social expectations may influence the relationship between gender and generosity (Allen, 2018). To that end, women's desire to create lasting

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societal change is a key motivational driver. Dale et al. (2018, p. 253) importantly highlight 'women donors saw supporting women and girls as breaking the cycle of poverty'. This confirms that women are more inclined than men to support causes related to social justice, education, healthcare, and the empowerment of marginalised communities (Shaw-Hardy and Taylor, 2010a). Their giving is often not merely transactional but transformational, aimed at fostering long-term systemic improvements. Women's awareness of structural inequalities and their lived experiences, particularly in areas affecting women and children, often drive this motivation (Mesch et al., 2013). Women also demonstrate a preference for funding grassroots initiatives and community-driven projects, where they can visibly track the impact of their contributions (Eagly and Crowley, 1986).

2.10.4.3 Community and Relationships

Petzinger and Jung (2024) Relational giving is another important characteristic of women's philanthropy. Relational giving, or relational philanthropy, emphasises long-term, collaborative relationships between donors and recipients, moving beyond transactional exchanges of funds. This approach focusses on mutual trust and community engagement, integrating the lived experiences and insights of those directly impacted by the philanthropic efforts. By fostering transparency and collaboration, such as involving grantee partners in decision-making processes, relational giving allows for more sustainable and community-informed outcomes (LaKelly Hunt, 2024; Dalen and McFerrin, 2024). Unlike men, who may approach philanthropy individually, women often find motivation in the desire to build and maintain social connections through giving. This can manifest through participation in giving circles, group-based charitable efforts, or donations to causes supported by friends and family (Shaw-Hardy et al., 2010). Women are also more likely to engage in collaborative philanthropy, where they pool

resources with others to increase the reach and impact of their contributions (Ostrander, 2004). This collective approach highlights the importance of social networks and relationships in shaping women's giving patterns (Mesch et al., 2013).

2.10.4.4 Family and Legacy

Research shows that women are their families' philanthropic agents (Loehr, 2024). The desire to create a lasting legacy rooted in family tradition plays a pivotal role in motivating women's philanthropy. Many women perceive philanthropy as a means to mirror their family's values and guarantee the use of wealth for the betterment of future generations (Shaw-Hardy and Taylor, 2010a). Women often engage their children in philanthropic activities to instil values like generosity, civic responsibility, and social engagement (Einolf, 2011). Research consistently highlights the theme of 'giving back' and the aspiration to improve the future for their children and grandchildren as key motivations for women's giving behaviours.

Understanding women's philanthropic motivations requires recognising the significance of family and legacy. Family traditions and values often guide women's charitable efforts, particularly in areas like caregiving, education, and social justice. Families play an essential role in imparting principles of compassion, accountability, and generosity, creating a legacy of giving. Women often influence their children and relatives to participate in philanthropy, ensuring these values endure (LaKelly, 2024; Dalen and McFerrin, 2024).

Legacy also holds profound importance as women seek to create a lasting impact. Their philanthropy extends beyond financial contributions to address systemic issues and promote sustainable social change. This legacy often manifests in the creation of institutions or foundations that champion causes such as gender equality, education, and community well-being long after their lifetimes. By prioritising inclusivity and

empowerment, women ensure that their philanthropic influence fosters ongoing social progress across generations (LaKelly Hunt, 2024).

2.10.4.5 Influence of Life Experiences

Women's giving is also significantly influenced by their personal life experiences. Those who have encountered adversity, such as poverty, illness, or discrimination, often choose to support causes that address these issues. Women's giving is based on community and place-based philanthropy (Ascent Private Capital Management, 2023). For example, survivors of domestic violence may be more inclined to donate to shelters and programmes for other survivors, while women who have experienced health challenges may contribute to medical research or healthcare initiatives (Shaw-Hardy, Taylor, Beaudoin-Schwartz, 2010a). Research conducted by Dale et al. (2018, p. 248) indicated that 'women are more likely than men to donate to domestic abuse; women's centres; cancer research, diagnosis, and support; economic possibilities for women and girls; and gay, bisexual, and transgender rights'. This connection between personal experiences and philanthropic motivation demonstrates how women's lived realities shape their priorities in giving (Einolf, 2011).

2.11 Conclusion

In conclusion, this study contributes to closing a critical gap in the literature by highlighting the evolving role of women in philanthropy in Nepal, an area that has been historically overlooked (McCarthy, 1996; Hickey and von Schlegell, 1993). Drawing parallels with global trends, it is evident that Nepalese women, like their counterparts in the Global North, are becoming increasingly influential in shaping philanthropic practices and advancing social change (Mesch et al., 2006; Shaw-Hardy and Taylor, 1995). As women gain access to education, economic resources, and leadership roles, their philanthropic engagement reflects a shift towards strategic, community-oriented, and

values-driven giving (Beardsley et al., 2016; Frank, 2024). Initiatives such as giving circles exemplify how women are collectively addressing systemic issues and fostering inclusive decision-making within the philanthropic sector (Eikenberry, 2006; Bearman et al., 2020). Their giving is often rooted in empathy, lived experience, and a deep commitment to equity and social justice (Mesch and Pactor, 2010; Dale et al., 2018). Ultimately, women's philanthropy not only challenges patriarchal norms but also serves as a powerful force for sustainable development, policy reform, and feminist advocacy (Girard, 2019; Shifman et al., 2022). This research underscores the importance of recognising and supporting women's roles in philanthropy as central to achieving broader societal transformation.

CHAPTER III:

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Overview of the Research Problem

The research problem explores the intersection of patriarchy and women's roles in philanthropy in Nepal, drawing on Sylvia Walby's and bell hooks' feminist theories. Both frameworks offer critical insights into the systemic barriers women face, highlighting the dual nature of oppression in private and public spheres and the need for transformative action.

Walby's framework distinguishes between private patriarchy, where power is exercised within the household by a dominant male figure, and public patriarchy (Walby, 1989, p. 227), which operates in broader social, economic, and political arenas, collectively limiting women's access to power, wealth, and influence. These forms of patriarchy reinforce each other, systematically marginalising women and perpetuating their exclusion from leadership roles, including in philanthropy. In Nepal, these dynamics are particularly pronounced due to entrenched cultural norms and socio-economic disparities.

Building on Walby's structural analysis, bell hooks' feminist theory emphasises the intersectional nature of oppression. hooks argues that gender inequality cannot be understood in isolation but must be examined alongside race, class, and other axes of identity. Her concept of 'feminist praxis' calls for action-oriented approaches to dismantle oppressive systems and empower women as agents of social change (hooks, 2000, p. 18). This perspective is particularly relevant in Nepal, where caste, economic marginalisation, and geographic isolation intersect with patriarchal norms to shape women's experiences and opportunities.

To that end, philanthropy offers a unique lens to explore these issues, as it provides Nepalese women with a platform to challenge patriarchal structures and assert agency. However, systemic barriers rooted in both private and public patriarchy (Walby, 1989), coupled with intersectional oppression (hooks, 2000), shape women's motivations, leadership roles, and impacts in the philanthropic sphere. Understanding these dynamics is critical to addressing social inequalities and empowering women in Nepal to become agents of change.

3.2 Operationalisation of Theoretical Constructs

3.2.1 Introduction

According to the Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English, research is defined as 'a careful investigation or inquiry, especially through search for new facts in any branch of knowledge' (Kothari, 2004). Redman and Mory (1923) define research as a 'systematized effort to gain new knowledge'. Leedy and Ormrod (2001) assert that merely searching for, collecting, and documenting informational facts cannot be confused with research. In actuality, 'research is the process of collecting', analysing, and 'interpreting data in order to' comprehend 'a phenomenon'—which this research study seeks to achieve: 'Women and Philanthropy: A Perspective from Nepal'.

Research, therefore, must be systematic in defining the objective, managing the data, and communicating the findings, all of which occur within established framework(s) and in accordance with existing guidelines ((Leedy, Ormrod and Johnson, 2014,)). These guidelines tell the researcher what to incorporate into the research project, how to carry out the research, and the potential inferences from the collected data. In essence, research is a journey of discovery, where the researcher goes from an unknown state to finding the answers and knowledge to the research questions on page 22.

There are three methods for conducting research: quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods (Swanson and Holton, 2005; Kothari, 2008; Creswell and Creswell, 2017). Researchers need to ascertain what type of data is required to best answer the research question(s) and/or the hypothesis. For example, do the research question(s) and/or hypothesis necessitate numerical, textural, or both. Depending on the suitability and pragmatic approach, a researcher will choose either quantitative or qualitative methods, or in some cases, a combination of both, to carry out the research methodology and the design. Should the researcher require numerical data, then a quantitative technique is recommended. Typically, a qualitative approach works best for textual data, and for research problems that require both numerical and textual data, mixed methods approach is recommended.

The researcher must be pragmatic when considering the approach(es) and the timeline, as it may require both monetary and non-monetary resources. In this case, the research study began during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the researcher has made at least four trips to Nepal during this period. In addition, the researcher must take into account the methodology based on the study purpose, nature of the issue, research questions, and research target (Goertz and Mahoney, 2012).

As the research study looks at women, their perspectives, and their voices, it is also important to integrate these from a feminist or gender lens. Campbel and Wasco, 2000) state that 'feminist epistemologies—feminist empiricism, standpoint theory, and postmodernism—recognize women's lived experiences as legitimate sources of knowledge'. Furthermore, 'feminist methodologies also search for ways to eliminate sexist bias in research and find ways to capture women's voices' (p. 773). The goals of feminist research, according to Brooks and Hesse-Biber (2007), are to 'foster empowerment and emancipation for women and marginalised communities' and,

consequently, to 'apply the findings to promoting social change and social justice for women' (p. 4). For instance, one practical application could involve providing resources, both financial and non-financial, to women founders and executive directors of nonprofit and grassroots organsations, enabling them to carry out crucial social work. One way that the researcher sees this going forward is by creating a grant-making engine, such as a registered charity or nonprofit organisation, to provide non-restrictive funding. Non-restrict funding is very important, as 'nonprofit organisations require stable and sustainable funding resources in order to maintain their organisation's long-term health, security, and effectiveness, as well as to achieve their mission and vision' (Malla, 2017, p. 11).

3.2.2 Feminist Research

Incorporating feminist perspective and research into the research methodology is important as it is 'reflexive', 'women-centred', 'the deconstruction of women's lived experiences', and 'the transformation of patriarchy and corresponding empowerment of women' (Fonow & Cook, 2005), which is 'defined by its value and process' (Mulvey, 1988). Feminist research is 'connected in principle to feminist struggle' (Sprague and Zimmerman, 1993, p. 266), and it is 'a holistic endeavour that incorporates all stages of the research process, from the theoretical to the practical, from the formulation of research questions to the write-up of research findings' (Brooks and Hesse-Biber, 2007, p. 4). Indeed, 'research conducted within a feminist framework is attentive to issues of difference, the questioning of social power, resistance to scientific oppression, and a commitment to political activism and social justice' (Hesse-Biber, Leavy, and Yaiser, 2004, p. 3).

3.2.3 Theoretical Framework to Designing Research Methodology

The research onion framework (figure 3) was developed for 'business studies' (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, 2019), is widely used in social sciences for the construction of the theoretical framework of research (Melnikovas, 2018, p. 30). The researcher chose to utilise this framework considering that this is a DBA research dissertation investigating a social phenomenon. The research onion graphically illustrates the various mechanisms of the research that necessitate analysis and planning to establish a robust research design. Furthermore, the research onion systematically guided the researcher through six layers: 1) the research philosophy, 2) the research approach, 3) the research methodology, 4) strategies, 5) time horizon, and 6) data gathering techniques (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, 2019).

Using the research onion as a tool for thinking holistically about methodology, the researcher took a systematic approach to designing a research methodology. Below is a summary of the Research Onion customised for the research study on 'Women and Philanthropy: Perspectives from Nepal,' presented in a table format.

Figure 3: The 'research onion'
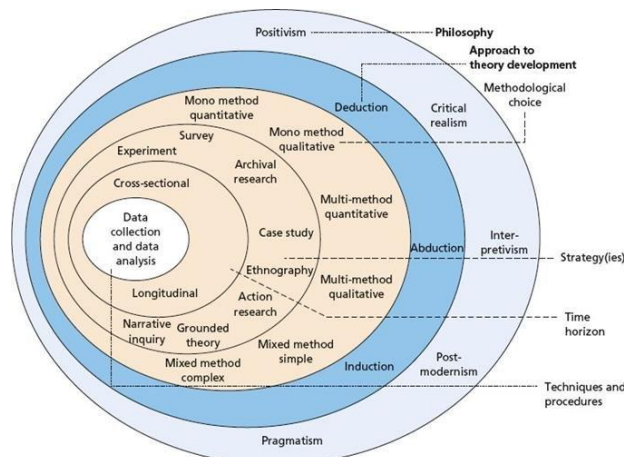
Source: (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, 2019)

The structured table on pages 99 to 100 aligns with the Research Onion framework (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2007), incorporating a customised version tailored to the study of women and philanthropy by the researcher. This adaptation enhances the conceptual clarity and justification of each methodological decision within the research.

Table 3: Conceptualised Research Onion

Layers	Customisation for the Research Study
Research Philosophy	Interpretivism: Understanding the subjective experiences and motivations of women in philanthropy in Nepal. Moreover, social and cultural factors have an influence on every individual interviewed. The researcher took an active role in the study, as it was essential to gain a comprehensive understanding of the participant, including their actions, thoughts, and interpretations. Pragmatism: Practical decisions on methods tailored to the context. Knowledge is not fixed. It involved the researcher's involvement and subjectivity, particularly when interpreting interviewees' analysis and responses. To that end, it is not confined to or constrained by any single philosophical framework.
Research Approach	Inductive: Developing theories and frameworks based on data gathered from the participants. Initially, little knowledge was known (gaps on woman, philanthropy, and Nepal). It is not rooted in the theory and qualitative. Frameworks: patriarchy (Walby) and feminist theories (hooks). Focus: Emergent themes related to cultural and societal perspectives on women's philanthropic roles. Religion, passive participants, role of women.
Research Strategy	Case Study: Explored specific individuals, organisations, or communities involved in philanthropy. The objective was to achieve a deep understanding within the context of this study, rather than necessarily aiming to generalise the findings. The social context and culture were taken

	into account. By definition, this type of study is qualitative and inductive in nature. Narrative Approach: Documented and analysed personal stories of Nepalese women philanthropists through primary data collection (in-depth interviews).
Choices	Mono-Method Qualitative: Utilised semi-structured interviews as the primary method. Supplementary Methods: Document analysis (e.g., historical records, philanthropic reports, journals, etc).
Time Horizons	Cross-Sectional: Captured a snapshot of perspectives or data collection during a set timeframe. In this instance, the interviews were conducted from 2022 to 2024.
Techniques and Procedures	Data Collection: Semi-structured interviews with women philanthropists, founders, volunteers, executive directors, etc. conducted; observations of philanthropic activities; analysis of organisational reports, journals, and cultural texts. Data Analysis: Thematic analysis for identifying patterns and themes; use of qualitative tools (e.g., manual coding, interviews). Ethical Considerations: Informed consent, bias, cultural sensitivity, and participants confidentiality.

Source: Saunders, M., Lewis, P., & Thornhill, A. (2007). Research Methods for Business Students. 4th edn. Harlow: Pearson Education.
Customised by the researcher.

3.3 Research Purpose and Questions

The research purpose is to study Nepalese women's perspective and prospective future impact on philanthropy. This is a qualitative research study, and purposive sampling was conducted 'to select respondents that are most likely to yield appropriate and useful information' (Kelly, 2010, p. 317). Therefore, participants were chosen based on their relevance to the research objectives, ensuring their experiences, perspectives, and

knowledge would provide meaningful insights into the study's focus. The following highlights research questions for semi-structured interviews conducted:

- Why do women and philanthropy matter?
- What leadership roles did women play during the COVID-19 pandemic? What were the impacts (if any)?
- What are women's motivations for giving?
- How can women and philanthropy address the root cause of social problems in Nepal?

3.4 Research Design

The approach underpinning this research study is qualitative research method. The researcher selected this approach as 'qualitative research is open-ended, emerging data that is then used to develop theses' and it is 'exploratory nature' (Campbell, 2014). The use of qualitative research methods often suggests that limited information is available about the participants or the subject being studied. Key characteristics of qualitative research include conducting studies in natural settings, employing multiple interactive and humanistic methods, allowing data to emerge organically rather than relying on pre-determined frameworks, and adopting a fundamentally interpretive approach (Campbell, 2014). Furthermore, qualitative research also has the capacity 'to uncover insights into the emotions, beliefs, and values that drive behaviours by exploring questions centered' on 'how', 'what', and 'why' (Creswell et al., 2011). It was also important for the researcher to ensure that the participants' views and their living experiences were accurately represented and authentically captured, reflecting their perspectives and realities without distortion or bias. Moreover, the interviews produced rich, detailed, and nuanced descriptions, providing deep insights into participants' experiences and perspectives, as opposed to numerical summaries or statistical data.

3.5 Population and Sample

According to Fraenkel, Wallen, and Hyun (2012), 'The target population is the total population for which a researcher would like to generalise the results of a particular research study'. The target population in this instance comprises females and males working in philanthropy, nonprofit, (international) NGOs, and civil society ecosystems from Nepal. It was also entirely impossible to survey the whole population of Nepal. Furthermore, randomly interviewing the general public does not necessarily yield the desired answers. Hence, the sampling strategy that the researcher seeks to apply is purposive sampling due to the qualitative nature of the study. To that end, purposive sampling (also known as judgmental sampling) enhances the depth (as opposed to breadth) of understanding (Palinkas et al., 2015) rather than generalise findings from a large population. Moreover, Kelly (2010) asserts purposive sampling is 'used to select respondents that are most likely to yield appropriate and useful information,' that is, to gain a deep understanding of the research questions. The rationale for implementing a purposive sampling strategy comes from the assumption that is based on the research study's aims and objectives. Additionally, there are specific types of people who hold varied and important views about the research study. It is important to include their opinions in the sample (Mason, 2002; Robinson, 2014; Trost, 1986).

In this instance, there were several advantages of the purposive sampling strategy. The researcher was able to focus on each participant who has specific knowledge and experiences in the sector. Additionally, participants also work in the sector with experiences ranging from five to 40 years. As it is targeted, it saves time and resources in comparison to (for example) random sampling. Selecting the participants who are directly relevant also ensured that the data collected were valid and relevant.

3.6 Participant Selection

To identify the population sample, the researcher searched individuals and organisations from nonprofit, philanthropy organisations, foundations, and CSOs, including local NGOs and INGOs. Further search was conducted via LinkedIn, where the researcher invited potential participants to connect. Facebook was also used as some of them did not have LinkedIn pages or websites. Local newspapers such as The Himalayan Times, The Kathmandu Post, The Rising Nepal as well as online newspapers such as Onlinekhabar, Nepalnews, etc. were consulted. Names and organisations were cross-checked against The Social Welfare Council Nepal (SWC) database. From these searchers, there were more than 120 individuals/organisations identified for potential interviews. Further analysis was conducted, out of which more than 50 percent were invited to participate in an interview (APPENDIX G CHARACTERICTICS OF INTERVIEWEES SAMPLED, page 176).

Two test runs (interviews) of random samplings were conducted from the compiled database (Excel file). The interviews did not yield the desired results. These individuals did not understand the questions nor the concept of philanthropy even though they work in the sector. The researcher then investigated the remaining individuals and organisations and set some criteria such as: good command and understanding of the English language were prerequisites as this study is in English, those working and/or volunteering in the sector, organisations are registered with the SWC, the main demographic are women, although men were also selected.

Of the 120 individuals/organisations, an invitation to an interview with detailed information was sent out to 60 individuals by email, Facebook and LinkedIn messages. Two declined, 15 accepted, and 53 were nonresponsive. Further information on the 15

participants can be found on pages 177 to 181, APPENDIX H LIST OF PARTICIPANTS INTERVIEWED.

3.7 Instrumentation

This research study was qualitative, exploratory, inductive, and primary data was collected via semi-structured interviews. Due to the logistical practicality, interviews were conducted using predominantly via Zoom. Communications between the researcher and the interviewees were conducted via email, WhatsApp, Facebook messaging, and LinkedIn. In order to answer the research questions on page 22, the following ice-breaking questions guided the interviews (APPENDIX D INTERVIEW GUIDE)

- Namaste, how are you? Thank you so much to agreeing to speak to me. How is your day going so far? So, what is happening in Nepal right now?
- Introduction about myself (the researcher)
- Can you introduce yourself (interviewee), who are you, what do you do and the organisations you represent?

3.8 Data Collection and Analysis

The use of data collection in qualitative research methods relies on the data collection process. The data collected during this process defines the 'volubility of the research presented' (Sells, Smith, and Newfield, 1997), 'supports this argument and confirms that the quality of the research study is mostly based on how to utilise the data collection method that is used during this phase, the relativity of the data to the research, the ability of the scholar to have an outstanding observation and interpretation skills, and valid record of the phenomena'. It is the intention of the researcher to utilise purposive sampling, which is that the participants will be chosen based on their perspectives and experiences relevant to the study (Patton, 2015). To establish who these participants are, desk research was conducted via existing references, social media and reaching out to

known networks either in Nepal or elsewhere and recommendations via word of mouth. This information was then compiled in an Excel format with names, organisations, contact details, etc. Further research and due diligence will be conducted to ensure that these participants are legitimate and fit the purpose of this study. The researcher deems this is important when choosing sampling so conducting and interviewing individuals will have the desired results. Once this has been done, a select number of participants will be approached and eventually invited via email. This whole process will be time and labour intensive. Conducting online Zoom interviews may add barriers as more and more people are Zoom fatigued, preferring physical meetings. An easier, simpler, and less time-consuming method would be to use random sampling, however, the researcher decided that this type of approach may not necessarily provide the outcome or sufficient information to answer the research study questions (Marshall, 1996). All Zoom audio recordings, and field and researcher's notes were fully transcribed.

3.9 Method of Data Collection

There are several methods of data collection in qualitative research, and this includes observations, group discussions, surveys, and interviews (Silverman, 2022). According to Gill et al. (2008), interviews and focus groups are the most commonly used methods of data collection. This research explores data collection methods via interviews, and there are fundamentally three approaches to research interviews: structured, semi-structured, and unstructured (Green, 2009).

Structured interviews are essentially verbally administered questionnaires with predetermined or minimally variable questions; consequently, there is no room for follow-up questions that may require further explanation.

Unstructured interviews, on the other hand, do not reflect any preconceived theories or ideas and are conducted with little or no planning (May, 1991). The interview

can start with a simple opening such as 'Can you tell me about your experience working in the philanthropic sector?' However, conducting unstructured interviews can be time-consuming and challenging due to the participants' time constraints. In fact, not having a predetermined interview question means that there is little guidance on the topic of the conversation, which could be frustrating and unhelpful for both the participants and the researcher.

Britten (2006) asserts that semi-structured interviews, guided by a set of questions, can effectively identify the areas under investigation and enable both the participants and the researcher to delve deeper into ideas and responses, seeking additional details and clarifications. This approach was more flexible than structured interviews and allowed for the discovery and elaboration of information, bringing to the forefront any other details that were not previously considered pertinent.

According to Struckey (2013), the primary difference between them is the level of influence the researcher or interviewer has over the encounter and its purpose. Generally, it is optimal to record interviews and then transcribe them for analysis. While it was possible to take notes during the interview session, the researcher found it challenging to document direct quotes from participants while simultaneously participating in the conversation. The researcher found that it was critical to maintain focus on the participant in order to build rapport and dialogue, rather than focus on the notes, and recording the interview assisted in data collection.

3.10 Research Design Limitations

Researching women and philanthropy in Nepal presents several design limitations that influence the scope and depth of the study. Accessing participants, particularly women in rural or marginalised communities, proved challenging due to geographic isolation, socio-economic barriers, and cultural constraints. Additionally, the limited

availability of historical or formalised data on women's philanthropic contributions in the English language may have restricted the study's ability to provide a comprehensive overview. Cultural and social norms, particularly entrenched patriarchal values, further complicated the research process, as they often influenced how women perceived and reported their philanthropic roles, leading to potential underrepresentation.

Methodological challenges included sampling bias, with women from urban or higher socio-economic groups being overrepresented, which limited diversity in perspectives. Language barriers also posed difficulties, as Nepal's linguistic diversity and the use of English for interviews created accessibility issues for some participants. Furthermore, the study's timing during the COVID-19 pandemic introduced temporal limitations, as philanthropic behaviours observed during this period may reflect short-term crisis-driven responses rather than long-term trends.

Researcher bias posed another challenge, as the researcher's positionality and cultural background could unintentionally shape the framing of questions or interpretation of data. A strong emphasis on gender, while central to the study, risked overshadowing other intersecting factors such as caste, ethnicity, or socio-economic status that also significantly influence philanthropic behaviours.

The study's findings are also constrained by scope and generalisability. Nepal's unique socio-cultural and economic conditions may limit the applicability of the results to other contexts. Additionally, focusing solely on women risks overlooking collaborative philanthropic models prevalent in Nepalese society. Finally, institutional and structural barriers remain, as women's contributions to philanthropy, especially in informal or community-based settings, are often under-recognised or undocumented, further limiting the study's depth and impact.

3.11 Research Bias

According to the thinking of Bradbury-Jones, Irvine, and Sambrook (2010), critical and analysis on the researcher's perspective in this research project could be mistaken for researcher's bias. The researcher is embedded in this study and is also part of the data collection instrument and therefore uses observational skills (during interviews), their trust with the participants, and the researcher's ability to extract the correct information from the interviews and transcripts. Being aware of the various types of biases, the researcher has endeavoured to remain neutral in data collection and interpretation. Moreover, the researcher has aimed to present a fair and accurate portrayal of the research phenomenon as best to her knowledge and experience.

3.12 Ethical considerations when conducting research

Ethical challenges are prevalent and therefore ethical considerations must be given the upmost importance just as well as the selection of the appropriate research methodology. Prior to conducting any research projects or studies, the researcher must ensure that certain ethical criteria are met or adhered to. In fact, research participants are entitled to information regarding the disclosure of the nature of the research, the duration, and the extent of exposure. Researchers are required to minimise the possibility of physical harm or emotional distress. In this instance and for the purpose of this study, the researcher has provided APPENDIX C– SSBM INFORMED CONSENT on pages 167 to 169 to all participants. Moreover, prior to their agreeing to be interviewed, the researcher ensured that all information was provided on what the research entails and the approximate duration of the interview (APPENDIX A, page 165 AND APPENDIX B, page 166). Moreover, during the interview, participants were asked for their permission to the sessions being recorded. There were no objections from all participants and permissions were granted.

Lillemoen and Pedersen (2013) state that ethics are essential in any research. According to Bell and Harley (2022), there are ten points that represent the most important principles that the researcher has adhered to, nine of which participants would not be subjected to:

- Harm in any ways whatsoever.

- They will be respected and their dignity prioritise.

- Full consent was obtained before the interview including the researcher sending out the Full Consent Form on pages 167 to 169.

- Should participants require protection of privacy, this was also ensured.

- Participants were also provided with the option to have an adequate level of confidentiality of the research data.

- Should they request for anonymity of their names and organisations, these were also ensured.

- The researcher was clear in the aims and objectives of the research study prior to the interview as well as when sending the Consent Form to ensure that there was no deception nor exaggeration.

- Communication was done via emails, LinkedIn and WhatsApp with honesty and transparency.

- The researcher ensured that primary data collected and findings were represented and biases were avoided to the best of the researcher's knowledge.

Moreover, those participating in the research were on voluntary basis and no financial incentives were provided. To that end, they had the right to withdraw from the study should they have wished to do so at any time. During the interview, the researcher also ensured that the use of offensive, discriminatory, or other unacceptable language was

avoided. The researcher also acknowledges the works of other scholars and authors used as well as the Harvard referencing system.

3.13 Triangulation

Foster (1997) asserts that a researcher endeavours to guarantee a multifaceted view of the research design's phenomenon, while also ensuring their studies yield 'rich, unbiased data' for comfortable interpretation (Breitmayer et al., 1993; Jick, 1979). Indeed, the ultimate goal of a researcher is to ensure the study's internal and external validity and reliability, thereby providing a 'comprehensive multiperspective view' (Boyd, 2000, cited in Thurmond, 2001), while also implementing procedures to mitigate potential biases (Mitchell, 1986; Shih, 1998). Denzin (2017) asserts that providing diverse perspectives enhances the validity, strength, and interpretive potential of a study, thereby mitigating the researcher's biases. These are done by conducting triangulation via 'multiple methods or data sources in qualitative research to develop a comprehensive understanding of phenomena' (Patton, 1999, p. 545). Moreover, Denzin (2017) views triangulation as a qualitative research strategy that tests validity by combining multiple different sources. Four types of triangulation have been identified: (a) method triangulation, (b) investigator triangulation, (c) theory triangulation, and (d) data source triangulation (Denzin, 1978 and Patton, 1999).

For the purpose of this research study, a theoretical triangulation has been employed to integrate multiple perspectives—such as feminist theory, review of literature, the hypothesis, the findings and the qualitative research methodology which is naturalistic—to critically examine and challenge traditional assumptions about women in Nepalese society, thereby offering a multidimensional understanding of their role and impact in philanthropy. This approach can help challenge patriarchal assumptions while supporting a nuanced exploration of societal and gender dynamics. According to

Mitchell) (1986, cited in Thurmond, 2001, p. 257), the usage of multiple 'theoretical perspective can decrease alternative explanations for a phenomenon'. The benefit 'of theoretical triangulation is that it provides a broader, deeper analysis of findings' (Banik, 1993, cited in Thurmond, 2001, p. 257).

The approach underpinning this research study was qualitative research method. The researcher selected this approach as 'qualitative research is open-ended, emerging data that is then used to develop theses' and it is 'exploratory nature' (Campbell, 2014).

The purpose was to study women and philanthropy and their perspectives. Therefore, through purposive sampling and by selecting respondents that were going to yield the desired information (Kelly, 2010, p. 317), the researcher ensured that their experiences, perspectives, and knowledge have provided meaningful insights into the study's focus.

By utilising (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, 2019) research onion framework, the research onion systematically guided the researcher through six layers: 1) the research philosophy, 2) the research approach, 3) the research methodology, 4) strategies, 5) time horizon, and 6) data gathering techniques.

To conclude this chapter on methodology, the researcher explored the intersection of patriarchy and women's roles in philanthropy. Furthermore incorporating feminist perspectives, this study incorporated "all stages of the research process from the theoretical to the practical (Brooks and Hesse-Biber, 2007, p. 4).

CHAPTER IV:

RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides the findings of this research study and seeks to answer the following research questions by providing the responses of 15 participants interviewees, both male and female.

4.1.1 Organisation

The following chapter is organised first by including a review of the research questions included in the study, a review of the hypothesis, results from the interviews, including an overview of philanthropy from Nepalese perspective, that additionally addresses each research question separately, and a summary that includes a glossary of terminology used during the interviews for reference.

4.2 Research Questions

- Why do women and philanthropy matter?
- What leadership roles did women play during the COVID-19 pandemic? What were the impacts (if any)?
- What are Women's Motivation for Giving?
- How can women and philanthropy address the root cause of social problems in Nepal?

4.2.1 Hypothesis

The study hypothesis is that Nepalese women are making impacts in their communities. As they retain leadership roles, they contribute to social change, challenge traditional gender norms, and inspire other women to actively participate in decision-making processes, fostering a more inclusive and equitable society.

4.3 Results from Interviews Conducted

4.3.1 Philanthropy from Nepalese Perspectives

Interviewee 15, 'From a South Asian (SA) or Nepalese perspective, the concept or the idea of philanthropy, is that "you are born with it". "For example, within the remits of our family 'daan' (donation or giving) is very important. We learnt this as children through religious festivals, giving and our age-old traditions. Perhaps, the formal definition of philanthropy theory comes from the Global North (western perspective); however, the practice of philanthropy is very much Asian. For my child's first birthday, perhaps giving to the old people's homes, donation of clothing to the needy, etc., this is something that we teach our children from very young. This is a very Eastern culture and not Western at all. Moreover, philanthropy in Nepal also permeates towards our love for animals". "In Nepal, we revere our domestic animals, such as 'Kukur Tihar' (festivals of dogs) and 'Gai Tihar' (cow festival), which is a sacred animal in the Hindu religion and culture. We celebrate them by putting 'tika' (red dot or mark on the forehead as blessings), marigold flower garlands, and treats. Therefore, the concept of philanthropy is embedded in our culture'.

The concept of philanthropy is further asserted by Interviewee 5 that it 'is not new and we practised this through culture, religion, community and neighbourhood…It is not something we have to learn about. We have seen our parents doing philanthropic work and we carry on the tradition from them'.

Similarly, Interviewee 8 states that, 'philanthropy cannot be defined through cash alone and it definitely does not come from the global west. It should be defined through the richness of mind and the heart. To that end, I may not be financially rich; however, I devote much, if not all, of my time to doing good, working and volunteering in the sector. Nepal has a strong culture of giving – via financial and non-financial means. For

example, previously people built 'chautari' (rest stops) along the foothills so that weary travellers could rest under the banyan and ficus trees (sacred fig trees). Some of these rest stops also had food and water and are also used as a social gathering space. In fact, building a 'chautari' is said to be good for one's afterlife'.

Interviewee 13, 'It's not always about giving money or giving goods or materials to people. It is also about giving good advice, empowering people and helping them to sort out the social problems, that's philanthropy'.

Interviewees agreed that the concept of philanthropy is not formalised in Nepal. Similarly, nonprofit organisations are one aspect of philanthropy. In fact, the concept of philanthropy is taken as a given in Nepal, and 'we don't have such discourses or discussions in our everyday life in a formal manner'. Interviewee 7 said, 'We also don't have much documentation or information on this issue from a local perspective. But, there are individuals and groups who donate money to people who are less privileged than them or to organisations that works for the marginalised community. For me, we have been practising philanthropy for a very long time. But we have not formalised the definitions, and the concepts like a theoretical thing, like in the West'. Despite the growing culture of philanthropy, Interviewee 14 pointed out that it is not 'well-organised compared to other countries in the West. The efforts are present but lack formal structures or coordination'. To that end, CSOs are playing a key role in this emerging philanthropic culture.

Interviewee 10 said, 'When I say philanthropy, I'm not only saying NGOs and INGOs, because philanthropy is even more than that - they are more organised. And this includes charitable work that you do where you collect resources from donors. For example, raising money through taxpayers like in an European Union (EU) funding programmes in Nepal'. That money from the 'EU and USAID [is] coming from

taxpayers in the respective countries. But philanthropy in general in Nepal has not really evolved a lot, especially organised philanthropy. People are donating, but they donate towards the temples. If they see someone in need, they will give money, food, etc, or they might organise some donation during some special days. But it's not really organised philanthropy'.

Interviewee 6 said, 'Philanthropy is something that brings about social good or social change in a positive manner. It's a work or a task done purely out of service that can have some benefits, but not in monetary terms or of economic value. It brings about a positive social change or makes people's lives at grassroots- and communities-level easier. So philanthropy is not all donation'.

Interviewee 11 said, 'Philanthropy is very important in the context of Nepal. It is a kind of a welfare modality that the people want to invest their volunteer services through money or through different skills or capacity, specifically to support social issues. Nepalese people still have that interest to support or to donate to address social causes'.

'Donation, supporting and helping others to transform the lives of those who are in a difficult situation' is how Interviewee 2 defines philanthropy. As well as those people who work in CSOs and NGOs mainly because of their passion. Furthermore, 'they must always work beyond their job descriptions and working hours. People can also contribute through their time and other resources. In Nepal, some people also donate (daan) for example, their land and their inheritances. Other prime examples include donating money to build temples and for religious work. There may be instances where people are donating and doing philanthropic work anonymously'.

4.3.2 Research Question 1 - Why do women and philanthropy matter?

Interviewee 6 said, 'Historically, women, children and girls have been identified as the most vulnerable and marginalised groups in terms of global issues that surround them. Conflict in health problems, educational issues, and illiteracy cases mean that women, children, and girls are the ones who suffer the most. Males are considered the primary breadwinners and the traditional leaders inside their family's dynamics. The decisions that they may take have an immediate effect, especially within the disadvantaged and poverty-stricken communities. In particular, women, children, and girls are affected by decisions made by their male relatives. That's why the engagement of women is very much needed and important'.

Interviewee 11 said, 'Even though, the Nepal government [has] committed to the 'Gender and Inclusion Policy', the reality is that we are still far away [from] reaching that goal. Women's rights and gender equity still lag behind. It is very important for us as women to address and lead these gaps in the context of Nepal'.

According to Interviewee 1, 'Many Tharu women have come to believe that it is no longer their destiny to live in despair. We have gained self-respect and the means to insist that we are worthy of more. Education and health care are key to women's empowerment. A society will not progress as long as rural women remain financially dependent, weak, or in broken spirits. And I feel my mission is complete only when all the women of Nepal have access to their basic rights to reproductive health, education, and income generation'.

Interviewee 7 said, 'When it comes to why women and philanthropy matter in Nepal, women have been historically marginalised. They don't have access to power nor resources. However, due to the philanthropic work that nonprofit organisations are doing, women in our society are benefitting more. And their quality of life [has]

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improved because of the philanthropic approaches via nonprofit organisations and individuals, CSOs, policy, and advocacy. In my opinion, if there were no NGOs, then the laws and policies related to gender or women would not have been that progressive in Nepal. There are now progressive laws related to sexual and reproductive health rights, the criminalisation of 'chhaupadi' (menstrual taboo), and abortion. These have been achieved through deliberate activism by the nonprofit organisations and individuals. And we see the positive impact of these laws, since I'm directly involved in the nonprofit sector'.

Interviewee 15 agrees that 'Nepal is advancing and has good progressive laws protecting women. But there [is] still a lot of work to be done. Patriarchy is the root cause facing discrimination of women through the history of time. For example, 'ekal mahila' (widows) are told not to wear certain pieces of clothing, colours, and [are] even barred from certain religious rituals. When they do not conform to the traditional widowhood status, they are viewed unfavourably and ostracised by their families and societies. Therefore, it is important that there are women-led organisations fighting the rights of women and disadvantaged communities'.

Interviewee 10 said, 'Women and philanthropy are important when you look at the way that the society is structured in this part of the world. Women are usually on the margins, across class and caste. Therefore, we work with girls and women because when we focus our work around them, we are then able to better reach the communities at large. And, if our focus is to work with everyone, then we will miss out on some of the most marginalised communities (girls, women, disabled and Dalits) because they are voiceless. By focussing on women and girls, we are better able to achieve the overall community well-being. Therefore, investing in women and girls leads to reducing poverty and ensuring a better future for all. Hence, philanthropy and gender are very

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important. When we look at our programmes, we call it 'gender-sensitive' or 'gender-transmitted work'. We make sure that we are looking at indicators that are achieving our gender-transmitted work, whether it is on climate change, employment, education, or health. And that's where it reminds me of what Gandhi said once. 'If you're going to make a policy, make sure how this is going to impact the last person in the row. If you are able to reach the last person, you will cover everyone down the line'. Therefore, by reaching the last person at the community level, that can be a disabled girl from a Dalit (untouchables and outcasts) community, then probably the policies are much more suitable for everyone in the community'.

Interviewee 7 said, 'I have seen the changes in attitudes among the government stakeholders because of their consistent engagement with nonprofit organisations like LOOM Nepal (interlinking generations of feminists and movement building and advocacy), Youth led Sexual and Reproductive Health Advocacy Nepal (YoSHAN) and Social Changemakers and Innovators (SOCHAI). They have also learnt about gender and related issues from us, the nonprofit organisations. So in the context of Nepal, the role of philanthropy and the role of nonprofit organisations are very crucial when it comes to women, and, equality in our society'.

Interviewee 12 said, 'My passion is to open up rural Nepal to the rest of the world. I do this by documenting and bringing images and information from rural parts of Nepal to people's homes and communities. When the viewers watch my documentaries and read about my work, donors directly send donations to affected communities from all around the world. This is a positive impact of my work. Furthermore, I also play a role in facilitating gender stereotypes. Not only are Nepalese women going beyond the traditional roles as carers and nurturers but that they are also educated, capable, bold and strong. This sends a positive message to the young girls and women, including our men'.

Interviewee 15 said, 'As a woman, I feel it is important to help other women because women in our society face discriminations. If a woman does not speak out to help her sisters, then who is going to speak out for those vulnerable and marginalised women? It is especially important for women like myself to be in this sector or field to stand up and help those vulnerable and marginalised women. Help can also mean time, cash, and voice. Those who cannot speak out and being their voice is very important'.

4.3.3 Research Question 2 - What leadership roles did women play during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Interviewee 7 said, 'I think women are more involved in the philanthropic and nonprofit sector than men. There are a lot of organisations being led by women. These women are in the leadership positions of nonprofit organisations. Perhaps, because of their gender roles that we have been assigned to. Women have been socialised in such a way that we should be giving back, be caring, and be nurturing. And so, this could be one of the reasons why a significant majority of women are working in the nonprofit sector. A majority of people who are in the nonprofit sector have acquired educations. Moreover, most of the people who are engaged in the nonprofit sector are from social science or health backgrounds; i.e., a lot of women are the students of social science, and so this could be another reason why the significant majority of women are in philanthropy and nonprofit. For example, after my Bachelors in Social Work, I decided to study gender studies as this will definitely add value to my ongoing activism. I am really happy that I chose gender study because the theoretical understanding that I'm getting from my academic journey has been very much helpful in my ongoing activism and vice versa. So, this is also how I got into the nonprofit sector'.

Interviewee 7 said these days 'a lot of women are taking up leadership roles and so it would be exemplary for the next generation because, in our generation, I didn't see

much. When I was in my adolescent period, I didn't get to see women in the leadership role. But now, I'm even in the leadership role of a few nonprofit organisations. And I'm seeing more and more women in the leadership position. It is important to have role models. So I think, the next generation, especially women of the next generation will take us as their role models to reach that (leadership) position. Hopefully, they will find this as a motivation, to succeed and we'll have a positive impact on the next few generations to come. But I think that the leadership role of women should not be limited to nonprofits. We should be able to take leadership roles in the private sector and in government institutions as well. And this is something that we have been advocating for'.

Interviewee 15 said, 'When it comes to leadership, there is a lack of transfer of leadership power in many CSOs. Many women founders are still in leadership even after 20 or 30 years. In my organisation, this is not the case. Leadership roles must be transferred to the younger generation. I have had the opportunity to work with many amazing women leaders in the sector. It is quite amazing that Nepal has grown so many women leaders…In the corporate sector, especially in the banking sector, there are not many [if any] women leaders…However, in the CSOs you will find women having roles such as chairperson, executive directors, etc'.

4.3.3.1 What were the impacts (if any)? (sub-question of RQ 2)

During the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown, Interviewee 3 demonstrated resilience and compassionate leadership through her long-standing dedication to working with vulnerable women, particularly migrant workers. Women migrant workers who were returning to Nepal were in vulnerable conditions—many were pregnant, had children, or required medical attention. As they could not travel to their villages, outside of Kathmandu city, they required temporary shelters. Due to pandemic-related safety measures, the number of women that her organisation could accommodate at its shelter

were reduced, from 20–25 to just 10–15. To handle the increased demand, Interviewee 3 rented motels to provide additional shelter space. Her leadership is marked by personal commitment, even in the face of financial challenges, as she continued to operate her organisation during lockdowns. She took personal responsibility, including paying for shelter accommodations from her own resources, showing a hands-on approach and a willingness to go beyond traditional organisational leadership. Her leadership also included advocacy, pressuring the government to take action to support migrant women.

The impact of Interviewee 3's actions was profound, especially for women migrant workers who had nowhere else to turn during the pandemic. Her initiative to secure extra shelter and provide necessary medical and personal support meant that many women in vulnerable conditions were housed, cared for, and protected. Although she incurred significant personal debt, her actions created a safe space for these women during a time of crisis, offering stability and security to those most in need. The financial burden she carried also highlights the often unseen sacrifices made by women leaders in the philanthropic sector.

Based on Interviewee 7's experiences during emergencies—like the 2015 Earthquake and the COVID-19 pandemic—the Nepalese government focused on visible, physical infrastructure needs (shelter, food, water, masks, and vaccines). However, critical gender-specific concerns such as menstrual hygiene, maternal needs, mental health, and sexual and reproductive health rights were overlooked. Hence, women and women-led nonprofits, stepped in to address these 'invisible' needs. They played a crucial role in highlighting and acting on issues like domestic violence, mental health, and menstruation, which are often neglected by broader humanitarian responses. She emphasised that women philanthropists and nonprofit leaders were proactive in investing time, resources, and effort into these areas. They proved their important role in

responding to needs and bridged critical gaps left by conventional relief efforts. Basically, women-led nonprofits during COVID-19 pandemic stepped in to ensure a more comprehensive and inclusive response. Their leadership and impacts highlighted the unique and critical role of women in advocating for a more compassionate, holistic approach to crisis response.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, WHR further demonstrated women's leadership by establishing community kitchens in Kathmandu. They provided daily meals to approximately 2,000 people. They faced resource challenges, and, therefore, mobilised the community and relied on their contributions—financial donations, time, and essential food supplies—demonstrating the philanthropic spirit within the community. This underscored how women's leadership played a crucial role in not only meeting immediate needs but also fostering a culture of community care and resilience. There were tangible impacts made by women by guiding the community and resources, inspiring collective philanthropy during times of crisis (Interviewee 15).

4.3.4 Research Question 3 - What are Women's Motivation for Giving?

Interviewee 1 said, 'As a child, I witnessed a lot of discrimination and injustices imposed against the community to which I belonged. We were deprived of the facilities and services that are provided by the government. Those in authority did not treat us equally. The scenario for women in those conditions were even worse. Moreover, within my family, it was typical for only boys to have education. Unfortunately, the Tharu community that I belong to is often considered 'backwards and marginalised' in Nepal. Therefore, there is a notion that women should not be educated. Investing in daughters' educations [is] seen as futile and expensive for parents. This concept of not educating girls is why we decided to embark on the campaign for women's literary awareness. The lack of access to education, discriminations and social injustices within my community

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inspired me to [found] a nonprofit organisation, so that I can do something to change the society'.

Interviewee 7 said, 'In my personal opinion, philanthropy is very important because we live in a very unequal and in a very capitalistic society at the moment. Some people are extremely wealthy, while others cannot even afford food, and a roof over their heads. So I think it's very important that we distribute the power and resources for an equitable society. Our society should be one based on human values. We should be giving back to the people who are less privileged than us. It should be embedded in our values and in our everyday life. This is also important for a peaceful and equal society. When there are differences between the rich and the poor, there will definitely be conflicts and chaos, so in order to maintain or to balance the status quo, we need philanthropy'.

Interviewee 12 said , 'As a daughter of poor migrant Nepalese parents, I was very fortunate to have received education. Education was important for me, because with education, I'll be able to change the entire next generation'.

Interviewee 15 said, 'Nepal is a beautiful country, but there are so many social challenges. In 2013, I co-founded an association together with other like-minded peace practitioners and conflict-affected women (CAW). Our aim is to serve as a common platform for all the conflict-affected women by working together for a just, equitable, and peaceful society. We help women victims who have suffered from a violent Maoist civil war'.

'Chaupadi' practise (menstruation taboo) is a traditional practise in some rural parts of Nepal. Even though it has been illegal since 2005, menstruation taboo is still strong and persistent in Nepal. This affects all girls and women who menstruate and limits their daily lives. During menstruation, they are confined to mud huts where death

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and rapes have occurred. They also face health problems as they do not have access to washing facilities. According to Interviewee 8, 'Our mission is to dismantle institutional, structural, interpersonal, and social oppressive systems in place affecting menstruation, individuals who menstruate, and their ability to access basic inalienable human rights, critical resources to lead happy, and healthy lives, and obtain dignity. Therefore, 'dignified menstruation' is an innovative approach to development and the feminist discourse to achieving the overarching goal of gender equality. Moreover, dignified menstruation is a tool for prevention of sexual and gender-based violence, improvement of Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR), and for the promotion of human rights'.

Interviewee 4 said, 'My background is in public health and nutrition. From a very young age, I wanted to contribute to the community in any way possible. But I would always be looking for an opportunity elsewhere instead of thinking about leading an organisation myself. I am an accidental leader who never intended to start her own organisation. My passion to contribute led me to study an undergraduate degree in Public Health. Moreover, people especially in grassroots communities, are still dying due to preventable causes. In this day and age, there are malnutrition and infectious disease, such as diarrhoea, which is very unacceptable and unfortunate. One defining moment for me was when a mother fed her [two-month-old] baby with cashew nut paste. She was not aware of the importance of exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of the baby's life. Unfortunately, the cashew nut was not [ground] enough and it got stuck in the child's throat, and the child died. The mother was blamed for the death of her child, and she was forced out of her own home. This unfortunate situation is the reality in Nepal. Sadly, this is not unique and is representative of thousands of such cases that are happening all over the country. So that sort of was one of the reasons that led me to

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think: what can we do about this, and how can we change this type of situation? There are so many problems in Nepal. But we wanted to tackle one problem at a time. So we decided to come up with a solution to tackle the problem of gap of nutrition knowledge. We (my team and I) came up with multiple ideas, and a lot of them didn't work. We finally came up with the idea of the nutrition bracelet or the nutribeads. This is a low-tech wearable tool, i.e., a bracelet. It is a simple accessory that you can wear on your wrist, but it actually has meaning to it. It explains how to feed a child in the first two years of a child's life, where the number corresponds to age of the child. The colour indicates the type of food that should be fed to the child to ensure diversity of dietary nutrition. Furthermore, the mother knows when to feed, and what to feed a child, because we provide counselling alongside the bracelet. A bracelet is perfect in the cultural heritage of Nepal as women wear them every day'.

4.3.5 Research Question 4 - How can women and philanthropy address the root cause of social problems in Nepal?

According to Interviewee 1, a microfinancing strategy is a powerful tool against poverty which she developed and offered to women in her community. This provided financial inclusion and created opportunities for women to gain financial control by investing in each other's success as farmers, merchants, and landowners. Since then, she has also created a health programme which was funded by UNFPA so that remote areas and communities, especially rural women can have access to quality health services. To date, 'thousands of women have become self-reliant through our programmess. Some of our beneficiary members have even become members of the federal parliament' in Nepal. She has organised 'more than 14,000 groups of rural women who make savings in their groups and take petty loans based on group collateral. She has also mobilised more than

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40,000 rural women in advocacy, literacy, income generation, livelihood, and climate change.

Interviewee 12 said, 'While working with foreign medias, my work took me to many rural parts of Nepal where I saw firsthand the social disparity and glaring lack of basic needs within Nepalese society. I was especially deeply moved by the struggles that single mothers faced. In Nepal, single women are stigmatised by the community, including her family. During one of my assignments, I followed a coffin that had arrived in Kathmandu from one of the Middle East countries. The migrant worker had died and his body was sent back to his village. When I arrived at the dead man's home/village, there was a fireplace in the middle. And there were, as far as I remember, four young kids. Every kid had almost two years of age difference between them all. The migrant worker had gone abroad on a contract and came home every two years. So the youngest one was a six-month-old baby and the oldest one was about 11 years old. There by the fireplace, she was breastfeeding her child and the coffin was just outside. She was not crying, and she looked like just like a statue. It was a very striking moment for me'.

Interviewee 12 then co-founded a Foundation in late 2019 with a mission to empower women with a focus on providing safe homes, skills development training, provide seed money and education for children. The Foundation works for widows, divorcees, physically disabled, and especially single mothers. Their main aim is to educate the society by providing educational support to nthe ext generation within their original family and community. 'And that's why NGOs like us, are very much needed to support vulnerable women like them. So that's why I feel like our social work should reach all the remote places as much as possible. Women like myself, when we really take a lead on social work, we really do it with our heart'.

Interviewee 15 said, 'In fact, our organisation is a pioneer in addressing single women's issues and has worked in the area of socio-cultural, economic, legal and political empowerment of single women. As a humanitarian organisation, we are dedicated to creating an active network of single women on a regional, national and international level. By working exclusively with and for them, we are dedicated to addressing the rights of single women (widowers) and creating an impartial society where their lives are strengthened and empowered'.

The majority of the interviewees emphasised that we need the distribution of wealth, and resources from the wealthy and privileged people to go to the disadvantaged people and communities. This means having several mechanisms such as philanthropy and charitable donations, CSR programmes, taxation, advocacy and strong policies, social and impact investment, entrepreneurship, nonprofit and philanthropic organisations.

4.3.6 Micro Enterprise, Social Enterprise and Social Entrepreneurship

Several interviewees asserted that they strongly believe in micro and social enterprise, social entrepreneurship, and impact investment models as a way to create sustainability.

Interviewee 5, 'In the 1990s, while travelling to the far western rural part of Nepal, I saw women living in abject poverty and hardship which led me to founding my organisation. For these women, they had never thought of themselves as human beings or having human life, seeing how hard their lives were. I felt obliged to help these women. As I love travelling, the mountains, and the nature, I decided to combine all of these and help rural women by coming up with women's empowerment programme. This was done via a social enterprise company where profits earned go towards the nonprofit organisation where free training and hostels are provided to these girls and

women. After the training, they are provided with paid internships and then transition to become qualified mountain guides within the male-dominated tourism industry in Nepal. In a traditionally marginalised population, my aim is to create opportunities for education, social influence, and economic stability, giving them a voice in their society for the first time'.

Moreover, Interviewee 5 said, 'In 1993, I came across some women travellers who had been mistreated by their male guides while trekking. At that time, I was running a restaurant and a lodge (guest house) in Pokhara. Upon hearing their stories of mistreatment, I decided to improve the situation, not only for foreign women tourists but also the local Nepalese women. In less than one year, I had started my own women's trekking guide service with my sisters, which is considered a pioneer project even today in Nepal. I have been challenging stereotypes of women, poverty, and the isolation of rural women by harnessing the growing demand for female mountaineers and professionals who are of course coming to Nepal for adventure tourism which is big here'.

Interviewee 14 states that in the remote Karnali region in western Nepal, 'empowering women economically, especially through micro-enterprises, can balance gender dynamics in a society where men typically hold more decision-making power. Nepalese society is largely patriarchal, where men traditionally control economic resources and decision-making. Women are often financially dependent on their male relatives, limiting their autonomy. Supporting women-led micro-enterprises and initiatives through philanthropic funding can create financial independence for women. By equipping women with the skills, training, and resources to start businesses, philanthropy directly addresses the economic disparity between men and women. I can see a big difference in the five years that I have been working in the region. Moreover,

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the impact of financial empowerment has meant that the women are asking their husbands who are working in the Gulf countries to come back and work in Nepal. Educated women and girls are more likely to contribute to their families and communities in meaningful ways. Access to healthcare ensures that women can take care of their physical and mental well-being, which is essential for long-term empowerment and social mobility'.

4.3.6.1 Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

Interviewee 3 said, 'In principle, CSR is a very good idea. We always talk about CSR and we have approached many banks, and many business people. But the thing is that most of these business people and these banks, they have their own NGOs, and private foundations. Our government has committed to CSR stipulating that banks and businesses have to donate, or provide support through their CSR programmes. However, the private banks have their own foundations, which they support, and then the money goes back to them. On a positive note, we have received funding through their CSR programme. Prabhu Bank Limited and the Himalaya Bank Limited have donated 50,000 Nepali rupees (NRS) each which we used for scholarships. We have supported 15 children of very poor or returning migrant workers including those who have passed away in the country of destination. However, many NGOs are not even aware that there is such a law relating to CSR. We have tried to access more funding through CSR, but it's not easy'.

Interviewee 7 said, 'CSR programmes can play a huge role in sustaining the nonprofits organisations in Nepal. Usually nonprofit organisations in Nepal are dependent on foreign donor agencies. If we were to mobilise the private sector and collaborate with the nonprofit sector by contributing financially, it will help nonprofit sustainability in Nepal. The private sector also [has] the responsibility to contribute in

the social sectors of Nepal. It is unfair for them to only earn profits from society and never contribute anything'. Hence 'policies like CSR programmes are very important in the context of Nepal. But in Nepal I don't see much involvement of private sectors. What do they do with the money they should be spending on CRS programmes? I am not aware of how they allocate funds towards social good. It is not transparent. The private sector must consider their CSR programmes in the future. Moreover, their CSR work is not very visible either. They have a lot of opportunity, and they should be doing it, but I don't think that they are doing it'.

Interviewee 15, 'Just as CSOs and governments have roles to play within the socio ecosystem, the private sector must also play their role through their corporate social responsibility (CSR). For example, banks make millions of rupees per year, and through their CSR programmes, they could be supporting CSOs by diverting some of their CSR-allocated funds to social programmes. If the government does not enforce CSR policy, the private sector may not be so forthcoming to donate some of the profits. If a bank were to make RS100,000,000 (in profit) and donate just 5 percent to 10 percent to the community, the lives of many women could change from just a small amount. So here we are talking about PPP, community, families, and society having roles working in partnership collaboratively'.

4.3.7 Emerging Themes

In addition to answering the research questions, there were several emerging themes that developed from the interviews.

4.3.7.1 Migration and Brain Drain

Interviewee 7 said, 'An unprecedented amount of unmanaged urbanisation is taking place at the moment. People from rural areas are migrating to urban areas like Kathmandu. This has created a lot of social and environmental issues like: high

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pollution level, poor air quality, overcrowding, vehicular emissions, dust from construction sites, etc. Consequently, there are a lot of health issues, crime rates are on the rise, food security, and unemployment'.

Interviewee 6 said, 'I feel really sad to mention that almost 3,000 young Nepalese people are leaving the country on average every day. It's obviously because they do not find a good opportunity in terms of job market or sustainable income through their businesses, and farming'.

Interviewee 3 said, ' Our government has not created any sustainable industries. There are so many ways that our government can prevent those kinds of small-scale migration. For example, people who are earning small money in foreign countries. But our government is not putting in any kind of effort. Instead, they are just trying to earn for themselves, for their family, and their next seven generations'.

Interviewee 12 said, 'Sadly, it's the children, youth, and the young generation that are leaving Nepal. They can do a lot but our government is failing to use these talents at home. So, instead, they want to sell their talents or gain skills and experiences in developed countries'.

4.3.7.2 Funding Challenges

Majority of the interviewees cited funding as a major challenge and a priority to running their nonprofit organisations in a sustainable way. Unlike in some other regions, most nonprofit organisations do not receive funding from the Nepalese government. There is a heavy reliance on funding from the Global North and INGOs. When they do receive funding, it is usually for a period of six months to a year to a maximum period of one to two years. They constantly worry about keeping their programmes running and serving their constituents. They are also worried about administration costs, such as paying their staff salaries, rents, and rates. Those nonprofit organisations with shelter

services, where they house vulnerable people, require unrestricted funding. Therefore, they are constantly writing and applying for funding from various INGOs, and the Global North. The reality is that they could be spending more time helping their beneficiaries and adding value to their various programmes. In some instances, the founders of the nonprofit organisation had to fund their organisations themselves personally. During the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown, the government did not provide any financial assistance to run their programmes nor to sustain their organisations. One of the founders working on women and migration went as far as to provide personal funding up to NRs. 500,000 (equivalent to Eur 3,518.86) to support the programmes. Migrant returnees were forced to quarantine and yet there were not enough government centres or facilities to accommodate them. Furthermore, these returnees were discriminated against as having or passing the virus even though they were not infected.

4.3.7.3 Administration Costs

Administration costs of big INGOs were also cited as another challenging factor. Large INGOs and nonprofit organisations partner with grassroots organisations to implement their programmes. However, by the time funding is allocated to local partners, there is not much left. Local grassroot nonprofit organisations are expected to work on small budgets. One interviewed executive director asked, 'Why not grant the funding directly to the local nonprofit' instead of going through an INGO? 'We can do so much more and add value especially without the high administration costs of foreign employees to our programmes'.

Donors are also not keen to support administration costs, preferring to donate to programme or project-based initiatives. However, for those nonprofit organisations working on the ground, supporting unpopular causes of migrant women, single women,

etc., this is extremely difficult for the long-term sustainability and viability of their organisations.

Interviewee 3 said, 'We need a lot of resources, and the most challenging part is, raising funds. The other challenge is running a shelter as it requires a lot of resources…There are many calls for proposals in a year and you write more than 20 proposals, and maybe you will get three or four grants. At the initial phase of launching our organisation, it was really difficult to get funding. We fundraised locally. Our organisation had support from individual donors who knew me and they knew my work. As the organisation grew, we raised funds through proposal writing. It is absolutely necessary to build trust with your stakeholders. Developing and maintaining close relationships with your donors and networks [is] crucial. You also need a good team'.

4.3.7.4 Government-CSOs Relationships

Interviewees 2, 3, 6, and 7 stated that there is a lack of trust between nonprofit organisations and the government. In fact, according to Interviewee 7, 'The nonprofit organisations are seen as competitors instead of partners. Furthermore, the government views NPOs negatively and assumes that we are doing nothing and are simply receiving foreign funding. When we have to ask for project approval from the Social Welfare Council (SWC), their behaviour is not very professional. For young women like us, it is not easy due to the traditional role of women in Nepal. Therefore, we sometimes have to take our older colleagues in order to move the discussions forward'. Another interviewee, 4, further confirms this. Her organisation now has credibility as she was endowed with several awards including the Goalkeeper Global Goals Progress Award 2020 by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Moreover, in 2019, she was listed among BBC's list of 100 Women inspiring and influential women from around the world. Young women like her set an example as a role model and now can sit at discussion

tables with older and male colleagues and government officials. 'Otherwise it would be difficult and young women would not be taken seriously' (Interviewee 4).

4.3.7.5 Political instability and disaster risk unpreparedness

The majority of the interviewees cited political instability and disaster unpreparedness as two of the biggest challenges facing Nepal. According to an interviewee, there is currently many capacity training taking place, and government officials are getting trained at local, provincial to Federal levels on disaster management. 'However, in five years' time, there will be a new set of government people and their representatives and everything will be new again. There is no documentation, nor transfer of knowledge and no succession planning meaning that in five years times everything will have to start from the beginning again. Hence, when one of the biggest earthquake struck causing widespread devastation, the government was not prepared to response' (Interviewee 3).

4.3.7.6 Gender equality and setting quotas

Interviewee 15 said, 'I feel there needs to be some quotas so that women can access leadership positions. For example, there are many women working in the banking sector; however, these are mainly low-level women employees. The banking sector influences the statistics by highlighting that they have women in banking. This is not the same as saying women are in leadership roles within the banking sector. Hence, I believe that quotas are necessary to ensure that there is women's representation in the private sector to access roles such as chairperson, etc. In politics, there are many men and not all may be qualified. When a woman is placed in a leadership role or a senior position, men think she is there because there is a quota system making her eligible, and not because she is qualified. However, men do not ask these questions whether or not the other men are qualified to do the job. We have to start from somewhere. By having quotas, and

encouraging women to take up leadership roles, we will eventually bridge the gap in the next few generations. And the banking sector must be held accountable as it is the public's fund and there needs to be gender equity. Perhaps this is not feasible in small family-run businesses. Maybe it will be good to have policy encouraging quotas in the private sector to encourage women to take up leadership roles. Governments can play a big role in this via policy and or through the passing of relevant laws. For example, during the second local election (2023), there were many young qualified women and men. Both were highly qualified and educated vying for leadership roles. I am strongly for the quota system'.

4.3.7.7 Summary

Interviewees agreed that philanthropy in Nepal is not new and has existed for very long. It is rich, diverse, and culturally embedded and encompasses both financial and non-financial contributions, driven by a deep sense of community responsibility, service, and a desire to create positive social change. While it lacks formal organisation, it remains a vital part of Nepalese people's lives. It started through religious giving and has expanded to volunteering and giving financial donations. The majority of the interviewees noted that it is becoming formalised and organised and requires the government's support and intervention. Interviewees also stressed the need for CSOs and the government to collaborate and partner. The government's support and participation are essential for the long-term sustainability, scalability, and institutionalisation of partnerships.

4.4 Glossary

The following pages provide the definitions described by the interviewees during their interviews.

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4.4.1 Cultural and Religious Foundations

Several interviewees highlighted that philanthropy in Nepal is deeply rooted in cultural and religious traditions. Terms like 'daan' (donation) and examples of giving during religious festivals, donating to temples, and revering animals during festivals highlight how philanthropy is ingrained in Nepalese culture. This form of philanthropy is learned from childhood and passed down through generations, emphasising community responsibility and collective well-being.

4.4.2 Beyond Financial Giving

Philanthropy is not limited to financial contributions. Interviewees stress that it includes non-financial means such as time, advice, and volunteer work. The building of 'chautaris' (rest stops) for travellers, offering food and water, and giving advice are examples of philanthropy that focus on the 'richness of mind and heart'. Empowerment and problem-solving within communities are seen as acts of philanthropy.

4.4.3 Service-Oriented Social Change

Some interviewees associated philanthropy with social good and positive change. They view it as actions done for the benefit of society without expectation of monetary or economic gain. This includes volunteering, supporting marginalised communities, and improving lives at the grassroots level. Therefore, philanthropy is a vehicle for social transformation, particularly in addressing issues of inequality and social justice.

4.4.4 Unorganised yet Deeply Embedded

Many interviewees agree that, while philanthropy is practiced widely in Nepal, it is not formalised or organised like in Western contexts. For centuries, Nepalese people have been giving informally—whether to temples, individuals in need, or through community initiatives—without a formal discourse on philanthropy. Although present,

organised philanthropy is still evolving, with civil society organisations (CSOs) playing a growing role.

4.4.5 Philanthropy as a Welfare Modality

It is also seen as a 'welfare modality,' where people voluntarily invest their resources, be it money, skills, or time, to address social causes. The desire to contribute towards social welfare, especially in disadvantaged communities, is considered a form of philanthropy that transcends mere financial donations.

4.4.6 The Importance of Women and Philanthropy

Female interviewees are engaged as donors, fundraisers, social entrepreneurs, volunteers, not-for-profit leaders, and founders. They play a vital role in advancing philanthropy and in areas that are not always popular to fund. According to some female interviewees, it is important to set and lead by example as role models, to help shape the next generation. They also emphasised that Nepalese women are more than givers and nurturers. They have led and continue to lead efforts to dismantle structural barriers to gender equality, creating a lasting impact through their nonprofit work, advocacy, activism, and philanthropy. They continue to inspire the next generation of female leaders in the fight for justice social and equality.

In conclusion, Nepalese women are moving beyond traditional roles and actively contributing to the country's social, and economic well-being. As demonstrated from the interviews, they are playing a pivotal role in the philanthropic landscape of Nepal, making significant contributions and creating a meaningful impact. Furthermore, the interviewees identified several recurring themes such as migration and brain drain, funding challenges, the need for CSOs and government to work together, and setting quotas as a mechanism to balance gender parity.

CHAPTER V:

DISCUSSION

5.1 Discussion of Results

This chapter begins with a brief review of the study, including key elements of literature and original interviews with selected participants. This chapter continues with discussions and conclusions drawn after an extensive study of literature and personal interviews discussing the primary research questions of this study:

- Why do women and philanthropy matter?
- What leadership roles did women play during the COVID-19 pandemic? What were the impacts (if any)?
- What are Women's Motivation for Giving?
- How can women and philanthropy address the root cause of social problems in Nepal?

This chapter will then discuss the implications, applications of future research, and a summary.

5.2 Brief Summary of the Study

Traditional practices such as 'chhaupadi,' early marriage, caste system, menstrual taboo, the patriarchal system, and lack of access to education are some of the prime examples that have impacted development efforts, particularly in addressing discrimination and the social and economic exclusion of women and vulnerable groups. Development programmes related to gender and social inclusion vary across different regions and ethnic groups. Although the Government of Nepal has shown commitment to the inclusion of marginalised groups through the enactment of the 2015 Constitution, the outcomes of these efforts may take time to become evident (Government of Nepal, 2015).

The Constitution of Nepal, 2015, Article 31 guarantees all children in Nepal the right to free and compulsory basic education (grades 1–8) and free secondary education (grades 9–12). Dalit (so-called untouchables) children have access to early childhood education and development, as well as free school education with scholarships, as their fundamental right. This includes free education and necessary support for children with disabilities. Accordingly, the 753 local government bodies and municipalities are responsible for managing basic and secondary education. The Constitution grants these local municipalities the authority to develop essential education policies and plans for managing school education at the local level. Article 31 of the Constitution enshrines the educational rights of the Nepalese people, including the right of access to basic education, the right to get compulsory and free education up to the basic level and free education up to the secondary level from the state, and those with shall have the right to free higher education in accordance with the law.

5.2.1 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

5.2.1.1 Introduction

The sustainable development goals (SDGs) comprise 17 goals (United Nations, n.d.). According to the United Nations Nepal (n.d.), Nepal committed to the SDGs early on and reaffirmed this commitment in key documents such as the '15th Development Plan' and the '25-Year Long-Term Vision 2100'. Furthermore, the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework has integrated the SDG codes into national programmes. Nepal has also developed the SDG Status and Roadmap to localise indicators with targets for 2030. The Nepalese government prioritises SDG 4, 'Quality Education—Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all' and SDG 5, 'Gender Equality—Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls' (United Nations Nepal, n.d.).

5.2.1.2 SDG 4: Quality Education: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

According to Nowak and Dahal (2016), 'Education plays an important role and is crucial for the development of a country'. To that end, SDG 4 focuses on ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all. In Nepal, women's philanthropy directly supports this goal by emphasising educational initiatives that empower girls and women. For instance, numerous organisations led by women in Nepal dedicate themselves to enhancing education access for marginalised communities, especially in rural areas where educational opportunities are scarce. These organisations provide scholarships, build schools, and offer vocational training, which not only enhances literacy and educational outcomes but also contributes to the economic empowerment of women.

By investing in education, women and philanthropy help to break the cycle of poverty and create opportunities for lifelong learning. This aligns with SDG 4 by ensuring that all girls and women have access to quality education, which is crucial for their personal development and for fostering a more equitable society (Government of Nepal National Planning Commission, 2015).

5.2.1.3 SDG 5: Gender Equality: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

According to United Nations Nepal (n.d.), SDG 5 seeks to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. Women's involvement in philanthropy is a powerful tool for advancing not only gender equality but also gender parity in Nepal. Women's Rights Organisations (WROs), for example, have been influential in advocating for policies that protect and promote the rights of women and girls. As one interviewee stated, if it was not for their advocacy programmes and policies, Nepal would

surely lag behind. Individuals and organisations are working to address gender-based violence, promote reproductive health rights, and support women's participation in leadership roles. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the leadership shown by women in Nepal's philanthropic sector was crucial in ensuring that recovery efforts were gender-sensitive. Women-led organisations focused on the specific needs of women and girls, such as ensuring access to healthcare and nutrition and addressing the increase in domestic violence during lockdowns. By challenging gender norms, reducing gender disparities, and empowering women to take on leadership roles in society, these efforts directly contribute to achieving SDG 5 (Pant, Phillips and Lee, 2023).

5.2.1.4 The Intersection of SDG 4 and SDG 5

The intersection of SDG 4 and SDG 5 is evident in the way that education is both a tool for and a result of gender equality. Women's philanthropy in Nepal often focuses on educational initiatives that not only aim to provide girls with the skills they need for economic independence but also empower them to challenge societal norms that perpetuate gender inequality. Women and civil society women leaders are helping to create a virtuous cycle where educated women are more likely to participate in the workforce, hold leadership positions, and contribute to society's overall development by promoting both education and gender equality. The message from interviewees is that they need government intervention, strong policies and funding at grassroots levels.

In summary, the philanthropic efforts of women in Nepal are crucial in advancing both SDG 4 and SDG 5 by focusing on education and gender equality. These efforts contribute to a more inclusive and equitable society where all individuals have the opportunity to learn, grow, and lead making it a fair society to live in.

5.3 Review of Findings

Women are playing a pivotal role in the philanthropic landscape of Nepal, making significant contributions and creating a meaningful impact. Interviewees underscored that and identified several recurring themes such as migration and brain drain, funding challenges, the need for CSOs and government to work together, and setting quotas as a mechanism to balance gender parity.

5.3.1 Research Question 1 - Why women and philanthropy matter

Given the distinct social, economic, and cultural challenges that women in Nepal experience on a day-to-day basis, the intersection of women and philanthropy is extremely important. Because they have direct experience with the consequences of inequality, women frequently take the initiative to lead projects, programmes, and organisations to overcome these difficulties. Women generally focus their philanthropy on issues that directly affect their communities' well-being, including economic empowerment, physical health and nutrition, and educational opportunities. This focus is absolutely necessary in a country like Nepal, where systemic challenges such as gender-based violence, menstrual health, proper nutrition, poverty, and limited access to education disproportionately affect women and girls. In fact, each woman who was interviewed had a personal story for choosing to work in the nonprofit sector, as well as for founding and leading their respective nonprofit organisations.

Even though Nepal's patriarchal society restricts women's roles to the realm of home responsibilities, women are now defying traditional and cultural conventions and contributing to larger societal change through philanthropy. Not only does the participation of women in philanthropic work empower them on an individual level, but it also elevates the entire communities that they serve, with the goal of creating development that is more inclusive and sustainable. Women often undertake

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philanthropic endeavours driven by the desire to effect long-term, structural improvements that will benefit future generations. As a result, the contributions made by women are particularly significant.

5.3.2 What roles do Nepalese women play in philanthropy?

Nepalese women are playing a variety of important roles, ranging from grassroots activism to leadership positions in nonprofit organisations, from board members to executive directors, chairpersons to founders. They actively advocate for policy changes in various government bodies, collaborate with relevant stakeholders (NGOs, INGOs, etc.), implement programmes that tackle crucial social issues, and participate in equity and patriarchy activism.

To give an example, the Tukee Foundation works with women who are widows, divorcees, or physically disabled, especially single mothers, to encourage and empower them socially, economically, and more (2024). The organisation's primary goal is to educate Nepalese society by providing educational support to the next generation within their original family and community. Womankind Worldwide (2019), 'There are 259 million widowed women worldwide, and over 115 million of these women live in poverty. In addition to widespread cultural discrimination and stigmatisation, widowed women (single women) often experience abuse such as property theft, eviction, social isolation, and physical violence. For example, feminist organisations like Women for Human Rights (WHR) provide vital support to widows in Nepal, mobilising them to reclaim their stolen property rights and helping them to achieve greater economic independence'. Despite legal provisions protecting widows' rights to their husbands' property, according to Kathmandu Post (2020), societal norms and customs continue to hinder widows in Nepal, forcing them to struggle for their property rights. This is even more relevant in rural areas where many girls and women still do not know how to read

and write. While Nepal promulgated the Constitution in 2015, many rural communities are unaware of their rights, individuals and organisations like those interviewed are very critical.

Another example is Dr. Radha Paudel, whose mission is to dismantle institutional, structural, interpersonal, and social oppressive systems that affect menstruation, individuals who menstruate, and their ability to access basic inalienable human rights and critical resources to lead happy and healthy lives and to obtain dignity. In Nepal, the practice of menstrual taboo (Chhaupadi) persists, leading to instances of sexual violence against girls and women in menstrual huts, as well as exposure to poor hygiene and unsafe conditions. Furthermore, those interviewed stated that their organisations have taken the lead in relief operations during times of crisis, such as the 2015 earthquake and recently the COVID-19 pandemic. They raised funds to feed the community, provided shelters when migrant workers could not travel to their homes in rural Nepal and helped educate women as entrepreneurs so that they could make a living by making face masks during the pandemic. These women and their organisations have made certain that financial and non-financial assistance has been provided, especially in underserved parts of Nepal, as well as, in particular, women and children, who are frequently overlooked in disaster response efforts. As one interviewee stated, during the 2015 earthquake, while funds were pouring into Nepal and the civil societies, INGOs and government bodies were distributing food, clothing, and tents, but they forgot about the needs of girls, women, and lactating mothers.

(The Guardian, 2021) On 12 February, 2021, Hima Bista, executive director of Women LEAD Nepal, gave a fierce speech during a march to protest against the Immigration Department's proposal to ban Nepalese women under 40 from travelling abroad. Women under 40 had to obtain an official authorisation from their family

members and the local ward office prior to travelling abroad. Because there are many women working as domestic help in foreign countries, the travel ban is not practical. This type of policy, according to Interviewee 3, only encourages women to find alternative ways. They travel to India and fly out from these countries in search of work. The shared border between Nepal and India facilitates easy crossing. Numerous instances exist where the sex industry traffics them. This is also dangerous, as some women fall victim to organised crimes. Therefore, as stated by Bista (2021), 'These politicians will need our votes for the next election, and let me just say that my vagina will vote you out!'

The current conflict between Ukraine and Russia has created lucrative opportunities for human traffickers, leading to the recruitment of Nepalese men to fight on both sides. Agents in Nepal are charging up to US$5,000 and US$7,000 to organise a tourist visa for an individual through a third country (The Kathmandu Post, 2020). In certain cases, visa agents have deceived them with the promise of employment as assistants, leading them to the frontlines of Russia. Currently, an estimated 2,000 Nepalese men are fighting the war in Russia. However, this figure is not an official number (Sky News, 2024), but rather based on the testimony of returning soldiers. Due to poverty, a lack of employment opportunities in Nepal, and a desperate need for work, young Nepalese men have voluntarily signed up to fight the war (Sky News, 2024. They usually travel to Russia on a tourist visa via the United Arab Emirates or India (CNN, 2024). These situations have serious repercussions for their families in Nepal, especially women and children. The GoN has banned Nepalese citizens from working in Russia and Ukraine; however, many young men are so desperate that they are willing to take a chance (AP News, 2024).

5.3.2.1 How can women and philanthropy address the root cause of social problems in Nepal?

Due to their frequent encounters with similar situations, women's philanthropy in Nepal holds a unique position in addressing the root causes of social problems. This implies that they tailor the proposed and implemented solutions to the specific needs and challenges they face. One of the primary ways women's philanthropy addresses root causes is by focussing on education and economic empowerment. Educating girls and women has a multiplier effect, leading to better health outcomes, increased income, and greater agency in decision-making processes. Economic empowerment initiatives, such as social enterprise, microfinance programmes and women-led cooperatives, help women gain financial independence, which in turn reduces their vulnerability to exploitation and poverty.

Moreover, women's philanthropic efforts often aim to shift societal attitudes and challenge harmful cultural norms such as patriarchy. Other examples include campaigns against child marriage and for reproductive rights, which are crucial in breaking cycles of poverty and gender inequality. By addressing these deep-rooted issues, women in philanthropy contribute to creating a more equitable society in Nepal.

5.3.2.2 Are women more involved and committed than men in Nepal, and if so, why?

According to the interviewees, women in Nepal are often more involved and committed to philanthropic work than men, partly due to their personal lived experiences of marginalisation and discrimination. A strong sense of responsibility drives their involvement to improve the conditions of their immediate and extended families, as well as their communities. Women's philanthropic activities are typically more community-orientated and focused on long-term impact, whereas men's philanthropy might focus more on financial donations or broader initiatives.

In Nepalese society, cultural expectations also influence women's philanthropic work; they often assume caregiving roles. This caring nature drives women to be deeply committed to causes that improve others' well-being, particularly those related to health, education, and poverty alleviation, as well as issues relating to women and children. According to Interviewee 2, his journey to working in the nonprofit sector came because of his need to earn a living rather than his desire to make an impact or serve the community. However, as he became more involved in philanthropic work, he appreciated the work that Nepalese women did and are doing in this sector. He also concurred that the presence of more women in this sector could be attributed to their inherent role as mothers, which could be reflected in their philanthropic endeavours. All women interviewed had personal narratives that inspired them to choose this sector to work in.

5.3.2.3 How can they be supported?

To support women in philanthropy, it is essential to provide them with access to resources such as funding, support, training, and networks. Current challenges cited by interviewees include limited access to sustainable funding, societal resistance, a lack of recognition in leadership roles, and a lack of female role models. Nonprofit organisations and the government need to work together to create trust. Opportunities exist in the form of increasing international attention on gender equality, the growing recognition of women's contributions during crises like the COVID-19 pandemic, and the potential for businesses to make an impact through partnerships with grassroots nonprofit organisations. Bonita Sharma, who received the Women Deliver Young Leaders Class of 2020 and BBC's 100 Influential Women 2019 recognition, and Neha Malla, who received the Professional Fellows Program Alumni award from the US Department of State, are two examples of young women who have received international recognition (see APPENDIX H LIST OF PARTICIPANTS INTERVIEWED on page 177). Young

women leaders are now setting examples for the next generation of young women leaders, smashing patriarchal norms.

5.3.2.4 What are the challenges and opportunities?

The interviewees, especially young women leaders, highlighted that age poses a significant challenge when interacting with older male stakeholders such as government officials. 'The government organisations do not take young people seriously, despite our greater passion and experience in addressing these issues compared to our older counterparts' (Interviewees 4, 6 and 7). They perceive 'us as lacking seriousness and occasionally exhibit unprofessional behaviour' (Interviewees 6 and 7). However, 'we are fortunate to collaborate with senior activists who guide us through the complexities of political nuances and bureaucracy (Interviewees 6 and 7). Furthermore, 'involving government agencies has made collaboration easier. Fostering intergenerational collaboration has made the partnership and engagement with government stakeholders easier' (Interviewees 6 and 7).

Civil society organisations are growing and flourishing in Nepal. 'We hope that more girls and women will receive education as the education sector becomes more dynamic and expands to rural areas' (majority of the interviewees). The Plan International Nepal Country Strategy Report, 2023 to 2028, states that their 'vision is to become a leading organisation advancing the rights of girls, adolescents, and young women in Nepal, with the aim of contributing towards an inclusive, just, and safe society for all girls and young women in Nepal' . In fact, their goal is to reach '700,000 directly and 1.5 million indirectly, girls, adolescents, and young women in Nepal' (Plan International Nepal, 2023). This initiative will have a profound impact on Nepal. This is especially significant and of importance in rural and marginalised communities.

Investing and educating girls and women are known to have multiplying effects, so it makes perfect social and economic sense.

5.3.2.5 What are the elements for this change?

Key elements for driving change include the empowerment of women through education, as more and more girls and women are going to universities, which leads to economic opportunities, and leadership. Most of the women interviewees have advanced degrees and some of them plan to pursue a doctorate. They identified advocating for policies as crucial in ensuring the implementation and enforcement of gender-sensitive policies. Building alliances between non-profit organisations, government bodies, and international agencies can further strengthen the impact of these efforts. The 2015 Constitution also ensures that women and girls have equal opportunities, at least on paper. Therefore, in an urban city like Kathmandu, discrimination may not be so open, as both educated women and men are aware of their constitutional rights. However, in urban areas, the progress may be slow. As several interviewees stated said, 'policy alone cannot change Nepal'. Progressive feminist organisations are also advocating at federal levels. All these various elements have the potential to transform women in Nepal.

5.3.3 What roles/leadership did women play during the COVID-19 pandemic? What are/were the impacts?

The COVID-19 pandemic showcased the crucial role of women in leadership, particularly in philanthropy, and how they served their beneficiaries and beyond. Women-led organisations in Nepal were instrumental in delivering relief to marginalised communities, advocating for gender-sensitive recovery policies, and addressing the specific needs of women and girls during the crisis. According to the UN Women 2023 report 'COVID-19 Recovery in Nepal: A Case Study of the Role of Women's Leadership', WRO were 'major contributors to local COVID-19 responses' (Pant,

Phillips, and Lee, 2023). Furthermore, WROs conducted comprehensive evaluations to determine the specific requirements of women and other marginalised groups. These demands were actively communicated to local government authorities and various clusters. These organisations formed alliances, transported aid, and enabled access to service. They took part in the dissemination of information and promotion of knowledge, which included initiatives related to COVID-19 and its symptoms. They also communicated with their stakeholders about the available government relief and support programmes. Overall, women's leadership during the pandemic not only mitigated the immediate impacts of the crisis but also highlighted the need for greater investment in women's leadership and gender-sensitive approaches in both philanthropy and disaster risk response (DDR). With technical and financial support from the UN Women and the Government of Finland, four WROs—Women for Human Rights, Maiti Nepal, Nagarik Aawaz, and Nari Bikas Sangh—set up several community kitchens to provide food and nutrition. The women managed the community kitchens, which provided them with employment opportunities and minimal income (UN Women, 2021).

Figure 4: Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic Worldwide

- 1,000,172 confirmed COVID-19 cases
- 12,019 deaths
- 4.9 million people in need
- USD 83.7 million in funding requested
- 76.5% of the population is fully vaccinated

Source: Ministry of Health and Population, Health Sector Response to COVID-19: Sit Rep #1002 (UN Women, 2023)

5.4 Discussion on the Hypothesis

This research study the hypothesis that Nepalese women are contributing and making impacts in their communities. The assumption was that they play vital roles in the current philanthropic landscape as more women than before have access to education and financial freedom. Based on the interviews conducted and desk research, social media, local news, journal articles and reports, women in Nepal are playing multiple roles within their communities and making impact. Their desire to make a difference in their community stems from a deep commitment to fostering positive change, empowering others through leadership and role models, and creating opportunities for growth and equity through philanthropy.

Natural disasters such as the 2015 earthquake, the floodings recently, high cost of migrations, and the COVID-19 pandemic have exposed the fragility of Nepal's social and economic systems, highlighting the critical need for philanthropic interventions to build resilience, support vulnerable communities, and invest in long-term recovery and sustainability. Women bring unique perspectives, foster inclusive solutions, and often focus on grassroots initiatives that directly impact families and communities. Empowering and supporting women in philanthropy not only strengthens resilience but also ensures that resources are allocated to areas that address systemic inequalities and promote sustainable development in times of crisis. Research indicates that women are more likely to say philanthropy is a way to show human caring and that philanthropy is a way to express their moral beliefs (Newman, 1995).

5.4.1 Prosocial Behaviours

All women interviewees shared personal stories that illustrated why philanthropy held deep significance for them. These narratives often reflected their deeply rooted values, personal experiences, and transformative moments that shaped their dedication to

giving and social impact. As (Newman, 1995) observes, philanthropy is particularly meaningful to women as it serves as 'a way to show human caring' and 'to express their moral beliefs'. Supporting this, Kesberg and Keller (2021) emphasised that prosocial behaviours encompass not only 'comforting others' but also actions such as 'cooperating, offering help, and contributing money, time, or goods'.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Nepalese women exemplified such behaviours through various impactful initiatives. For instance, many set up community kitchens to feed the homeless and those in need. One founder of a nonprofit organisation provided training on mask-making and leveraged her marketing expertise and networks to sell the masks, enabling women to generate income during a challenging economic period. Another woman stepped in to offer shelters when government resources were exhausted, creating safe spaces for vulnerable individuals, including both men and women, who had nowhere else to turn.

Beyond these efforts, women also led initiatives to distribute essential supplies such as hygiene kits, medical aid, and food packages to underserved communities. Some organised virtual support groups, addressing the growing emotional and psychological toll of the pandemic. A group of nonprofit founders developed nutribeads bracelet, an educational tool to make mothers aware of the nutritional requirements of their children in the first two years of life. Others mobilised local networks to help out at the soup kitchens including raising funds to purchase necessary staple food such as rice, lentils and vegetables.

These examples showcase the multifaceted roles women play in philanthropy, particularly during crises. Their actions highlight their capacity as leaders, caregivers, and changemakers, often filling critical gaps left by strained government systems and demonstrating the profound impact of women-led philanthropic efforts.

5.5 Discussion on Women and Philanthropy and the Application of bell hooks'

Feminist Theory

Discussion on the context of Nepalese women in relation to bell hooks' concept of centre and margin dynamics, the interplay of social, economic, and cultural factors reveals the nuanced challenges and opportunities they face in philanthropy and societal transformation:

5.5.1 Social Context: Marginalisation and Agency

5.5.1.1 Patriarchal Structures

Nepalese society is deeply patriarchal, with traditional gender roles that position women primarily in domestic and caregiving responsibilities. While these roles often confine women to the margins, they also enable them to play critical roles in informal philanthropy, such as organising community kitchens during the COVID-19 pandemic and supporting community welfare (education, health, etc). These contributions, though significant, are undervalued within mainstream narratives, echoing hooks' assertion that the centre often ignores the margin.

5.5.1.2 Caste and Ethnic Hierarchies

Women and girls from marginalised caste groups (e.g., Dalits) often face layers of oppression due to the intersection of gender, caste, and ethnicity. Their philanthropic efforts, such as advocating for social justice or supporting education within their communities, serve as acts of resistance against these intersecting oppressions, reflecting hooks' emphasis on the transformative power of marginalised voices.

5.5.1.3 Grassroots Leadership

Despite societal constraints, many Nepalese women exercise leadership through grassroots organisations, and their communities. These initiatives demonstrate their

agency and the capacity of those at the margins to drive social change, aligning with hooks' belief in the unique insights of the marginalised.

5.5.2 Economic Context: Gender Inequality and Resource Mobilisation

5.5.2.1 Economic Disparities

Nepalese women experience significant economic inequality, with limited access to property ownership (although this is changing), financial independence, and formal employment opportunities. This economic marginalisation reinforces their peripheral status but also shapes their approach to philanthropy, which often focuses on addressing immediate community needs.

5.5.2.2 Microfinance and Collective Philanthropy

Women in Nepal have been at the forefront of microfinance initiatives, and social enterprises, which enable them to pool resources for their community development and programmes. These practices align with hooks' critique of individualistic approaches to empowerment, showcasing collective action as a powerful tool for challenging systemic inequalities.

5.5.3 Cultural Context: Tradition, Modernity, and Resistance

5.5.3.1 Role of Religion and Tradition

In Nepal, religious and cultural traditions significantly influence women's roles and societal expectations. While these traditions often perpetuate patriarchal norms, they also provide a framework for women's philanthropic activities, such as volunteering, providing health care, and advocating for menstrual taboos (APPENDIX F POPULATION BY RELIGION AND GENDER).

5.5.3.2 Shifting Gender Norms

Urbanisation and globalisation are gradually transforming cultural attitudes, creating opportunities for Nepalese women to engage in public roles, including formal

philanthropy and leadership in non-governmental organisations, INGOs, and foundations. These shifts reflect hooks' vision of the margins as sites of resistance and change.

5.5.3.3 Cultural Capital and Knowledge

Women at the margins often possess deep cultural and community knowledge, which they leverage to design locally relevant and sustainable philanthropic initiatives. This reflects hooks' assertion that those on the periphery have valuable perspectives often overlooked by centralised, dominant systems.

5.5.4 Structural Challenges and Opportunities for Transformation

5.5.4.1 Systemic Exclusion

The exclusion of women from policy-making and decision-making processes limits their influence in shaping the country's socio-economic and political agendas. However, grassroots advocacy by women's groups is increasingly challenging this exclusion, creating space for more inclusive practices.

5.5.4.2 Education as a Tool for Change

Education remains a critical area where Nepalese women engage in philanthropy, often focusing on girls' education to challenge patriarchal norms. hooks' emphasis on the transformative power of education aligns closely with these efforts, as education provides a pathway for long-term empowerment and systemic change.

5.5.4.3 Global Influence and Local Adaptation

Nepalese women's philanthropic practices are also shaped by global feminist and development discourses. However, these practices often require localisation to address the unique challenges of Nepal's social and cultural context, resonating with hooks' critique of imposing centralised, Western frameworks on diverse realities.

5.5.5 Philanthropy and Feminism

Gillespie and Fletcher (2024, p. 103) state that it is important to 'understand the role of feminism in addressing social issues, particularly with the prevalence of feminist causes today'. Furthermore, feminist activism historically played a significant role in societal changes, such as women's right to vote, access to education, and reproductive rights (Johnson, 2017, cited in Gillespie and Fletcher, 2024), through the use of philanthropy and nonprofit organisations (p. 103) 'to gain access to the public sphere and power in order to foster changes that benefited women and society (Johnson, 2017; Lister, 2012; Martin, 1990; Stivers, 2000, cited in Gillespie and Fletcher, 2024). Early feminist activism also gave rise to the establishment of feminist organisations, which in turn led to the creation of women's foundations and funds (WFFs) in the 1970s. These WFFs are dedicated to directing financial resources towards nonprofit organisations that support and empower women and girls (Bothwell, 2005; Shaw-Hardy, 2005). Rooted in feminist ideologies, WFFs rely on feminism as a vital framework for understanding their role in the 21st century. According to Bell et al. (2019, p. 4), feminism introduces alternative approaches to knowledge creation, challenging the patriarchal underpinnings of organisational literature and academic scholarship (Benschop, 2021). WFFs contribute significantly to public administration by addressing gender and social equity. However, their influence is often overlooked in public administration and nonprofit literature, which tends to marginalise feminist perspectives. Scholars such as bell et al. (2019) highlight the importance of feminist organisations in creating equitable public policies.

Based on the report by the Women's Philanthropy Institute (2023) giving to women's and girls' organisations accounts for only 1.8% of charitable donations in the U.S. Therefore organisations such as the WFFs are important and vital for funding women-centric social change. In 2009 alone, WFFs invested over $60 million in such

initiatives, showcasing their potential to drive change (Skidmore et al., 2021, cited in Gillespie and Fletcher, 2024, p. 104).

5.5.5.1 The Concept of Intersectionality and Feminist Theory

Intersectionality is an important concept within the framework of feminist theory. Coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989, Crenshaw initially used it as a metaphor to critique the inadequacies of antidiscrimination law in addressing the experiences of Black women. Intersectionality examines how various social identities (such as gender, race, class, sexuality, ability, and others) intersect and create overlapping systems of discrimination or privilege. The term highlights the experiences of individuals cannot be fully understood by looking at one identity category in isolation (silo), as these identities are interdependent and interact in complex ways. (Crenshaw, 1989).

Applying intersectionality to the research study on women and philanthropy offers a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of the complexities faced. For instance, Nepalese women do not form a homogeneous group; their experiences and broader societal roles are shaped by intersecting factors such as caste, ethnicity, socio-economic status, geography (urban vs rural), and education. Applying an intersectional lens helps to recognise the unique struggles faced by women from marginalised communities, such as Dalit women or indigenous groups including disparities in access to resources, networks, and opportunities for engaging in philanthropy.

Intersectionality also highlights the systemic barriers that hinder women's participation in philanthropy or volunteering in Nepal. For instance, patriarchy might intersect with economic disenfranchisement, making it harder for women in poorer households. Social norms may restrict women's autonomy, particularly in regions with rigid caste or ethnic hierarchies.

In conclusion, the experiences of Nepalese women in philanthropy embody hooks' concept of 'margin as a site of resistance'. By navigating and challenging the intersecting oppressions of patriarchy, caste, and economic inequality, these women create alternative models of giving and leadership that disrupt dominant systems. Their contributions, though often marginalised, are essential for fostering community resilience and challenging societal structures, making them central to any holistic understanding of philanthropy in Nepal. This contextualisation underscores the need for intersectional and inclusive approaches in both feminist theory and philanthropic practice

CHAPTER VI:

SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Summary

6.1.1 Overview of Research Objectives

This study explored the role of women and philanthropy in Nepal, examining historical and contemporary perspectives while challenging traditional assumptions about their roles and their impacts. The research sought to understand the motivations, barriers, and impact of women's philanthropic contributions, particularly within Nepal's socio-cultural and economic context.

6.1.2 Summary of Key Findings

The study found that women in Nepal have played a significant but often overlooked role in philanthropy. Findings suggest that:

- Women's philanthropy is deeply embedded in cultural and religious traditions, often driven by dāna (charitable giving in Hinduism and Buddhism) and social responsibility rather than wealth accumulation.

- Patriarchal structures influence philanthropic participation, with women's giving often being informal and family-centred rather than institutionalised.

- Women are increasingly engaging in strategic philanthropy, particularly in education, healthcare, and economic empowerment, despite facing societal and financial barriers.

- The influence of feminist philanthropy is emerging, with women advocating for gender equity through funding and social initiatives.

- There are many definitions of philanthropy as espoused in local contexts.

- There is a huge gap in literature on women and philanthropy from Nepal.

- Education as a Tool for Change and Upliftment from poverty.

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- Long-term funding is essential for sustainability, enabling organisations to plan strategically, expand initiatives, and achieve lasting impact. Donors should commit to multi-year, flexible funding models to ensure stability and adaptability to evolving community needs.

6.1.3 Methodology Recap

The research employed a qualitative approach, using semi-structured interviews with 15 participants (both male and female), document analysis, and secondary literature. The research problem explored the intersection of patriarchy and women's roles in philanthropy in Nepal, drawing on Sylvia Walby's patriarchal and bell hooks' feminist theories to ensure that women's voices were centred in the analysis. Both frameworks offered critical insights into the systemic barriers women face, highlighting the dual nature of oppression in private and public spheres and the need for a structural transformation.

6.1.4 Restatement of Research Questions

The study aimed to answer the following questions:

- Why do women and philanthropy matter?
- What leadership roles did women play during the COVID-19 pandemic? What were the impacts (if any)?
- What are women's motivations for giving?
- How can women and philanthropy address the root cause of social problems in Nepal?

6.2 Implications

6.2.1 Theoretical Implications

This study contributes to the feminist theory of philanthropy, demonstrating that women's giving in Nepal is influenced by both patriarchal constraints and feminist

agency. Nepalese women's philanthropy is shaped by religious duty, communal and personal responsibilities, and social justice motivations. The study also explained briefly Gandhi's theory of trusteeship, showing how Nepalese women embody ethical stewardship through collective community philanthropy. In China, the theory of goodness as a philanthropy concept existed during Mencius times, a Confucian philosopher. Therefore, there is no one-size-fits-all approach to philanthropy when it comes to South Asia including Nepal.

6.2.2 Practical Implications

The findings have significant implications for policymakers, NGOs, and philanthropic organisations:

- Donors and funding agencies must develop gender-sensitive funding models that acknowledge the intersection of gender with socio-economic factors, ensuring that women and their organisations from diverse backgrounds can access and benefit from funding opportunities.

- Women's networks should be strengthened to encourage peer-to-peer giving and collaborative philanthropy.

- Educational initiatives should highlight women's philanthropic contributions, reshaping public perceptions of giving beyond male-dominated structures.

6.2.3 Social and Cultural Implications

- Challenging patriarchal norms: This study shows that despite cultural and financial barriers, Nepalese women are key philanthropic agents. Their increased recognition can lead to shifts in gender roles and empowerment.

- Rethinking wealth and generosity: Women's philanthropy is often rooted in non-monetary contributions, such as time, knowledge, and community

leadership. Expanding the definition of philanthropy further can better capture these contributions.

- Advancing feminist philanthropy: Women are gradually shaping philanthropy to include gender equity and social justice agendas, a trend that needs greater institutional support, i.e., advocacy, funding, networks, and policy.

6.3 Recommendations

6.3.1 Recommendations for Policy and Practice

- Formalising Women's Philanthropy: Government policies and philanthropic organisations should recognise and institutionalise women's informal philanthropy, ensuring it receives adequate funding and visibility.

- Gender-Inclusive Philanthropy Strategies: NGOs should integrate women-focused funding mechanisms, offering leadership roles to female candidates.

6.3.2 Recommendations for Future Research

- Based on the findings from the interviewees, the following are the recommendations for future research study proposed.

- How can philanthropy address the dual oppression of caste and gender to empower women as agents of social change in Nepal?

- What role can women's philanthropic initiatives play in dismantling caste-based hierarchies and promoting inclusive development in Nepal?

- What lessons can the Global North learn from Nepalese women's approaches to community-driven and culturally rooted philanthropy?

- How do international collaborations influence women's philanthropic practices in Nepal, and what are the challenges and opportunities?

- How can Nepalese women's philanthropic practices contribute to decolonising philanthropy by shifting power dynamics in the donor-recipient relationship?

- What roles do the Nepalese diaspora play in bridging global resources and local needs through philanthropy?
- How does the Nepalese diaspora contribute to philanthropic initiatives in Nepal, and what are the key areas of focus for their contributions?
- The Role of Resource Mobilisation Strategy for local CSOs operating in Nepal.

6.3.3 Recommendations for Stakeholders

- For Women Philanthropists: Engage in advocacy and mentorship programs to strengthen the visibility of women's contributions.
- For Nonprofits and Funders: Ensure that funding priorities align with the needs and priorities of women-led initiatives.
- For Policymakers: Create tax incentives and legal frameworks that encourage women's philanthropic participation.

6.4 Limitations of the Study

- While this study provides valuable insights, it has certain limitations:
- Sample Size: The research was based on 15 interviews, which may not be fully representative of all Nepalese women philanthropists.
- Focus on Urban Perspectives: Many participants were from urban or semi-urban settings, meaning rural perspectives on philanthropy require further exploration.
- Limited Financial Data: The study focused on qualitative insights rather than financial metrics, which could be examined in future research.

6.5 Conclusion

This study contributes to the understanding of women's philanthropy in Nepal by challenging traditional narratives, recognising women's giving as strategic rather than

incidental, and highlighting the potential of feminist philanthropy. By amplifying women's voices in philanthropy, this research underscores the need for policy reforms, institutional support, and greater visibility of female philanthropic leaders. Future research and practice should continue to prioritise gender-inclusive models of giving, ensuring that women's contributions to philanthropy are acknowledged, supported, and expanded.

APPENDIX A

SURVEY COVER LETTER

Dear

I hope this email finds you well.

My name is Teg Malla and I am a doctoral research student from the Swiss School of Business and Management, and currently working on my research thesis on WOMEN AND PHILANTHROPY - Perspective from Nepal.

I am contacting you in the hope that you may be able to participate in my research study and help contribute towards this. My interest is especially in the context of your nonprofit/charitable/CSO work in Nepal. Based on my preliminary exploration conducted via literature reviews, informal dialogues, attending various sectorial webinars and events, there is a huge gap on the study of philanthropy, especially even more so within the context of Nepal and women. Therefore, the research on philanthropy and the role that women play in the ecosystem is relevant and important and I do hope that you can participate. Your perspectives on the landscape of philanthropy/nonprofit/charitable work in Nepal are highly important and much appreciated.

Why do I think this is an important subject?

It is important to bring Nepali perspective.
The culture of philanthropy is not a western phenomenon.
Nepalese women are making big contributions and they deserve to be profiled, etc.
I have been working on this sector for more than 20 years and I am passionate about my work.

Please let me know if you are available for a Zoom interview in the next few weeks. I am based in Brussels and there is a time difference - Nepal is 4 hours and 45 minutes ahead of Belgium. The interview will take about 1 – 2 hrs depending on our discussion. I will be happy to send you any further information or answer any questions you may have.

Thank you very much for your kind consideration and I really hope to hear from you.

With kind regards,
Teg
https://www.linkedin.com/in/tegmalla/

APPENDIX B

SURVEY COVER REPLY LETTER

Dear xxxx,

Thank you so much for getting back to me and in advance for agreeing to participate in an interview. At this time I do not think that any preparation is required as I am looking forward to speaking with you and finding out about your many works that you are currently doing at XXXX. I am very impressed with what I have found and look forward to getting to know you better.

My availabilities are as follows and I would very much appreciate if you could let me know your preferred date/time as soon as possible:

- Wednesday, 28th February @ 1 PM to 4 PM Nepal time
- Thursday, 29th February @ 1 PM to 4 PM Nepal time
- Friday, 1st March @ 1 PM to 4 PM Nepal time
- Monday, 4th March @ At the moment available all day
- Wednesday, 6th March @ At the moment available all day
- Thursday, 7th March @ At the moment available all day.

Once the date and time have been confirmed, I will send you Zoom details. Depending on the discussion, the interview could take 1 - 2 hours.

Please note that the interview will be recorded and it will be mainly in English and transcribed later.

As is required by the Swiss School of Business & Management, I am attaching for your reference an Interview Consent Form and would be most grateful if you could review, sign and send it back to me before the interview takes place. Should you have any question regarding this, please do let me know.

In the meantime, thank you for connecting with me via LinkedIn as well.

With kind regards,

Teg

PS – Just in case here is my mobile no. and I am available WhatsApp and Viber +32 XXX XX XX XX

APPENDIX C

INFORMED CONSENT

SSBM GENEVA

Interview Consent Form

Research project title: WOMEN AND PHILANTHROPY - Perspective from Nepal

Research investigator: Teg Malla

Research Participant name:

The interview will take (1 – 2 hours). We don't anticipate that there are any risks associated with your participation, but you have the right to stop the interview or withdraw from the research at any time.

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed as part of the above research project. Ethical procedures for academic research require that interviewees explicitly agree to being interviewed and how the information contained in their interview will be used. This consent form is necessary for us to ensure that you understand the purpose of your involvement and that you agree to the conditions of your participation. Would you therefore read the accompanying **information sheet** and then sign this form to certify that you approve the following:

- the interview will be recorded and a transcript will be produced
- you will be sent the transcript and given the opportunity to correct any factual errors
- the transcript of the interview will be analysed by Teg Malla as research investigator
- access to the interview transcript will be limited to Teg Malla and academic colleagues and researchers with whom she might collaborate as part of the research process
- any summary interview content, or direct quotations from the interview, that are made available through academic publication or other academic outlets will be anonymized so that you cannot be identified, and care will be taken to ensure that other information in the interview that could identify yourself is not revealed

- the actual recording will be (kept or destroyed state what will happen)
- any variation of the conditions above will only occur with your further explicit

1

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- approval

Or a quotation agreement could be incorporated into the interview agreement

Quotation Agreement

I also understand that my words may be quoted directly. With regards to being quoted, please initial next to any of the statements that you agree with:

	I wish to review the notes, transcripts, or other data collected during the research pertaining to my participation.
	I agree to be quoted directly.
	I agree to be quoted directly if my name is not published and a made-up name (pseudonym) is used.
	I agree that the researchers may publish documents that contain quotations by me.

All or part of the content of your interview may be used;
- In academic papers, policy papers or news articles
- On our website and in other media that we may produce such as spoken presentations
- On other feedback events
- DBA programme deliverable – a book on women making impact in Nepal and for Nepal
- In an archive of the project as noted above
- Other

By signing this form I agree that;

1. I am voluntarily taking part in this project. I understand that I don't have to take part, and I can stop the interview at any time;
2. The transcribed interview or extracts from it may be used as described above;
3. I have read the Information sheet;
4. I don't expect to receive any benefit or payment for my participation;
5. I can request a copy of the transcript of my interview and may make edits I feel necessary to ensure the effectiveness of any agreement made about confidentiality;
6. I have been able to ask any questions I might have, and I understand that I am free to contact the researcher with any questions I may have in the future.

7. _____
   Printed Name

   <mark>Please sign here</mark>
   _____   _____
   Participants Signature   **Date**

   _____**Teg Malla**_____   _____
   Researchers Signature   **Date**

   Contact Information

   This research has been reviewed and approved by the Swiss School of Business and Management, Geneva, Switzerland Ethics Board. If you have any further questions or concerns about this study, please contact:

   Name of researcher: Teg Malla
   Full address: Avenue Winston Churchill, Uccle 1180 Brussels Belgium
   Tel: +32 476 0577 91
   E-mail: tmalla@gmail.com

   You can also contact Teg Malla's supervisor: Dr. Giacomo Marzi, PhD
   Name of Supervisor: Dr. Giacomo Marzi, PhD
   Full address: Swiss School of Business and Management, GBC - Geneva Business Center, Avenue des Morgines 12, 1213 Genève, Switzerland
   Tel: +41 (022) 508 779
   E-mail: giacomo@ssbm.ch

   What if I have concerns about this research?
   If you are worried about this research, or if you are concerned about how it is being conducted, you can contact SSBM by email at contact@ssbm.ch.

   Add names of any associated funding bodies and their logos
   N/A

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Ice-breaking questions

Namaste, how are you? Thank you so much to agreeing to speak to me. How is your day

going so far? So, what is happening in Nepal right now? Can you introduce yourself,

who are you, what do you do?

The interviewee's relationship to philanthropy

When and where did you learn about philanthropy?

How would you define philanthropy?

How important is philanthropy to you as a woman (personally)? In society?

The interviewee's experience and practices

Tell me more about your philanthropic commitment: the actions you support and your

foundation, organisation.

What do you want to accomplish or achieve?

How are you connected to the people you help and serve?

What are the challenges and opportunities you have encounter(ed)?

How do you feel about your initiative now?

Philanthropy in Nepal

What are the contemporary social/human development issues in Nepal?

What do you think should be the role of government in solving the social issues in Nepal

(e.g gender inequity)?

How can philanthropy address the root causes of social problems?

How do you think that philanthropy can help the development/social sectors in Nepal?

What can you/r organisation contribute to that government and businesses cannot?

What is unique/particular about Asian (Nepalese) philanthropy?

Will the consequences of the pandemic force a change in the philanthropic practise in Nepal? How and why?

What are the challenges and opportunities for philanthropy in Nepal?

How can we make the philanthropic sector become more resilience?

Gender and the field of philanthropy

Are women more involved and committed than men and if so, why? If yes, what is the impact of generation and gender on philanthropy?

How do women take part in philanthropy? What role (leadership) are women playing in Nepalese philanthropy?

How can women in philanthropy impact gender equity?

Women and Philanthropic impact

What role can Nepalese women play in harnessing philanthropy to address the social issues?

What roles/leadership did women play during the COVID-19 pandemic? And/ or Disaster philanthropy?

How do females change the landscape of philanthropy in Nepal and why? 5.11.4 What are the elements for this change?

How can they be supported?

Closure that shows the interviewer consideration and appreciation

What values and sharing do you want to pass on to the next generation of women and men?

What advice would you give to others looking to do something similar/to engage in philanthropy?

Do you have any questions for me?

Thank you for taking the time to speak with me today.

STATEMENT FROM A SPOKESMAN FROM THE NIMSDAI FOUNDATION

How would you define philanthropy?

Nimsdai Foundation: It is the ability and social / personal responsibility to give back. It provides us the opportunity to offer support to others.

How can philanthropy address the root causes of social problems?

Nimsdai Foundation: It can help deliver change on a small or large scale.   However, addressing the root cause of an issue demands a collaborative cultural and values approach. It also requires clear leadership and supporting policies. Finally, it demands commitment to see the pledges and projects through.

What can you/r foundation contribute to that government and businesses cannot?

Nimsdai Foundation: Independence and neutrality. We can bring a collaborative approach to addressing a problem, bringing expertise and externa funding to the table.

How can the diaspora community contribute towards philanthropy and why is this important?

Nimsdai Foundation: In some cases, the distance allows perspective. Through our global networks we are able to widen the net of awareness, support and engagement, highlighting the issues and canvasing support. Our collective voice can be made heard through the noise.

Making an impact

Nimsdai Foundation: At the Nimsdai Foundation our aim is to 'redefine what is possible' through projects that Inspire, Educate and Protect. Philanthropy to us means using our voice and resources to raise awareness, inspire global change and support incredible people and projects that make a real difference. Our core pillars are environmental

protection, education, renewable energy, disaster relief and supporting people through rehabilitative climbing experiences.

Nimsdai Foundation: Founded by multiple world record setting mountaineer Nims Purja, the aim is to give back to the communities that have supported him. 5% of all proceeds from Nims' business enterprises goes to support the work of the Foundation, this includes from treks and climbs with Elite Exped, adventures with Skydive Nimsdai, merchandise sales through Nimsdai Store and from all speaking opportunities and future book and TV deals.

Nimsdai Foundation: The Foundation's previous projects include helping clean rubbish from the Big Mountains, helping provide grants to families and the community during Covid, supporting disaster relief during the Pakistan floods in 2022 and following the two Nepal earthquakes in 2023, and this year our team are building a new Porters House at Lobuche on the Everest Base Camp Trail in Nepal. Working with the local community and authorities, this will be a new fit-for-purpose building, providing accommodation for the Himalayan heroes – the Porters. Without porters there would be no expeditions in the Himalayas.

Nimsdai Foundation: On our educational side, we are working with a number of schools directly in Nepal to support students, this includes directing donations to the Khumjung Secondary School to allow them to buy new scientific equipment and interactive white boards; and working with supporters Scarpa, we were able to deliver hundreds of pairs of new school shoes to children in the Samagau area of Nepal.

Nimsdai Foundation: We believe we all need to play our part in helping others and making the world a better and more equitable place. Projects like the Porters House will have a positive impact on the area for years to come. If we can encourage awareness of, and investment in, the Porters livelihoods, then more young people will see it as a

prestigious job and stay in the Big Mountain communities rather than emigrating or going to the cities to find work. It is about preserving heritage and culture and ensuring the vitality of the mountain communities for generations to come. Key to that is well paid jobs with opportunities for growth and development and a great standard of life.

Nimsdai Foundation: This is key, because currently around 30% of Nepal's GDP comes from Nepali's living outside Nepal, sending money home to family. While this shows the incredible kindness and community of the Nepali people, it is not sustainable over generations. Key to this sustainability is well paid opportunities in the country.

APPENDIX F

POPULATION BY RELIGION AND GENDER

Religion	Total	Percentage	Male	Female
Hindu	23,677,744.00	81.19	11,587,529.00	12,090,215.00
Buddha	2,393,549.00	8.21	1,159,790.00	1,233,759.00
Islam	1,483,066.00	5.09	732,006.00	751,060.00
Kirat	924,204.00	3.17	451,193.00	473,011.00
Christian	512,313.00	1.76	240,206.00	272,107.00
Prakriti	102,048.00	0.35	48,527.00	53,521.00
Bon	67,223.00	0.23	31,968.00	35,255.00
Jain	2,398.00	0.01	1,239.00	1,159.00
Bahai	537.00	0.00	234.00	303.00
Sikha	1,496.00	0.01	859.00	637.00
Total	**29,164,578.00**	**100**	**14,253,551.00**	**14,911,027.00**

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics, 2024. p52. Final Population Composition.

Available at: https://censusnepal.cbs.gov.np/results/files/result-folder/Final_Population_compostion_12_2.pdf [Accessed 30 July 2024].

CHARACTERICTICS OF INTERVIEWEES SAMPLED

Variable	Gender	
	Female	**Male**
Age:		
30-40 years	4	
41-50 years	4	1
51-60 years	2	3
61-70 years	1	
Education:		
Bachelor's degree	3	1
Master's degree	7*	3
Doctoral	1	
Note: * Four out of the seven interviewees indicated pursuing a PhD programme.		
Work experience in the sector:	3	
5-10 years	3	1
11-20 years	3	1
21-30 years	1	2
31-40 years	1	
> 40 years		
Demography:		
Kathmandu	10	
Pokhara	1	3
Other	1	
Job Title:		
CEO	1	
Chairperson	1	
Country Director	1	2
Executive Director	3	1
Founder (including Co-Founder)	3	1
Co-ordinator/Lead	1	
Vice-Chair	1	
Total interviewed	**11**	**4**

Aasmani Chaudhary (Ms.)
Chairperson, Rural Women Development Center (Gramin Mahila Utthan Kendra) was founded in 1993 by a group of women social workers led by Aasmani Chaudhary in Dang. The primary focus of the organisation is to promote educational rights, empowerment, maternal health rights, income generation and combating gender discrimination for backward and marginalised girls and women and create a just society. https://rwdc.org.np/
BK (Mr) *
Country Director, an organisation based in Kathmandu, working on children who have been trafficked. To date the organisation has rescued over 850 children and reunited the majority of those children with their families Note: Not his real name.
Bijaya Rai Shrestha (Ms.)
Founder/Chairperson, Aaprbasi Mahila Kamdar Samuha Nepal (AMKAS) Aaprabasi Mahila Kamdar Samuha (AMKAS) or the Returnee Women Migrant Workers' Group, is a civil society organisation led and run by returnee women migrant workers. Established in 2016 by a group of well-known and experience Nepali migrant rights' activist, AMKAS pushes for the rights and interest of Nepali migrant workers, in the home and the destination countries, on the ground that 'Migrant Rights are Human Rights'. AMKAS specialises working with and for the Nepali women workers: both domestic and migrants. AMKAS has been widely recognised as a pioneer organisation working in the field despite short period of its existence. https://amkas.org.np/

Bonita Sharma (Ms.)

Co-Founder, The Social Changemakers and Innovators (SOCHAI)

Co-Founder, Youth Led SRHR Advocacy Nepal (YoSHAN)

Youth champion at Asia Safe Abortion Partnership

Awards

Women Deliver Young Leaders Class of 2020

BBC's 100 Influential Women 2019 at BBC

Female Champion at UNESCO (as part of the Malala Fund for Girls' Right to Education)

Youth led Sexual and Reproductive Health Advocacy Nepal (YoSHAN), a dynamic youth-led feminist organisation where our collective mission is to transform societal attitudes towards reproductive health, striving for reproductive justice across Nepal. We're dedicated to challenging outdated beliefs and practices surrounding reproductive health, particularly focusing on eliminating unsafe abortions and addressing various health-related issues from their grassroots. Through collaborative endeavors, YoSHAN amplifies feminist actions, pushing back against discriminatory norms while advocating for meaningful youth participation in sexual reproductive health and rights and safe abortion advocacy.

https://www.bbc.com/news/world-50042279

https://yoshan.org/

Lucky Chhetri (Ms.)

Founder, 3 Sisters Adventure Trekking & Founder/Director - Empowering Women of Nepal (EWN), is a non-profit company, based in Pokhara, which aims to improve the lives of Nepali women and girls through adventure sports and tourism. It was founded by three Nepali sisters, Lucky, Dicky and Nicky Chhetri, who were pioneers in the promotion of female trekking guides in the Himalayas. The Chhetri sisters also founded 3 Sisters Adventure Trekking to work in partnership with EWN in promoting and empowering women and girls through adventure tourism and sports. They offer practical skill-based training programs free of cost to the trainees.

The training is designed to extend educational, employment, and entrepreneurial opportunities to disadvantaged women from all over Nepal.   https://www.3sistersadventuretrek.com/
Ms. Neha Malla (Ms.)   Board Chair, ALL IN Foundation   Co-Director, Gender and Diversity, Authentic Leadership Institute Nepal   Ambassador, One Young World, National Youth Champion   YoSHAN, Asia Safe Abortion Partnership   Field SDG Advocate, MY WORLD 2030 Asia-Pacific   ALIN is a social impact company that works in various sectors to address the unjust walls of power and privilege in Nepal and beyond. We do this through: research and policy work in health and education sectors   leadership training and workshop in organisational spaces   **Awards**   Professional Fellows Program Alumni, U.S. Department of State   https://www.alinglobal.org/about
Pushpa Joshi (Ms.)   Vice Chair, LOOM Nepal   Chairperson, Social Changemakers and Innovators (SOCHAI)   Co-Founder, YoSHAN   The Social Changemakers and Innovators (SOCHAI) is an award winning young women led non-profit organisation, formed in 2017 to improve overall health, nutrition and socio-economic status of people, particularly women, children and girls through education, innovation and entrepreneurship at grass-root level.   https://sochai.org/
Dr. Radha Paudel, PhD   Founder, Global South Coalition for Dignified Menstruation   Director, Radha Paudel Foundation   Founder & President, Action Works Nepal

Chief Disruptor
Their mission is to dismantle institutional, structural, interpersonal, and social oppressive systems in place affecting menstruation, individuals who menstruate, and their ability to access basic inalienable human rights, critical resources to lead happy, and healthy lives, and obtain dignity.
Awards
2014 Youth Talent Award (Government of Nepal)
2014 Madan Puraskar
2012 Woman Peacemaker (University of San Diego)
https://dignifiedmenstruation.org/
https://www.radhapaudelfoundation.org/index.php/our-team/
Raj Tamang (Mr.)
Founder, Responsible Adventures
LGBTQ Ally Nepal
Responsible Adventures is a leader in innovative boutique adventure tours that are transformational with unparalleled services. In addition, they have pioneered mobile glamping and wellness culinary trekking adventures in the Himalayas.
https://responsibleadventures.com/
Ram Kishan (Mr.)
Country Director Nepal, Plan International Nepal
Plan International has been working in Nepal since 1978 to help marginalised children, families and communities access their rights to survival, protection and participation.
https://plan-international.org/nepal/
Renu Shrestha, Gender Based Violence (Ms.)
ActionAid International Nepal, is an anti-poverty, human rights-based organisation established in 1982. ActionAid Nepal is a non-governmental national social justice organisation rooted and working locally in different parts and regions of Nepal.
https://nepal.actionaid.org/about-us

Savitri Rajali (Ms.)
Chairperson, Tukee Foundation Nepal
Founder, Nepal Fixer
https://tukee.org.np/
https://www.nepalfixer.com/
Sheela Sen Thakuri (Ms.)
Executive Director, Tukee Foundation Nepal, works for those women who are widows/divorcees/physically disable especially single mothers. Tukee Foundation, aim is to educate the society by providing educational supports to next generation within their original family and community https://tukee.org.np/
Ujjwal Amatya (Mr.)
Country Director, Mission East Nepal, is an international relief and development organisation working in crisis-affected countries in the former Soviet Union, the Middle East and Asia. They deliver emergency relief during disasters as well as long-term development assistance. Mission East works to support vulnerable people and help local communities lift themselves out of poverty and marginalisation. https://missioneast.org/en/case/nepal-en/
Upasana Rana (Ms.)
Executive Director - Social Activist, Women for Human Rights (WHR) Nepal South Asia Coalition Coordinator - Every Woman Treaty Director - Chhahari Women Entrepreneur House Co-Founder - Nispakchya, an Association of Conflict Affected Women Women For Human Rights, single women group (WHR) is a non-governmental organisation, established in 1995, with the aim of fighting for the socio-cultural, economic and political rights of single women of Nepal. WHR strives to create a just and equitable society where there will be "no discrimination on the basis of marital status". https://whr.org.np/website/about-us-2/

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