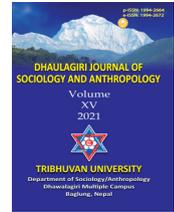


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Dhaulagiri Journal of Sociology and Anthropology

Interview with Professor Om Gurung

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Professor Om Gurung is a senior anthropologist, an influencing intellectual, and a prominent public leader in Nepal. He served Tribhuvan University as a professor of anthropology for 36 years and headed the Central Department of Sociology/Anthropology for 13 years.

Professor Gurung did his M. A. in History from Tribhuvan University in 1975, M. A. in anthropology from the University of Poona in 1980, and Ph. D. in Anthropology from Cornell University of Ithaca, New York in 1996. He is one of the founding members of the Central Department of Sociology/Anthropology at Tribhuvan University of Nepal. He has served as a visiting professor at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Liverpool John Moores University in the UK, Lille University in France, and the University of Sichuan in China. He is a visiting research fellow at the University of Bergen, Norway, and a guest lecturer at Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, Oxford University, UK, China Institute of New School University, New York, the University of Mons, Belgium, the University of Heidelberg, Germany and Chinese University in Hong Kong.

Professor Gurung was heavily engaged in various social, professional, and political organizations. He has made substantial scholarly and social contributions to the understanding of social and political issues of Nepal. As a promising intellectual leader of ethnic rights and politics of social inclusion in Nepal, he raised socio-political awareness among indigenous peoples of Nepal and mobilized them to assert their ethnic identity and cultural rights. He has a deep commitment to the development of anthropology and Nepali people.

Question 1: How are you? How is your health? Could you please share with us your family background?

First of all, I welcome both of you to my home. I thank you for your care and concern about my health. I am absolutely fine and my health is in very good condition.

I am from a small Gurung village named Bhuskat of Baglung District in west Nepal, where I was born in 1953 and raised in a lower-middle-class peasant family. My father, Bal Bahadur Gurung, was a village head (mukhiya). He was a busy person involved in social and political activities. My mother Ratna Kumari Gurung was a hardworking woman responsible for all domestic works.

My mother gave birth to nine children (four daughters and five sons), of whom eight of us (four sisters and four brothers) are surviving today. I was married to Amrita Gurung in 1975, and I have three children, Deepak, Bijaya, and Pushpa. My son Deepak is married to Sanju Gurung and they have a daughter Saffron-Devyashi Gurung who now lives in the UK.

Question 2: When did you start your education? Where did you go to your school?

During my early childhood, there was no school in the village. I remained home most of the time, caring for



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younger siblings and cattle. As a *mukhiya*, my father was eager to read and write. However, there was no school in my village. So he could not do so. Later, my father and other village people requested to *Jamdar* Lal Sing Gurung, a retired British-Indian Gurkha soldier who agreed and started to teach us voluntarily in a cowshed until the district government opened a school in my village in 2017 BS. Later Lal Sing Gurung was assisted by other two ex-British and Indian Gurkha soldiers Dil Bahadur Chantyal and Man Bir Chantyal to teach in the school.

With the help of the British Gurkha soldier, I started to read and write Nepali alphabets and count the basic numbers of mathematics at the age of nine. In 2017 BS, the district government permitted the villagers to open a primary school (initially up to class 3 and later to class 5) in my village with Abir Kumar Shrestha as headteacher. I completed primary education in 1965. I went to Galkot Harichaur for middle school education, where Chitra Bahadur KC and Jhalanath Khanal taught me. After completing middle school education, I progressed to Galkot High School for further study. But I could not complete high school education due to political unrest. During that period, Galkot was under the sway of communist politics, and I was actively involved in student politics. When we were staging a dance-drama of martyr Gangalal Shrestha during the festival of Holy Purnima, the police forces raided the school and arrested many teachers and students. The headteacher Chitra Bahadur KC and a classmate Ram Singh Shris scaped the police arrest and went underground. My other teacher Jhalanath Khanal was arrested and kept in Baglung District jail. I ran away from the school but was caught and kept under police custody. Later the police authority released me from custody and transferred me to Vidhyamandir Multipurpose High School of Baglung for my high school education under their direct surveillance. I completed high school education (SLC) from Vidhyamandir Multipurpose High School of Baglung in 1971. Students from my region had no access to high school education during that time. So I was the only student to complete high school education from my region.

From Vidhyamandir, I moved to Mahendra Inter College (Now Dhawalagiri Multiple Campus, Baglung) and received an Intermediate Degree (I. A.) in 1973. From Baglung, I went to Prithvi Narayan Campus of Pokhara and received a Diploma degree, majoring in History, in 1975. I received an M. A. degree in History in 1978 from Central Campus of Kirtipur of Tribhuvan University. At that time, Tribhuvan University was planning to open a Department of Anthropology and Sociology in Kirtipur Campus, but the University did not have enough human resources. Therefore, the University called for applications from the graduate students of social sciences for Tribhuvan University fellowships to go to India for an M. A. degree in Anthropology and Sociology. I applied and got selected for the fellowship. I went to the University of Poona

with the fellowship and received another M. A. degree in Anthropology in 1978. After getting an M. A. degree in Anthropology from the University of Poona, I returned to Nepal and started teaching History first and then Anthropology at Tribhuvan University. After teaching for ten years at the Central Department of Sociology/Anthropology of Tribhuvan University, I embarked on a Graduate program in anthropology at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York, in the fall of 1990. I gained an especial M. A. degree in anthropology in 1992 and Ph. D. degree in 1996.

Question 3: – Did you face any problems during your study period? If yes, what were your problems and how did you manage to solve your problems?

Of course, I faced many problems during student life. The first problem was the economic problem. We were not a wealthy family. My parents owned a large tract of drylands but could not produce enough food. They faced food shortages and suffered from seasonal famine for three to six months each year. Therefore, I often went to school with an empty stomach and sometimes worked for my neighbors and relatives before and after school time for food. I did not have good pair of summer and winter clothes. My parents could hardly buy me a pair of clothes twice a year during festive occasions. During high school education at Galkot, I shared a room and kitchen with a friend from my village in a buffalo shed, cooked food, and washed dishes every day and night. In Baglung, I shared a room with an old Newar carpenter in a small Buddhist shrine. During I. A. study in Baglung, I moved to a house of Ram Bahadur Shrestha (fictive uncle) where I looked after his children and worked in his paddy field for food and room. In Pokhara, I stayed with the already familiar Thakali family from Galkot in their small hotel and worked as an account assistant. The owner of the hotel, known by all as *maili didi* in the campus area, was kind to me. I also helped her look after her children and taught them in the morning and evening. In return, *maili didi* provided me a room, snacks, and food. In the evening, I also worked in Danfe Kala Mandir as a cultural program assistant for a small amount of pocket money. I also received a merit fellowship from Prithivi Narayan Campus for topping the semester examination.

I also had a problem of physical deformity from early childhood. As a result, I could not put on shoes. So I walked bare feet until the time of amputation surgery of left limb in 1979 at the military hospital of Poona, India. Despite these various adversaries, I managed to survive and continue my study, as I had a strong will, deep conviction, and commitment that always inspired me to work hard to achieve academic goal.

Question 4: Could you please tell us about your higher education? How did you manage your higher education in Kathmandu, India, and the USA?

Many individuals and institutions supported my education throughout my study both in Nepal and abroad. My parents never went to schools for their formal education, but they always supported my education. They were poor, but they were committed to my education. They mortgaged my mother's jewelry, sold lands, and borrowed money from local money lenders for my education. When my elder brother Dambar Bahadur Gurung was recruited into the British Gurkha army, he allocated a certain amount of his salary to support my education in Kathmandu. I received a Tribhuvan University fellowship to study in India for two years. I received Developing Country Training fellowships from Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research for Ph. D. in anthropology at Cornell University for three years. Cornell University also provided me with a tuition waiver, summer fellowships, and teaching assistantships during my study at Cornell. I also received research fellowships from Norwegian University Committees' for Development Education and Research (NUFU), Ph. D. Dissertation Research Fellowships from Social Science Research Council (SSRC), New York, Research Grants from National Geographic Society and World Wildlife Fund, Washington DC, International Research Travel Grants from Inaudi Research Center and South Asia Program of Cornell University, several small research support grants from the Alan Holmberg Endowment Fund of the Department of Anthropology at Cornell University. These research and teaching fellowships made it possible for me to accomplish my higher education without trouble during the later period of my study in India and the US.

Question 5: What factors or who influenced you to study anthropology? Do you think that it was the best choice for your academic career? What was your imagination to be an anthropologist?

Anthropology was not my choice of study. Instead, it was a choice of Tribhuvan University which was planning to introduce the subject at Tribhuvan University for a long time. Due to a lack of human resources in this field, the university could not start Anthropology and Sociology. To develop human resources, Tribhuvan University made an open call for applications from students of social science backgrounds and selected five students (three for Anthropology and two for Sociology). As I was preparing a comprehensive examination for an M. A. in History, my friend applied for me and I was selected as a top student in the list of their selection for the university fellowships to study Anthropology. I was naïve to the subject and had no idea of Anthropology. My friend, late Dr. Chandra Bahadur Gurung gave me an introductory book of Anthropology written by E. Adamson Hoebel, Regents Professor of Anthropology at the University of Minnesota, which gave me some idea of Anthropology. After my enrollment in M. A. Anthropology at the University of Poona and taking some classes, I found Anthropology an interesting subject.

Upon completing my degree in Anthropology, I returned to Nepal with my friends Ram Bahadur Chhetri and Padam Lal Devakota and started teaching Anthropology in a combined Department of Sociology/Anthropology established in 1981. My mission in life was to be a good teacher and a good man. I believe it is Anthropology, a subject of humanity which made me a good teacher and a good man.

Question 6: You studied at the University of Poona in India and Cornell University in the USA. What is your overall impression of these two Universities?

Both the University of Poona and Cornell University in Ithaca, New York, are good. The University of Poona is renowned in India. Cornell is ranked among the top 10 in the USA. Both universities have good programs in Anthropology. They have well-equipped laboratories, libraries, and physical facilities in the classrooms. They offer courses in four fields of Anthropology; Cultural, Physical, Linguistics, and Archaeology. As a student of the University of Poona and Cornell university, I had unique opportunities to learn advanced theories, concepts, and methods of all branches of Anthropology. They have had qualified and experienced professors who are committed to academic works. They were very friendly, helpful, and supportive to the international students. In consultation with individual professors, the students can take individual reading courses as per their personal choices and interests at Cornell. Teachers help students create a unique learning environment. I had a great time at both universities.

Question 7: When did you start your teaching career? How did you get the teaching position? Was it difficult for you to get the teaching position at Tribhuvan University?

I started my teaching career in 1980 as an Assistant Lecturer of History at Dhaulagiri Multiple Campus of Baglung (initially Dhaulagiri Mahendra Inter college and then Mahendra Multiple Campus). I did not have much trouble getting the teaching position for several reasons. First, Mahendra Campus of Baglung was in dire need of a history teacher. I had already completed M. A. in History from Tribhuvan University. So my history teacher, late Prof. Chandra Bahadur Thapa, who was then Assistant Dean of the Institute of Humanities and Social Sciences of Tribhuvan University, approached me first and requested to teach History at the Mahendra campus until the opening of a new department of Sociology and Anthropology at Kirtipur Campus. He sent me an appointment letter of Assistant Lecturer in History at home soon after returning from India. Second, as a recipient of the Tribhuvan University fellowship, I was bound to work for the Tribhuvan University after completing my degree. So I had no problem to find a teaching job. Finally, I was happy to provide teaching service to a campus where I was a student in the past. So I happily accepted the offer of an

Assistant Lecturer at Tribhuvan University and taught at Dhawalagiri Multiple Campus of Baglung for one and half years. After the establishment of the Central Department of Sociology/Anthropology in 1981, I was transferred to Kirtipur and became one of the core faculty members of the department, where I served for more than 36 years.

Question 8: You served as the Head of Department for a long time at the Central Department of Sociology/Anthropology. What significant contributions did you make to the development of the department and disciplines?

I served at Tribhuvan University for 36 years. During my service period, I headed the Central Department four times. In 2015, the combined department of Sociology/Anthropology splited into two separate departments, and I got the chance to become the founding head of the Central Department of Anthropology as well. During service period, I played two major roles; academic and administrative. As an academic head of the Central Department, my first duty was to teach M. A. and M. Phil. students and supervise the dissertation works of Ph. D. students. Besides, I worked very hard to make the department a center of academic excellence. I was fully committed to developing Anthropology and Sociology as distinct subjects. I introduced M. Phil. programs in Sociology and Anthropology and made it mandatory to embark on Ph. D. program. I organized subject committee meetings periodically to develop, revise and update courses in Sociology and Anthropology for M. A., M. Phil., and bachelor level students. In addition to basic courses, the committee introduced many applied courses in Sociology and Anthropology relevant to Nepal. The unavailability of reading course materials in the central Library of Tribhuvan University and the book markets in Kathmandu was a great problem for both teachers and students. I, therefore, managed the resources and supported the faculties to prepare reading materials for both teachers and students. The courses we developed and taught to our students were no less standard than international universities. I was able to get research funds from national and international organizations for dissertation field research for students and academic research for the faculties. I managed academic exchange programs with international universities, coordinated research projects, and published research books and journals. With the help of the faculty, I was able to organize many national and international seminars on the socio-political issues of Nepal. I received several research grants for research training on social inclusion issues and federalism. Due to various academic works, my department was recognized by the national and international academic communities as a spearhead department for teaching classes, doing researches, and organizing research training in Tribhuvan University. To develop Sociology and Anthropology as distinctly two different disciplines, I played a key role in

establishing two separate Sociology and Anthropology departments at Tribhuvan University in 2015.

As an administrative head of the department, I created a friendly academic environment for the teachers and students. I managed classrooms for M. A. and M. Phil. students with modern teaching equipment, managed office rooms for the teaching faculties. I established two separate computer labs and a department library for Sociology and Anthropology students. I connected the department with international scholarly communities and institutions through the development of internet facilities. I sorted out the problems of electricity, drinking water and lavatories. I coordinated and convinced the university authority to provide timely promotion to teaching faculties and maintain an adequate administrative staff. As a result, young colleagues were promoted to professors, associate professors, and lecturers. There was a full-fledged administrative staff and office assistants at the department. In my academic and administrative works, my faculty colleagues, administrative staff, and students supported me during an entire period of my headship. I am much thankful to them.

Question 9: Department of Sociology/Anthropology collaborated with different departments and institutions, what was the good and bad experience with those institutions.

I initiated the joint study and collaborative research programs with various universities in the USA, UK, and Europe. Notable among them are Cornell-Nepal Joint Study Program and Bergen-Nepal Human Ecology Program. Prof. David Holmberg and Prof. Kathryn S. March of Cornell University and Prof. Gunnar Haaland and Prof. Randi Halland from the University of Bergen were key people to manage joint study and research programs. These collaborative programs provided many students and teachers with an opportunity to go to their universities in the USA and Norway and complete M. Phil. and Ph. D. degrees. Similarly, we had a student and faculty exchange program with the University of Lille, France initiated by Prof. Brigitte Steinmann. One of our students Guman Singh Khatri studied at Lille for three years and received Ph. D. degree in Sociology. We also had a joint research program with the British Columbia University of Canada and the University of Toronto. The department received research grants from Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research. Many of our students and faculty benefitted from these joint research programs. They provided travel grants to our students and faculties to participate in international seminars where they presented research papers and shared their knowledge and experiences with international scholarly communities. I was happy with the collaborative works with international universities and research organizations.

Question 10: We are proud to know that many national and international seminars and conferences were organized in your leadership. How did you manage the funding and collaboration for the seminars? Could you please tell us any specific approach you followed for that?

Everybody knows that I have organized many national and international seminars during my academic leadership. As Tribhuvan University did not have enough funds to support academic research and seminars, I had to seek funds from other sources. For that, we should identify the funding agencies and the area of their academic interests and approach them with a brief concept note of our proposed research or seminar. If the funding agencies indicate their interest in supporting the proposed research or seminar, we need to develop a good proposal with a schedule and realistic budget. Some academic funding organizations have their formats of proposal writings, but most development organizations are open and flexible. They want a high-quality academic proposal on the issues of research or seminars. Sometimes, personal relations work to get fundings from international organizations. If you have a personal relationship with the heads of funding agencies and the heads are convinced with your proposals of research or seminar, there is a high chance to get fundings. I usually took help from friends to prepare good proposals. I received many small seminar grants from various organizations in Nepal and big seminar grants from Norwegian Embassy through Social Inclusion Research Fund (SIRF) managed by SNV-Nepal, the Swiss Embassy, ILO-Nepal, and Second Higher Education Project supported by the World Bank through Tribhuvan University. I am very much thankful to Dr. Manju Thapa (Tuladhar), Sita Rana and Swasti Pradhan of SIRF, Sarita Moktan of the Swiss Embassy, Saloman Rajbansi of ILO, Nepal, and Shankar Bhandari of Second Higher Education Project of Tribhuvan University for their cooperation.

Question 11: You also lead one of the big research projects funded by the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Nepal through the Netherlands Development Organization (SNV) and the Social Inclusion Research Fund (SIRF). What were the major outputs and outcomes of the research project? How did the research project benefit the department and how did it contribute to the advancement of the discipline?

Many of my colleagues were engaged in ongoing research projects funded by national and international organizations in their capacities. Some development organizations based in Kathmandu provided the department with small research grants to support M. A. students' dissertation research works as per their priority of research agendas. So the research projects completed by students and colleagues were not necessarily academic in terms of their contribution to disciplinary advancement. A social inclusion research project funded by the Royal Norwegian

Embassy in Nepal through SNV, Nepal was the only academic research project carried out by the department on an institutional basis for the first time in the research history of the department. The research had two major objectives. The first objective was to promote an informed understanding of Nepal's social diversity by producing research based, high quality, and up to date information on the country's social, cultural, and linguistic diversity and the status of human and social development of the 100+ social groups (identified by the 2001 Census) in the geographic map, and produce information relevant for the assessment of social exclusion and inclusion that are useful for policy formulation and education of excluded groups. The second objective was to produce information relevant for the assessment of social exclusion and inclusion that may be useful for policy formulation and education of excluded groups.

The major outputs of the research were the publications of Perspectives on Social Inclusion and Exclusion in Nepal, Nepal Social Inclusion Survey 2012, the Nepal Multidimensional Social Inclusion Index, four volumes of Social Inclusion Atlas, and Ethnographic profiles of forty-two highly marginalized social groups. Nepal Social Inclusion Survey, Social Inclusion Index, and Social Inclusion Atlas demonstrate the social inclusion/exclusion status of the 100+ social groups and different parameters, including index published in print and online in series. Detailed ethnographic profile of the forty-two highly excluded social groups published in six different monographs on the Hill Janajatis (nine groups), Tarai Janajatis (eight groups), Hill Dalits (five groups), Madhesi Dalits (10 groups), Madhesi other castes (10 groups) including a consolidated volume in both Nepali and English languages provide clear understandings of the social diversity of Nepal.

There are two major outcomes envisaged in the research. The first is that the social inclusion index and atlas 2012 will be extensively used by government policymakers, international development agencies, including the United Nations systems, and others for the policy reformulation, planning, and monitoring of the dimensions of social inclusion in their work. The second outcome is that materials and findings of the SIA and EP will be used by educational institutions and researchers for better informing their work.

The research project on social inclusion atlas of 90+ social groups and ethnographic profiles of forty-two highly marginalized communities is the most significant academic research project completed by the Tribhuvan University of Nepal. The research project has enhanced the academic profile of the department.

Question 12: You were involved in many professional, social, and political organizations. What role did you play in these organizations?

Besides academic institutions, I was actively engaged

in many professional, social and political organizations where I played executive and advisory roles. I am the first president of Nepal University Teachers' Association (NUTA) at Dhawalagiri (Mahendra) Campus of Baglung, president of Sociological and Anthropological Society of Nepal (SASON), Chair of the Curricula Development Committee of Sociology and Anthropology, member of the Faculty Board of Humanities and Social Sciences, Member of the Executive Committee of the Center for Economic Development and Administration (CEDA) where I provided mine inputs to develop and implement academic programs. As a General Secretary of the Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities (NEFIN), I provided leadership to the indigenous movement for their ethnic identity and cultural and political rights. I also served as an Adviser to Indigenous Peoples' CA Members' Caucus in the Constituent Assembly of Nepal, Coordinator of High-Level Task Force for the Revision of Official List of Indigenous Nationalities, Member of National Development Council and Social Inclusion Program Monitoring Committee of National Planning Commission, Board Member of Poverty Alleviation Fund (PAF), Coordinator of Dialogue Team of NEFIN to lead the dialogue with the Government of Nepal, Member of the High-Level Monitoring Commission on Code of Conduct of Ceasefire, and a Member of High-Level Local Body Reform Advisory Committee in the Local Development Ministry of Nepal government, Senior Advisor of Gurkha Army Ex-servicemen's Organization (GAESO) and British Gurkha Army Ex-servicemen's Organization - Singapore Department (BGAESO-Singapore). I am also a Senior Advisor of Tamu Hyula Chhoj Dhin Gurung Rastriya Parisad and General Secretary of Padma Ratna Tuladhar National Memorial Foundation. In all these organizations, my major role was to work for social equality, human rights, and socio-economic development.

I was actively engaged in student politics in student life. I was a General Secretary of All Nepal Free Students' Union in Galkot High School and a Chair of All Nepal Intellectual Association affiliated with NCP (Masal). Currently, I am the Chair of the All Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities (ANFIN) and Chair of the Central Advisory Committee of NCP (Revolutionary Maoist).

Question 13: You were able to lead the Janajati movement in Nepal, holding the position of General Secretary of NEFIN. What significant contributions did you make to the janajati movement? You also headed a commission to revise the official list of indigenous peoples of Nepal. What did you recommend for the revision of the official list? Did the government of Nepal adopt your recommendations?

In 2003, I became the General Secretary of the Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities (NEFIN) by consensus for three years. It was a period of great political upheaval in Nepal. The Maoist insurgency had engulfed

the whole country. The Royal massacre of June 1, 2001, had paved the way for Gyanendra Shah to become an absolute monarch of Nepal. He had usurped the political and administrative power by dismissing the government of Sher Bahadur Deuba and dissolving the elected parliament. The direct rule of King Gyanendra had put the democracy on the verge of collapse. The critical political situation in Nepal created a condition for the seven political parties to come together and sign a 12 point understanding through the mediation of India and form a political alliance to fight against the absolute monarchy. Indigenous peoples and their organizations were in a state of political confusion. So they were keeping aside the democratic movement in the country. As a leader of indigenous peoples, I organized and mobilized them for the democratic movement of 2006. The participation of indigenous peoples in the democratic movement allowed inserting their political agendas of identity-based federal structure, ethnic autonomy, self-rule, rights to self-determination, prerogative rights, secularism, linguistic freedom, proportional electoral system, proportional representation at all bodies of the government at all level, reservation as a special measure to bring excluded and marginalized classes and communities in the mainstream of state-building process, the election of constituent assembly and promulgation of new constitution ensuring the rights of indigenous and excluded groups. Agitating political parties capitalized the political agendas raised by indigenous peoples as their own during the second democratic movement (*dosro jana andolan 2062/2063*).

After the second democratic movement of Nepal, there was a strong demand for rescheduling the list of indigenous peoples by those community leaders who were not included in the official list of indigenous peoples published by the government in 2001. In response to their demands, the government of Nepal formed a nine-member High-Level Working Group (WG) under my leadership to revise the official list of indigenous peoples. After a careful review of the official list, extensive field visits, and intensive, interactive discussion with indigenous leaders and academic experts, the WG prepared and submitted the new official list with an addition of 25 new groups. The government has not yet adopted the new list. Recently, the government of Nepal has recognized Rana Tharu as a new indigenous community of Nepal.

Question 14: At the end of your service period, the central department of Sociology/Anthropology splited into two independent departments. What was your position in the question of sliting the department and do you still hold that position? How do you see new development at the Central Department of Sociology and Anthropology?

Sociology and Anthropology share many theoretical and methodological commonalities. So these two subjects are often perceived as a common subject. Taking into account the agrarian social structure of Nepal, our predecessors

also interpreted the common nature of Sociology and Anthropology and agreed to open a combined department of Sociology/Anthropology at Tribhuvan University. On the pretext of resource dearth (both human as well as financial), Tribhuvan University authorities decided to open a combined department, but Sociology and Anthropology are not the same disciplines even though they share many common theories and methods. So I was always in support of two separate departments for the development of both Sociology and Anthropology. I had proposed to the then department heads several times to separate the two departments. My proposal was not seriously taken by the then heads. During the tenure of my headship, I made the teaching of Sociology and Anthropology practically almost in separate departments. I appointed two coordinators for two subjects for M. Phil. programs who could design and prepare specialized courses in both subjects and teach them independently. Towards the end of my tenure, Sociology students demanded the establishment of a separate department of Sociology. Though the establishment of two separate departments was not under my jurisdiction, I was always in support of their demand, and I coordinated the dialogues of students and teachers of Sociology with the university authorities for two separate departments. But students did not have the patience to wait for the university authorities' decision. Instead of pacifying, the Sociology teachers backed the students for agitation and fueled them for further aggravation. This spoiled friendly environment of the department. Finally, the combined department was split into two separate departments. I am pleased with the split with the pious hope that the two separate departments would contribute to developing the field of Sociology and Anthropology. However, things have gone wrong, as I hear from other colleagues. Instead of developing the disciplines, the present leaders of the department are developing their grudges and egos, which I think might be harmful to themselves and the departments. Before the split, there was a friendly relationship among the faculty and a spirit of teamwork among them.

Question 15: What do you think about the future of Anthropology in Nepal in the changing world political and economic order?

Anthropology is a valuable subject for Nepal. It has a wide scope and bright future. However, it should be developed as a groundbreaking subject to explore and explain Nepal's social and political reality. When I was a Head of the Department, I tried to break the course of conventional Anthropology by expanding the area of study from descriptive ethnography to development and contemporary social and political issues of Nepal, such as caste, ethnicity, identity, social inequality, nationalism, federalism, secularism, labor migration, trans-border communities and cultures, ecology, and economy. Accordingly, the department had designed and refined its teaching courses. The department also frequently

organized national seminars, workshops, and international conferences on these contemporary social and political issues and published books and journals. It also completed many academic research projects on these issues. The new move to the wider field of study and research has made Anthropology a contextual and contemporaneous subject in a changing world.

Question 16: We are fortunate to know that you were involved in so many organizations and we are also proud to know that you were very successful in your endeavors. Could you please tell us what made you so successful in all of your endeavors?

My hard work, honesty, commitment and integrity, dedication and conviction to work, friendly relations with colleagues and students, sense of collectivity, a spirit of teamwork, and trust in colleagues and working staff are fundamental bases which, I think, made my work successful.

Question 17: In between our conversations, let us ask about your daily activities. You are retired from your active service at Tribhuvan University. What do you do now? and how did you manage your time?

Of course, I am officially retired from the active service of Tribhuvan University, but I am still not tired of work. I am as busy as before. Earlier, I was confined only to my department. Now I visit many departments to give lectures for M. A., M. Phil., and Ph. D. students. I go to governmental and non-governmental research organizations and give lectures and training to researchers and social workers. I still supervise many Ph. D. students in Anthropology. Though life was difficult for the poor workers during the lockdown period, it was a productive time for my academic works. During the lockdown period, I published a book on my own community Rhanmai Gurungs of Nepal (2020). I published three research articles in international journals which are published from Singapore and India and dozens of articles (in Nepali) on contemporary social and political issues of Nepal in various local and national level academic journals. I am actively engaged in indigenous issues and movements. I am involved in the British and Singapore Ex-Gurkhas' issues of equal pay and pension for their equal works. I am also actively involved in political movements for democracy, livelihood of common people and national sovereignty of Nepal.

Question 18: Any suggestions to the editorial Team of Dhaulagiri Journal of Sociology and Anthropology, how shall we continue this journal, what area should we focus and how can we develop higher quality and visibility of the paper published?

Dhaulagiri Journal of Sociology and Anthropology is a pioneer for publishing research-based articles in Sociology and Anthropology. It has covered a wide range of subjects in Anthropology by native and foreign Anthropologists

and Sociologists. It still needs to cover more contemporary social and political issues of Nepal as there is great confusion and controversy to understand the concept of caste, ethnicity, social diversity, identity-based federalism among Nepali scholars, political leaders, civil society leaders, media workers, and anthropologists as well as sociologists themselves. Academic publications like Dhaulagiri Journal should focus on these most debatable and contested issues. Publication of journals with limited resources is a daunting task. My former student and presently a colleague, Man Bahadur Khattri is doing an excellent job for the publication of the Dhaulagiri journal. I admire his hard work and commitment to continuing the publication. I wish its bright future.

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