



Chiya Guff (Tea Talk): Reimagining an Indigenous Conversational Framework through Community-Based Qualitative Research in Nepal

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Abstract

Background: Chiya Guff (Tea Talk) is an everyday conversational practice in Nepal through which people build relationships, exchange stories, discuss community concerns, and share knowledge. Yet such culturally embedded practices have rarely been theorized as approaches to qualitative research. This paper conceptualizes Chiya Guff as a potential Indigenous conversational framework for community-based qualitative research in Nepal.

Methods: This conceptual paper uses structured conceptual analysis to examine the philosophical assumptions, ethical commitments, and conversational characteristics of Chiya Guff. It compares these features with established Indigenous methodologies, including Talanoa, Yarning, Kaupapa Māori, and Indigenous Storywork.

Results: The analysis identifies five principles: relational accountability, hospitality, reciprocity, Storytelling and dialogue, and reflexivity. It also proposes a six-stage circular research pathway involving community entry, relationship building, tea-centered conversation, collaborative interpretation, community reflection, and knowledge sharing.

Conclusion: The conceptual analysis suggests that Chiya Guff may become a source of methodological knowledge when an everyday cultural practice is interpreted through local epistemologies, relationships, and ethical responsibilities. The framework remains situated and provisional until empirically tested.

Novelty: The paper contributes a Nepal-based perspective to Indigenous methodological scholarship by theorizing everyday tea-centered conversation as a potential site of qualitative inquiry.



Keywords: Decolonization, Methodology, Reciprocity, Relational accountability, Storytelling

Indigenization Statement

The author is an Indigenous researcher from Nepal whose engagement with Indigenous communities, cultures, and knowledge systems informs the development of this conceptual framework. The idea of Chiya Guff (Tea Talk) emerges from an everyday social practice in which tea-centered conversation can support relationship building, Storytelling, collective reflection, and discussion of community concerns. The paper therefore approaches Chiya Guff not as an object from which knowledge is extracted, but as a culturally situated practice that can provide methodological insight.

The paper adopts a decolonizing and relational orientation to research. It emphasizes Indigenous epistemologies, respect, reciprocity, relational accountability, reflexivity, and responsibility to community. At the same time, it does not claim that Chiya Guff represents every Indigenous community in Nepal. Indigenous knowledge is situated in histories, languages, places, and relationships. The framework proposed here is therefore deliberately contextual and provisional. It is presented as a Nepal-based conceptual contribution that requires further community-based empirical examination.

1. Introduction

For much of the history of academic research, Indigenous peoples have been positioned primarily as objects of study. Their knowledge has often been collected, classified, translated, and interpreted through research structures designed outside the communities concerned. Such practices have contributed to concerns about extraction, unequal authority, misrepresentation, and the separation of research from the relationships and responsibilities through which knowledge is lived. Indigenous research methodologies emerged partly in response to these concerns and have emphasized culturally situated knowledge, relationality, reciprocity, community accountability, and the participation of Indigenous peoples as knowledge holders and co-creators ([Barlo et al., 2021](#); [Pidgeon & Riley, 2021](#); [Windchief & Cummins, 2022](#); [Butler et al., 2024](#)).

This shift raises a broader methodological issue. If research is shaped by ways of knowing, being, relating, and taking responsibility, then methods cannot always be separated from the cultural contexts in which knowledge is produced. Indigenous methodological scholarship increasingly demonstrates that research may be grounded in practices that are already meaningful within communities rather than relying exclusively on standardized procedures developed elsewhere. Methodology, in this sense, concerns not only how information is collected but also who is recognized as a knower, how relationships are formed, how interpretation is negotiated, and what responsibilities follow from the production and representation of knowledge.

Conversational and story-based approaches make this issue particularly visible. Talanoa, Yarning, and Indigenous Storywork demonstrate that conversation and storytelling can



function as more than techniques for obtaining answers. They can create relational spaces in which experiences are shared, meanings are negotiated, knowledge is co-created, and responsibilities are established. Research on Yarning emphasizes respectful, reciprocal, and responsible relationships, while recent work on Talanoa demonstrates the potential of culturally grounded dialogue to contribute to collective interpretation and analysis ([Kennedy et al., 2022](#); [Mafle'o et al., 2024](#)). At the same time, these approaches are rooted in particular Indigenous histories, languages, epistemologies, and protocols. Their methodological value therefore cannot be separated from their cultural contexts.

This development raises an important question for Nepal: if culturally grounded research methodologies can emerge from meaningful ways of knowing, being, and relating, what everyday practices in Nepal might offer similar methodological possibilities? The question is significant because Nepal is culturally and linguistically diverse. The National Foundation for Development of Indigenous Nationalities (NFDIN) recognizes 60 Indigenous Nationalities, each with distinctive histories, cultural institutions, oral traditions, customary practices, and knowledge systems ([NFDIN, 2002](#)). A methodology developed for one community cannot simply be assumed to represent another.

Yet an important conceptual gap remains. Existing Nepal-based work has begun to theorize local conversation, hearth-based interaction, leisure-time dialogue, and culturally grounded fieldwork, but tea-centered sociality has not been sufficiently conceptualized as a distinct framework organized around hospitality, relational accountability, reciprocity, storytelling and dialogue, and reflexivity. In many Nepali contexts, sharing tea is an important part of everyday social life. Tea is commonly shared at home, in workplaces, tea shops, community spaces, and when welcoming visitors. These tea-sharing moments often create opportunities for storytelling, remembering past experiences, discussing politics, education, and careers, talking about community issues, resolving differences, listening to others, and building relationships. From the author's experience in the Nepali context, tea sharing is therefore not only about drinking tea but also about creating social connections and maintaining relationships.

The issue, however, is not whether Nepali people already talk over tea. They do. Nor is the argument that adding tea to a conventional interview automatically makes research Indigenous or decolonial. The methodological question is more demanding: can the relational characteristics surrounding tea-centered social interaction be interpreted through Indigenous methodological scholarship and developed into a culturally situated approach to qualitative inquiry? Under what ethical and relational conditions could such a practice become methodologically meaningful without becoming another form of extraction or cultural appropriation?

This paper responds to that question by conceptualizing Chiya Guff (Tea Talk) as a potential Nepal-based conversational framework for community-based qualitative research. Its focus is not tea as a beverage but the sociality surrounding tea: hospitality, relationship building, conversation, storytelling, listening, reciprocity, reflection, and community accountability. The paper does not claim that tea drinking is inherently Indigenous, that every conversation over



tea constitutes research, or that Chiya Guff represents all Indigenous communities in Nepal. Instead, it presents Chiya Guff as a situated and provisional conceptual contribution.

The paper makes three contributions. First, it recognizes an existing Nepali social practice as a potential source of methodological knowledge rather than treating everyday cultural life only as research data. Second, it develops a conceptual relationship among hospitality, relational accountability, reciprocity, storytelling and dialogue, and reflexivity and translates these into a six-stage research pathway. Third, it places Chiya Guff in dialogue with Talanoa, Yarning, Indigenous Storywork, Kaupapa Māori, and emerging Nepal-based methodologies without treating those approaches as templates to be transplanted into Nepal. The central argument is therefore not that informal conversation is new, but that a familiar social practice can be methodologically reconsidered when its cultural, ethical, and relational dimensions are made explicit.

Research Objective

This paper has three objectives:

1. To conceptualize Chiya Guff as a potential Nepal-based Indigenous conversational framework by examining its cultural characteristics, philosophical foundations, ethical commitments, and guiding principles.
2. To develop a conceptual research pathway showing how Chiya Guff could inform community-based qualitative research while maintaining relationality, reciprocity, cultural responsiveness, and community accountability.
3. To position Chiya Guff within broader Indigenous methodological scholarship by comparing it with Talanoa, Yarning, Indigenous Storywork, and Kaupapa Māori while recognizing the distinct cultural and historical contexts of these approaches.

2. Review of Literature

2.1 Indigenous Research Methodologies and Relationality

Indigenous research methodologies challenge the separation of research from relationships, values, histories, cultural contexts, and responsibilities. Rather than viewing research primarily as extraction of information, Indigenous methodological scholarship emphasizes situated knowledge, reciprocity, community accountability, and responsibility for how knowledge is produced and represented ([Chilisa, 2020](#); [Kovach, 2021](#); [Smith, 2021](#); [Wilson, 2008](#)). From this perspective, methodology involves particular ways of knowing, being, relating, and taking responsibility.

Recent scholarship further cautions against reducing Indigenous methodologies to standardized procedures. Pidgeon and Riley emphasize cultural and ethical specificity; Windchief and Cummins discuss bicultural accountability and protection of community-held knowledge; Barlo emphasize relational accountability; Butler describe Indigenous research methods as extensions of Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing; Mbah highlight relationality and decolonization; and Palakiko emphasize researcher positionality and relationships with



communities. ([Pidgeon and Riley, 2021](#); [Windchief and Cummins, 2022](#); [Butler et al., 2024](#); [Mbah et al., 2024](#); [Palakiko et al., 2024](#)).

This distinction is central to Chiya Guff. The presence of tea or informal conversation does not by itself make a research encounter Indigenous or decolonizing. Chiya Guff becomes methodologically meaningful only when conversation is grounded in appropriate cultural protocols, reciprocity, reflexivity, community accountability, and ethical responsibility. Relational accountability is therefore treated as an ongoing responsibility throughout the research process.

Recent Nepal-based scholarship strengthens this perspective. Rai et al., (2026a) in his article identify raithane approaches such as bhetghat baatchit, fursad gaph, padheri gaph, and Chule gaph and show how culturally familiar interaction can facilitate knowledge sharing ([Rai et al., 2026a](#)). Again, Rai et al., (2026b) similarly presents in another article about Dapla Khaa as a culturally embedded form of hearth talk involving spontaneous conversation, storytelling, memory sharing, and co-created knowledge ([Rai et al., 2026b](#)). These studies demonstrate that methodological development can begin with existing cultural practices rather than the importation of external techniques.

2.2 Indigenous Conversational and Story Based Methodologies

Talanoa

Talanoa is a culturally grounded Pacific approach to dialogue through which realities, experiences, and aspirations can be shared in ways that differ from highly structured research encounters ([Vaiolleti, 2006](#)). Recent Pacific scholarship shows that Talanoa can extend beyond initial data generation toward collective interpretation and meaning-making ([Mafale'o et al., 2024](#)). Its relevance to Chiya Guff lies in demonstrating how culturally grounded conversation can become a relational process of shared sense-making. Chiya Guff should not, however, be presented as a Nepali form of Talanoa because Talanoa has its own languages, histories, epistemologies, and protocols.

Yarning

Yarning provides another important comparison. Bessarab and Ng'andu (2010) established Yarning as a legitimate Indigenous research approach, while later scholarship emphasizes its protected relational space and commitments to respect, reciprocity, and responsibility ([Bessarab and Ng'andu, 2010](#); [Barlo et al., 2021](#); [Kennedy et al., 2022](#)). The relevance of Yarning to Chiya Guff is not that its protocols can be copied, but that it demonstrates how familiar conversation can become methodologically rigorous when relational accountability is explicit. Chiya Guff similarly places relationships at the center of inquiry but begins from Nepali tea-centered hospitality and social interaction.

Indigenous Storywork and Storytelling

Indigenous Storywork provides an important basis for understanding storytelling as a mode of knowledge transmission, relationship, and learning. Archibald (2010) emphasizes respect, responsibility, reciprocity, reverence, holism, interrelatedness, and synergy. Cook (2023) likewise illustrates how talk-story can support co-created knowledge and challenge extractive



research relationships. In Chiya Guff, storytelling is treated as one component of broader conversation rather than as a direct replication of Indigenous Storywork. This distinction is essential because Indigenous Storywork is a specific methodological and pedagogical framework with its own cultural foundations. ([Archibald, 2008](#); [Cook, 2023](#)).

Kaupapa Māori

Kaupapa Māori is more appropriately understood as a Māori-centered Indigenous research paradigm than as a conversational technique. Its emphasis on Māori self-determination, cultural integrity, Indigenous authority, and research grounded in Māori aspirations reinforces the principle that methodology should emerge from community epistemologies and ethical processes. Recent work on whakapapa methodology similarly demonstrates the importance of community ethics, co-design, accountability, kinship, and culturally grounded narratives ([Kawharu et al., 2024](#)). These approaches therefore serve as comparative conversation partners rather than methodological templates.

These methods have common elements and are not substitutes for each other. Their methodological understanding comes from specific languages, histories, epistemologies, communities and cultural protocols. This paper, therefore, does not rely on them as models for being transplanted in Nepal, but rather treats them as “comparative conversation partners.”

2.3 Indigenous Knowledge and Conversational Practices in Nepal

Nepal’s Indigenous Nationalities have diverse languages, cultural institutions, oral traditions, customary practices, and systems of intergenerational knowledge transmission. The 60 Indigenous Nationalities recognized by the National Foundation for Development of Indigenous Nationalities (NFDIN) reflect this cultural plurality, which is important when considering Indigenous research methodologies in Nepal (NFDIN, n.d.). These communities have different ways of knowing, communicating, transmitting knowledge, and maintaining relationships; therefore, no single conversational practice can be assumed to represent all Indigenous communities in the country. Everyday communication, storytelling, communal gatherings, hospitality, and intergenerational interaction can nevertheless provide culturally meaningful spaces for social learning, knowledge sharing, and collective meaning-making.

Methodological scholarship in Nepal has increasingly begun to recognize such culturally grounded practices. Dhungana and Yamphu (2016) for example, examine Indigenous research practices involving conversation, observation, Storywork, and listening ([Dhungana and Yamphu, 2016](#)). More recent studies have explored Indigenous methodologies in environmental peacebuilding ([Nalbo, 2024](#)), intergenerational transmission of Indigenous knowledge among Tharu communities ([Niure, 2024](#)), and Indigenous knowledge systems and sociocultural values among Newar communities ([Shrestha et al., 2025](#)). Rai et al., (2026a) further examine *raithane* or local conversational approaches, including *bhetghat baatchit*, *fursad gaph*, *padheri gaph*, and *Chule gaph*, while Rai et al., (2026b) discuss *Dapla Khaa* as a culturally embedded form of hearth talk involving storytelling, memory sharing, humor, cultural teaching, and intergenerational learning ([Rai et al., 2026a](#); [Rai et al., 2026b](#)). Together, these studies demonstrate that methodological knowledge within Nepali communities is not



absent; rather, scholars are increasingly articulating how everyday cultural practices can contribute to relational, community-based, and decolonizing research.

At the same time, these approaches are grounded in particular languages, histories, communities, epistemologies, and cultural protocols and should not be treated as interchangeable methods. Their significance lies precisely in their cultural situatedness. This consideration is particularly important in Nepal because the diversity of Indigenous communities means that a practice meaningful in one community cannot automatically be transferred to another. The emerging literature therefore indicates a growing recognition of culturally grounded research practices while also suggesting that the methodological potential of everyday conversational practices remains insufficiently theorized.

Within this emerging scholarship, a more specific conceptual gap can be identified. Existing Nepal-based research has examined local conversation, informal social interaction, hearth talk, storytelling, and other culturally familiar forms of knowledge exchange. However, tea-centered sociality as a distinct conversational framework organized around hospitality, relational accountability, reciprocity, storytelling and dialogue, and reflexivity has not yet been sufficiently conceptualized. This gap provides the context for the present study. Chiya Guff is therefore proposed not as a replacement for existing Nepali approaches, nor as a methodology that represents all Indigenous communities in Nepal, but as a situated and provisional framework for examining how tea-centered social interaction may inform community-based qualitative inquiry.

3. Methods

This is a conceptual paper rather than an empirical study involving participant interviews. Its purpose is to develop and define a potential framework through conceptual analysis, comparative methodological reading, and the construction of a proposed research pathway. Chiya Guff has not yet been empirically validated as a research methodology across Indigenous communities in Nepal.

3.1 Conceptual Analytic Approach

This study uses a conceptual analytic approach rather than primary participant interviews or field-based data collection. It brings together Indigenous methodological scholarship, recent Nepal-based research on culturally grounded conversational practices, and conceptual analysis of the relational and social characteristics associated with Chiya Guff. The framework has not yet been empirically validated across Indigenous communities in Nepal.

The analysis proceeded through five connected steps. First, characteristics associated with Chiya Guff were identified as descriptive features of a culturally familiar social practice, including hospitality, relationship building, informal conversation, storytelling, listening, reflection, reciprocity, and community interaction. Second, these characteristics were examined through ontology, epistemology, axiology, and methodology. Third, the resulting concepts were compared with established Indigenous approaches and recent Nepal-based scholarship to identify convergence and difference. Fourth, recurring concepts were synthesized into five



guiding principles. Fifth, the principles were translated into a proposed six-stage research pathway. This conceptual analysis was based on the peer-reviewed literature from the field of Indigenous research methodologies, relational research, conversational methods, Storywork, decolonizing research, community-based qualitative research and Indigenous knowledge in the context of Nepal.

3.2 Literature Identification and Selection

Literature was identified through academic databases and scholarly sources using combinations of terms related to Indigenous research methodologies, relational accountability, conversational methodologies, storytelling, decolonizing research, community-based qualitative research, Nepal, and culturally grounded research. Priority was given to recent peer-reviewed literature, particularly work published between 2021 and 2026, while foundational sources were retained where they provide essential theoretical or methodological grounding. Sources were selected purposively for relevance to Indigenous and decolonizing methodologies; relationality and reciprocity; conversational and story-based research; researcher positionality and reflexivity; community participation; and Nepal-based approaches.

3.3 Analytical Criteria

The comparison was based on five criteria: (1) role of relationship in knowledge production; (2) role of culturally familiar conversation in knowledge production or Storytelling; (3) ethical principle underlying relationships with the researcher and participant(s); (4) extent of participation and shared interpretation by members of the community; and (5) methodological contribution of each approach in their own cultural context. These are the criteria used to identify common foundations, and to distinguish the proposed Chiya Guff framework.

3.4 Philosophical Derivation

The philosophical foundations of Chiya Guff were derived by linking the cultural characteristics of tea-centered conversation with principles identified in Indigenous methodological scholarship. The ontological dimension emphasizes relationality; the epistemological dimension views knowledge as socially situated and collectively produced; the axiological dimension emphasizes hospitality, reciprocity, respect, humility, and accountability; and the methodological dimension emphasizes culturally familiar, flexible, and dialogic conversation. The framework therefore moves from cultural practice to philosophical interpretation and then to possible methodological application.

3.5 Reflexivity and Scope

Reflexivity is essential because the researcher is personally situated within a Nepali context. This positionality informs the development of the framework while also requiring the author to recognize the limits of personal experience. The framework is therefore presented as a situated conceptualization that requires dialogue with communities, attention to local protocols, and empirical testing. This position aligns with Indigenous methodological scholarship emphasizing positionality, accountability to community, and protection of community-held knowledge ([Windchief & Cummins, 2022](#); [Palakiko et al., 2024](#)).

4. Results

4.1 Conceptual Definition of Chiya Guff

The results are organized around the three research objectives. The first objective resulted in a conceptual definition of Chiya Guff and its philosophical foundations; the second resulted in a six-stage research pathway; and the third positioned Chiya Guff in relation to existing Indigenous research approaches by identifying shared principles and distinctive characteristics. The conceptual analysis produced four main findings. First, Chiya Guff is a conversational framework rather than a standardized interview. Second, five principles organize the framework. Third, these principles can be mapped onto a circular pathway for community-based research. Fourth, Chiya Guff has a family resemblance to established Indigenous conversational approaches while being distinguished by its emphasis on everyday hospitality and tea-centered social interaction in Nepal.

Chiya Guff refers to informal, meaningful conversation that takes place around the sharing of tea in culturally familiar social settings such as homes, communities, workplaces, tea shops, and host–visitor interactions. The framework is not about the beverage itself, but about the relational setting that tea sharing can create. It can provide time and space for people to listen to and understand one another, share experiences, recall community histories, discuss concerns, and build collective understanding.

Such tea-centered social interaction can create a familiar space for conversation, listening, storytelling, and relationship building, as illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 1: *Tea Conversation*



(Photograph by Rebika Pun Magar)



The culturally familiar context for relational conversation, Storytelling, listening, and reflection is not tea itself, but the sociality surrounding tea. The methodological focus is therefore relational rather than centered on the beverage.

Chiya Guff differs from a structured interview in three main respects. First, the relationship is not merely a means of obtaining data; it is an integral part of the ethical and relational substance of the research. Second, participants are approached as holders of knowledge and conversational partners rather than simply as information providers. Third, interpretation is not limited to the researcher. Participants can seek clarification, question interpretations, provide additional context, and contribute to the clarification and sharing of findings.

This framework should not, therefore, be interpreted as a directive for a cup of tea to be set up next to a normal interview timetable. This would duplicate the hierarchy, but with a different name. When conversation is left culturally responsive and continues to be a relational and reciprocal practice with a sense of community accountability, Chiya Guff becomes methodologically meaningful.

4.2 Philosophical Foundations

Ontological Foundation: Relationality

Chiya Guff is grounded in a relational understanding of social reality. People experience identity, memory, knowledge, and place through relationships with family members, neighbors, communities, and environments. This orientation aligns with Indigenous methodological scholarship that treats relationships as central to inquiry rather than merely instrumental to data collection ([Barlo et al., 2021](#); [Wilson, 2008](#)).

Epistemological Foundation: Situated and Co-Created Knowledge

Knowledge is understood as situated within lived experience, oral memory, storytelling, observation, listening, and dialogue. The researcher is not assumed to be the sole knower who enters a community to extract information. Knowledge may emerge through interaction among participants, researchers, relationships, experiences, and cultural contexts. This does not remove the researcher's responsibility for interpretation; instead, it requires reflexive attention to how identity, assumptions, institutional position, and relationships influence what is heard and represented.

Axiological Foundation: Hospitality, Reciprocity, and Accountability

The values guiding Chiya Guff include hospitality, respect, reciprocity, humility, and accountability. Tea sharing may function as a culturally familiar form of welcome and social interaction. However, hospitality should not be romanticized as automatically creating equality. Differences related to gender, age, caste, status, education, economic position, and institutional authority may continue to shape participation. Consent and ethical safeguards therefore remain necessary.

Methodological Foundation: Flexible Dialogue

Chiya Guff emphasizes flexible, open-ended conversation rather than a rigid sequence of questions. Conversation may begin with familiar topics and develop toward research concerns as relationships and familiarity develop. Participants may introduce topics, redirect discussion,



tell stories, clarify meanings, or raise concerns that might not emerge through a standardized schedule. Open-ended prompts may be used as conversational invitations rather than as a fixed questionnaire.

4.3 Five Guiding Principles of Chiya Guff

Relational Accountability

Research relationships involve continuing responsibilities. The researcher's responsibility extends beyond collecting and publishing information to include how relationships are established, how participants and communities are represented, how knowledge is interpreted, and how outcomes are communicated.

Hospitality

Tea sharing can create a familiar environment of welcome and social interaction. Its methodological significance lies in recognizing and respecting an existing cultural practice, not in instrumentalizing hospitality as a technique for obtaining trust or information.

Reciprocity

Knowledge production is understood as a relationship of mutual responsibility rather than one-directional extraction. Participants contribute experiences, memories, interpretations, and knowledge, while researchers have responsibilities concerning respectful engagement, recognition, representation, appropriate knowledge sharing, and community benefit.

Storytelling and Dialogue

Knowledge may be communicated through stories, memories, experiences, examples, humor, reflection, and ordinary conversation rather than only through direct responses to predetermined questions. Storytelling is one component of Chiya Guff and should not be equated with Indigenous Storywork, which is a specific methodological and pedagogical framework. Dialogue is reciprocal: participants and researchers listen, respond, clarify, question, and reflect.

Reflexivity

Researchers must examine how identity, assumptions, social position, institutional roles, expectations, and relationships influence the research process. Informal conversation can create a sense of closeness that may obscure rather than eliminate power differences. Reflexivity therefore helps prevent Chiya Guff from being presented as neutral, universally applicable, or automatically equitable.

4.4 Proposed Six-Stage Chiya Guff Research Pathway

The five principles were translated into six interconnected stages. The stages are not intended as a rigid sequence; relational accountability continues throughout the process, and later stages may require renewed conversation, clarification, or relationship building. The six-stage research pathway is summarized in Figure 1.

Stage 1: Community Entry and Cultural Engagement

The process begins with respectful community entry and attention to local protocols, relationships, expectations, and community structures. Entry is not simply administrative access; it marks the beginning of a relationship.



Stage 2: Relationship Building

Researchers spend time in culturally familiar environments and engage appropriately in ordinary social interaction. Tea sharing at this stage is not treated as data collection. The purpose is respectful relationship, listening, and learning rather than manipulating participants into trust.

Stage 3: Tea-Centered Conversation

Once appropriate relationships have developed, conversation may move toward the research topic. Open-ended prompts and active listening are used, while participants remain free to share stories, memories, experiences, concerns, and interpretations. Consent, confidentiality, and protection of sensitive knowledge remain throughout.

Stage 4: Collaborative Interpretation

Emerging meanings may be revisited with participants. Participants can clarify meanings, correct misunderstandings, provide context, challenge the researcher's interpretation, or introduce alternative perspectives. This stage operationalizes co-created knowledge and reflexivity.

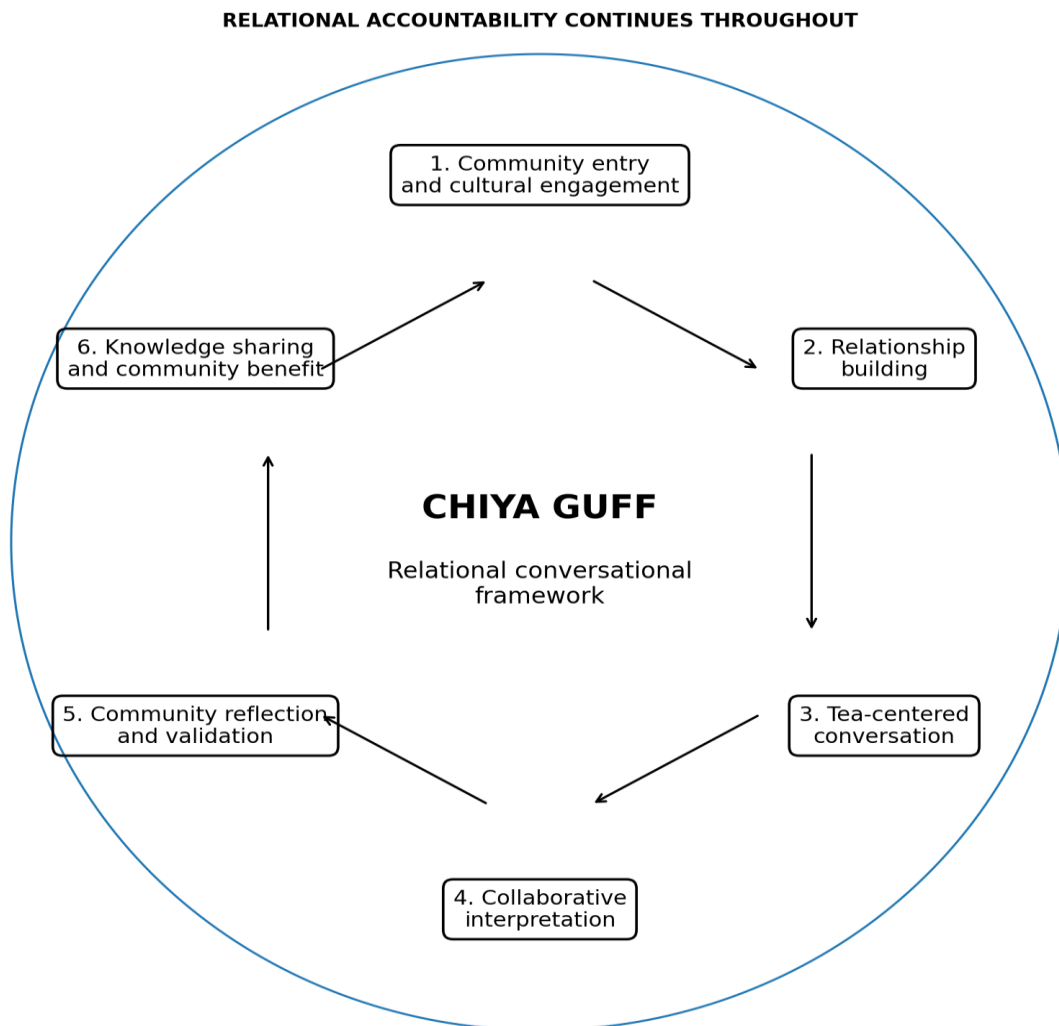
Stage 5: Community Reflection and Validation

Where appropriate, participants or community members can reflect on emerging interpretations and representations. The purpose is not for the community to approve every academic sentence, but to provide opportunities to correct, clarify, identify inaccuracies, and consider what should or should not be represented.

Stage 6: Knowledge Sharing and Community Benefit

Researchers consider appropriate ways of sharing findings with participants and communities, including accessible summaries, community presentations, local-language materials, or other agreed forms. Knowledge sharing extends rather than ends the relational responsibility.

Figure 2. *Proposed research process outlined in the Chiya Guff framework.*



4.5 Comparative Positioning

The conceptual analysis positions Chiya Guff in relation to established Indigenous approaches without claiming equivalence. It shares with Talanoa an emphasis on relational dialogue and culturally situated conversation; with Yarning, an emphasis on relationship, reciprocity, respect, and accountability; with Indigenous Storywork, an appreciation of storytelling and experiential knowledge; and with Kaupapa Māori, a concern for cultural integrity, Indigenous authority, and community-grounded research. Its strongest local comparisons are Nepal-based approaches such as bhetghat baatchit, fursad gaph, Chule gaph, and Dapla Khaa.

Chiya Guff belongs to a broader family of culturally grounded Indigenous methodological approaches, that challenge extractive research while remaining culturally specific. Its proposed distinctiveness lies in bringing tea-centered sociality and hospitality into a framework of



relational accountability, reciprocity, storytelling and dialogue, and reflexivity, translated into a six-stage pathway.

Methodology	Cultural context	Central practice	Shared principles	Distinctive contribution	Research purpose
Talanoa	Pacific communities	Open, relational dialogue	Relationships, reciprocity, culturally grounded communication	Develops culturally specific Pacific dialogue as research methodology	Culturally grounded dialogue, relationship building, knowledge sharing, collective understanding
Yarning	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australia	Social and research yarning	Trust, respect, relational accountability, culturally appropriate conversation	Uses culturally grounded conversation with explicit relational protocols	Respectful, relational, culturally appropriate qualitative inquiry
Kaupapa Māori	Māori communities, Aotearoa New Zealand	Māori-centered research paradigm	Self-determination, cultural integrity, Indigenous authority	Broader Indigenous paradigm rather than a single conversational technique	Māori self-determination, cultural integrity, Indigenous authority
Indigenous Storywork	First Nations contexts in Canada	Storywork and story-based learning	Respect, responsibility, reciprocity, holism, interrelatedness	Centers story as knowledge, pedagogy, and relationship	Transmission of knowledge, values, relationships, and teachings
Chiya Guff	Nepal; proposed from Indigenous cultural contexts	Tea-centered everyday conversation	Hospitality, relationship, reciprocity, dialogue, storytelling, accountability	Theorizes tea-centered sociality as a situated conversational framework	Community-based qualitative inquiry through relational



					conversation and collaborative interpretation
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Table 1. *Comparison of selected Indigenous methodologies and relational approaches.*

The comparison is presented as a set of conceptual findings that identify shared principles as well as contextual and methodological differences.

The comparison suggests that Chiya Guff belongs to a broader family of Indigenous methodologies that challenge extractive research and center relationships, reciprocity, cultural context, and collaborative knowledge creation. Its similarities with Talanoa and Yarning are particularly visible in the emphasis on open conversation, trust, and relational engagement. Its connection with Indigenous Storywork is evident in the importance of Storywork and shared meaning-making, while its relationship to Kaupapa Māori is strongest in the emphasis on Indigenous authority, cultural integrity, and rejection of a single universal model of research. However, Chiya Guff should not be confused with Talanoa or Yarning. Talanoa emerges from Pacific contexts, while Yarning is grounded in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander contexts in Australia. Both methodologies have developed from specific Indigenous communities and histories.

Hospitality is another distinctive characteristic. In Nepali contexts, tea can serve as a material and social expression of welcome. Hospitality may open a space for conversation, but it does not replace ethical requirements such as consent, confidentiality, community authority, and reflexivity. The framework also contributes a Nepal-based perspective to methodological literature that has been particularly developed in Pacific, Australian, Aotearoa New Zealand, and North American contexts.

Finally, Chiya Guff emphasizes the methodological potential of everyday life. Indigenous knowledge production is not restricted to ceremonies, formal institutions, or specialized knowledge spaces. Everyday conversations can also become spaces in which knowledge is remembered, interpreted, taught, negotiated, and reproduced. This argument aligns with recent scholarship challenging the treatment of Indigenous methodologies as fixed lists of techniques and emphasizing their continuing development through relationships, practices, and places ([Kawharu et al., 2024](#); [Butler et al., 2024](#)).

5. Discussion

The conceptual findings suggest that Chiya Guff may provide a useful framework for community-based qualitative research in Nepal, but its contribution should be understood carefully. It is not presented as a new interviewing trick. Rather, it is a methodological re-reading of an everyday cultural practice. This distinction matters because Indigenous methodologies are culturally grounded and cannot be universalized. Positionality, community-owned knowledge, relationships, cultural context, and accountability remain central to decolonizing research ([Denscombe, 2025](#); [Palakiko et al., 2024](#)).



5.1 Chiya Guff and Talanoa

Chiya Guff and Talanoa share an understanding of conversation as a relational process rather than merely a mechanism for collecting information. Both value dialogue, shared experience, reflection, and culturally grounded communication. Recent work also shows that Talanoa can extend into collective interpretation ([Mafile'o et al., 2024](#)). The distinction lies in cultural context: Talanoa emerges from Pacific languages, histories, relationships, and protocols, whereas Chiya Guff is proposed from Nepali tea-centered social interaction. The comparison therefore supports the possibility of culturally grounded dialogue without suggesting that Chiya Guff is a Nepali version of Talanoa.

5.2 Chiya Guff and Yarning

Yarning provides a particularly useful comparison because it places relationship before and during the research conversation. Yarning scholarship emphasizes a protected relational space and responsibilities of respect, reciprocity, and accountability ([Barlo et al., 2021](#); [Kennedy et al., 2022](#)). Chiya Guff shares this relational orientation, but its cultural entry point is tea-centered hospitality in Nepal. Yarning's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander protocols should not be assumed within Chiya Guff; the comparison instead demonstrates the methodological importance of culturally familiar conversation when relationships and responsibilities are explicit.

5.3 Chiya Guff and Indigenous Storywork

Storytelling is important to Chiya Guff because stories can connect individual experience with family memory, community history, values, identity, and everyday knowledge. Indigenous Storywork, however, is a specific methodological and pedagogical framework grounded in particular First Nations contexts ([Archibald, 2008](#)). Chiya Guff therefore draws on the methodological significance of storytelling without claiming to reproduce Storywork. The comparison demonstrates that stories may communicate knowledge that would not necessarily emerge through standardized questions while also reinforcing the need for cultural specificity.

5.4 Chiya Guff and Kaupapa Māori

Kaupapa Māori offers a broader paradigmatic comparison. Its emphasis on Māori self-determination, cultural integrity, Indigenous authority, and research grounded in Māori aspirations demonstrates that methodology cannot be separated from the communities and knowledge systems in which it is produced. For Chiya Guff, this reinforces the point that simply placing tea inside a conventional research structure would not transform the underlying power relationship. The framework must instead attend to cultural protocols, community expectations, researcher positionality, and authority.

5.5 Chiya Guff and Emerging Nepal-Based Methodologies

The strongest contextual comparison comes from recent Nepal-based scholarship. Rai identify raithane approaches such as bhetghat baatchit, fursad gaph, padheri gaph, and Chule gaph, while Rai examine Dapla Khaa as a culturally embedded form of hearth talk involving conversation, storytelling, memory, humor, cultural teaching, and intergenerational learning ([Rai et al., 2026a](#); [Rai et al., 2026b](#)). These studies demonstrate that culturally grounded



conversational practices are already emerging as methodological resources in Nepal. Chiya Guff contributes to this movement by focusing specifically on tea-centered sociality and by organizing its relational characteristics into a conceptual framework.

5.6 What Makes Chiya Guff Distinctive?

Chiya Guff has four distinguishing features. First, it begins with everyday social practice rather than a practice already established in methodological literature. Second, it places hospitality at the center of the research relationship while recognizing that hospitality must be accompanied by consent and accountability. Third, it contributes a Nepal-based perspective to international Indigenous methodological scholarship. Fourth, it highlights everyday cultural life as a potential site of knowledge production and methodological reflection.

These claims should be understood as situated rather than universal. Chiya Guff is not necessarily Indigenous in every context, and tea-centered conversation is not necessarily practiced in the same form across all Indigenous communities in Nepal. The framework is therefore a provisional conceptual proposition whose value will depend on future community-based research that may support, challenge, adapt, or refute it.

5.7 Ethical and Practical Implications

Several ethical implications follow. Hospitality must not become a tool for extracting information. Informed consent remains necessary even when conversation is informal, particularly when ordinary social interaction becomes research data. Researchers must attend to power differences related to age, gender, caste, class, education, status, and institutional authority. Confidentiality requires care because informal conversations may include family histories, personal experiences, or culturally sensitive knowledge. Reciprocity should extend beyond the interaction toward appropriate knowledge sharing, representation, and community benefit. These concerns reinforce that a practice is not automatically decolonial simply because it is informal or locally familiar.

5.8 Limitations

First, Chiya Guff remains a conceptual rather than empirically validated methodology. The proposed principles and research pathway require testing in actual community settings.

Second, the framework is culturally situated. Nepal's Indigenous communities have different languages, histories, social structures, and protocols. Therefore, Chiya Guff should not be assumed to represent all communities; researchers should first determine whether a similar practice exists locally and what protocols should guide its use.

Third, informal conversation does not automatically remove power differences. Age, gender, caste, education, status, language, and institutional authority may influence participation and interpretation. Relationality therefore requires active accountability, not simply good intentions ([Windchief & Cummins, 2022](#); [Reo, 2019](#)).

Fourth, confidentiality may be more difficult in informal community settings where others can enter or overhear conversations. Researchers should therefore use context-sensitive procedures for consent, recording, storage, anonymization, and protection of community-held knowledge.



Implementation may also create practical tensions between informal conversational practices and institutional research requirements. Researchers may need to negotiate how informed consent, recording, documentation, data management, and ethical review are handled when conversations occur in ordinary social settings.

Finally, there is a risk of romanticizing cultural practices. Calling a practice Indigenous does not automatically make it ethical or rigorous. Chiya Guff should remain a community-agreed option that respects internal diversity and participants' preferences, rather than a mandatory research technique.

5.9 Future Research

Future research should move from conceptual development toward community-based empirical examination. Studies could explore how different Indigenous communities in Nepal understand tea sharing, hospitality, storytelling, and informal conversation; whether participants experience tea-centered conversation differently from structured interviews or focus groups; and how the framework operates across differences of gender, age, caste, geography, language, and social status. Researchers should also examine how consent, confidentiality, reciprocity, and community benefit are negotiated in informal settings. Most importantly, communities themselves should be able to evaluate, modify, challenge, or reject the framework. Its legitimacy cannot be established through the researcher's conceptual argument alone.

6. Conclusion

This paper has conceptualized Chiya Guff (Tea Talk) as a potential Nepal-based conversational framework for community-based qualitative research. Its methodological significance lies not in tea as a beverage but in the relational sociality surrounding tea sharing: hospitality, conversation, storytelling, listening, reciprocity, reflection, and relationship building. The analysis identified four philosophical foundations—relationality, situated and co-created knowledge, hospitality and accountability, and flexible dialogue—and synthesized them into five guiding principles: relational accountability, hospitality, reciprocity, storytelling and dialogue, and reflexivity.

These principles were translated into six interconnected stages: community entry and cultural engagement, relationship building, tea-centered conversation, collaborative interpretation, community reflection and validation, and knowledge sharing and community benefit. Comparison with Talanoa, Yarning, Indigenous Storywork, and Kaupapa Māori demonstrates shared concerns with relationality, dialogue, storytelling, reciprocity, cultural responsibility, and community participation while also showing why culturally specific methodologies should not be copied across contexts. Recent Nepal-based scholarship further demonstrates that the methodological possibilities of everyday cultural practices are already emerging in Nepal.

Chiya Guff is therefore not presented as a finished methodology, a universal model, or an automatically decolonial practice. It is a provisional conceptual framework whose value depends on cultural specificity, ethical responsibility, community accountability, and empirical



examination. Its central contribution is to ask how an ordinary Nepali social practice may become a source of methodological knowledge when its relational and ethical dimensions are taken seriously. Future communities and researchers must determine whether, how, and in what forms the framework should develop.

Recommendation

Chiya Guff should not be imposed as a universal research practice, as its relevance may vary across communities and cultural contexts. Communities should be encouraged to evaluate and adapt it according to their own needs and cultural protocols. Further empirical studies are needed to examine its effectiveness and limitations in different research settings. Researchers should also ensure informed consent, respect local protocols, and maintain ethical responsibility and community accountability.

Author Contribution

Prakash Roka conceptualized the study, conducted the literature review and conceptual analysis, developed the proposed framework, drafted and revised the manuscript, and approved the final version.

AI Use Statement

Generative artificial intelligence tools were used during manuscript preparation to assist with language editing, organization, and revision in response to reviewer comments. The author reviewed and verified the manuscript, references, interpretations, and final content and accepts responsibility for the accuracy and integrity of the work.

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