

Communication for Empowerment in Nepal

An assessment of communication and media needs among indigenous peoples

2009



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Acknowledgements

This assessment was produced under the initiative 'Indigenous Voices: Communication for Empowerment (C4E) of Asia's Indigenous Peoples'. UNDP Regional Centre in Bangkok (RCB) led the implementation of the initiative. UNDP RCB wishes to acknowledge the dedicated contribution of Khim Ghale, President of the Association of Nepalese Indigenous Nationalities Journalists (ANIJ), the leadership of Dr. Chaitanya Subba and the local research team, including Krishna Chaudhari, Mangal Menyangbo and Amrit Rai. Binod Bhattarai provided invaluable support and substantive inputs throughout the drafting process and Chhan Bhattachan processed the field research data in a timely and structured manner.

Special thanks go to the Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities (NEFIN), Foundation of National Indigenous Nationalities (NEFDIN) and the National Indigenous Women's Federation (NIWF) for their support and cooperation during the study. Without the views and information provided by various organizations and individuals interviewed and surveyed, particularly the indigenous peoples in the three participating districts, this study would not have been possible.

UNDP RCB also wishes to express its appreciation to UNDP Nepal, particularly Jorn Sorensen, Sharad Neupane and Tek Tamata for their support throughout the implementation. We would also like to thank the Capacity Development of the National Human Rights Commission Project for their support in the successful organization of the National Stakeholder Consultation on Communication for Empowerment on 19-20 January 2010. The consultation would not have been possible without representative organizations of indigenous peoples in Nepal and their active participation. Valuable insights and comments were shared during the consultation by Pasang Sherpa, President of NEFIN; Barsha Man Pun, Constituent Assembly member; Indra Bahadur Guring; Prithivi Subba Gurung and other stakeholders.

Substantive comments were provided by Chandra Roy, Birgitte Jallof, Paavani Reddy, Manohar Bhattarai, Tek Tamata and Sharad Neupane during the finalization of the report. Furthermore, Lars Bestle and Ryce Chanchai coordinated the Regional Initiative on C4E and contributed to the overall writing and analysis of the report. Rukka Sombolinggi co-organized the National Stakeholder Consultation.

Finally, special appreciation must be given to UNDP Oslo Governance Centre and Communication for Social Change Consortium for the enriching collaboration and partnership and, above all, for providing the funding mobilized through the United Nations Democracy Fund (UNDEF). This support made it possible for this unique initiative to operate at the global, regional and national levels simultaneously and planted the seeds for additional funding to enable expansion of the C4E initiative to other countries in 2010.

Foreword

Nepal is blessed with a remarkable diversity of culture and traditions and is home to people from nearly 60 indigenous ethnic groups and nationalities. On the other hand, the caste system and secular forms of government have fostered the exclusion and marginalization of large population groups. Exclusion and marginalization were root causes of the past decade of armed conflict. The Comprehensive Peace Agreement signed in 2006 clearly spells out the need for inclusion and giving a voice and equal opportunity to marginalized and excluded groups.

Indigenous peoples are among the most marginalized and vulnerable groups in the world. In Nepal, the excluded groups are comprised of women, Dalits (so called “untouchable”), indigenous peoples (IPs) and religious minorities. People in these groups have little or no voice and participation in decision-making and governance processes. There are large gaps between groups in terms of access, voice, participation and development.

Since 2006, Nepal has taken major steps to ensure increased participation of indigenous peoples in policy making through provisions in the Interim Constitution of Nepal 2007 and a new electoral law that requires political parties to ensure proportional representation of all excluded groups in parliament. Similar measures have been taken in the civil service and other state structures. In 2002, the National Foundation for the Development of Indigenous Nationalities (NFDIN) was established to oversee the development interests of indigenous peoples and to make policy recommendations. Currently, the government recognizes 59 indigenous nationalities and a process is underway to reclassify other groups that are seeking this recognition.

In 2007, Nepal formally acknowledged that indigenous peoples have suffered historic exclusion, limiting them in exercising their right to identity, with all the associated impacts on their participation in the overall development process. Nepal therefore decided to ratify International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples. Nepal also endorsed the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), following its adoption on 13 September 2007 by the United Nations General Assembly. Among other things, UNDRIP emphasizes the importance of inclusive communication and media and provides a benchmark to guide and inspire efforts to promote and protect indigenous peoples’ rights.

In recognition of UNDRIP, the UNDP Regional Centre in Bangkok launched the Regional Initiative on Communication for Empowerment of Asia’s Indigenous Peoples in December 2007. The initiative emphasized the role of a diverse media and inclusive communication channels as empowering mechanisms to enhance voice, inclusive participation and democratic governance.

During the C4E pilot project and at the time of this report, Nepal was in the process of drafting a new Constitution, expected to be ready in May 2010. One of the main challenges has been to ensure that it is fully rights-based and inclusive. The Constituent Assembly (CA) is the most inclusive ever, with 601 members coming from 25 different parties, many of them from traditionally marginalized and excluded groups. For the first time, the CA members travelled across the entire country to solicit the opinions of the people for the new constitution; in addition, many other efforts were made by NGOs and development partners to raise awareness, provide information and encourage the voicing of opinions by all groups of society, in particular the most excluded. Mainstream as well as local media played a very important role in the complex process by giving voice to different views and by ensuring the participation of all marginalized groups in the discussions on state building.

This report provides essential insights to how the indigenous peoples of Nepal are organized and represented by the national and local media. The report describes the media landscape in three districts inhabited by indigenous peoples and reveals that Nepal has one of the most vibrant media environments in Asia, particularly in community radio, yet these channels could be strengthened for ensuring voice and participation for indigenous peoples in the future. Alternative channels, using modern technology, should also be explored as a means to bringing information and giving a voice to indigenous peoples, especially in the most remote areas of the country. The report points to specific recommendations and proposes activities that can mutually benefit the media and indigenous peoples.

I hope that the findings and recommendations from this report can help to enable indigenous peoples in Nepal to enjoy better access to information, strengthen their communication among and between their communities as well as with the broader Nepalese society, and have a stronger voice in matters that affect their daily lives.

Anne-Isabelle Degryse-Blateau
Country Director, UNDP Nepal

Preface: A Step Towards Inclusive Participation

Communication underpins human development because it enables people to access, produce and transfer to others information that is important for their empowerment and progress. Through communication people are able to arrive at their own understanding of issues, to consider and discuss ideas, and to engage in national public debates. Communication thus enables people to negotiate, develop and act on knowledge, and it facilitates the formation of public opinion without which democracy cannot exist.

While being very different types of organizations and working with very different mandates, the UNDP Oslo Governance Centre and the Communication for Social Change Consortium share an understanding of the importance of communication as a tool and a methodology that can make development strategies more effective, more sustainable, more pro-poor and more gender sensitive.

In UNDP, the recently approved 2008-2013 Strategic Plan recognizes that communication channels are key determinants of inclusive participation. Inclusive participation is a focus for the work of UNDP in the area of democratic governance. The approach is rooted in the knowledge that one of the challenges facing developing countries is the lack of inclusion and participation of poor and vulnerable groups in decisions that affect their lives.

The Communication for Social Change Consortium fundamentally believes that communication has the power to change societies. Participatory communication approaches can help us to better understand how commonly held social values and beliefs are nurtured and spread within cultures, and this knowledge is a powerful step towards helping people decide upon and begin to make the kind of changes they want and need in order to make their lives better.

Said differently, the Consortium helps people to obtain necessary skills and feel empowered enough to advocate for changes that will make their communities healthier, their countries stronger, and their families more productive. When people come together in dialogue – and plan and act together – it is the truest form of democracy.

One of the most exciting manifestations of democratic principles is understanding how information flows within communities and unleashing the voices of those people who are often not heard or seen. We have looked forward with great anticipation to the findings of the Communication for Empowerment pilot projects.

A few years ago, the UNDP Oslo Governance Centre developed the UNDP Guidance Note on Communication for Empowerment, drawing upon the expertise of the Communication for Social Change Consortium. The purpose of this Guidance Note was to turn the above general insights into mainstream planning tools that facilitate an understanding of the information and communication needs of the poor and the marginalized, hopefully also making this a permanent feature in national development planning processes.

This report is part of a series of pilot Needs Assessments in five Least Developed Countries, funded by a grant from the United Nations Democracy Fund. The country pilots will be followed by a global synthesis report that will reflect on the experience of the five pilots and provide tools for national actors to conduct their own assessments and to develop their own strategies for incorporating Communication for Empowerment into national planning processes and programmes.

We hope that this partnership between UNDP Nepal, other stakeholders in Nepal, UNDP Regional Centre in Bangkok, UNDP Oslo Governance Centre, and the Communication for Social Change Consortium can offer a contribution towards listening more effectively to the needs and views of communities throughout the country, and that these needs and views will increasingly inform our approach to development.

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Contents

Acknowledgements

Foreword

Preface: A Step Towards Inclusive Participation

Terms and Definitions

Executive Summary

Inclusion and Development of the Indigenous Peoples	1
Media and ICT landscape	2
Field Assessment	3
Communication and Information Needs	5
Key Recommendations	6

1. Introduction and Background 11

The Concept of Communication for Empowerment	12
The C4E Practical Guidance Note and Project: Developing Media Strategies in Support of Vulnerable Groups	12
The Regional Initiative on Indigenous Voices: Communication for Empowerment of Asia's Indigenous Peoples.	13
The C4E Approach and Process in Nepal	16

2. National Overview Study 19

2.1 Inclusion and Development of the Indigenous Peoples 20

National Context.	21
Demographic Profile	22
Development Situation of the Indigenous Peoples	26
Social and Political Exclusion	28
National Policy and Legal Framework: Implications for Inclusion of Indigenous Peoples	31
Organized Voices of Indigenous Peoples	33
Key Challenges and Opportunities for the Indigenous Peoples	34

2.2 Media and ICT Landscape in Nepal 35

Overview of the Media Landscape	35
Media Policy and Regulations	41
Indigenous Peoples in the Media	43
Coverage of Issues Related to Indigenous Peoples in the Media	44
Overview of ICT and Telecommunication Landscape	45
ICT Policy and Regulations	47
Rural ICT Initiatives	47
Key Challenges and Opportunities for Indigenous Peoples in Media and ICT	48

3. Communication for Empowerment Field Study 53

Field Research Methodology	54
Findings in the Three Districts	56
Comparative Analysis of the Three Districts	66
Summary of Key Information and Communication Needs, Challenges and Opportunities Identified through Field Research	69

4. Analysis of the Findings from the National Overview Study and Field Research 73

Development Situation for Indigenous Nationalities. . . . .	.74
Communication and Information Needs . . . . .	.74
Appropriate Communication Channels for Empowerment, Inclusion and Participation of Indigenous Peoples. . . . .	.75

5. C4E Recommendations and Proposals for National C4E Interventions	77
References.	85

Appendix I: Field Research - Household Survey Questionnaire . . . . .	.88
Appendix II: Research Data for Nepal . . . . .	.91
Appendix III: Summary of Focus Group Discussions with IPs Leaders in Kathmandu . . . . .	.98
Appendix IV: List of Focus Group Discussion Participants and Interviewees in Kathmandu . . . . .	.99
Appendix V: List of People Met during the Scoping Mission	100
Appendix VI: List of Official Interviews	101
Appendix VII: Field Research Team	102

List of Figures

Figure 1: Percent Composition of the Population by Caste/Ethnicity (Total Population: 22,736,934). . . . .	.24
Figure 2: Proportion of those with Bachelor's Degrees and Above (Percent) . . . . .	.28
Figure 3: Nepal's Caste Hierarchy . . . . .	.29
Figure 4: Respondents by Caste/Ethnicity in Study Area . . . . .	.56
Figure 5: Reliability of Information Across Districts . . . . .	.67

List of Tables

Table 1: Major Population Groups in Nepal . . . . .	.23
Table 2: Representation in Legislative Bodies and Constituent Assembly 2008 . . . . .	.31
Table 3: Preferred Sources of Information . . . . .	.37
Table 4: Newspapers Published in Different Languages. . . . .	.38
Table 5: Media by Zones (Parenthesis Show the Percent of Weekly Newspapers) . . . . .	.39
Table 6: Profile of Respondents in the Survey Districts . . . . .	.55
Table 7: Comparative Dataset for the Three Study Districts . . . . .	.69
Table 8: Priority Areas for C4E Interventions . . . . .	.82

List of Maps

Map 1: Nepal . . . . .	.20
Map 2: Ethnographic Map of Nepal (Native Area of Ethnic/Caste Groups) . . . . .	.25
Map 3: Locations of Field Research for C4E Study . . . . .	.55
Map 4: Location of Rasuwa District . . . . .	.60
Map 5: Location of Tehrathum District63

List of Boxes

Box 1: Radio Menchayem66
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Abbreviations

ACORAB	Association of Community Broadcasters
B/C	Brahmin/Chhetri
CA	Constituent Assembly
CBS	Central Bureau of Statistics
C4E	Communication for Empowerment
DDC	District Development Committee
DFID	Department for International Development
FPTP	First-Past-The-Post
HDI	Human Development Index
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
ICT4D	Information and Communication Technologies for Development
ILO	International Labour Organization
IPs	Indigenous Peoples
ICIMOD	International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development
NFDIN	National Foundation for the Development of Indigenous Nationalities
NEFIN	Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PCN	Press Council Nepal
TPAMF	Tanka Prasad Acharya Memorial Foundation
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDRIP	United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
VDC	Village Development Committee

Terms and Definitions

Terms	Definitions
Access to Information and Communications	The study has examined information and communications separately and not as interchangeable concepts. On one hand, access to information is a precondition for empowering IPs through understanding of issues and rights. On the other hand, communication means the ability of the people to express their voice, participate in a dialogue and influence decisions that affect their lives. The two complement each other but also embody separate meanings, which are necessary for understanding and implementing the C4E study.
Communication for Empowerment (C4E) Approach	C4E encompasses the role of communications as an empowering mechanism to enhance inclusive participation and governance. It is based on the fundamental belief that social inclusion and participation through access to information and effective communication channels are integral parts of democratic governance and sustainable development for the poor, vulnerable and marginalized groups. In essence, the C4E approach focuses on the governance dimensions of poverty, which recognizes the lack of voice, participation and choice as a result from social exclusion and discrimination.
Dalit	'Dalit' is a self-designation for a group of people traditionally regarded as low caste or untouchables. Dalits are a mixed population of numerous caste groups all over South Asia, and speak various languages. They are among the most marginalized groups in all of South Asia, where even though untouchability has been abolished it still exists in practice.
Indigenous peoples or indigenous nationalities	<p>Indigenous communities, peoples and nations are those that have a historical continuity to earlier societies and are determined to preserve, develop and transmit to future generations their ancestral territories and a collective social and cultural identity that is distinct from dominant groups in society. United Nations human rights bodies, ILO, the World Bank and international law apply four criteria to distinguish indigenous peoples: (a) indigenous peoples usually live within (or maintain attachments to) geographically distinct ancestral territories; (b) they tend to maintain distinct social, economic, and political institutions within their territories; (c) they typically aspire to remain distinct culturally, geographically and institutionally rather than assimilate fully into national society; and (d) they self-identify as indigenous or tribal. Despite common characteristics, there does not exist any single accepted definition of indigenous peoples that captures their diversity as peoples. Self-identification as indigenous or tribal is a fundamental criterion for determining whether groups are indigenous or tribal, sometimes in combination with other variables such as 'language spoken' and 'geographic location or concentration'.</p> <p>(Source: United Nations, <i>The Concept of Indigenous Peoples</i>, the Secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, 19-21 January 2004; UNDP, <i>UNDP and Indigenous Peoples: A Practice Note on Engagement</i>, 2001)</p>
Voice	'Voice' is defined as representation in formal institutions to enhance participation. In the C4E context, voice means access and representation in the media. It also extends to mean organizing and forming institutions to voice and articulate demands of excluded groups. The outcomes of voice, influence and agency are the extent to which poor and excluded people engage, influence and hold institutions that affect them accountable

Executive Summary

Indigenous peoples (IPs) in Nepal, known there as indigenous nationalities, remain a marginalized and vulnerable group largely excluded from the mainstream development process. They represent 37.2 percent of the population. A large number of IPs, particularly indigenous women, have been living in extreme poverty and face many development challenges, including limited access to natural resources, unequal access to healthcare, education, water and sanitation.

The changing socio-political climate in Nepal is witnessing increasing political participation of the IPs and demands changes in the governance systems in the country. But an informed participation of citizens in governance and other decision making processes requires access to information and effective communication channels. Therefore, this Communication for Empowerment assessment in Nepal aims to identify challenges and opportunities to enhance voice and participation of IPs in the governance and development process.

The C4E study is comprised of three main parts: the national overview study, the media and ICT landscape and the field assessment.

Inclusion and Development of the Indigenous Peoples

Since 2006, Nepal has been going through a major social and political transformation, including the election of the Constituent Assembly and the unprecedented process of creating a constitution to establish Nepal as a federal republic. The new constitution defines a new structure, and the right to self-determination lies at the heart of demands by indigenous peoples for greater recognition in this new structure. Decisions about the state structure and how it will be governed are the most contentious issues in the ongoing debate, and they will have implications for the inclusive participation and development of indigenous peoples for years to come.

The national overview study examines the diversity and complexity of the Nepali society with its various caste and ethnic identities. It also illustrates significant dimensions of language, religion, geographic areas and variations in development outcomes among the different groups of indigenous peoples. The expression of grievances and issues of the oppressed groups, including IPs, has brought 'identity politics' to prominence in Nepal. Collective mobilization of these groups has created an environment of ethno-political conflict.¹ The cultural, social, political and economic differences between dominant caste groups and the subordinated IPs (and other excluded groups) run deep in the Nepali society.

Nepal faces a critical challenge in establishing social cohesion, especially given the conflicting demands among the various social groups. There is very little intergroup dialogue on issues of concern to indigenous peoples, especially in the mass media. IPs groups are often under-represented in major governance institutions. A bureaucracy that is more inclusive and representative could help to ensure more effective development, particularly in the delivery of basic social services to IPs and other commonly excluded groups.

The current process of social and political transformation in Nepal provides a unique opportunity for the empowerment and mobilization of indigenous peoples. Over the past decade, groups representing IPs have become more organized and can now lobby and advocate for ending inequality and for building more inclusive democratic governance systems. The umbrella organization representing all indigenous peoples' organizations (IPOs) is the Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities (NEFIN). NEFIN notes socio-economic disparity among groups of indigenous peoples and recognizes the need for special efforts to support the livelihoods and development of the 'disadvantaged' groups.

¹ Ethno-political conflict, according to Ted Robert Gurr (1997:8,9) "has become the principle source of warfare, insecurity, and loss of life in the contemporary world" and such conflicts "are the principle source of humanitarian disasters" (genocide, mass political murder, civilian fatalities, refugee situations and internal displacement, etc.). Conflict experts from dominant groups often express concerns about the consequences of ethno politics or identity politics in Nepal. Intellectuals from subordinated groups argue that cultural or identity politics is eclipsing contemporary Nepali social politics of equality due to the latter's failure to accommodate differences and deepen democracy. (Subba, 2009)

The formation of an IPs caucus of representatives in the Constituent Assembly provides an excellent opportunity for amplifying demands and negotiating for desired policies and legal instruments for more inclusive participation. There are thus opportunities for incorporating the rights of IPs into the new constitution. Increasingly, the recent national development plans and policies have recognized the need for specific provisions to advance development of IPs and excluded groups. Currently, Nepal officially recognizes 59 groups of indigenous peoples. However, there is an ongoing process to identify and categorize groups that were not included in the earlier classification.

Media and ICT landscape

This section examines the media and information and communication technology (ICT) landscape in Nepal as it pertains to indigenous peoples, including the policy and legal environment, challenges and opportunities. Access to traditional media (print, TV and radio) and to new media is examined in terms of physical access, language, different types of media outlets and the use of ICTs. It also explores the role of the mainstream media in amplifying the voice and participation of indigenous peoples' groups in Nepali society, including the issues related to representation, ownership and coverage of their issues.

The key findings from the overview of the media landscape indicate that indigenous peoples' communities have relatively little access, voice and participation in the mainstream media. By and large, Nepal's media is owned and controlled by more socially and economically powerful groups or influenced by political parties. IPs and other excluded groups have low representation in the media. Their demands are not always well represented or acknowledged. In addition, language remains a major barrier. Content in their first language (mother tongue) is still limited in the mainstream media. Furthermore, IPs often have low literacy rates in their first language, which means that the written word is not the most effective medium for access to information and communications. Resource and capacity constraints are two other major challenges, particularly for media organizations at the local and community levels.

Concurrently, indigenous peoples have very limited access to ICT-enabled communications. While access to telecommunication services is gradually increasing, the usage is rather inconsistent due to the inability to pay for the equipment and services as well as challenges to service reliability. ICT services and applications have very low relevance to the majority of rural Nepalis, including IPs. Services and information provided on the Internet do not match the needs of users.

Nevertheless, new opportunities for enhancing access, voice and participation of IPs have emerged as the technological convergence of the traditional and new media comes closer to reality and services become more affordable. In addition, the new media and networked communication environments have transformed the communicative space driven by the use of modern technology such as the Internet, wireless technologies and mobile telephony. Through these new technologies, users and communities, including IPs, can create content themselves. Other opportunities lie in the improvement of the existing media and communication channels, particularly community radio.

Potential of community radio and other forms of media

Radio remains a major medium for indigenous peoples to communicate with the rest of the society. It is an important source of information and is widely owned and accessible. As of July 2009, Nepal's broadcasting sector was comprised of 323 licensed FM radio stations and 12 television channels. About 195 FM stations claimed to be community radio stations of which more than 160 were broadcasting at that time. These community radio stations were owned and operated by non-governmental organizations (NGOs), cooperatives and local government bodies. Radio, especially FM, reaches large parts of the country. According to the Broadcast Audience Survey (2006-2007) conducted by Equal Access Nepal, radio is ranked as the second most preferred source of information (96 percent) after television (99.3 percent) in urban areas. It remains the most preferred information source (98 percent) in rural areas. Although Nepal has a fairly wide network of community radio stations, they have not been used for C4E of the indigenous peoples. This is an opportunity that can be explored as part of the social inclusion process.

Infrastructure and opportunities for new media and ICTs in the remote rural areas

Nepal has a basic fibre cable network connecting the plains districts and there are plans to connect all districts within five years. Upon completion, Nepal will have the basic infrastructure needed to expand communication outreach using ICTs and new media. However, there are issues around ownership and pricing of the infrastructure and its use for rural communications that need to be resolved before it can be effectively used to promote voice and participation of IPs.

Combinations of mobile phones, new media and mainstream media

Mobile telephony is growing rapidly in Nepal. Competition in the telecommunications sector has brought down prices, making this tool accessible to a growing number of people. Some efforts are already underway at using mobile phones for soliciting public opinion in the media. This can be used immediately to bring the voices of more IPs to the forefront on issues put up for vote. Such initiatives can benefit from partnerships between organizations that represent IPs and the mainstream media. Potential opportunities through mobile phones and other ICT applications can help enhance media content and expand space for communications among indigenous peoples in the mainstream media. These communication channels could promote the voices of IPs on issues that matter to them, and ensure that their views are broadly reflected in the media at the national level.

Nepal has a National Information Commission for ensuring the right of the people to be informed. This provides another opportunity to ensure that IPs and other marginalized groups can access the information they need to make decisions affecting their lives.

Field Assessment

The field study on information and communication needs, challenges and opportunities for IPs provides data for verifying and complementing the national overview study as well as the review of the media and ICT landscape. It does not seek to provide a representative view of the entire indigenous population in Nepal. Indigenous peoples were involved in the research process as the targeted beneficiaries of the C4E initiative, and also as partners in participatory development. These findings are expected to assist in devising intervention strategies and actions for addressing information and communication needs of IPs in specific groups and areas. They could also assist in planning C4E interventions for excluded groups in Nepal. The recommendations based on the key findings are, through extrapolation, applicable to other parts of Nepal. In addition, the experiences and lessons from the community level research are also expected to help in improving the methodology for national C4E studies to be conducted in other countries.

The study examined information and communications separately and not as interchangeable concepts. On one hand, access to information is a precondition for empowering IPs through understanding of issues and rights. On the other hand, communication means the ability of the people to express their voice, participate in a dialogue and influence decisions that affect their lives. The two complement each other but also embody separate meanings, which are necessary for understanding and implementing the C4E study.

The study was conducted in three locations:

- Durgauli, Kailali district in mid-western Nepal;
- Syaphru, Rasuwa district in the central region north of Kathmandu; and
- Basantapur, Tehrathum district in the eastern region of the country.

The research locations were selected taking into account the time constraints and they do not necessarily fully represent the three indigenous groups — Tharu, Tamang and Limbu — to which the majority of respondents belonged. Nevertheless, the selection of locations was intended to achieve a broad conceptual understanding of the diversity, geographical spread and differences in development outcomes among the different groups. The locations were fairly easily accessible by vehicle and therefore, the IPs at the locations generally represented a higher level of development in terms of access to modern infrastructures compared to those living in remote areas.

The field research provides insights into the diversity in Nepal and how it influences the lives of the people, particularly their access to information, voice and participation in communications and development. Some of the key issues are common to all IPs. Others are more specific to the different social groups, their geographic locations and languages. These conditions are reflected in their different priorities. This section attempts to identify the commonalities and differences based on a comparative assessment of the findings from the three field study locations.

Access to information and media

The level of access to information varied by geographical location. IPs living in both Kailali district and Tehrathum district had higher access to sources of information compared to Rasuwa district. Kailali and Tehrathum also differed in terms of physical access. By and large, eastern Nepal has greater exposure and access to media compared to western Nepal. Ironically, although Rasuwa lies in the central region of Nepal, which has the highest concentration of the media, it lagged behind the two other districts in the study's findings on access to information.

The ability to make use of information in the media also varies across locations and social groups. This is an outcome of the differences in languages, low literacy in the mother tongue and non-availability of information in local languages. Most of the information is available only in the Nepali language. Literacy in the Nepali language is also low among IPs and the levels vary across groups. Language can determine relevance of information to specific groups.

At the level of the information 'product', programming formats determine the level of access to information. Generally, the media had very little content on local issues, and even less content on issues of interest to the IPs. Though the community radio in Tehrathum was more advanced in terms of programming for IPs compared to radios in other districts, there is a general need for improving content in all three districts. This can be implemented by enhancing representation of the IPs in the media and building local capacity for producing locally relevant programmes.

Despite shortcomings, radio was the preferred media in terms of reliability of information in the study locations. Radio ownership was also high and this suggests that it could be the medium that can provide villagers greatest access to information and voice. Mobile phone ownership was also high across the three districts. However, the mobile phones are used more for personal communications and not as a primary source of information.

Across the study locations, the villagers relied on traditional local sources to access information. These included the *Katuwal* or village-criers in Kailali. Other information sources included teachers, health workers, and people at the markets and social gatherings. Word-of mouth and face-to-face meetings were also identified as information sources. Community media centres, such as telecentres, remain constrained by the lack of Internet connectivity, lack of resources to establish and run the centres, and the need to improve the content available for dissemination through the telecentres. If developed, telecentres could be sources of information to the villagers.

Voice and communication

Voice and communication can be enhanced when information systems allow interactivity and exchange of different views and opinions. Programme design, content planning and production systems can determine the extent to which people can engage and participate in discussions in the media. In the study locations that had community radios, there were some programme formats that allowed people to discuss issues. The farther away people were from a radio station (e.g. Rasuwa), the more detached they were from media content and its potential benefits.

The presence of a large number of radio stations does not necessarily lead to more inclusive voice and communication for indigenous peoples, the study suggests. Rather, numerous stations can potentially exacerbate tension and mistrust among different social groups, especially if these radio stations are co-opted by political parties or other partisan interests.

In Kailali, for example, a relatively large number of radio stations are in operation, but this did not seem to play a critical role in enhancing voice and communication for IPs, nor did people consider radio as the most useful communication platform in this district. In contrast, Tehrathum

had only one station, but it stood out in terms of the people's references to its programming, its representation of different social groups and its strong focus on local issues.

Indigenous Peoples in the media

Not only are IPs under-represented in Nepal's media, they are not always properly and positively portrayed. During the assessment respondents from all IPs groups indicated that the lack of or negative coverage of issue related to their group was due to lack of journalists from their ethnic group in media agencies. This shows a strong need to improve newsroom diversity in order to bring in the voices and increase participation of IPs, and also to ensure more indigenous-sensitive coverage. Nepal has some media run by IPs, which can contribute towards narrowing the gaps in information and communication, but their outreach is often limited to indigenous peoples only. There is a greater need for capacity building to prepare and place indigenous journalists in the decision-making and management positions of the mainstream media. This could be a more sustainable and effective means to ensure continued, credible.

In addition, it is also important to consider the issue of misrepresentation within the fragile context of state building and strong ethno-politics in Nepal. Additional research and analysis is required to understand if the perception of negative coverage by certain journalists is due to mistrust created by ethno-politics or reflects a lack of capacity of the journalists to present objective stories in the media. Both causes would require different sets of media strategies to meaningfully address the issues.

Gender

Access to information and communication can play a critical role in gender equality and empowerment of women. In Nepal, patriarchal norms still determine access, voice and participation of women in all spheres of life. Understanding of the gender dimension in Nepal is still constrained by the lack of disaggregated data. Observation of proxy indicators across the three field study locations suggest that women, particularly in indigenous peoples' groups, have much lower literacy and education compared to the national average and that of men. Therefore, they naturally face enormous challenges in accessing information and participating in informed discussions.

Media content production is still dominated by men in the three study locations. In addition, it was unclear to what extent women had control over access to information and whether they had equal opportunities to voice their views through existing communication channels. As an alternative, women have been using informal channels to seek information through face-to-face discussions with peers, teachers, female community health workers and other women they meet in the markets.

Development situation

There are significant variations between the districts in the levels of education and literacy, which could be influenced by factors such as geographic locations, languages and dynamics of social exclusion. These conditions also influence the level of access to information and communications channels among different social groups in different locations. In addition, access to infrastructure and basic services such as electricity was a major factor affecting the choice of preferred medium of communication. Variations in poverty and economic opportunity in the field research locations also influenced the choice of medium.

Communication and Information Needs

At the national level, recognition of the human rights of indigenous peoples is a central issue in the ongoing process of formulating the country's constitution. It is also linked to the empowerment of the indigenous peoples in Nepal. The right to self-determination and political rights are among the primary demands of the IPs. Development issues also need to be addressed in conjunction with these political demands, notably the need to improve livelihoods for IPs. Therefore, the information and communication needs must be addressed at two levels:

- Equal access to information and communication opportunities could help ordinary villagers to improve their livelihoods by enhancing voice and participation. This entails understanding the role and impact of information on the process of political transformation and decision-making; and
- Improving communications among and between indigenous peoples themselves could help IPs to have more coherent messages to strengthen their positions.

Efforts by organizations representing indigenous peoples to advance these two aspects of information and communication have focused on the national level and not on the sub-national level. However, a focus on the sub-national level could help ordinary villagers to improve their livelihoods by enhancing voice and participation.

Representation of the indigenous peoples

Nepal has about 54 indigenous peoples' organizations (IPOs) and one very strong representative organization. However, there is a need to enhance the ability of IPOs to interact and communicate with the rest of the Nepali society, a capacity currently constrained by low media coverage and misrepresentation of indigenous peoples' issues.

Key Recommendations

Based on the findings from the C4E study and assessment, the proposed recommendations focus on the following priority areas for action in support of indigenous peoples:

- Enhancing knowledge of indigenous peoples' issues and rights;
- Building capacity of indigenous journalists and media professionals;
- Increasing access to information and media;
- Strengthening voices and participation in media and communication platforms;
- Mainstreaming C4E, media and ICTs as well as rights into existing development programmes and projects;
- Promoting the role of indigenous women in media;
- Exchanging experiences and lessons learned on using communication as an empowerment tool to strengthen indigenous peoples' rights.

Enhance knowledge of issues

Insufficient knowledge of indigenous peoples' rights and realities is affecting the current political debate on the benefits and challenges of federalism. Groups lacking such knowledge include IPs, the general public and policy makers. Greater understanding of indigenous peoples' rights and development challenges is needed in order to avoid misrepresentation and misinterpretation that could exacerbate tensions in Nepali society.

Nepal's open media and civil society provide a conducive environment for generating and sharing knowledge on issues related to IPs, including different arrangements to recognize their rights through constitutional processes. Furthermore, the country has ratified ILO Convention 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples and voted in favour of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Both instruments include provisions to promote the rights, voice and participation of IPs.

To accelerate this, the proposed areas for C4E intervention aims to:

- Support production and dissemination of knowledge on indigenous peoples' issues, rights and demands for media coverage;
- Raise awareness and knowledge of journalists on issues affecting IPs;
- Raise awareness of youth from indigenous communities about the media and encourage them to participate in public discussions in the media through media literacy initiatives;
- Support interactive media formats and programmes to encourage greater exchanges of

views and opinions between IPOs and decision makers/opinion leaders in both mainstream and community media.

Building capacity of indigenous journalists and media professionals

Nepal has vibrant and diverse media outlets, including print and broadcasting. Nevertheless, the low representation of journalists and media professionals from indigenous groups remain one of the key challenges. In addition, journalists from other social groups tend to have limited knowledge about issues related to IPs, which results in poor reporting and coverage of their issues. There is a need to enhance capacity of indigenous journalists and media professionals in the following areas:

- Support a range of training programmes (e.g. investigative and in-depth reporting) for addressing the needs of different media;
- Support and promote 'citizen's journalism' including the use of New Media by individuals and IPOs;
- Support orientation programmes of media professionals to enable them to better understand the issues affecting IPs.

Increasing access to information and media

Limited access to information by IPs is a key challenge in making informed choices. At the policy and legislation level, the constitutional guarantee for the Right to Information and Freedom of Expression serves essentially as a starting-point for implementation. Because the process of creating a constitution is now underway in Nepal, there is a rare opportunity to ensure that the new constitution includes these rights. To take advantage of this opportunity, C4E interventions must:

- Support efforts to inform all people in Nepal about these rights so that the enjoyment of the rights are shared by all, including IPs;
- Ensure availability of information in the languages of IPs;
- Initiate efforts to make all public information easily available to all citizens, with special efforts to enhance the access of IPs;
- Work with the High-Level Commission for IT and the National Information Commission to develop appropriate applications for facilitating information access for IPs in collaboration with IPOs.

Furthermore, strengthening the capacity of the IPOs and indigenous communities to establish or improve indigenous community media could help overcome challenges in access to information. Priority areas for intervention are to:

- Set up pilot media and ICT initiatives for IPs at locations that have low media exposure and concentrated populations of IPs;
- Support existing community media initiatives to improve inclusiveness of the diverse indigenous people's groups, including programmes in indigenous languages;
- Establish partnerships with the private sector and civil society organizations to devise sustainable models of engagement.

Strengthening voices and participation of indigenous peoples in media and communication platforms

Existing local communication channels such as community radio can promote voice and participation of IPs in public discourse at the national and local levels. Yet, despite a number of existing community radio stations in Nepal, indigenous peoples' issues are inadequately covered and often politicized. Little of the local news and programming related to IPs is produced by local radio stations. These challenges can be addressed by strengthening existing local media and communication channels and platforms, including radio, to better serve the poor and marginalized, including IPs. Recommended areas for intervention are to:

- Conduct a strategic review of Nepal's radio sector to identify areas of intervention to ensure access, voice and participation of marginalized groups;
- Develop series of strategic responses based on a community media performance assessment conducted in partnership with media organizations;
- Restructure the operations and management to ensure voices and inclusive community participation, including proportionate representation of IPs at all levels;
- Build capacity, including inhouse training and coaching of the community media;
- Consider setting up model community radio stations for serving marginalized groups, including IPs.

Mainstreaming C4E, media and ICTs into existing development programmes and projects

Support to media and communications has largely been ad-hoc and preoccupied with advocacy messaging rather than development of the media to be a mechanism for inclusive participation. There is a need for media development activities that can help to narrow the existing the gaps in access, voice and participation for IPs and other excluded groups. Efforts to mainstream C4E, media and ICTs into existing development programmes and projects are equally important. Recommended areas for intervention are to:

- Formulate a separate programme in support of C4E of IPs focusing on the role of media and access to information in promoting social inclusion in Nepal;
- Assess the potential for establishing a regional mechanism for capacity development and exchanges among groups representing IPs;
- Organize a consortium of donors and a national multi-stakeholder groups to support media and C4E initiatives;
- Identify linkages with other programmes supporting social inclusion, civil society and democratic participation.

Strengthening the role of indigenous women in media

Indigenous women in particular are marginalized and underrepresented in media. Mobilizing women's movements, especially among groups of IPs, could potentially bring about several interrelated benefits. Such movements could enhance the role of women in media, increase the number of women in journalism and management positions, increase sense of ownership among women towards their local media, increase the visibility of women in media, and increase the impact of women on media. In this regard, more efforts are needed to identify strategic responses and capacity building of indigenous women by:

- Convening the national meeting among women from indigenous communities to analyze the present situation and identify the reasons for low representation of indigenous women in media;
- Supporting capacity building for indigenous women in media, including training and coaching of indigenous women journalists;
- Supporting production of media programmes focusing on women's issues and coverage of issues relevant to women's lives;
- Promoting gender policies for radio stations to ensure the equal participation of women.

Exchange of experiences and lessons learned on C4E of indigenous peoples

There is a need to generate knowledge and capture lessons learned on indigenous media and C4E experiences as well as to establish a platform for knowledge exchange on C4E. Proposed areas for C4E intervention are to:

- Explore potential collaborations with existing regional forums and organizations;
- Establish a regional knowledge sharing mechanism to enhance knowledge and implementation of the C4E initiatives;

- Document, in video and print, issues related to indigenous peoples (e.g. cultures and livelihood outcomes) for sharing knowledge and experience with the larger indigenous community and society;
- Set up a mechanism for archiving indigenous knowledge related to C4E.



A stylized map of South and Southeast Asia is shown in white outlines against a solid blue background. A light gray callout box with a white border points to the southern tip of India. Inside the box, the text "1. Introduction and Background" is written in a bold, dark blue font.

1. Introduction and Background

1. Introduction and Background

The Concept of Communication for Empowerment

The development community has acknowledged the important role played by communication at many levels of the development process. The specific understanding and concept of communication in development is, however, ever-changing. For many years, the United Nations has defined the role of communication for development in relation to specific development challenges such as HIV/AIDS, education and agricultural development. Today, communication for development is regarded as a people-centred approach that can contribute to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015.²

Among the various definitions of communication for development generated at the UN Inter-Agency Round Table on Communication for Development, there seems to be a general consensus to define it as a participatory and two-way process, and distinct from external and public relations. This is further emphasized by the formal UN definition of Communication for Development, adopted in the General Assembly resolution 51/172 Article 6:

Communication for development stresses the need to support two-way communication systems that enable dialogue and that allow communities to speak out, express their aspirations and concerns, and participate in the decisions that relate to their development.

The concept of communication for empowerment (C4E) has emerged in recognition of the necessity to emphasize and address the specific information and communication needs of poor and vulnerable groups. It was initially introduced and conceptualized by the UNDP Oslo Governance Centre (OGC) and the Communication for Social Change Consortium in 2006. The C4E approach emphasizes the role of communications as an empowering mechanism to enhance inclusive participation and governance. It is based on the fundamental belief that social inclusion and participation through access to information and effective communication channels are integral parts of democratic governance and sustainable development for the poor and for vulnerable and marginalized groups. In essence, the C4E approach focuses on the governance dimensions of poverty, which recognizes the lack of voice, participation and choice as a result of social exclusion and discrimination.³

The C4E Practical Guidance Note and Project: Developing Media Strategies in Support of Vulnerable Groups

In 2006, the Oslo Governance Centre released a Practical Guidance Note on Communication for Empowerment⁴ that explains the importance of communications to poverty reduction. It outlines a range of ways that UNDP and other development agencies can best enhance C4E based on the

2 General Assembly (A63/180): Sixty-third session, Item 49 of the provisional agenda: Information and communication technologies for development' Communication for development programmes in the United Nations system Report of the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 50/130, including the recommendations of the tenth United Nations Inter-Agency Round Table on Communication for Development.

3 For the underlying concept see Reducing Poverty by Tackling Social Exclusion (2005), a DFID Policy Paper, London.

4 United Nations Development Programme, Bureau for Development Policy, Democratic Governance Group, Communication for Empowerment: developing media strategies in support of vulnerable groups. Practical Guidance Note, March 2006. http://www.undp.org/oslocentre/overview/ogc_communication_empowerment.html

first step of conducting information and communication audits.⁵ At present, the opportunities for poor and vulnerable groups to voice their concerns through communication channels have not been sufficiently identified and documented, particularly not at the local level. In a C4E approach, the assessment of communication needs and opportunities is seen as an initial instrumental step in the process of improving the voice and participation of marginalized and vulnerable groups. But this critical step has largely been ignored by national development planning processes and policy makers.

The intended outcome of an information and communication audit is to identify key challenges and opportunities for interventions to empower the poor and marginalized and vulnerable groups through better access to information and skills to engage with the media, taking advantage of communication facilities. In so doing, they can exercise their voice and participate more actively and meaningfully in decision-making and development processes affecting their lives.

In 2007, with funding from the United Nations Democracy Fund, the Oslo Governance Centre initiated C4E pilot projects targeting five least developed countries: three in Africa and two in Asia. The African countries are Ghana, Madagascar and Mozambique. The countries in Asia are Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR) and Nepal.

The pilot project conducted information and communication audits for the purpose of identifying information and communication gaps and establishing a national stakeholder forum that could take the findings and recommendations forward. The implementation of the C4E study and assessment in each country aimed for the following outputs:

- A national report with the key research findings;
- A stakeholder group to continue the C4E project and programme interventions after the completion of the national C4E research and report. The stakeholder group, which will act as a national coordinating body, will be comprised of participants from the UN system, mass media, government, bilateral partners and civil society;
- A series of gap-filling projects emerging from the national needs assessment process as described in the national report. These projects will be driven forward by the national stakeholder group;
- A C4E assessment tool. This tool will continue to be improved based on lessons from the national studies and will be made available for governments, UN agencies, international donor organizations and community-based organizations and institutions. This aims to ensure that the information and communication aspect of good governance will be included in the strategic planning process at all levels.

The Regional Initiative on Indigenous Voices: Communication for Empowerment of Asia's Indigenous Peoples

The African pilot projects were implemented directly by the Oslo Governance Centre in collaboration with the respective UNDP Country Offices. The two Asian pilot projects were implemented through the UNDP Regional Centre in Bangkok (RCB) under the Asia Regional Governance Programme (ARGP) in partnership with the Regional Indigenous Peoples Programme (RIPP). Hence, the C4E studies in Asia are part of the regional initiative on Indigenous Voices: Communication for Empowerment of Asia's Indigenous Peoples. Moreover, several synergies between the two initiatives were identified and it was agreed that a regional-level engagement would be worthwhile to optimize the use of scarce resources.

⁵ The Practical Guidance Note aims to demonstrate that media can play a crucial role in empowering vulnerable and marginalized groups. This can best be achieved if media support and media capacity development is directed in a way that enables the media to better respond to and reflect the information and communication needs of these groups. The Note underscores the particular importance of radio in communication for empowerment strategies because of its reach, accessibility to the poor and increasingly interactive character. It further explains that the media landscape in most developing countries has undergone a revolution over the last 15 years. This has been marked by increased democratization; an ensuing liberalization of media, particularly of broadcasting; a subsequent decline in government support to former monopoly broadcasting; and greater availability of new and more cost effective information and communication technologies. Media in many of these countries have been transformed from monopolistic and government-dominated systems to increasingly diverse types.

In addition to Lao PDR and Nepal, the Asia regional C4E initiative also aims to engage other countries in the Asia-Pacific region in collaboration with interested UNDP Country Offices. The RCB and the Oslo Governance Centre share the overall objectives, including the RCB's particular focus on the needs and opportunities for empowering Asia's indigenous peoples. Both initiatives are based on the same principle that communication is a central determinant of inclusive participation, which is also a key result area of UNDP's strategic plan (2008-2011)⁶ in the area of democratic governance. The overall approach is predicated on inadequate social inclusion and participation of the poor and vulnerable groups in developing countries in development decisions affecting them.

In accordance with the objectives of the Oslo Governance Centre programme, which have been refined to incorporate the indigenous and ethnic minority perspective, the Asia regional C4E initiative consists of various follow-up activities at regional and national levels. In this regard, the C4E study and needs assessment is an initial preparatory step that serves as a foundation to formulate policy and programme interventions to overcome challenges and meet the needs for information and communication of indigenous peoples at the national and community level.

The strategic intent of the national C4E study in Nepal is to establish the development context of the indigenous groups with particular reference to the media, information and communications. It aims to propose specific interventions, including the effective use of media and information and communication technologies (ICTs) that can help to alleviate some of the challenges faced by Nepal's indigenous peoples. The proposals arising from this study will inform a subsequent component of the regional initiative, which will eventually focus on the implementation of the strategic C4E interventions.

Within the regional C4E initiative, a number of participating countries in the Asia-Pacific region will contribute to greater regional implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, particularly the use of media and ICTs to promote the realization of the rights enshrined in the UNDRIP. Through global and regional partnerships, the C4E initiative will leverage knowledge and experiences from a wide range of country level activities to advise and strengthen such efforts through coordinated South-South collaborations. It will also bring indigenous peoples together with common concerns and foster unity to effectively address these concerns.

In line with these wider intentions, the regional project has four outputs:

- Output 1: Information needs and media-related legislative conditions for indigenous peoples in Asia identified and awareness of policy makers improved;
- Output 2: Increased capacity of indigenous journalists and other media professionals in reporting on indigenous peoples' issues and in harnessing ICTs and new media;
- Output 3: Strengthened capacity of indigenous peoples' organizations/communities in setting up or improving a number of indigenous community media and ICT interventions (e.g. local radio, website, multipurpose telecentre, etc.) and to test applications of common interest (e.g. land, culture, poverty, health, access to information, and freedom of expression);
- Output 4: Knowledge of indigenous media and ICT for development (ICT4D) experiences is enhanced through research initiatives and the establishment of a 'community of practice' for sharing of good practices.

From the study in Nepal, the regional C4E initiative developed a document to describe the approach and research process that is being used in the Asia country studies.⁷ It intends to provide a procedural manual for implementing the forthcoming country-level activities.

The methodology for the C4E study and assessment represents a structured approach to promoting an understanding of the situation with regard to the IPs in Nepal and their development context with particular reference to the media, information and communication. The approach includes four sets of activities: 1) a national overview study that draws on existing knowledge and data to formulate an overview of the indigenous groups in Nepal; 2) more specific analyses of the

⁶ The UNDP Strategic Plan has been extended to 2013.

⁷ United Nations Development Programme, *Research and Activity Guideline for national C4E Study: Information and Communication Needs and Opportunities Appraisals* (Draft), January 2009. Unpublished Document.

relationships between IPs, the media and ICTs; 3) focused grassroots research involving selected indigenous communities; and 4) presentation of the findings to relevant stakeholders and the formulation of proposals for specific programme interventions to enhance information flow and communications to and from indigenous groups, especially concerning their development prospects and well-being.

In Asia, the C4E approach has been adapted to focus more closely on indigenous peoples. Therefore, in conducting the C4E study, special attention has been paid to the involvement of indigenous peoples. Their equal and informed participation is important to ensure accurate and appropriate representation of their rights and priorities, and also as a vital part of a process that will lead to greater inclusion and ownership at the national and local levels.

In line with the above, the development of the methodology has been guided by the following principles:

- The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples provides the normative framework and is grounded on human rights principles. It affirms core principles such as the right to equality and non-discrimination and the right to exist as distinct peoples. UNDRIP enhances legitimacy, importance and urgency to strengthen efforts to realise these rights. Article 16 on media and communication has guided the methodology;⁸
- The flow of information among and between indigenous peoples and the rest of society is one of the most significant factors contributing to the realization of the rights specified in UNDRIP, especially when the means for generating such information flows (i.e. ICTs and the media) are under the ownership and control of the indigenous peoples themselves;
- The means to ensure the robust and continued improvement in the use of information and communication should be based on ownership and management arrangements of indigenous peoples, to empower their communities to achieve legitimate rights and desired communication outcomes.

In accordance with these principles, the methodology adopted by the Asia C4E initiative presents an initial step for empowerment of the indigenous peoples participating in the study.

The methodology endeavours to combine the national-level perspective with a more focused and in-depth analysis through field research in three selected locations. This 'T-shaped' research approach is characterized by: 1) a broad investigation at the national level; and 2) a narrow but deep analysis at the local level. This serves as a reality check for the researchers while providing the opportunity to draw conclusions and propose interventions that are based on first-hand evidence and direct experience.

A research and activity guideline was designed for carrying out Output 1 of the regional C4E initiative. It includes information and communication audits in selected countries and locations. It is based on the following key steps:

8 United Nations General Assembly Resolution 61/295, United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, 13 September 2007. See, Article 16: 1 "Indigenous Peoples have the right to establish their own media in their own languages and to have access to all forms of non-indigenous media without discrimination; 2. States shall take effective measures to ensure that State-owned media duly reflect indigenous cultural diversity. States, without prejudice to ensuring full freedom of expression, should encourage privately owned media to adequately reflect indigenous cultural diversity."

Country level activity	Description
1. Formation of partnerships	An initial scoping mission conducted by the Regional Centre Bangkok in conjunction with the UNDP Country Office to identify relevant stakeholders and to assemble a team of project partners from appropriate government, private, civil society and indigenous peoples' organizations.
2. National overview	National-level research that outlines the development context and situation of the county's indigenous peoples/ nationalities.
3. ICTs, media and IPs	Overview analysis of the involvement of IPs with ICTs and the media, their representation and treatment in mainstream media and the extent to which they have ownership of the media.
4. Field research	Grassroots examinations of the situation within particular representative indigenous communities, taking the form of Indigenous Communities' Information and Communication Needs and Opportunities Appraisals. These appraisals are comprised of village-level assessments based on ethnographic tools that include group discussions, household surveys and informant interviews. The focus is on the present and potential use of information and communication.
5. National workshop – internal	Feedback to stakeholders on the findings and proposals of activities 1-4. Consensus-building on proposals for Outputs 2 and 3.
6. National C4E Report	Based on the stakeholder feedback, formal documentation of the findings and proposals.

Source: Indigenous Voices: Communication for Empowerment of Asia's Indigenous Peoples, Concept Note, Democratic Governance Team, Regional Centre in Bangkok.

The C4E Approach and Process in Nepal

This report documents the results of Output 1 in Nepal. The Association of Nepalese Indigenous Nationalities Journalists (ANIJ) led the national C4E study and assessment in close collaboration with various IPOs and the UNDP Regional Centre in Bangkok. It benefits from the commitment of the ANIJ management and the support of the UNDP Country Office. ANIJ took a leading role in identifying a local research team with researchers from various ethnic backgrounds and languages.

A two-day training programme preceded the research. The methodology was discussed and the final field locations (villages) were selected. The questionnaires were translated into Nepali and discussed and finalized at a training workshop held at ANIJ. Three teams of two researchers and one local translator administered the questionnaire and carried out the field interviews. C4E surveys were carried out in the three locations in August and September 2009, focusing on three major indigenous groups: the *Tharu* in Kailali district in the mid-western plains of Nepal; the *Tamang* from the mountain district of Rasuwa in central Nepal; and the *Limbu* from Tehrathum, a hill district in eastern Nepal.

The field data was processed using SPSS and the information disaggregated by location was used for the analysis. The idea was to assess the ground realities and also to try and compare the findings of the national overviews with the situation on the ground. Time and resource constraints led to reducing the number of respondents and communities included in the survey. The findings complement the national overview study and broadly reflect the diversity of indigenous communities in Nepal.

There are seven large indigenous groups in Nepal, and the three groups selected for the study represented Mountain, Hill and Terai (Plain) ecological zones. They were purposively selected to get localized pictures of the changing conditions of the groups. The empirical evidence gathered by the study were expected to fill the gaps in the macro-level information from the 2003 to 2006

period.⁹ The local data were expected to be more reliable for assessing the specific needs of the IPs surveyed.

Indigenous researchers carried out the C4E pilot project in Nepal and the key findings were reviewed by the national stakeholders. The C4E study produced key recommendations and proposed areas for interventions that will be taken forward by relevant national stakeholders. In addition, the experiences from Nepal provide important lessons for the implementation of the C4E initiative and for the exchange of knowledge at the regional level.

⁹ Most disaggregated data used for computing HDI and other indexes were based on the National Living Standard Survey 2003-04 and Demographic Health Survey 2006.





2. National Overview Study

2. National Overview Study

2.1 Inclusion and Development of the Indigenous Peoples

This chapter attempts to establish the development context and conditions under which the C4E initiative is to be implemented in Nepal. It provides an overview of the situation of the indigenous peoples, also known as indigenous nationalities. The assessment focuses on their development challenges and opportunities, and the obstacles to their participation in mainstream development and governance processes.

For the purpose of this report, 'voice' means representation in formal institutions, because this enriches participation. In the C4E context, voice means access and representation in the media. It also extends to organizing and forming institutions to voice and articulate the demands of excluded groups. The outcomes of voice, influence and agency are the extent to which poor and excluded people – as part of representative groups and coalitions – successfully engage, influence and hold institutions that affect them accountable.¹⁰

Map 1: Nepal



History at a glance	
1768	Nepal is ruled by the Shah dynasty of kings.
1854	Country Code counts castes and makes Nepali the official language.
1996-2006	The Maoists lead insurgency to overthrow monarchy.
April 2006	King Gyanendra fails to consolidate his support and eventually relinquishes his absolute power.
May 2006	Nepal has an interim parliament that includes the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) and the coalition government was appointed.
November 2006	Nepal's government and the Maoists sign a comprehensive peace agreement (CPA) formally declaring an end to the 10-year civil war.
April 2008	Constituent Assembly (CA) elections are a major step forward in Nepal's Peace Process. The Communist Part of Nepal (Maoist) won the largest number of seats in the CA election.
May 2008	The CA ends the 240-year old monarchy and establishes the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal.
May 2010	New Constitution to be promulgated in May.

¹⁰ DFID and World Bank. 2006. Unequal Citizens: Gender, caste and ethnic exclusion in Nepal.

National Context

Nepal is a small mountainous country in the Himalaya, lying between India and China. It is one of the poorest countries in the world. It ranked 144th out of 182 countries in the global Human Development Index (HDI) of UNDP in 2009.¹¹

Nepal experienced a violent insurgency from 1996 to 2006, when the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) fought to overthrow a longstanding monarchy. Since April 2006, when the People's Movement II resulted in the abolition of the 240-year-old monarchy, Nepal has been going through momentous social and political changes. The country is in the process of preparing a new constitution for establishing a federal republic.

A Comprehensive Peace Accord signed in November 2006 ended a 10-year conflict that had cost the country about Rs 5 billion (approximately US\$ 70 million) in lost or damaged infrastructures.¹² The Constituent Assembly (CA) elected in April 2008 is now drafting the new constitution. The new statute is to be promulgated by May 2010.

Among the proposals on the table is for Nepal to have 14 federal units or provinces. The Constituent Assembly's Committee on State Restructuring and Distribution of State Powers has proposed a federal structure for Nepal on the basis of a first criteria of identity (i.e. ethnicity/nationality, language, culture, geographical and historical continuity) and a second criteria of capability (i.e. economic interdependence and capability, status of infrastructure development, availability of natural resources and administrative convenience). The committee rejected other alternative proposals, including six federal units on the basis of capability and one Madhes (plain region) province on the basis of geography. These were recorded as dissenting opinions. The CA's constitutional committee is to prepare a final draft for approval by the assembly.

The CA was discussing Nepal's political system when this assessment was done in 2009 and early 2010. As of January 2010, the right to self-determination of indigenous peoples (IPs) was at the core of the discussions in the CA. The indigenous nationalities¹³ see self-determination as the basis for ensuring a lasting peace and social harmony. Many IPs demand that Nepal should have ethnic or identity-based federations, in which marginalized groups have special rights to take leadership positions at the provincial level. In contrast, other social groups that have enjoyed greater access to current political positions and state services argue that the recognition of the right to self-determination of IPs would lead to inter-group conflicts and even the disintegration of Nepal. The IPs assert that the lack of recognition of their distinct identity and the right to self-determination will perpetuate the social discrimination and exclusion in Nepal. The IPs demand constitutional recognition of their rights and their accommodation within the framework of the state, and contend that these measures along with electoral reforms are the only solutions towards a cohesive and peaceful Nepal. Decisions on the state structure will have implications for how the country will be governed in the coming years.

The IPs say that identity-based federal provinces and autonomous areas will guarantee their rights in accordance with two United Nations instruments, ILO Convention 169 and UNDRIP. They also say that self-rule with the right to self-determination can help to improve their participation in democratic governance and the resulting outcomes. The position of the IPs is that self-determination does not necessarily mean separation. Instead they see it as a way to ensure access to state governance and opportunities, which they have been denied in the previously unitary state. The structuring of federal units is the most contentious issue within the CA and outside. The Constitutional Committee has started work on a draft that will come up for discussion and approval of the assembly.

The issues being voiced in the CA today gained prominence during the 1996-2006 insurgency because the rights of IPs was a major promise of the leading party.

11 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Human Development Report 2009.

12 *Ibid.*, p. 139.

13 Indigenous people in Nepal prefer to call themselves indigenous nationalities. However, for consistency with parallel global studies under the C4E, this report uses the term indigenous people or IPs throughout the text.

Nepal's Interim Constitution has committed to establishing federalism and proportional representation. A large number of Nepalis also believe that a change in the state structure can bring more equitable benefits for various groups within the society. The basic principle of federalism was widely accepted but demarcation of the constituent units (autonomous states/provinces or areas) remains complex because of conflicting claims and ideological perspectives of different parties and groups.

The main issues put forward by the indigenous peoples' group as demands in the CA are:

- Autonomous homelands/ ancestral territories;
- Right to self-determination;
- Right to self-government;
- Rights to land and natural resources;
- Official use of indigenous languages;
- Right to decide the priority of the projects in indigenous areas.

Indigenous peoples' groups also demand the right to participate in formulating, implementing and evaluating development programmes and projects in indigenous areas. Another key demand is the right to free and prior informed consent on all decisions affecting, including those taken by the CA.

Despite all the uncertainties, the political processes in Nepal provide a unique opportunity for the empowerment and mobilization of IPs. Compared to about a decade ago, their groups are also better organized to lobby and advocate their demands for ending inequality and building more inclusive democratic governance systems.

According to the National Consultation Report Summary on *Inclusion of Indigenous Peoples' Rights*, specific recommendations were made for the actual text of the new Constitution to incorporate the rights of IPs in the following sections:¹⁴

- Fundamental rights and directive principles;
- Fundamental state principles;
- Safeguard against arbitrary amendment of constitutional provisions that safeguard the rights of indigenous peoples;
- Natural resources, economic rights and revenue allocation;
- Rights of minorities and marginalized communities.

IPs in Nepal have had less educational opportunities compared to the dominant groups. This has affected knowledge production and dissemination, which has not always been favourable for understanding their issues and demands. Knowledge and power are intimately linked to political struggles. Those who have access to power, information and knowledge tend to have better control and influence over the public discourse.¹⁵

Demographic Profile

Nepal has a population with distinctive social characteristics. It is comprised of caste-stratified Hindus with an Indo-Aryan language and egalitarian indigenous peoples speaking Tibeto-Burman languages. Many of these groups had ancestral territories.¹⁶ These groups have different caste or ethnic identities. Some of the historical identities were prescribed by the state.

The number of groups seeking or asserting identity has increased in successive censuses since the 1980s. The first Country Code (1854) identified about 48 castes and ethnic groups.¹⁷ Nepal's

14 Devasish Roy and John B. Henriksen, *Inclusion of Indigenous Peoples' Rights in the Constitution: National Consultation Report Summary*, 15-16 February 2010 available at Centre for Constitutional Dialogue (CCD), www.ccd.org.np

15 This formulation is based on the proposition of Michel Foucault (1996-1984) that power is exercised through knowledge or "truth" and the game of truth: the rules, resources and practices, make something true for humans for legitimizing power (see Allan, 2007: 521; Sattery 2003: 208-11 for analytical briefs on concepts and theory of Michel Foucault).

16 Gurung, 2003.

17 See, Höfer, 2004 (First Published in 1979) for detailed discussion on the caste hierarchy of Nepal.

2001 census reported about 100 castes, ethnic groups and religious groups. But none of them accounted for more than 16 percent of the total population (22.74 million).¹⁸ Groups whose number exceeds one percent of the population are listed in Table 1.

Table 1: Major Population Groups in Nepal

Caste/ethnic group	Percentage of population
Chhetri	15.80
Brahman	12.74
Magar	7.14
Tharu	6.75
Tamang	5.64
Newar	5.48
Muslim	4.27
Kami	3.94
Yadav	3.94
Rai	2.79
Gurung	2.39
Damai	1.72
Limbu	1.58
Thakuri	1.47
Sarki	1.40
Teli	1.34
Chamar	1.19
Koiri	1.11

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics, 2001.

Note: The smallest IPs have populations of less than two thousand people: Hayu (1,821), Koche (1,429), Dhunia (1,213), Walung (1,148), Jaine (1,015), Munda (552) and Kusunda (164).

Nepal's dominant population groups are Brahmin, Chhetri, Thakuri and Sanyasi, collectively referred to as the B/C group. They represent the Hill 'high' castes and in 2001 they comprised about 30.9 percent of the population (Figure 1). In the plains, known as Terai or Madhesh, the so-called high caste groups constituted only 1.9 percent, while the middle castes accounted for 12.9 percent. Dalits (formerly 'untouchable') and IPs represented 4.7 and 8.7 percent of the population, respectively.

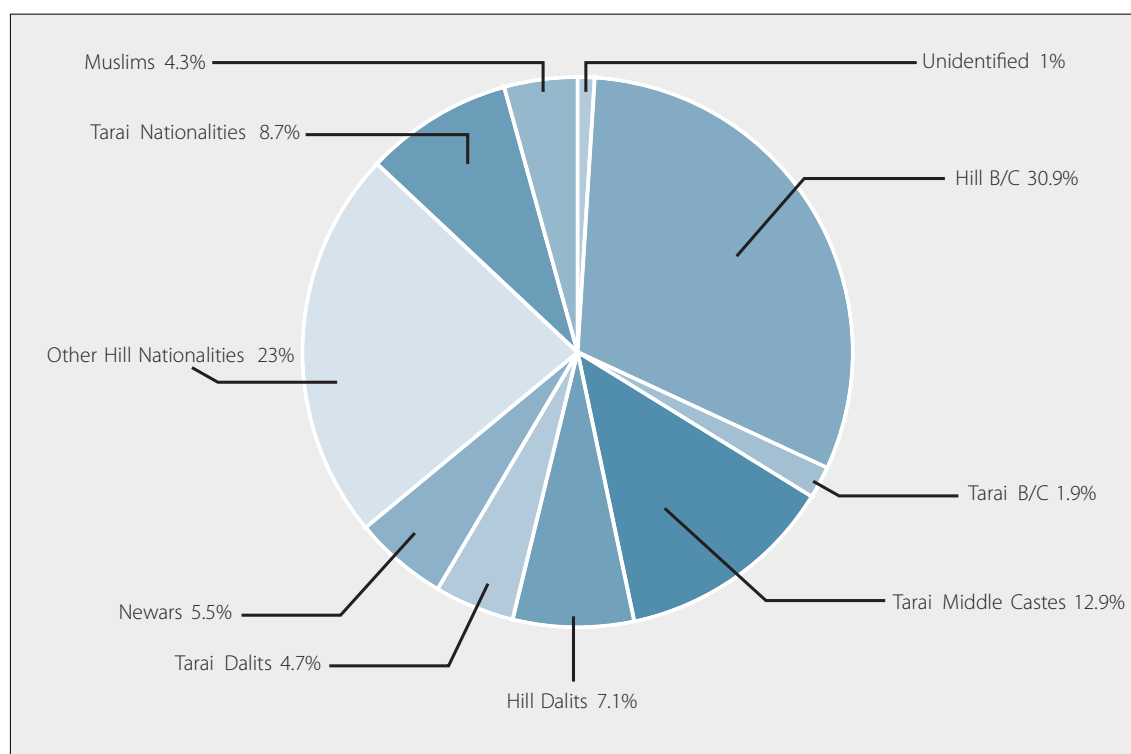
In terms of religion, the Hindus, including Dalits, accounted for 57.5 percent of the population. The IPs (who have been asserting that they are non-Hindus) accounted for 37.2 percent. Religious minorities represented 5.3 percent of the population, which included 4.3 percent Muslims.

Of the 100 castes and ethnicities in the 2001 census, Brahmin/Chhetri (high caste) and Magar, Tharu, Tamang and Newar (IPs) had populations exceeding one million. There were 25 caste/ethnic groups numbering 100,000 to 1,000,000; and 17 groups with populations from 50,000 to 100,000.¹⁹ No group in Nepal has an absolute majority in terms of population.

¹⁸ See, Population Census 2001: National Report, June 2002 by the Central Bureau of Statistics. Nepal published population statistics disaggregated by caste and ethnicity for the first time in 1991.

¹⁹ Gurung H. 2006.

Figure 1: Percent Composition of the Population by Caste/Ethnicity (Total Population: 22,736,934)



Source: Acharya et. al 2008.

Note: B/C = Brahman and Chhetris

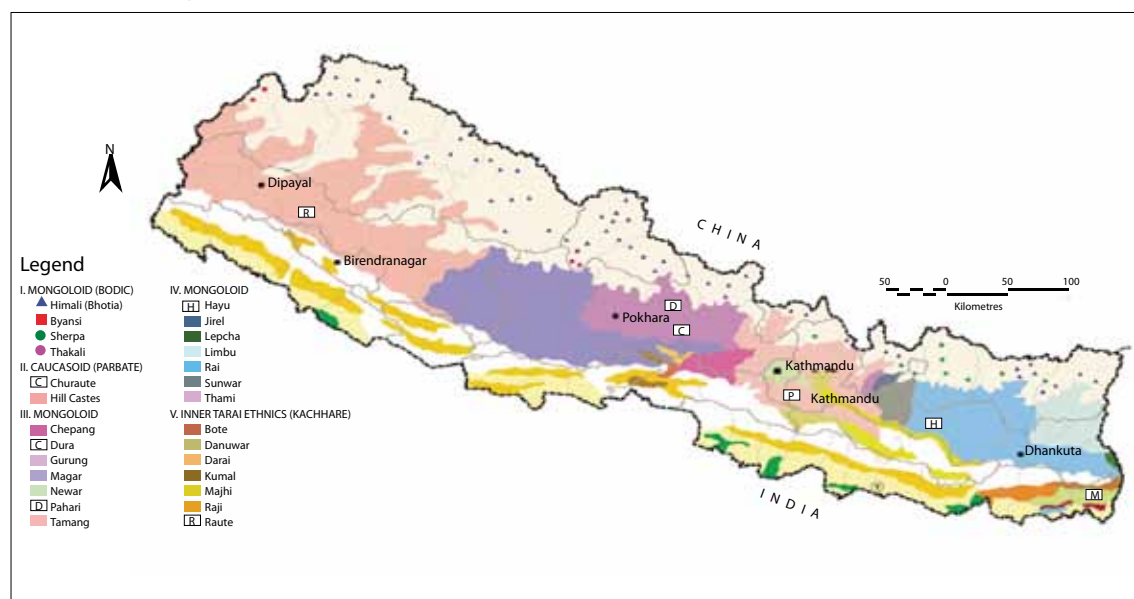
In 2002, the government formed the National Foundation for the Development of Indigenous Nationalities (NFDIN) and recognized 59 indigenous nationalities. The 2001 census enumerated only 46 of these groups (see Map 2: Ethnographic map).

The largest indigenous groups are Magar who comprised 7.14 percent of the population in 2001. The other large groups were Tharu (6.75 percent), Tamang (5.64 percent), Newar (5.48 percent), Rai (2.79 percent), Gurung (2.39 percent) and Limbu (1.58 percent). Others were very small groups including Kusunda, Hayu, Lapcha, Raute, Raji, Kisan, Meche, Kusbadiya, Bankariya and Sural.

The Bankariya and Sural were not enumerated or identified in the census. Other small but recognized groups that were also not reported were Chhaintan, Dolpo, Larke, Lhomi, Lhopa, Marphali, Mugali, Phree, Siyar, Tangbe, Tin Gaunle, Thakali, Thakali, Thudamba and Topkegola. Two groups, the Chhaintan and Phree, are believed to have disappeared.

Most IPs had ancestral territories. However, IPs outnumber other groups in only a few districts, due to the migration and integration of the population. The exceptions are Rasuwa, Manang and Mustang districts, where Tamangs and Gurungs have a majority. The mountain region is home to a group formerly known as Bhotes. The Eastern hills are known to be native homeland of Limbu, Lapcha, Yakkha, Rai Kirat (some Kirat groups) and Sunuwar. The central hills are homelands of the Tamang, Thangmi, Hayu, Chepang and Jirel. Similarly, the western and mid-western hills are home to the Tamu (Gurung), Dura, Baramu, Bhujel, Chantyal and Magar.

Map 2: Ethnographic Map of Nepal (Native Area of Ethnic/Caste Groups)



Source: Gurung, 1998.

Some Inner Terai enclaves are said to be the homelands of the Danuwar, Bote, Darai, Majhi, Kumal, Raji and Raute groups. The Terai or plains is the traditional residence of the Tharu, Rajbhansi (Koch), Gangain, Dhimal, Meche, Santhal, Jhangad (Uraun) and Tajpuriya groups. The eastern plains are highly populated by Terai caste groups, who collectively identify themselves as Madhesis.²⁰ The so-called Hill high castes were mainly concentrated in mid- and far-western hills. The mid- and far-western hills are said to be the traditional homelands of the Khas (a caste group). Nepal's different caste and ethnic groups now live in all parts of the country. Hill caste groups and IPs make up significant numbers of the plains population.

Religion

Nepal became a secular state following the parliamentary declaration of May 2006. Prior to that, it was officially a Hindu country and Hindu values were promoted, supported and even imposed by the state at the expense of other religious practices, including those of the IPs. Until 1981 the population of Hindus was increasing. It began to decrease after 1991 when Nepal became a liberal democratic state, which was when the IPs began asserting their religions (e.g. animism, shamanism, Kirat, Bonism, Swarna, etc.).²¹ Historical census data showed increases in the number of Hindus until the 1981 census and of Buddhists and people following the Kirat religion after the 1991 census.

Language

Several languages of Nepal have disappeared over the past two centuries because of the state's single language policy and the compulsions on non-speakers to use the Khas Nepali, the official language. Nepal has not had a proper linguistic survey and it is therefore difficult to ascertain the number of languages in use. The 2001 census reported 92 languages.²² Linguists have identified 75 languages spoken by indigenous peoples.²³

Khas Nepali has been the official language for more than 240 years. Language is the most significant cultural attribute for distinguishing social groups. The lack of a policy to support all languages

20 This identity became established after a movement organized by the Madhesis in early 2007.

21 See Gellner, 1997:151- 184; 2002:1- 30; Macfarlane, 1997: - 204; Allen, 1997:303- 323 for discussions on explosion of ethnic activism and indigenous religion assertions that are gradually causing the decrease in the number of Hindus.

22 Others have estimated the existence of as many as 140 languages (see Yonjan-Tamang, 2006).

23 Yadav and Turin, 2005.

remains one of the major concerns of IPs. Protection and promotion of indigenous languages is critical for assuring effective inclusive participation and voice of the IPs. However, more than three-fourths of indigenous peoples' languages in Nepal are facing the threat of extinction. Languages can disappear if the groups using them are deprived and do not have resources to invest in their development and standardization.

The language policy of the state can be critical for preserving and promoting culture and identity. The CA is expected to decide on a language policy and also outline the mechanisms for the federal units to take decisions on the use of language.

Development Situation of the Indigenous Peoples

In 2008, Nepal's population was estimated at 28 million. In 2004, 30.9 percent of the population was living below the poverty line. Since the mid-1980s, the number of the absolute poor has increased and so has inequality. Poverty has become more prevalent and severe in the rural areas. The incidence of poverty in the mid- and far-western regions and in the mountain districts was higher than the national average. There are also large differences in the living standards of those living in Kathmandu Valley and the rest of the country.

Differences in caste or ethnicity, cultures, languages and religions have been closely associated with discrimination, exclusion and deprivation in Nepal. These social cleavages created by the inequalities in access to development opportunities have given rise to unrest, political instability, and even hostile confrontations. Collective memories and group experiences of oppression, discrimination and exclusion were reasons behind violent outbursts starting in late 1990s.²⁴

After 2006, group assertion began taking a new shape in Nepal. Oppressed groups, including IPs, began to express grievances through collective mobilization, creating an environment of ethno-political conflicts.²⁵ This is also known as identity politics. The cultural, social, political and economic differences between dominant caste groups and the subordinated IPs (and other excluded groups) run deep in Nepali society.

Poverty incidence

In 2007, Nepal's GDP per capita stood at US\$ 297. The poverty incidence was 30.9 percent, with rural poverty incidence at 34.6 percent. The net primary school enrolment was 72.4 percent, with enrolment of girls at 66.9 percent. The literacy rate (15 years and above) was 48.6 percent. Roughly 27 percent of the population had access to improved sanitation facilities and 84 percent to improved water sources. The child mortality rate was 51 deaths per 1,000 live births and underweight children numbered 45 percent.²⁶

Using poverty as an indicator for development, the overall outcomes for IPs still lag behind the national average. The incidence of poverty for Hill IPs in 2004 was 44 percent, while the national average was 31 percent. Overall poverty incidence for Hill IPs declined by about 10 percent between 1996 and 2004. That for the Brahmin/Chhetri groups had declined by 46 percent in the same period. The share of the Hill IP groups among the poor rose from 19.7 percent in 1996 to 27.8 percent in 2004.²⁷

Despite improvements in the human development indicators (HDIs), large inequalities continue to persist across different regions and social groups of Nepal. The HDI outcomes vary more widely

24 See Whelpton (1997:39- 78); Bhattachan (2008), Kramer (2003:227- 237), Hachhethu (2009: 20- 22, 35, 50, 64-75, 84-95), Subba (2006:31- 59), Subba et al. (2009:51-70, 94-100), among others, for the discussion on IP issues and their movements.

25 Ethno-political conflict, according to Ted Robert Gurr (1997:8,9) "has become the principle source of warfare, insecurity, and loss of life in the contemporary world", and such conflicts "are the principle source of humanitarian disasters" (genocide, mass political murder, civilian fatalities, of refugees and internal displacement, etc.). Conflict experts from dominant groups often express concerns about the consequences of ethno politics or identity politics in Nepal. Intellectuals from subordinated groups argue that cultural or identity politics is eclipsing contemporary Nepali social politics of equality due to the latter's failure to accommodate differences and deepen democracy. (Subba, 2009).

26 The World Bank. 2007. Managing Public Finances for a New Nepal: A Public Finance Management Review.

27 Unequal Citizens. p. 20.

by caste and ethnicity than by geographical area.²⁸ The overall HDI for all groups of IPs (excluding Newar) in 2006 was 0.494 compared to 0.552 for all Brahmins/Chhetris. The Hill/Mountain IPs groups were doing better (HDI 0.507) compared to those in the Terai (plains) (HDI 0.470). The HDI for all groups of IPs when Newar are included is 0.513.²⁹

The low levels of human development among IPs reflects their limited capacities to participate meaningfully in the governance and development processes. Government policies acknowledge exclusion and its impact on development outcomes. As response, the government has planned initiatives to assist the advancement of marginalized groups. However, implementation remains a major challenge in Nepal. In this regard, the health and education sectors remain at the forefront of the human development agenda, particularly for the IPs. Targeting basic services to socially excluded groups is necessary to enhance the development outcomes for the IPs.

Health

In the public health sector, the government plans to enhance access to healthcare services in remote rural communities. The management of health facilities is being transferred to local communities with increasing engagement of the private sector and NGOs. Nepal has made progress in the health sector. Nonetheless, public health facilities and resources are still inadequate for the majority of the population.

Substantial gaps exist across gender, caste and ethnicity. Access to healthcare and the nutrition of children tends to worsen among the excluded groups, which result in their low standing in human development indicators. Marginalized IPs have higher poverty incidence and therefore are likely to face economic constraints in seeking quality healthcare. Most of the healthcare facilities are located in urban areas and large sections of the population do not have access to basic water and sanitation services.

Health outcomes are generally the worst among women of the Muslim community and indigenous groups, especially in the realm of reproductive health (Newars are an exception). The World Bank reports that “The under-five mortality rate among excluded groups such as the Gurung, Rai, Limbu, Magar and Tamang is about 133, and among Dalits it is 171, which are significantly higher than the national average of 105 (per 1,000 live birth)”³⁰ Furthermore, language barrier posts a major challenge in terms of access. For linguistic minorities, such as IPs and those who many not speak Nepali, it is difficult to communicate symptoms and understand the treatment instructions.

Education

There are large disparities in literacy between high caste groups and IPs and also among the indigenous nationalities. About 3.6 million IPs or 46.4 percent of the IP population were illiterate 2001. Illiteracy is very high for some groups, particularly Santhal, Jhangad and Kusbadiya (73 percent). The literacy rate of Santhal, Jhangad, Koche, Kushbadiya, Chepang, Bote, Raji and Raute ranged from 26.9 percent to 28.7 percent, which was lower than that for Hill Dalits (41.9 percent) and higher than Terai Dalits (21.1 percent). Newar and Thakali have the highest literacy among IPs. The literacy rate of 10 indigenous groups (Rai, Gurung, Limbu, Yakkha, Darai, Chhantyal, Byansi, Jirel, Dura, Hyolmo and Meche) exceeded the national average of 53.7 percent. Less than a third are literate among 12 indigenous groups and the literate population for 39 groups ranged from 35 percent to 50 percent.³¹ Among IPs, the Kushbadiya had the lowest literacy skills (13.2 percent).

Based on 2003-2004 data, about 26 percent children from indigenous peoples’ groups (excluding Newar) completed primary education. However, the completion rate for Tamang, which is one of the largest groups, was only 16 percent. Primary education completion rate for girls from IP

28 United Nations Development Programme, Nepal Human Development Report 2009: State Transformation and Human Development (Kathmandu, UNDP, 2009) available at <http://www.undp.org.np/publication/html/nhdr2009>.

29 UNDP 2009. p. 156.

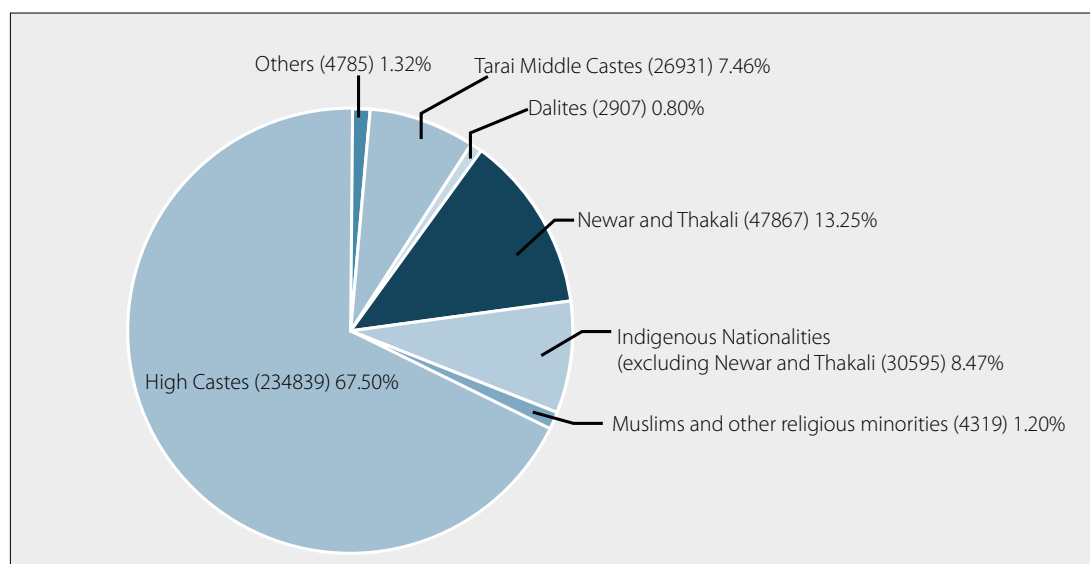
30 World Bank and Department for International Development, Unequal Citizens: Gender, Caste and Ethnic Exclusion in Nepal (Kathmandu, World Bank and DFID, 2006).

31 **Source:** Acharya et al. 2008 (Based on Census 2001 data set) and NIRS, 2006 (Based on Nepal Living Standard Survey 2003-04 Data set).

groups, especially from the Terai was an extremely low 4 percent, whereas the rate for children from high caste groups was about 43 percent.³²

At the higher education level, the proportion of those with bachelor's degrees and above for high castes (3.62 percent) was over seven times higher than that of the IPs (0.49 percent). This does not include Newar and Thakali, for whom the proportion with degrees was 8.5 percent (Figure 5). The Newar had 13.2 percent with bachelor's degrees or higher. Eleven indigenous groups – Baramu, Kisan, Koche, Kusunda, Meche, Kushbadiya, Raji, Raute, Thami, Walung and Hyolmo – did not have a single individual with a bachelor's degree.³³

Figure 2: Proportion of those with Bachelor's Degrees and Above (Percent)



Source: Acharya et al. 2008 (Based on 2001 census data).

Social and Political Exclusion

Social exclusion

The cultures of indigenous nationalities have suffered as a result of the imposition of rules by dominant groups. The so-called nation building process in Nepal involved assimilation measures that were pursued at the expense of cultural preservation, participation and representation of IPs.³⁴ This began with the introduction of the Country Code in 1854.

The Country Code transformed Nepal's society into a hierarchical structure of high, medium and low status groups (Figure 2). *Matwalis* (alcohol drinking people) were people in specific territories with their own social, cultural, economic and political institutions. They were placed in the middle order and were sub-divided into *Masine* (enslavable) and *Namasine* (non-enslavable) categories. From 1854 to 1924 or 1925, large pools of labourers and slaves were drawn from both the indigenous populations and the enslaved *Matwalis*.³⁵ Enslavement resulted from a number of reasons from tax evasion to slaughtering a cow.³⁶ The caste system was abolished in 1963 but it

32 Source: NIRS, 2006 (Based on Living Standard Survey 2003-04 Data Set).

33 Gurung, 2007: 27/op cit. Only 45 groups, apart from one group just named as Adivasi Janajati (indigenous nationality) were identified in Census 2001.

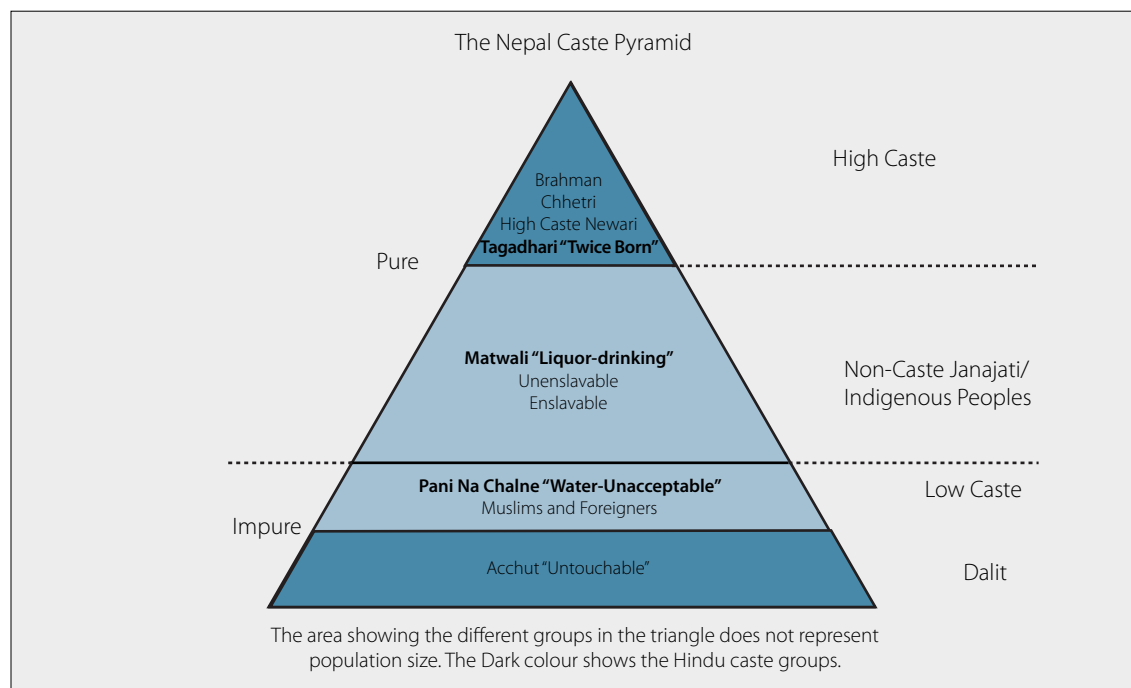
34 See Whelpton op.cit Michaels (1997:79- 99), Pfaff-Czarnecka (1999:41- 98 and Lawoti (2005) for this formulation. See Harka Gurung F. 2007 for an analysis of state ideology of exclusion.

35 See Andras Hofer's "The Caste Hierarchy and the State in Nepal" published in 2004 (first published in 1979) for insightful discussion.

36 Mahesh C. Regmi (1978) has discussed the causes of enslavement in late 18th century and throughout the 19th century in Land Tenure and Taxation in Nepal. Accordingly, enslavement was punishment to those guilty of slaughtering cows, violating caste rules, failing to pay debts or government taxes and other levies and for rebelling against state authorities or disobeying government injunctions.

left a profound impact on socialisation and development of the IPs as a result of the Hinduization or imposition of Hindu values.

Figure 3: Nepal's Caste Hierarchy



Source: Unequal Citizens, p. 6.

The caste system based on the Hindu religion was rigorously enforced, and it institutionalized the system of hierarchical entitlements to power, positions, privileges, assets, wealth, rewards, opportunities, prestige and other resources. Those placed at the lowest rung of the hierarchy were deprived of basic rights, opportunities and resources. Women across all caste and ethnic groups occupy the most disadvantageous position in the triangle because Nepal is still a patriarchal society. Therefore, women of Nepal, including indigenous women, lag behind the men in the overall development process.

Political exclusion

Nepal's history is marked with violent power struggles and subordination and political exclusion of marginalized groups, including IPs.³⁷ Some indigenous groups opposed the oppression but were suppressed.³⁸ The rulers and the state had full support of the military and the governance institutions, generally had the Chhetris as administrators and the Brahmins mostly as advisers. All other groups were the governed.

³⁷ Abundant literature is available on this subject. Some of them are from Krishna B. Bhattachan 1999 ("Nepal: Minority Rights in Predatory Nepalese State"), 2000 ("Possible Ethnic Revelation or Insurgency in Predatory Unitary Hindu State"), 2008 (Minorities and Indigenous Peoples of Nepal); Harka Gurung 2003 ("Trident and Thunderbolt: Cultural Dynamics in Nepalese Politics"), 2004 (Janajati Serophero), 2007 (From Exclusion to Inclusion), Mahendra Lawoti 2005 (Towards a Democratic Nepal: Inclusive Political Institutions for a Multicultural Society), Chaitanya Subba 2006, Durgahang Yakkha Rai 1996, Gopal Gurung 1985, Govinda Neupane 2000, and several other Nepali and Western scholars whose works are not possible to refer due to space limitation.

³⁸ Gurung, 2003; Subba, 2006: 31- 59.

The debate on political exclusion began in the early 1990s when indigenous peoples began seeking greater voice and participation in state affairs. Later, many individuals from these communities joined the Maoists because they favoured the idea of establishing ethnic federations.³⁹

After 2005, when King Gyanendra began ruling the country directly, social inclusion and state restructuring became the main agenda of mainstream political parties. People from all walks of life – including IPs – joined the protests led by political parties to overthrow King Gyanendra's regime. The main demands of this movement were social inclusion, restructuring state, election of the Constituent Assembly, democracy without monarchy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and restoration of peace. The movement ended when the King agreed to step down in April 2006.

The representation of IPs in political decision-making bodies began to improve when the Interim Parliament was formed in January 2007. Indigenous peoples make up 36 percent of the CA members, which is roughly equal to their proportion in the population. This was possible because of the proportional representation system, which was applicable for 335 of the 601 CA seats. The remaining 240 seats were filled through the first-past-the-post election system but the parties were also required to be inclusive while nominating candidates.

The progress in political inclusion was also reflected in other state institutions. The more inclusive political environment also resulted in the formulation of more inclusive national development policies and programmes. The Three-Year Interim Plan (TYIP) – the first development plan formulated after the political changes of 2006 – has separate sections with quantifiable indicators for the advancement of excluded groups.

Limited participation in the civil services

The representation of IPs in public offices has always been very low.⁴⁰ In 1854, about 95 percent of the signatories of the first Country Code belonged to the high castes; in 1991, the same caste groups held 91 percent of positions in government services.⁴¹ The Brahmin/Chhetri groups continue to dominate the bureaucracy. Only the Newar, an urban IP group, have been able to successfully compete and gain these positions.

Civil service records of 2006 revealed that officers from indigenous groups other than Newar made up only 3.3 percent of the total.⁴² These officers came mostly from the Magar, Gurung, Rai, Limbu, Tamang, Tharu and Thakali. Representation of IPs in the police was slightly better than in the civil service: 13 percent of high-level officers came from indigenous communities other than Newar. The representation of IPs in the judiciary was 2.4 percent.⁴³

The over-representation of Brahmin, Chhetri and Newar in government services is due to the larger pool of qualified candidates. It is likely that the Brahmins and Chhetris will continue to dominate the civil service for another 30 to 35 years.⁴⁴ To change this situation, Nepal would need to find ways to make the bureaucracy more inclusive and representative, which would help to ensure more effective development, particularly the delivery of basic social services to the excluded groups.

39 Essays of Anne de Sales, 2003, Karl-Heinz Kramer, 2002, 2003 Marie Lecomte-Tilouine, 2002, 2004 and several other scholars/researchers, have written about why and how the members of indigenous nationalities, women and Dalits joined the Maoist forces.

40 Low in relation to the dominant groups but higher than Dalits and religious minorities.

41 Gurung, 2007: 18.

42 Nijamati Kitapkhana (Civil Service Records office, 2006).

43 *Ibid.*

44 Ram Prakash Yadav, 2007: 113.

National Policy and Legal Framework: Implications for Inclusion of Indigenous Peoples

Nepal's parliament adopted the Interim Constitution in January 2007. The provisions address many concerns of IPs, including the following:

- Declaration of a secular state and commitment to form an inclusive federal republic;
- Commitment to inclusion of IPs and excluded groups in all state structures;
- Commitment to allow use of local languages in local government offices and to promote education in the mother tongue;
- Commitment to preserve, promote and treat all languages and cultures equally;
- Affirmative action or positive discrimination/reservation for excluded groups, including IPs in government services;
- Mixed electoral system: first-past-the-post and proportional representation;
- Representation of IPs in the CA in proportion to their population;
- Representation of non-elected IPs (from small groups) and others in the CA through nomination by the Council of Ministers.⁴⁵

Framework to enhance representation and participation of IPs

The Civil Service Act (2007) and the Constituent Assembly Member Election Act (2007) established the principle for the representation of IPs in the CA, Parliament⁴⁶ and civil service. The election law required political parties to be inclusive and specified the percentage of candidates to be nominated under the proportional representation system. It also required them to be inclusive while nominating candidates for the direct election. As a result of this rule, indigenous peoples account for 36.27 percent of representatives in the CA, which is close to their proportion in the population (Table 2).

The government has reserved 45 percent of vacant positions in the civil service for competition between candidates from excluded groups. Twenty-seven percent of those positions have been reserved for candidates from indigenous peoples' groups. Similar reservations have been introduced in the security services.

Table 2: Representation in Legislative Bodies and Constituent Assembly 2008

Social Group	1991		1994		1999		2006		CA 2008	
	(No.)	(%)	(No.)	(%)	(No.)	(%)	(No.)	(%)	(No.)	(%)
B/C Hill	119	58.33	134	66.34	129	63.86	183	55.62	199	33.11
B/C Madhesi	7	3.43	7	3.47	3	1.49	4	1.22	21	3.49
Dalit Hill	1	0.49	0	0.00	0	0.00	13	3.95	36	5.99
Dalit Madhesi	1	0.49	0	0.00	0	0.00	3	0.91	14	2.33
IP Hill	35	17.16	22	10.89	25	12.38	54	16.41	139	23.13
IP Terai	13	6.37	10	4.95	11	5.45	16	4.86	46	7.65
Newar	13	6.37	12	5.94	13	6.44	27	8.21	33	5.49
Madhesi Other Caste	10	4.90	16	7.92	19	9.41	25	7.60	96	15.97
Muslim	5	2.45	1	0.50	2	0.99	4	1.22	17	2.83
Total	204	100	202	100	202	100	329	100	601	100

Source: Election Commission, CA Secretariat.

⁴⁵ The Interim Constitution of Nepal 2007, Articles 4, 138, 21 & 33e, 5(3), 7 (1) & (3), 35 (3), (10), (14), 63 (3 a, b & c) and (4).

⁴⁶ The same CA members function as members of the Legislative Parliament that has lawmaking duties.

Among the indigenous groups, the Newar had been over represented in parliament compared to their proportion in the population. However, they have not been successful in seeking leadership positions in government after 1990.⁴⁷ Apart from the Newar, IPs were underrepresented in parliament until 2007. The IPs blamed the first-past-the-post system of election for their low representation.

Representatives of indigenous people have not participated very effectively in constitution making due to their low endowment and empowerment.⁴⁸ Within parties, members from indigenous groups have been largely sidelined or have not been well-represented in decision-making bodies. The IPs in leadership positions in the political parties have been accused of being more loyal to their parties than their constituents. Similarly, some activists from indigenous groups argue that their CA representatives have not sufficiently addressed their concerns.⁴⁹

Some IPOs have started demanding the right to select their own representatives in government bodies as opposed to giving that right to political parties or representative organizations of IPs. The Nepal Federation of Indigenous Peoples has 54 affiliated IPOs, the largest representative body of IPs in Nepal. The government has begun consulting NEFIN on decisions related to IPs. Nevertheless, some IPOs have also expressed preferences to have a direct contact with the government. There is a need for more coherent positioning of the indigenous peoples' groups for the advancement of their demands.

There are 218 representatives from indigenous groups in the CA. These members have formed a caucus to search for a common ground for lobbying political parties in the preparation of an inclusive democratic constitution.

National development plans

Nepal began considering the needs of the IPs during the 8th Five-Year Plan but it was only the 9th Five-Year Plan (1997-2002) that it initiated special programmes for development of IPs. Social inclusion became one of the four strategic pillars in the 10th Five-Year Plan (2002-2007), which was also Nepal's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP). Inclusive development is a strategy of the Three Year Interim Plan (TYIP) (2008-2010), which has been effective during the political transition.

The 9th Plan had a separate section on indigenous peoples' groups (section 13.7.1).⁵⁰ The major achievement during the plan period was the establishment of the National Committee for Development of Nationalities, which was reorganized as a National Foundation for Development of Indigenous Nationalities (NFDIN) in 2003.

The 10th Plan was a major milestone in terms of policy focus on development for IPs. The four major pillars of the plan were: 1) high, sustainable and broad-based economic growth; 2) social sector and rural infrastructure development; 3) targeted programmes and social inclusion; and 4) good governance.⁵¹ The programmes that were most meaningful to the IPs were grouped under social inclusion and targeted programmes.

The major institutional and policy reforms initiated during the 10th Plan⁵² were the establishment of the NFDIN, requirements for all ministries to begin inclusive programmes, initiation of scholarships and other incentives for students, and the creation of the Poverty Alleviation Fund to reach out to excluded groups. Another major development was the amendment of the Education Act (in 2006) to begin teaching and learning in the mother tongue. Simultaneously, the government began to

47 Marich Man Singh Shrestha did become prime minister before 1990 when Nepal did not have political parties.

48 Nepal Human Development Report 2009 (p. 9) raised the question of endowment and empowerment for effective participation of CA members and has suggested alternative conduits for public input in constitution making. Educational attainment of most CA members elected through proportional representation is low and many have no law-making experience.

49 Iris Marrion Young, one of the champions of inclusive democracy argues that inclusion without political equality is futile and does not alter unjust conditions. See: *Inclusion and Democracy*, New York, Oxford, 2000: 16-51.

50 NPC, 1997 pp. 702-706 & pp. 707-712.

51 NPC, 2002. The Tenth Plan (2002-2007).

52 The Tenth Plan began from 2001/02 (mid-July 2001 to mid-July 2002) and ended in mid-July 2007.

discuss reforming representation in the civil services. The legislative changes to that effect were made in 2007.

It was only during the 10th Plan that donors started to recognize that exclusion and discrimination were major problems in Nepal and initiated programmes focused on development of IPs and other excluded groups. Many of the commitments were not implemented owing to political instability and escalation of the Maoist insurgency, which slowed development efforts.

Nepal prepared a three-year plan to cover the period of the political transition from 2007 to 2010. It aimed to sustain peace and stability and reduce unemployment, poverty and inequality.⁵³ The plan attempted to make all sectoral programmes more inclusive. It had a separate chapter on gender mainstreaming and inclusion, and a separate section (8.3) devoted to IPs. The plan aimed to promote economic and cultural development of IPs by increasing their access to administrative, social and economic resources.⁵⁴ Political differences in the ruling coalition prevented a stronger focus on empowerment and development of IPs.

The plan included the following quantitative targets for IPs: increase HDI by 10 percent, improve the empowerment index by 10 percent, ensure representation in CA and/or legislative bodies in a manner that is proportionate to their population, and improve the gender empowerment measures of indigenous women by 10 percent.

Organized Voices of Indigenous Peoples

The indigenous peoples of Nepal are diverse, as the above data has shown, facing various realities and challenges and having different priorities. Organized movements of indigenous nationalities in Nepal began with the democracy movement of the 1950s. However, the early initiatives to form their organizations ended with the royal takeover and the ban on political parties by the king in 1961.

IPs began to organize openly after 1990. They collectively referred to themselves as Janajatis and not Matwalis (alcohol consumers), the term used by the first Country Code. In 1990-1991, several indigenous peoples' organizations came together to form the Nepal Federation of Nationalities⁵⁵ as a common front.⁵⁶ By the early 1990s, NEFIN had begun to claim that they were "adivasi" or indigenous to Nepal. In 2008, NEFIN had 54 IPOs as members and 64 District Coordination Committees (DCCs).⁵⁷ NEFIN had Village Coordination Committees (VCCs) in 2000 Village Development Committees (VDC).⁵⁸ The objectives of NEFIN (amended in 2003) were to strengthen the indigenous peoples' movement by forming a forum to collectively voice issues related to their rights, language, culture and development. More recently it has been advocating for the implementation of ILO Convention 169 and other UN conventions on human rights and the development of IPs.⁵⁹

The government formed a new task force to review the classification of IPs in 2009. This action was in response to demands of various indigenous groups that had not been included in the official list and were seeking recognition of their identity by the government, mostly making their demands heard through public demonstrations. Leaders of IPs tend to believe that the media have often misrepresented or ignored the coverage of their issues.⁶⁰

53 NPC, 2007. Three-Year Interim Plan (2007/08 – 2009/10). p. 28.

54 NPC, 2007: 121.

55 NEFIN had a name change to NEFIN in 2003.

56 Suresh Ale Magar was the first General Secretary of NEFIN (now NEFIN). He is now a CA member elected on a CPN (Maoist) ticket.

57 NEFIN said DCCs could not be formed in other districts because of small number of IPs.

58 There are 3,915 VDCs in Nepal.

59 See Subba et al. 2009: 53 for key points and references.

60 This was one of the major issues raised by IPs participants at the National Stakeholder Consultation on C4E held on 19-20 January 2010 in Kathmandu, Nepal.

IPOs and representatives of indigenous peoples in the Constituent Assembly have been critical about the influence of dominant groups in the mass media, which they believe is the main reason for bias or stereotypical coverage. They also argue that the mainstream media has been working to build public opinion in favour of a political system and power structure that will perpetuate domination by traditional caste elites.⁶¹ They also have said that journalists in Nepal are largely unaware of ILO Convention 169 and UNDRIP.

Key Challenges and Opportunities for the Indigenous Peoples

Inclusive participation, voice and development

Challenges

- *Identity politics*: One challenge is to establish social cohesion in a country where very different social groups have conflicting demands. At present, there is not an effective mechanism to facilitate communication and dialogue on the grievances and claims that could help to bridge the differences.
- *The rights of IPs*: Another challenge is obtaining recognition and implementing the rights of the IPs in line with ILO Convention 169 and UNDRIP. There is a need to include the provisions of these two instruments into the new constitution to ensure greater compliance.
- *Restructuring the state for effective participation and development of the IPs*: In the current process, there is a commitment to setting up federal units but their viability will depend on delineated territories and governance systems. Ethnic-demarcated provinces with the right to self-determination are key demands of the IPs. This has the potential to create tensions and conflict with similar demands of other social groups who want geographically defined provinces and provinces based on economic viability.
- *The indigenous peoples' movement*: The gains made by IPs after 2006 must be institutionalized to guarantee their proportionate representation in all state institutions. Only this reform can increase their voice and participation in democratic political decision-making, governance and development.
- *Low representation*: IPs have been under-represented in the civil service, with the exception of the Newar. This has negative implications in formulation and implementation of policies for their advancement.
- *Language*: There is recognition and commitment to equal treatment of all languages. However, the language policy has not yet been finalized. The development and standardization of all languages are crucial for effective implementation of this policy.
- *Access to development opportunities*: Existing programmes to support excluded groups have been victims of patronage politics. There is the need to establish transparent and accountable democratic governance systems for effective implementation.
- *Misrepresentation and ignorance of indigenous peoples' issues*: There is very little intergroup dialogue on issues affecting IPs, especially in the mass media. IPs are underrepresented in the media profession and often misinterpreted or ignored in media coverage.

Opportunities

- *New constitution*: There are opportunities for incorporating the rights of the IPs into the new constitution. This can provide a basis for policy and legislation to ensure inclusive participation of IPs in democratic governance.
- *Collective voices of IPs*: The formation of a caucus of representatives in the CA provides an opportunity for amplifying the demands and negotiations of IPs for policies and legal instruments promising more inclusive participation. Strengthening the all-party caucus could effectively enhance the ability of IPs to negotiate with other social groups.

⁶¹ Such feelings were widely expressed by CA members and IPO activists during FGDs organized in Kathmandu.

- *Open political environment:* The open democratic environment in Nepal provides opportunities for undertaking programmes aimed at raising awareness and building public opinion for supporting the demands of the IPs and other excluded groups. There are also opportunities for communicating indigenous rights with all stakeholders.
- *Development opportunities:* Recent national development plans and policies have increasingly recognized the need for specific provisions for the advancement of the IPs and excluded groups. This provides opportunities for implementing both targeted programmes for the IPs and mainstreaming inclusion in broader development intentions.

2.2 Media and ICT Landscape in Nepal

Overview of the Media Landscape

Political and legal environment for the media

In 1990, when Nepal established multiparty democracy and constitutional monarchy (ending almost three decades of direct royal rule),⁶² the political change triggered new developments in the media environment. The new leadership formulated a new communication policy and enacted new laws on the print and broadcast media. The Constitution (1990) guaranteed press freedoms and prevented closure of newspapers in response to published content. The statute barred censorship though it allowed the government to place “reasonable restrictions” for safeguarding national sovereignty, integrity, “harmonious relations”, sedition, defamation and so on. A new broadcasting law provided a framework for licensing independent broadcasters of television and frequency modulation (FM) radios. The legislative environment remained largely unchanged at the time of this study in 2009, although the same can not be said for other aspects of the media.

Positive changes in the political and media environment allowed IPs to articulate their demands, which was vital for re-invigorating the IP movement (see the national overview section above). These changes also facilitated new private investment in the media, which began with the launch of two independent broadsheets in 1993. In 1991 and 1992 Nepal’s press was ‘free’.⁶³ A number of factors including the delays in formulating the broadcasting regulations delayed the licensing of independent radio until May 1997.

Nepal’s media environment changed drastically in 2005 following an attempt by the king to install direct rule. The king suspended about half a dozen constitutional articles and reintroduced censorship.⁶⁴ Following three weeks of protests, in early 2006 the king agreed to restore parliament and formed a government of the political parties.

The operating environment for media became dangerous after the peace process began in 2006. At least five journalists have been killed or have gone missing since April 2006 and, in most cases, those attacking the media and journalists have been close to or affiliated with political parties and/or newly formed armed groups with various political demands.

Key challenges and opportunities for indigenous peoples

Nepal’s media has been and is still overwhelmingly controlled by members of the dominant social groups, not necessarily in terms of ownership but in terms of control of content production.⁶⁵ This

62 Following experimentations with various governments following the overthrow of the Rana Oligarchy in 1951, in 1960 the king dismissed an elected government and began ruling directly. The system of direct rule – called the Panchayat – that was established later continued until April 1990. See: Bhattarai, B (2005). Censored: Nepal’s Press under King Gyanendra’s Regime. Studies in Nepali History and Society. Vol. 10 No 2 for a detailed discussion of the media before 1990.

63 These are the only two years that Nepal’s press was so classified by Freedom House (www.freedomhouse.org). Thereafter, press freedoms were constricted owing to political instability and the Maoist insurgency (1996-2006).

64 See Bhattarai (2005).

65 There are little or no studies on ownership available. Studies that exist show that media jobs are largely held by members of the Brahmin/Chhetri groups and Newars among the IPs.

has resulted from their greater access to opportunities in education, training and jobs. Similarly, the principal language of the mass media has been Nepali, the mother tongue of the dominant groups, and also the only official language before 2007. With better language abilities, individuals from these groups have distinct advantages for securing media jobs. It is also true that the Newar enjoy fairly high representation in the media compared to other IPs. This is because the Newar live in urban areas such as Kathmandu, where they have better access to education and training facilities.

Various individuals from indigenous groups own and run media, including some large Kathmandu-based radio and television stations. However, only a few of these companies have been successful commercially. According to key informants in this study, media owned by members of indigenous groups have been more open to covering their events, demands and concerns. However, even in such media, the gatekeepers of news and information usually come from the dominant groups – and many of these gatekeepers may have low understanding of the issues affecting IPs. Media owned by members from indigenous groups also tend to be accused of taking sides, which may damage their professional image and credibility. Therefore, there is a need to devise mechanisms for enhancing the capacity of journalists to understand issues affecting IPs, and there is a need to design professional content that purposefully communicates the concerns of IPs.

Some IPOs produce publications in their mother tongues. However, the publications are largely read within the language groups. While helping raise awareness of readers about their rights, these publications are not very effective for communicating with the other social groups, which is needed for building broader public opinion.

Nepal has little or no regulation of media, especially broadcasting. Reforming the regulatory environment could provide opportunities for making the media more diverse not only in terms of who owns and controls media outlets but also in terms of content and staffing. Making the existing newsrooms more diverse could be the first step towards giving greater voice to the IPs.

Nepal has a very vibrant and energetic media with great diversity in terms of scale and form. Some kinds of media are professional, within the space allowed by commercialization; others openly advocate partisan positions; and others are seemingly independent. Most of Nepal's media are concentrated in the capital Kathmandu and other urban centres. Radio, especially FM, reaches large parts of the country but newspapers still remain restricted to accessible areas. The language used by the media – mainly Nepali – is another barrier to reaching IPs effectively.

Print media

The government's data on newspapers and publications are not always consistent with data from the Press Council Nepal (PCN). This is partly because not all newspapers register at PCN. Furthermore, Nepali law bars the cancellation of newspaper registrations, which means that newspapers and/or publications remain in public records forever.

According to the Press Council Nepal, as of mid-July 2008 Nepal had 2,601 registered newspapers. Among them 386 were dailies, 23 bi-weeklies, 1,871 weeklies and 321 fortnightlies. However, only 754 of these newspapers were actually published, and of them, only 553 were regular. Effectively, therefore, Nepal has about 99 dailies, four bi-weeklies, 429 weeklies and 21 regular fortnightlies. Based on the number of regular newspapers, there is one publication for every 49,000 Nepalis. However, not all newspapers are fully accessible even to people who receive the copies, owing to language. Timeliness of delivery and affordability are other factors that affect access.

According to the government's Department of Information, as of March 2009 Nepal had 5,258 registered newspapers and periodicals. Among them were 398 dailies, 1,957 weeklies, 376 fortnightlies, and 1,562 monthlies along with others publishing at other frequencies, including annual publications.⁶⁶ Size and circulation varies widely but reliable data is unavailable.

Generally, Nepal's eastern-most regions and the regions adjacent to the Bagmati zone have more publications (see Table 5) compared to other regions, with the exception of the Sagarmatha zone. The weeklies, which are infrequent and more partisan compared to broadsheet dailies, outnumber

⁶⁶ Government of Nepal. Ministry of Information and Communication. Department of Information. 2009.

other publications. Daily newspaper content generally flows from the centre to the periphery. Some broadsheets also have regional publications and include some local content.

Broadcasting

Nepal's broadcasting sector was comprised of 323 licensed FM radio stations and 12 television channels as of July 2009. Ten of the 12 licensed television channels were broadcasting. Among the 323 FM stations, 195 claimed to be community radios, of which over 160 were broadcasting. These included stations owned and operated by non-governmental organizations (NGOs), cooperatives and local government bodies.⁶⁷ The government licensed the first private television stations in early 1990 but they began broadcasting only after 2000. Nepal's broadcasting sector, especially FM radio, has the widest reach.

Nepal also has three major private content production organizations that produce materials for broadcast on FM radio, often with the support of donors. Programmes produced by these companies and non-governmental organizations are broadcast on a variety of stations. The production companies produce and distribute news as well as communication content to support development and advocacy efforts.

One example of content produced with donor support is the 2007 initiative of UNDP and the BBC Trust to develop programming on state building, with support from DFID. Following a bidding process, conducted after Nepali broadcasters raised questions about why Nepali radios were not selected and why BBC Trust was brought in without bidding, the BBC Trust took on the Association of Community Broadcasters (ACORAB) as partner for a second phase of the project.⁶⁸

The Broadcast Audience Survey (2006-2007) done by Equal Access Nepal suggested that television and radio are ranked as first and second choice among urban and rural audiences, although the order is reversed in rural areas, as illustrated in the following table of audience preferences:

Table 3: Preferred Sources of Information⁶⁹

Media	Urban	Rural
Television	99.3	90.6
Radio	96.0	98.0
Newspaper	72.9	41.0
Internet	35.0	2.9

Source: Broadcast Audience Survey (BAS) 2006-2007 conducted by Equal Access Nepal. http://www.nepalradio.org/reports/p3_mp_report-1.htm (accessed on 23 December 2008)

Public perceptions of the media and access

Nepal's media have both credibility and trust despite their political links and the quality of content, according to a five-part survey on The Nepal Contemporary Political Situation. The survey asked people about the institutions they trust. The institutions the respondents trusted "very much" were:

1. Religious organizations
2. Media persons
3. Ethnic organizations
4. Civil society

⁶⁷ Source for data on radio: R. Mainali. B. Bhushal B. 2009. Community Radio Statistics. Community Radio Support Centre. NEFEJ (Forthcoming).

⁶⁸ The Danish Development Agency (DANIDA) supported the expansion of community radio by providing hardware and technical support. After 2006 the USAID's Office of Transitional Initiatives provided "in-kind" support to a large number of FM stations to upgrade their equipment.

⁶⁹ Broadcast Audience Survey (BAS) 2006-2007 conducted by Equal Access Nepal. http://www.nepalradio.org/reports/p3_mp_report-1.htm (accessed on 23 December 2008).

5. Human rights organizations
6. Non-governmental organizations⁷⁰

(Those not on the list, e.g. government, parliament, police, army, etc., were lower in the order.)

A number of factors determine media access. Nepal's traditionally excluded communities – women, Dalits, IPs and religious minorities – do not have equal access to media. People from the dominant social groups still control most media content. The exclusion of the poor and marginalized and vulnerable groups in Nepali society (see the national overview section) extends to the newsrooms. According to journalists from indigenous peoples groups working in various media, their presence in the newsrooms is very low and they lack effective participation in decision-making on news content.

Physical access

Access to media is comparatively better in the eastern and central regions of Nepal compared to the rest of the country. As of 2008, of the total registered publications 1,260 (40.4 percent) were based in the Bagmati zone (mainly in Kathmandu, the capital). These included 159 dailies, seven bi-weeklies, 904 weeklies and 190 fortnightlies. Table 5 summarizes media presence in different parts of the country for newspapers (based on registration) and radio.

Though media presence is highest in Bagmati, access is not uniform across the eight districts in the zone. Eight of Nepal's 75 districts do not have locally registered newspapers. The districts without newspapers include Dailekh, Humla, Jajarkot, Manang, Mugu, Mustang, Rasuwa and Solukhumbu, according to PCN records in 2007-2008. Rasuwa, one of three districts where the field study was done, also did not have a FM radio as of mid-2009.

Language

Language is an important determinant of access to information. An overwhelming majority of Nepal's newspapers were published in Nepali (85.39 percent) in 2008, as seen in Table 4. English language periodicals accounted for 3.6 percent and the remaining were published in both Nepali and English or in other languages. According to the PCN there were 18 Newar language newspapers, 10 Hindi, five Maithili and two in Tharu languages. Most of the IP language newspapers were irregular; PCN data suggests that only seven Newar language newspapers were regular.

Table 4: Newspapers Published in Different Languages*

Language	Daily	Bi-weekly	Weekly	Fortnightly
Bhojpuri	-	-	-	1
English	4	-	9	5
Hindi	4	-	3	-
Maithili	-	-	2	-
Nepali	120	4	538	24
Newar	2	-	4	1
Tharu	1	-	-	-

Source: Press Council Nepal.

Note: *Same newspapers that appear in more than one language are not included in this table.

There is a discrepancy in data on language between the PCN data and the government records, which reported 28 Newar language publications, 14 Hindi, 15 Maithili, five Tharu, two Tamang, three Bhojpuri, two Sanskrit, two Urdu, two Limbu, two Doteli, one Tibetan and 203 "others" listed among the language newspapers/publications.⁷¹

⁷⁰ Sudhindra Sharma, Pawan Kumar Sen. 2008. Nepal Contemporary Political Situation – V. Interdisciplinary Analysts. Page 29. ida.com.np/upload_files/ncps5.pdf. (accessed on 22 August 2009).

⁷¹ Economic Survey, July 2008, p. 185.

Table 5: Media by Zones (Parenthesis Show the Percent of Weekly Newspapers)

District	Newspapers	FM Radio
Mechi	380 (69)	11
Kosi	270 (65)	27
Sagarmatha	88 (72)	20
Janakpur	174 (79)	24
Bagmati	1,355 (72)	54
Narayani	296 (77)	40
Gandaki	109 (66)	29
Dhawalagiri	30 (70)	25
Lumbini	84 (65)	12
Rapti	27 (67)	20
Bheri	80 (68)	29
Karnali	6 (83)	12
Seti	47 (70)	13
Mahakali	46 (65)	7

Source: Press Council Nepal. Radio data from: CRSC (2009) Community Radio Statistics.

Nepali is also the dominant language in broadcasting. Over 30 radio stations have programming in the indigenous peoples' languages. But most of the content is either broadcast outside of prime time hours or is comprised of musical programmes. This is true also for community radio stations.

State-run media

Among Nepal's state-run media, Radio Nepal has short wave, medium wave and FM. Nepal Television broadcasts on two channels. The Gorkhapatra Corporation is the government's publishing arm with two daily newspapers (in Nepali and English) and other publications. The Rashtriya Samachar Samiti (RSS) is the official news agency. The state-run media follow government directives.

Radio Nepal broadcasts news in 20 languages: Avadhi, Bhojpuri, Doteli, English, Gurung, Hindi, Kham Magar, Limbu, Magar, Maithili, Nepali, Newari, Rai Bantawa, Sherpa, Sanskrit, Tamang, Tharu East and Tharu West, and Urdu.⁷² These languages remain to be standardized and developed, so news in one dialect may not be understood by IPs of the same language group but with another dialect.

Nepal Television broadcasts most of its programmes in Nepali. It has some indigenous language programmes but no newscasts. Films in national languages are often not on the programme list because advertisers prefer Hindi films. However, the policy on Hindi films has also changed with the political position of the party in control of the Ministry of Information and Communication (MOIC). Hindi film broadcasts were briefly stopped in 2008, when the Maoists held the MOIC portfolio.

Gorkhapatra is a Nepali language daily that is run by the state. Since 2006, it has been inserting *Naya Nepal* (New Nepal), a two-page supplement in different languages other than Nepali.⁷³ Over a month, it provides space for 26 languages spoken by IPs in one supplement a day.⁷⁴ The supplement carries news and opinions on contemporary issues, culture and interviews in various national languages.⁷⁵ But the reach of this publication is limited. It did not reach the villages where the field research for this assessment was done.

⁷² Doteli is a dialect of Nepali language spoken in far western hills of Nepal.

⁷³ The depth of coverage, frequency and reach is a subject for a follow-up study.

⁷⁴ Mohan Mainali. 2008 (unpublished). He had conducted an interview with Naresh Khapangi who coordinated the publication of the supplement in November 2008.

⁷⁵ Supplement in 25 languages can be accessed at <http://www.gorkhapatra.org.np>

Government newspapers generally reach the district headquarters and have been losing readers to private competitors. At a speech during the National Stakeholders Meeting on the C4E study, Shanker Pokhrel, Minister, MoI, said the supplements had not raised circulation of the newspaper. The supplement therefore has a symbolic value in terms of acceptance of diversity in language but is not effective as an information and communication tool, especially in rural areas.

Foreign media

Nepal receives many foreign television signals, including a large number of Indian channels. Even though studies on audience preferences are unavailable, it can be assumed that Nepali TV channels are preferred for news and current affairs and the foreign stations (Indian, mainly) are popular for entertainment. Reach of satellite television is not uniform across the country. The Indian television channels are more readily available in villages along Nepal's southern borders with India. For example, the Indian channels were popular at the field C4E study site in Kailali district in mid-west Nepal.

Major media organizations

The Federation of Nepali Journalists (FNJ): The FNJ, claims a membership of over 7,000 journalists. Nepal also has several other journalist unions, which are organized along partisan lines, but the FNJ represents all journalists. The FNJ has a 27-member executive committee. One journalist from the indigenous peoples' community was elected to the executive committee in 2008. In addition, FNJ also reserved one seat each for representatives of the IPs, women, Madhesi and Dalits in its executive committee.

Nepal also has several organizations offering media development and training, and university courses in journalism are also available. A large number of international media development organizations have carried out – or are implementing – media development and capacity development programmes. The Danish Development agency (DANIDA) supported journalism training and support for community radio in Nepal for over 15 years. Other donors have supported media programmes mainly within project frameworks and also for development messaging. After 2006, many donor projects have focused on state building, peace, democracy, rule of law and constitution making. Donors have not supported major media development programmes with particular attention to empowerment of the IPs and strengthening their voice and participation. However, there are at least two organizations dedicated to supporting and promoting the engagement of IPs in the media.

Association of Nepalese Indigenous Nationalities Journalists (ANIJ): ANIJ was set up in August 1999 to serve as a professional organization to increase IPs participation in the media and to make them aware of their basic rights, heritage and cultural expressions through content production and dissemination. ANIJ claims to have over 500 members and 48 branch offices. ANIJ's objectives are to:

- Advocate and publicize the rights of IPs guided by the human rights declarations and their provisions;
- Provide professional leadership and to protect the professional rights of indigenous journalists in Nepal by incorporating them under ANIJ;
- Support writing and publishing activities, creations and study reports related to IPs and to analyze, review, criticize and provide feedback on literature, books and other publications along with creating awareness about cultural pollution of language, script, religion, art and music of IPs and indigenous knowledge;
- Publicize and broadcast issues related to IPs and internationalize them by organizing seminars, workshops, debates, discussions and interactions for ensuring holistic development of IPs;
- Publicize articles written in the mother tongue or local languages, to prepare audio-visual programmes and to motivate journalists from indigenous peoples' communities.⁷⁶

76 The ANIJ executive committee has a three-year term. The elected body in August 2009 comprised of Khim Ghale, President; Raj Kumar Dikpal, Amar Bhuju, Tilak Pun, Krishna Sarbahari Chaudhary, vice-presidents; Ganesh Chaudhary, General Secretary; Mohan Singh Lama, secretary; Jas Kumar Rai, treasurer.

ANIJ has carried out programmes to raise awareness among youth from indigenous groups about the profession of journalism and media, and offered training to support their professional development. It has also arranged journalist visits to communities of IPs to familiarize media with issues that matter to the IPs, and has supported NEFIN and other IPOs in efforts to carry their messages to the media.

Indigenous Film Archive (IFA): The IFA was established in November 2006 to promote and archive films made by indigenous filmmakers and films about indigenous cultures, cultural practices, knowledge, skills and values. It has since expanded to include collection, documentation, categorization, archiving, promotion and dissemination of films on indigenous issues, traditional institutions, governance, knowledge, skills, cultural best practices, values, value systems, customary laws and wisdom. Some of IFA's development objectives are to establish indigenous filmmaking as a tool for the development of IPs and provide filmmakers a forum to showcase productions.⁷⁷ It is also trying to establish an archive for starting exchanges with IPs around the world.

The IFA has been organizing film festivals since 2007. It has also organized a training of female filmmakers from indigenous peoples' group, set up a fund to support producers and facilitated the establishment of filmmakers associations in the Gurung, Limbu, Magar, Newar and Tamang communities.

Media Policy and Regulations

Nepal does not have an independent mechanism for regulating broadcasting. The Press Council Nepal is a mechanism for regulating the print media. It began including an assessment of radios in its report in 2008.

PCN seems to be independent in structure and operations, including industry participation, yet the government appoints its members. This can result in compromises on decisions. Nepal's Interim Constitution grants broadcasters the same freedoms extended to print but the media laws have not been amended to incorporate the necessary changes and to bring broadcasting under some regulation.

An analysis of the media in the mid-1990s found strong associations of the newspapers with political parties.⁷⁸ The political leanings were also evident in media monitoring done by the PCN during the CA election in April 2008. It found that all major weeklies leaned heavily toward one party or another and sometimes even suppressed or excluded news about other political parties.⁷⁹ The larger broadsheet dailies had maintained editorial independence during the elections.

Freedom of expression

Nepal's media has been largely free in terms of legislation and policy since 1990. The constitution currently under construction, as well as its interim form, provides adequate guarantees for media freedoms and freedom of expression.⁸⁰ But implementing the provisions remains problematic.

⁷⁷ Based on conversation with Navin Subba, Chairperson, IFA and IFA publications. (August 2009).

⁷⁸ Mohan Mainali. 2009 (unpublished).

⁷⁹ Campaign 2008: A Public Report on Media Monitoring for Nepal's Constituent Assembly Polls. 2008. Press Council Nepal. Kathmandu.

⁸⁰ Articles 12(3) guarantees freedom of expression. Article 15 contains provisions regarding publication, broadcasting and the press, which bars prior censorship, guarantees against closure of media companies on account of their content. Article 27 guarantees the Right to Information. Article 28 grants citizens the right to privacy.

Nepal's constitutional guarantees on media freedoms have restrictive clauses that are vague and could be misinterpreted for controlling the media. The provisions are also of "much lower standard than that imposed by international law" and can be used to restrict free expression because the reasons to control content are only required to be 'reasonable'. There are more general terminologies used such as 'may undermine', 'may jeopardize' or 'may be contrary to' various interests, which allow different interpretations of the law.⁸¹ Since Nepal is preparing a new constitution, many of the provisions in the interim statute may be amended and/or updated. A draft in circulation in November 2009 had more restrictive clauses.⁸²

The implementation of laws and policies remains a major challenge in Nepal. It has been lax during the transition for lack of adequate regulatory systems as well as political will. As of the end of 2009, the government was playing four roles in the media: broadcaster, publisher, licensing authority and regulator.

The Right to Information Law 2064 and the Working Journalists Act (WJA) 2064 were approved by Parliament in 2007. WJA sets standards for employing journalists and provides for a committee to recommend minimum wages. Several media groups commented on the Right to Information law in February 2008, including Article 19, Freedom Forum and the FNJ. They observed:

- It is limited in scope applying for citizens rather than to everyone;
- The information request procedures require applicants to submit reasons for their requests, which is not only contrary to international standards but also potentially places the burden of proof on the applicant;
- It lacks an override providing for the disclosure of even exempt information where this is in the overall public interest;
- Parliament and civil society groups should have greater input in appointing members of the National Information Commission (it is done by the government);
- The National Information Commission should be given a wider promotional mandate to foster implementation of the law.⁸³

Further legislative and legal reforms appeared unlikely in the short-run given the priorities associated with constitution writing and peace building. It may take several years for the laws to be updated – based on the new constitutional provisions. Therefore, there is a need to continuously advocate for media freedoms, as the new laws will also influence communication for empowerment of the IPs. Other areas for media policy reforms concern issues such as ending criminal defamation; national security (definitions, scope); states of emergency (and media controls); hate speech, greater inclusion in media and prohibition of speech intended to incite hatred, violence, etc.; review of parliamentary and judicial privileges vis-à-vis media scrutiny, establishment of public media and independent regulation.⁸⁴

Following the approval of Nepal's Right to Information act, an independent National Information Commission was formed in June 2008. The three-member commission can require government agencies and even non-governmental organizations to furnish the requested information. It has already taken several decisions to require agencies to furnish information. None of its decisions made so far are related to demands for information in the languages spoken by indigenous peoples.⁸⁵

81 Article 19, Freedom Forum, Federation of Nepali Journalists. (2008). An agenda for change: The document analyses and makes detailed recommendations on the necessary actions. The recommendations have been endorsed by the International Mission to Nepal – a coalition of media rights and development organizations that have been closely monitoring the freedom of expression situation in Nepal and assisting the media development process.

82 Discussion paper prepared by Bhanubhakta Acharya and Dharmendra Jha for a discussion with the constitution drafting committee, 23 November 2009.

83 <http://www.article19.org/pdfs/press/nepal-rti-act-pr.pdf> (accessed on 19 August 2009).

84 See Agenda for Change, 2008 and International Press Freedom and Freedom of Expression Mission to Nepal. 2009. A call to end violence and impunity. <http://www.i-m-s.dk/files/publications/1453%20Nepal.web.pdf> (Accessed on 19 August 2009).

85 http://www.nic.gov.np/aayogka_nirnaya.php

Attacks on media

Nepal's media faced attacks during the decade-long (1996-2006) conflict but the attacks did not stop even after the peace process began in April 2006. Records at the FNJ suggest various motives for the attacks, including political motivation and settling of old scores, public anger against content published or broadcast and the lack of effective and adequate measures for redress, revenge attacks and even petty crime. Attacks may also have been motivated by the desire to ensure content that is supportive of causes espoused by different groups, including those with identity-based demands.

Trade unions supported by the Maoists have also resorted to industrial actions, which have often resulted in closure and disruption of media services. Publicly some Maoist leaders have made critical remarks about the large organized press and when industrial actions follow such statements, there are grounds to suspect a connection between party policy and union actions. In some instances, media companies were forced to temporarily stop publication.⁸⁶

Attacks on the media escalated after mid-August 2008 and culminated in the deaths of two of journalists, one killed in late 2008 and the other in early 2009. The cases were not investigated thoroughly and no legal action was initiated against the suspects. Nepal was among the most dangerous global workplaces for journalists in 2008 – it was ranked the eighth in terms of the danger journalists faced at work.⁸⁷

These attacks on media including due to the content of the programmes and articles has resulted in increasing self-censorship of the media. This has an adverse effect on the level of trust of the general public in the media, as its content is subjected to the control of various political groups.

Media capacity

Nepal has a fairly well-established media sector. But improving content quality remains a major challenge. The media run by the indigenous peoples' groups in their own languages have limited reach. The voice of IPs can be enhanced only through mechanisms to ensure greater representation of trained journalists from their communities in the mainstream media. Good-quality training and mentoring can assist professional journalists from indigenous populations to upgrade their skills, obtain and retain media jobs and continuously give credible voice to their issues.

Indigenous Peoples in the Media

Recent information on representation of IPs in the media is not available. However, a 2000 survey by Shekhar Parajuli and Bhaskar Gautam of the Samajik Bikas Tatha Anushandan Kendra (Social Development and Research Centre) in 23 cities and towns provides a snapshot. The representation may have improved slightly following greater demands for inclusion in the media. This study grouped media workers into the editorial, columnist and publisher categories for analysis.

The editorial group included reporters, editors and layout/design staff. This group included 956 individuals from 73 publications of which Janajatis (IPs) comprised only 164 persons or 17.15 percent; there were 57 Newar (34.7 percent) among the IPs in the editorial group. The representation of IPs in 41 newspapers inside Kathmandu Valley was 149 (21.5 percent) of the total number of 693 in the group. The representation of Newar journalists in the districts was 62.4 percent. The other groups with some representation were Rai, Limbu and Tamang. There were eight women from indigenous peoples' groups among the 31 female journalists in the Kathmandu Valley papers. Five of the eight women were Newar.

⁸⁶ See Report of the International Press Freedom and Freedom of Information Mission to Nepal February 2009 for most recent cases and Mission reports from July 2005 for earlier cases.

⁸⁷ <http://cpj.org/2009/02/attacks-on-the-press-in-2008-nepal.php> (24 March 2009).

According to the same study, among the 298 columnists in 73 newspapers, 25 were from indigenous groups. Thirteen of these columnists were Newar. The representation of IPs as columnists was higher in the Kathmandu Valley papers (64 of 248 or 25.8 percent of the total number). Among the 64 columnists, 44 or 68.8 percent were Newar. There were 15 female columnists in these publications of which seven were IPs; among them six were Newar.⁸⁸

The publishers group included the heads of distribution, marketing, directors, the managing director and the company chairman. The newspapers outside Kathmandu were not very organized and therefore the publisher had varied roles such as that of the distributor, manager and editor. The study found 25 IPs in the publishers' group. Of the 41 publications studied in Kathmandu Valley, there were only 21 IPs in the group, of which 14 were Newar.⁸⁹

Clearly, underrepresentation of IPs other than the Newar in the media remains a challenge. Reasons for this include language of the publication (and the proficiency of IPs in the language) and most importantly the limited capacity of journalists from indigenous groups owing to their inadequate access to opportunities for self-improvement.

A number of issues related to journalism in the Nepali language have had a negative, direct influence on communication for empowerment of the IPs. The broad issues⁹⁰ include the following:

- **Resources:** Most media companies are understaffed. A reporter works on at least two reports a day and this means he/she has time for writing straight news only. No time or resources are available for stories that require in-depth research and analysis;
- **Capacity:** Nepal has a long history of journalism training (also a reason for donor fatigue in the case of DANIDA). However, training has largely focused on basic skills and because Nepal's social science education is poor, the grounding and tools needed for understanding issues in-depth and for reporting on them is still lacking;
- **Feedback and self-improvement:** Even reporters wanting to do something different do not have the time and resources required to access, study and produce stories based on research. Their sources and readers/audiences (for feedback) are largely politicians, political analysts and lawyers. Both content and feedback remains largely within this self-serving circle. (There are therefore opportunities for extending media literacy for expanding the feedback loops. Such a mechanism can also be a learning experience for journalists.)

Coverage of Issues Related to Indigenous Peoples in the Media

In another 2000 study, Shekhar Parajuli looked at what and how the media were portraying issues related to IPs. He looked at dailies, weeklies, fortnightlies and monthly publications. He found that the print media was largely covering events and new developments, including events organized by IPs to mark various festivals. The study also found that the 'investigative reports' covered various aspects of IP lifestyles, including culture, religion, language, traditions, occupations, etc. Among the baicharik lekh (opinion articles), the study found political issues covered more prominently in newspapers with a 'Leftist tilt'. The issues covered were related to ethnic self-rule, the right to self-determination, nature and types of self-rule (unitary or federal). The study did not report on the volume of the coverage but said it was low. Parajuli concluded that it was rare to find a front-page story related to IPs and that there were more event-based stories compared to well-researched investigative articles and opinion pieces. There were very few editorials.⁹¹

88 In 2004 the development outcomes for the Newar, believed to be the original inhabitants of Kathmandu Valley, was close to (if not better on some indicators than) that of the Brahmin and Chhetris. They also have considerable influence in business and politics. See: Chapter II.

89 Shekhar Parajuli and Bhaskar Gautam. 2058 (2000/01). "Print mediama Dalit ra Janajati sahabhagita" (Participation of Janajatis in the Print Media) in P. Onta, Kumar Yatru and Bhaskar Gautam (eds.). Chapama Janajati. Martin Chautari/Samajik Bikas tatha Anushandan Kendra. Also see Shekhar Parajuli and Bhaskar Gautam. 2058. "Print mediama Dalit ra Janajati Sahabhagita" in Pratyoush Onta and Shekhar Parajuli (eds.). Nepali Media ma Dalit ra Janajati. Ekta Books.

90 M. Mainali. 2009. (unpublished).

91 Parajuli Shekhar. 2000. Patrapatrikama Janajati Bishayabastu (Janajati issues in newspapers) in Shekhar Parajuli and Bhaskar Gautam. 2058 (2000/01). in P. Onta, Kumar Yatru and Bhaskar Gautam (eds.). Chapama Janajati. Martin Chautari/Samajik Bikas tatha Anushandan Kendra.

The International Day of the World's Indigenous People (August 9, 2009) was taken as a test case about media coverage of IP issues. For the present C4E study, eight daily newspapers published from Kathmandu on August 10 were analyzed. The analysis confirmed the pattern described by Parajuli (2000): there was very little coverage, it was routine and event-driven and even half-hearted. Most of the newspapers reported on a rally organized by Nepal's IPs on August 9 but many did not report what the speakers had said or interview the speakers. Other newspapers printed large pictures of IPs in traditional attire, giving it a festive angle. They did not report their key demands and did not discuss how those could be addressed. There was one exception. The *Nagarik* daily ran an op-ed piece in which an activist was invited to write about IPs' demands. The newspaper also had a fairly long story on illegal taxes imposed by different IPs groups seeking ethnic federations on the highways. It did not report on the rally that marked the International Day.

Two English-language newspapers did not cover the rally. Another newspaper had a fairly long report on the views of a former prime minister and president of the Nepali Congress party, on federalism. The former prime minister did not support federalism based on ethnicity, language, etc. The story could have been an opportunity to bring the views of IPs into the debate – many of which were articulated by the speakers at the rally – but this was not done. The *Gorkhaparta* daily ran the federalism story on page 1; its report on the International Day for IPs was, as in many other papers, in the inside pages. One English-language newspaper featured a seven-column photograph of IPs in traditional dresses but the accompanying six-column story was not about the rally or their demands related to state building. Instead, it was about a mix-up in results of a beauty contest for children of IPs.

The lack of interest of newspapers in the International Day of the World's Indigenous People could have resulted from it being a routine event (one that comes around every year). However, reporters could have hooked the Day to the constitution-making underway in Nepal and the issues that the IPs want incorporated. Another 'news peg' is the fact that all IP members of the CA participated in the rally. The speakers at the rally spoke about IP issues being neglected in the assembly.

This simple content study suggests a need for a detailed analysis of coverage as groundwork for follow-up on the C4E assessment. The analysis could identify stories on relevant issues and study the 'depth' or 'completeness' of coverage. It could also interview the reporters/authors to obtain insights into the production processes.

From the published articles reviewed for the International Day, it can be concluded that there was an apparent lack of discussion on how the media decide to handle such events. The Day was an important opportunity for both the civil society and the media to raise the debate about federalism in Nepal to a new, more informed level. But the coverage suggested a compartmentalization of the issue as one being of interest to only IPs and therefore it was reduced to an entertainment story (without real substance) by some newspapers.

Journalists from indigenous communities working at several media organizations discussed this situation during an interaction programme in early January 2010. They said issues affecting IPs get reported because they (the journalists) are in the organizations, but it is mainly people from the communities that do the reporting. They said journalists from other groups are not interested or not adequately informed about the issues affecting IPs and the importance of these issues to their communities. In addition, the respondents to the assessment also indicated their lack of trust in the media due to misrepresentation of IPs in the media.

Overview of ICT and Telecommunication Landscape

Nepal has made considerable advances in the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). The telephone network (fixed lines, mobiles and CDMA⁹² phones) is expanding but the use of broadband for Internet is restricted to urban centres, mainly in Kathmandu Valley. Nepal has also tested innovative experiments in rural communications using the Internet and other communication technologies. One effort led by Mahabir Pun won him the Ramon Magsaysay

92 Code Division Multiple Access phones that are mobile. Services are similar to the regular mobile services.

award for community leadership in 2007. He was recognized for the use of “wireless computer technology in Nepal, and bringing progress to remote mountain areas by connecting his village to the global village.”⁹³

Nepal has a number of Internet news portals and bloggers. However, connectivity is still limited to a small number of urban dwellers. Access is not uniform, often limited by the ability to pay. Many organizations, including ANIJ, have an Internet presence but only a handful of sites are routinely serviced and updated (except for news organizations).⁹⁴

Postal services

Nepal’s postal network reaches all Village Development Committees. The network is comprised of the General Post Office, regional post directorates, district post offices, *llaka* post offices and additional post offices, for a total of 3,992 offices. There are ongoing efforts to upgrade rural post offices into rural communications hubs. However, the transformation has not been effective for various reasons, including limited resources and bandwidth. The district post office in Rasuwa, one of the three-field study districts, had been designated as a telecentre. However, the only service available at the post office at the time of the survey was a photocopy machine.

Telecommunications

The Nepal Telecommunication Authority (NTA) is the regulator with semi-judicial authority. Six companies provide voice communication services: Nepal Telecom, United Telecom Ltd., Spice Nepal Pvt. Ltd., STM Telecom Sanchar Pvt. Ltd., Nepal Satellite Telecom Pvt. Ltd., and Smart Telecom Pvt. Ltd., as of August 2009. Nepal Telecom, previously a government monopoly, provides fixed-line or basic services as well as mobile services. Other companies provided limited mobility and mobile services. In mid-July 2009 the government said CDMA mobile⁹⁵ coverage for cellular technology had been extended to all 75 districts of the country and the GSM mobile coverage was available in 72 districts.⁹⁶ Mobile telephone coverage is expected to reach all 75 districts by mid-July 2010. The telecom penetration rate – both fixed-line and mobile – was 26.7 percent in December 2009.⁹⁷ Nepal had 1,893 rural public call (telephone) offices in December 2009.

As of December 2009, almost 7.3 million telephones had been distributed, including 6.2 million mobile phones. There were about 700,000 Internet users in Nepal. Kathmandu, the capital, has fairly good Internet connectivity though prices are still on the high side. Data disaggregated by the user’s caste/ethnicity are not available. However, there are a few Internet users from indigenous groups, apart from Newar, who use the new media in urban areas.⁹⁸

Nepal has a fibre optic cable connecting districts in the southern plains and has been working on a north-south connection to the Tibetan border.⁹⁹ But the ownership issues have complicated the use of this backbone for information technology (IT) services. Nepal Telecom owns the IT backbone and therefore controls access. The cost of use and other physical barriers to access remain unresolved. Currently, Nepal has basic legislation on telecommunications and the Internet and is now preparing an Electronic Transaction Act. The government has plans to connect all 75 districts to the cable network within five years.

A ‘communication highway’ of sorts exists in Nepal, and there are plans to expand it. However, there are challenges to its use for effective communication for empowering the IPs.

93 <http://www.rmaf.org.ph/Awardees/Citation/CitationPunMah.htm>

94 <http://www.anij.org.np/home.php> the site of ANIJ did not go beyond the opening window on 30 November 2009

95 Code division multiple access (CDMA) is the current name for the cellular technology originally known as IS-95. This technology is in competition with the GSM technology set for leadership in the global cellular technology market.

96 Government of Nepal. 2009. Economic Survey 2008/2009.

97 Nepal Telecommunication Authority, Management Information System.

98 Based on focus group discussions organized in Kathmandu.

99 Sushil Pandey, Basanta Shrestha. Digital Review of Asia Pacific 2007. ‘np’ Nepal. pp. 230-235.

ICT Policy and Regulations

High-level Commission for Information Technology: The Prime Minister heads Nepal's High-level Commission for Information Technology (HLCIT). It seeks to provide a strategic direction and assist the formulation of appropriate policy for the development of the ICT sector and to harness the technology for overcoming developmental challenges, including governance reform, and for catalyzing economic growth.

The HLCIT is entrusted to oversee implementation of Nepal's IT policy and strategy (2000). Its duties include everything from policy support and introducing new technology to promoting and supporting Nepal's IT products and services. The HLCIT is Nepal's answer to seemingly overlapping functions of two ministries: science and technology and information and communications. Its effectiveness remains to be tested. The HLCIT also serves as a forum to bring all major players together in the IT sector, where growth in the provision of services has been led largely by the private sector.

The HLCIT plans to use the existing cable network for Web 2.0 services to ensure wide participation of people in the ongoing debates on state building. One idea being discussed in mid-2009 was training and exposing students to ICTs and using facilities installed at schools as a rural telecentre.¹⁰⁰ This initiative and others would reach rural areas that do not have other means of communication, with activities tailored to the language, ways of life and information needs of specific communities.

Bandwidth remains a major hurdle for starting major IT-enabled services. In February 2007, only 13 Internet Service Providers (ISPs) were connected to the Nepal Internet Exchange (NPIX), which is owned by the Internet Service Providers Association of Nepal. The international bandwidth used for uplink and downlink was 37 Mbps and 90 Mbps.¹⁰¹ Nepal does not have a broadband policy. The NTA has prepared a policy draft, which is waiting government approval.

Rural ICT Initiatives

Despite bandwidth constraints, Nepal has opportunities to optimize its use for rural information and communications. Nepal's telecom consumers pay 2 percent of their gross revenue into a rural telecommunication fund that is largely unused. The Rural Telecom Development Fund is said to have grown to over NRs 1 billion (approximately US\$ 14 million). This fund could be used to expand communication infrastructure and increase information access for rural populations. This would require government commitment to expand the IT infrastructure and facilitate equal bandwidth access to all groups, including IPs.

Rural information/communication telecentres

One HLCIT initiative with potential for empowering IPs is the Rural Information Centre, or telecentre. A telecentre is envisioned as a Web-based information portal that can provide the tools for levelling the playing field by increasing information access. The idea remains only an idea, for the most part, given lack of resources, capacity, tools, a reliable communications backbone, etc.

The HLCIT website allows a search for telecentres in different districts (see http://www.telecenters.org.np/rural_telecenters_nepal.php).¹⁰² There is one telecentre in Kailali district. This centre is located at Attariya Bazaar, about 80-km from Durgauli, where one C4E field study was carried out. The website search yields some information: contact person's name and contact details, type of Internet connection available (e.g. dialup), type of online services offered (e.g. email, Internet, Diversity Visa lottery, chat, agricultural price dissemination, agricultural price collection, B2B commerce), and offline services (e.g. courier, post, news agency, common library, book seller, chat, typing, printing, lamination). The use of these services, however, is limited by both Internet connectivity and language, which is either English or Nepali.

¹⁰⁰ Interview with Mahohar Bhattarai, member secretary, HLCIT. August 2009. Nepal has experimented with rural telecenters but they were not established as part of a larger plan and many of those centres were left in the lurch after donor funding to the projects doing them ended.

¹⁰¹ Sushil Pandey, Basanta Shrestha. Digital Review of Asia Pacific 2007. 'np' Nepal. p. 234.

¹⁰² Accessed on 24 August 2009.

Other pages on the telecentre's website offer a variety of services: agricultural information, online forms, training resources (see <http://www.telecenters.org.np/en/listcontents/15>). Most of the links were inactive, even those listing forms relevant to rural populations such as citizenship papers, changes in names and proof of marriage. Interestingly, it also had a link to U.S. DV application forms <http://www.telecenters.org.np/en/listcontents/7>. The Forum page on the portal had no interactivity. The site contained some fairly recent agricultural commodity prices. It also had an announcement about an Asian Development Bank and United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asian And the Pacific initiative to set up six pilot community communication centres. The selected VDCs and districts were: Phikkal, Ilam; Phutung, Kathmandu; Kalikasthan, Rasuwa; Sundarbazar, Lamjung; Bijauri, Dang; and Bailya, Kailali.

Telecentres in rural areas can be effective for increasing access and voices of villagers but their utility is linked to connectivity and the bandwidth as well as the costs. The bandwidth cost is high, and available via satellite and import mainly from India and also from China through fibre optic cable. Nepal Telecom Company (NTC) procures bandwidth in bulk from the two countries. Some ISPs have also begun procuring bandwidth via optic fibre cable from India and this is expected to reduce the Internet costs. The NTC, in which the government is a major shareholder, therefore remains a vital institution. It can determine the level of access and reach of ICT services and the use of these technologies for empowering IPs. It also has the largest backhaul network¹⁰³ in the rural areas.

This is not the first time efforts have been made to enhance rural communication. UNESCO supported the establishment of four Community Media Centres some years ago. Nepal also has hundreds of Community Learning Centres promoted by the education ministry. UNESCO is now considering pilot projects to 'build bridges' between some of these centres and/or community radios to take digital technology to the villages and encourage information sharing.¹⁰⁴

Key Challenges and Opportunities for Indigenous Peoples in Media and ICT

Communications, voice and representation

Effective communication for empowering Nepal's IPs faces some of the major challenges and opportunities, as listed below.

Challenges

- *Changing policy and legislations* — Nepal is formulating new laws and building new institutions. Their structures will be clear only after the new constitution is promulgated. Nepal has had fairly broad and open media policies and laws since the early 1990s. The challenge is to ensure similar, if not more clearly defined, freedoms for the media. The legal and policy framework will influence all media and communication efforts in Nepal, including efforts aimed at empowering IPs;
- *Media is largely controlled by dominant groups and remains strongly influenced by political parties* — Excluded groups including IPs have low representation in the media (compared to dominant groups) and this has affected their ability to influence content. Media companies have begun hiring more journalists from indigenous peoples' groups but the ability of these journalists to take on leadership positions (and be able to influence content and present issues professionally and fairly) is constrained by capacity. The views of IPs in the party-influenced media are influenced by the positions of the parties concerned rather than the views of the IPs as a group. This has an adverse effect on the level of trust of the general public and specifically IPs in the media;

¹⁰³ In wireless network technology, to transmit voice and data traffic from a cell site to a switch, i.e., from a remote site to a central site. (2) In satellite technology, to transmit data to a point from which it can be uplinked to a satellite. (3) To transmit data to a network backbone. (<http://www.webopedia.com/TERM/B/backhaul.html>, accessed on 1 April 2010.)

¹⁰⁴ UNESCO. 2009. Building Bridges – the Concept. (unpublished) The project is expected to begin in 2010.

- *Limited reach in remote and rural areas* — Media is concentrated in large urban centres and messages continue to flow from the centre to the periphery. Access to media is a major issue in the villages, particularly for excluded groups, including IPs. FM radio has now reached many districts but some do not still have radios. Even where they exist, much remains to be done to improve access, voice and participation of the IPs in content production;
- *Language barrier/ local language content* — Government-owned media have more content in languages spoken by IPs than privately run media, with some exceptions (e.g. a Tharu language radio in Bardia and the radio in Tehrathum that even teaches Limbu language). However, indigenous language content is limited to supplements in newspapers and/or programming on radio and television in outside of prime time hours. They are often music programmes. Language publications of IPOs have limited reach and serve awareness-building purposes within the language communities, at best. The challenge is to find effective measures for bringing the issues of IPs into the mainstream media;
- *Nepal's broadcast sector remains largely unregulated* — The lack of independent regulation of broadcast media is a major challenge given the potential for misuse of media by partisan interests, and also for spreading hate speech. This can affect the empowerment of people through communications. There are also ownership issues in the broadcasting sector that have never been assessed and addressed;
- *Resource and capacity constraints* — Except for a few large media organizations, most media institutions, especially those in the districts, face resource and capacity constraints. Radio stations lack adequate equipment, trained journalists and managers;
- *The coverage of IP issues by the mass media remains low and superficial* — Low representation of indigenous peoples in the mass media has to do in part with access to media jobs, which in turn is related to the capacity of IP journalists. Raising the voice of IPs in the media remains a challenge because capacity development or promoting media ownership in their mother tongues are not projects that interest most donors;
- *Uncertain legal and policy environment* — Nepal's evolving legal and policy environment remains a major challenge because free expression is critical for addressing to the empowerment needs of the IPs. Nepal has not yet emerged from the 'culture of violence' that marked the 10 years of insurgency. This has manifested in the form of attacks on the media. The inability of the society to tolerate different opinions has resulted in attacks on the media. Some of the attacks are related to capacity issues (how something is said) and the lack of mechanisms for swift legal redress (to aggrieved parties);
- *Relevant information and media content* — Use of new media and ICTs remains low. IPOs and IPs have low access to these opportunities. Nepal's existing ICT infrastructure cannot support major initiatives for using ICTs for empowerment and awareness building of IPs. The cost (e.g. bandwidth, power-supply and equipment) remains a major hurdle preventing the use of ICTs for communication and empowerment;
- *Implementation of ICT as a means for development* — Another challenge is the ability to tap existing opportunities for using ICTs as an active resource for Communications for Empowerment. ICTs will have low relevance to a majority of rural Nepalis, including IPs, because the services and applications in use are inaccessible and the services (information) provided on Internet sites do not match the needs of the users in remote rural areas.

Opportunities

- *Open political and legislative environment* — Nepal has had a fairly open political and legal environment since the 1990. The country is in the process of writing a new constitution and restructuring the state into federal units. The process is complex owing to the challenges of fixing boundaries and ensuring inclusive governance mechanisms. All future legal and policy matters will depend on how the new state is structured. The constitution is expected to be ready by May 2010 but the lawmaking process thereafter could take a number of years. Therefore there are opportunities to advocate for greater media freedoms and guarantees and for the establishment of an open political and legal environment. C4E interventions are premised on media freedoms, an open media and enabling policies;

- *New laws for media and RTI* — There are opportunities to advocate and lobby for improving the legal and policy framework governing the print and broadcast media and provisions for community media initiatives in radio, television and ICT-enabled services. The new policy and legal environment must also account for independent and transparent regulation on broadcasting to ensure both diversity of ownership and content. The UNESCO Media Development Indicators could provide a basis for assessing the needs and advocating change alongside other material that is available in Nepal, including the performance assessment indicators for community radio;
- *State media publish and broadcast in IPs languages* — There are opportunities for further increasing access of IPs in the state-run media – including their transformation into public service media. As public media these organizations can be mandated to reflect diversity of Nepal in their structures and content. There are also opportunities for providing incentives for private media for providing greater access to IPs in their organizations and in the content produced by the organizations;
- *Entrepreneurs from IPs groups own and run media* — Though entrepreneurs from indigenous groups own and control media, there still is a shortage of well-trained journalists from indigenous communities to take up gatekeeping positions. This provides opportunities for targeted capacity building activities, which can over the long-run help to improve the quality of content and coverage;
- *Mass media can facilitate the public dialogue and discussion on restructuring the state among different social groups* — Most of the issues facing the IPs in Nepal are related to restructuring the state and sharing of power and opportunities. The mass media can play a major role in facilitating the process. The media can provide a platform for impartial and moderate debate aimed at building public support for the demands of the IPs and also for informing ordinary citizens about their rights, which have now been accepted by several United Nations instruments;
- *Infrastructure for ICT and telecommunication* — Nepal has a basic fibre optic backbone and there are plans to connect all districts in five years. However, ownership and cost-sharing issues have prevented effective use of existing infrastructure for rural communication using ICTs. This fibre optic network provides opportunities for high-speed data and information exchanges. The existing network provides opportunities for carrying out pilot projects using media and ICT convergence for empowerment of IPs in some parts of the country;
- *Good experience with community radio* — Nepal has been the leader in the community radio movement in South Asia and there are opportunities for tapping into this sector for enhancing communication for IPs. The community radio network provides a vehicle for reaching IPs with messages aimed at awareness building and also for trying out experimental programming for enhancing their voice and participation in content production;
- *Nepal's community radios are still evolving* — There is opportunity for setting up a model radio using the best experiences available, and promoting the model in other parts of the country and regionally. Good programming at one station can also help to influence programming at other existing stations;
- *Best practices* — Many of Nepal's FM stations are owned and operated by individuals or groups from IPs communities. This provides opportunity for taking up one or two stations, through a open and transparent selection process, and working with them to undertake new initiatives building on best practices available in Nepal and other countries. Marginalized groups of IPs can be encouraged and supported to replicate successful projects and ideas that emerge from this initiative. There are also opportunities for designing and implementing rural communication initiatives using ICTs for replication upon successful piloting;
- *Assessment of the community radio performance* — Nepali radio advocates have prepared a set of indicators to assess the performance of community radios. Implementing the indicators can support the C4E initiative. However, there is also a need to do a baseline study of the radios in Nepal to identify potential partners that could enhance the C4E process;
- *Sharing of experiences* — Sharing of best practices can enhance communication experiences. But there is no platform that brings together excluded groups and IPs for this purpose. The C4E process provides a background for thinking towards establishing a regional

centre for continuous learning and sharing of experiences in the field of Communications for Empowerment. Such a centre could double up as a training institute on media and communication skills and should be designed in a manner that would make it both sustainable and accessible to all. Such a mechanism does not exist for either South Asia or the Asia Pacific Region.



A blue-toned map of South and Southeast Asia serves as the background. A light gray callout box with a white border and a pointer directed at India is centered on the page. Inside the box, the text '3. Communication for Empowerment Field Study' is written in a bold, dark blue font.

3. Communication for Empowerment Field Study

3. Communication for Empowerment Field Study

The field research aims to complement the national overview study. The assessment of information and communication needs, challenges and opportunities reflects the perspective of IPs. The field research does not seek to provide a representative view of the entire indigenous population in Nepal. Rather, these findings provide data for verifying and complementing the national overview study. IPs were involved the research process as the targeted beneficiaries of the C4E initiative. These findings are expected to assist in devising intervention strategies and actions for addressing group and area specific information and communication needs of IPs. They could also assist in planning C4E interventions for excluded groups in Nepal.

The field research data are not representative for the whole country. Nevertheless, the recommendations generated based on the key findings are, through extrapolation, applicable to other parts of Nepal. In addition, the experiences and lessons from the community-level research are also expected to help in improving the methodology for national C4E studies to be conducted in other countries.

The study has examined information and communications separately and not as interchangeable concepts. On one hand, access to information is a precondition for empowering IPs through understanding of issues and rights. On the other hand, communication means the ability of the people to express their voice, participate in a dialogue and influence decisions that affect their lives. The two complement each other but also embody separate meanings, which are necessary for understanding and implementing the C4E study.

Field Research Methodology

The national overview study was the basis for assessing data and information collected from secondary sources and interviews with key resource persons. The field study generated analysis based on primary sources including household surveys, focus group discussions and interviews with members of indigenous peoples' households and local officials. The field visits were required to assess development challenges and opportunities, particularly the use of information and communication to overcome development challenges as well as to promote voice and participation of IPs.

The research locations were selected taking into account the time constraints and they do not necessarily fully represent the three IPs groups – Limbu, Tamang and Tharu – to which the majority of respondents belonged. The selection of locations was intended to achieve a broad conceptual understanding of the diversity, geographical spread and differences in development outcomes among the different groups of IPs. The locations were fairly easily accessible by vehicle and therefore, IPs at the locations generally represented a higher level of development in terms of access to modern infrastructures compared to those living in remote areas.

Profile of interviewees

A total of 113 persons were interviewed for the field study. The household surveys were reasonably gender-balanced; one location had a higher number of female respondents. The respondents did not represent the caste and ethnic diversity of Nepal but was representative of IPs living in the specific locations. The interviewees do not necessarily represent the larger community of indigenous nationalities in Nepal (see Table 6).

Table 6: Profile of Respondents in the Survey Districts

District	Gender				Total households
	Female interviewee		Male interviewee		
	Households	Percentage	Households	Percentage	
Kailali	15	37.5	25	62.5	40
Rasuwa	14	45.2	17	54.8	31
Tehrathum	25	59.5	17	40.5	42
Total	54	47.8	59	52.2	113

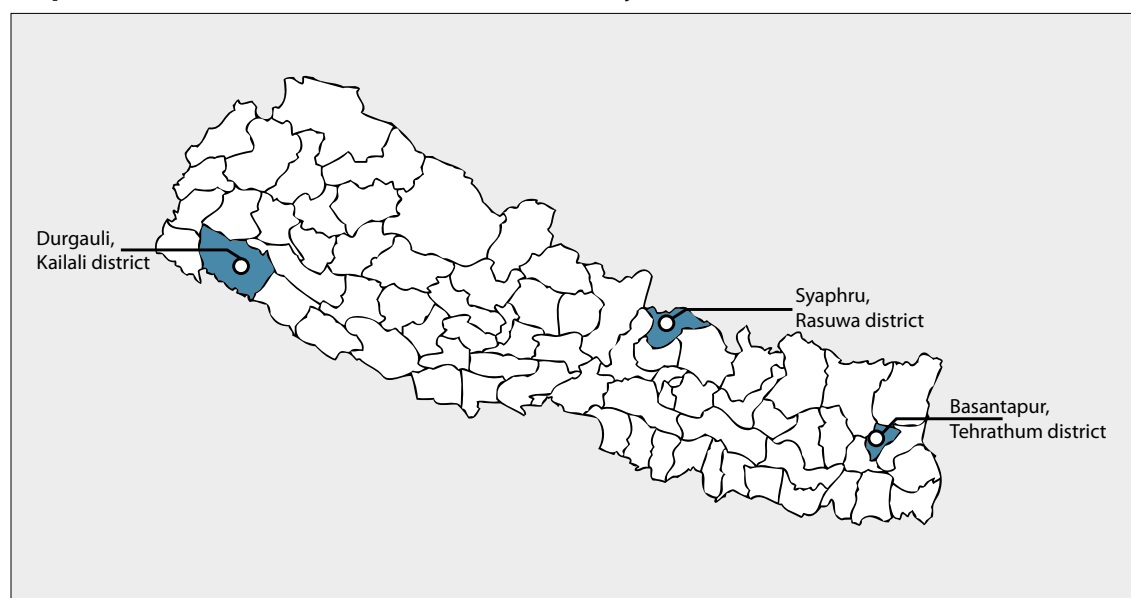
Location of districts

The field study locations were identified during the Training Workshop on C4E Study and Assessment Methodology for Indigenous Peoples in Nepal, held in Kathmandu 15-17 June 2009.¹⁰⁵ The locations were selected in consultation with the indigenous stakeholders at the training and the representative organizations of IPs in the selected districts.

The study was conducted in three locations:

- Durgauli, Kailali district in mid-western Nepal
- Syaphru, Rasuwa district in the central region north of Kathmandu, and
- Basantapur, Tehrathum district in the eastern region of the country.

The selection of the field research district has tried to reflect Nepal's geographical divisions and also includes pockets with high IP populations. The three districts represent different eco-climatic zones: Terai (plains), mountain and hill of Nepal. Kailali district was selected because it is one of Nepal's four districts where the population of the Tharu is high, making up over 30 percent of the population.¹⁰⁶ Rasuwa was selected because it is one district where the Tamang have the majority, more than 77 percent of the population. Likewise, Tehrathum is one of Nepal's three districts with the largest Limbu settlements. The Limbu accounted for 34.5 percent of the district's population.¹⁰⁷

Map 3: Locations of Field Research for C4E Study

¹⁰⁵ See, Draft Workshop Report: Training Workshop on Communication for Empowerment Study and Assessment Methodology for Indigenous Peoples in Nepal. Unpublished Document.

¹⁰⁶ Pitamber, Sharma. 2008. Unravelling the Mosaic: Spatial aspects of ethnicity of Nepal. Himal Books. The Tharu had a majority in one district, Bardia. pp. 15-19.

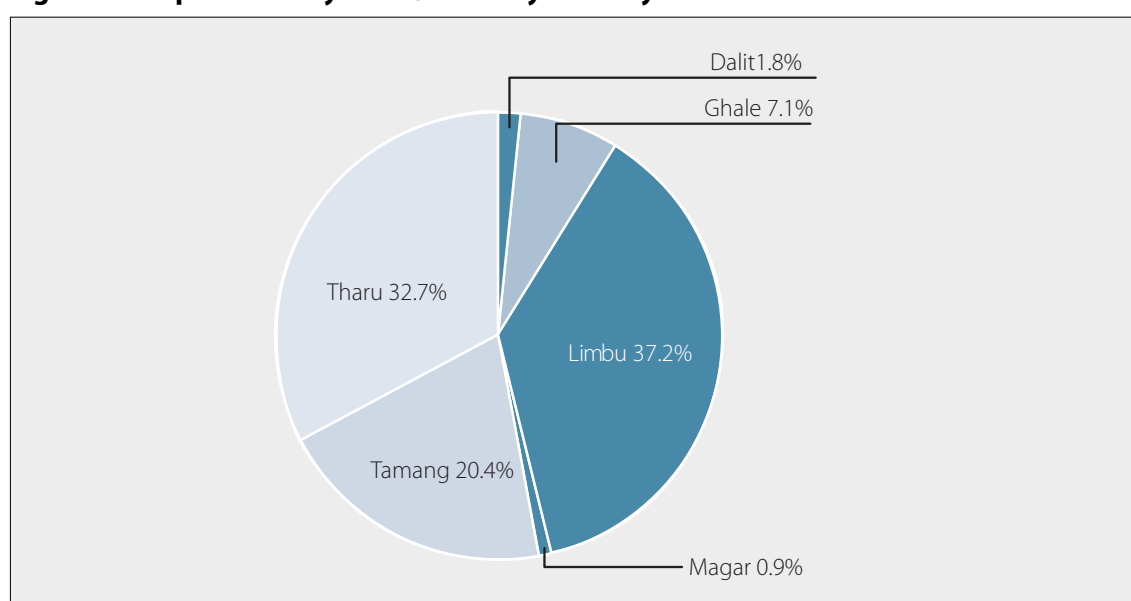
¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 15-19.

Household survey

The purpose of the household surveys was to develop a quantitative overview of community use of information, communications and media in relation to development. The study attempted to assess the access to information through various channels, both traditional and formal. It also included an assessment of communications, indicated by the participation of the people in information exchanges. The final component measured the people's perceptions of the media coverage related to their development challenges.

The surveys were carried out at the Village Development Committee level (see questionnaire in appendix 1). The questionnaire was translated into Nepali and each one was completed in an interview with a householder. A local translator assisted in the interviews at some locations. Each interview lasted for about 45 minutes. Participating households were selected based on their availability at the time of the visit. The respondents belonged to five ethnic groups and one caste group, the Dalit. The number of Dalit respondents was negligible (see Figure 4).

Figure 4: Respondents by Caste/Ethnicity in Study Area



In-depth interviews

Open-ended or less-structured interviews were conducted with individual householders and local officials. The householder interviews complemented the survey data as they allowed deeper examination of how the mass media covered issues related to IPs and their development challenges. Furthermore, interviews with local officials helped ascertain contextual information about development and infrastructural issues and activities at the district level. This information was relevant for understanding the household data.

Focus group discussions

The focus group discussions generated deeper perspectives from representative groups in each community. The participants at the focus groups were mixed in terms of gender and professions. (Data used for the analysis is presented in Appendix 3.)

Findings in the Three Districts

The findings are presented by district and are also compared across the locations. Information from focus group discussions and the official interviews has been combined with the survey results. A case study has been included to demonstrate how greater representation of indigenous groups in the media can provide better coverage of issues affecting IPs.

Kailali District

Kailali district lies in Nepal's mid-western region. It covers an area of 3,235 square kilometres, of which about 40.3 percent is hilly and the remaining 59.7 lies in plains. In 2001, the district had a population of 616,697, about half were women. The Tharu make up about 44 percent of the population.¹⁰⁸ Other major social groups in the district are Brahmins, Chhetri, Dalit and Magars.

About 50 percent of the district's population was economically active; women comprised 31 percent of this group. Most people are engaged in agriculture. Rice, wheat, pulses, oilseeds and vegetables including potatoes are the major food crops. Sugarcane is the major cash crop. The district had 2,486 landless households.¹⁰⁹

There were wide disparities in land ownership, with 263 landowners owning over 10 hectares of land while 2,486 shared 1.4 hectares. The 263 landowners occupy 4,765.6 hectares.¹¹⁰ According to a 2003 study by the National Labour Academy and Oxfam Nepal, there were 17,719 landless households in the district. A large number of the Tharu IPs worked as bonded labourers in the fields of large landholders before the system was abolished on July 17, 2001.

The findings were drawn largely from Tharu respondents, plus two Dalit and one Magar respondents. There were 62.5 percent males and 37.5 percent female respondents. Almost 83 percent of them belonged to the 11-40 years age group, with 33.6 percent from the 21-30 years age group. Tharu respondents, both men and women, were illiterate; 50 percent of the Dalit respondents were illiterate. Among the Tharu, 16.2 percent had education above the higher secondary level, 16.2 percent held bachelor's degrees and 5.4 percent held master's degrees. However, only men had the master's degrees.

About 47 percent of the Tharus said they are farmers, 18.2 percent said they are skilled labourers and 22.7 percent said they are teachers. Thirty six percent said they are dependent on their families/charity. The other two categories of respondents said they are farmers.

Development situation

Kailali district came under the 0.400 - 0.449 category in the HDI. Districts in this HDI range in Nepal rank fourth (from the top) in a six-level grouping.¹¹¹ Based on the 2001 census, Kailali district had one health facility for 14,016 people and the contraceptive prevalence rate was 41.56 percent. Over 58 percent of the population did not have toilets and only 21.92 percent had modern toilets with flush.¹¹²

The literacy rate of both men and women in Kailali was 52.6 percent in 2001, which was close to the national average. Literacy of women in Kailali district was 41 percent. This is much lower than the national literacy rate for men, which was 70 percent in 2007. The data indicates women have lower access to education. Roughly 44 percent of the population had completed primary education and around 16 percent did not attend school. The district had 544 schools.

The larger political debate on indigenous peoples' rights and their development concerns were also reflected in the focus group discussions held in the village. At one focus groups discussion, the participants said inequality between the Tharus and non-Tharus had caused them to set up their own club and build a separate clubhouse. They said the club was formed because the non-Tharus did not include them in their club.

One of the major livelihood concerns among the Raji, a small group of IPs in Kailali, was land ownership. Their nomadic livelihoods were threatened because most public forests were either protected as national parks or had been converted into community forests.

108 Data is based on information available at the DDC, <http://www.ddckailali.gov.np/pages/introduction.php> (accessed on 2 December 2009)

109 <http://www.ddckailali.gov.np/pages/introduction.php> (Accessed on 3 December 2009)

110 *Ibid.*

111 NPC/UNDP, Nepal Human Development Report. 2004.

112 ICIMOD. CBS. 2003. Mapping Nepal Census Indicators & Trends. Kathmandu.

Education and healthcare were two other major development challenges identified by the villagers. Tikapur municipality had recognized the Raji as a minority group. In 2008 the District Development Committee (DDC) allocated Rs150,000 for scholarships and stationery for Raji children. The discussants said the support was not enough and wanted every ward or village where the Raji reside to be given autonomy so that they can take charge of their own development. They felt politicians ignored them because they were insignificant as a voting base. The Rajis put forward their own candidate for the CA election but the candidate was able to obtain only 270 votes and did not win.

Access to information

Durgauli Village Development Community lies in the mid-western plains of Nepal and has fairly good access to information and media. There are two FM radio stations at Tikapur municipality, which is close to the survey village. The FM stations had IP station managers and also employed fairly large number of Tharu journalists. There were five locally published newspapers and the district also received newspapers published in Dhangadhi, the district headquarters, and also from Kathmandu. The village also receives radio broadcasts from neighbouring districts and television programming from both Nepal and India. There was a local cable operator in Tikapur municipality. The cable services were available within the municipal boundaries. The cable operator provided free advertising time for announcements of indigenous peoples' groups. Tikapur municipality also had an Internet café, which was largely used by teenagers for emails and online chats/discussions.

As a source of information, newspapers were less useful compared to the broadcast media largely because of the high illiteracy in the Nepali language. Illiteracy in the Tharu language was also low.

A little over 50 percent of the respondents reported ability to write and read in their mother tongue, a larger percentage of them could read and write in the national language.

Villages relied on the following information sources: television, radio and traditional sources such as the *Katuwal* (village-crier), teachers and health workers.¹¹³ These modern and traditional forms of media coexist in Kailali and serve as useful and fairly reliable information sources.¹¹⁴ However, a majority of the respondents, especially men, preferred the *Katuwal* (village-crier) the traditional source of information.

The household ownership of television and radio was high at 75 percent and 70 percent, respectively. Television is the most prevalent information channel; 27.5 percent of the respondents found it "very reliable". Only 12.5 percent of the respondents said radio was very reliable. Television and radio scored higher in the "somewhat reliable" category or 62.5 percent and 60 percent, respectively. A large number of people found that both television and radio had somewhat reliable information, while a smaller percentage found them very reliable. This suggests that there might be room for improving content and programme formats, and their relevance to local populations through quality local language programming.

Media coverage of indigenous peoples' issues was low. Among respondents 47.4 percent said coverage of their issues was "very low" in newspapers, 50 percent said it was very low on radio and 47.4 percent said it was very low on television.

Voice and communications

In the rural context, some traditional sources of information can also serve as platforms for communications among IPs. These include interactions with teachers, health workers and with people at social gatherings and the local market.

113 Nepal has 50,000 Female Community Health Volunteers (FCHV), predominantly based in rural areas. They have made significant contribution to women's leadership and empowerment at the local level. Several active FCHVs have also been VDC members. (See: Female Community Health Volunteers. WHO Country Office, Nepal. www.nep.searo.who.int).

114 The presence of *Katuwals* and their role in disseminating information was noted in a presentation by Krishna Sarbahari, the field researcher in Kailali at the National Stakeholder Consultation on C4E in Kathmandu.

Though local FM radios were identified as useful sources of information, they had not been able to provide villagers an adequate platform for communications through call-in programmes and discussions on issues related to IPs. Local FM radios in Nepal have very little programming on local issues and tend to provide more space for national political content as opposed to local voices, including those of the IPs.

Mobile telephony has opened up new opportunities in information and communications. Household ownership of mobile phones was high (90 percent). However, mobile phones were less useful as sources of information compared to both radio and television. This could be because mobile phones are used mainly for personal communications. It is not used for sharing development-related information.

Information and communication needs and challenges¹¹⁵

One focus group discussion in Kailali district was held with the Raji, a small indigenous group.¹¹⁶ “Earlier even the media were hesitant about covering our issues, now they do and we are satisfied,” a participant said. Participants in the discussion said, they would like the media to cover success stories on achievements of individual Rajis. They said they would like to have a journalist from their community and would send someone for training when and if the opportunity arose. They said they believed this would help improve their representation and coverage in the media. The discussion suggested that the media did cover issues about the Rajis but did not serve them as a platform for communication. No newspapers were available in the Raji settlements and even if they had been available the Rajis would not have been able to purchase them or to read them.

The other focus group discussion had all IPs from the Tharu group. They said information in the media in Tharu language was useful, and were pleased that the media reported about them when they sent the information to the media. But they would have liked reporters to visit them in the villages. There was a non-Tharu journalist in the village but the discussion participants said the reporter was not interested in reporting about them.

The villagers were also critical about some content of the FM stations. They said one programme on a local FM station sometimes crossed the limits of decency and was difficult to listen to with family members, even though it was informative. The discussants wanted to have more informative and educational programmes and less entertainment and blamed the media of bringing instant foods to the village, through advertising. The villagers said they would like to have programmes where doctors explained the benefits of eating wholesome food.

Coverage of Tharu issues on radio was higher compared to other media, the villagers said. The reason for this was the presence of more Tharu as journalists in radio compared to other media. Newspapers had fewer Tharu journalists and also lower coverage of Tharu issues. The villagers wanted more local issues covered on radio. They said water in the village was contaminated with arsenic and wanted the media to tell them how the harm could be reduced. In addition, they also wanted programmes for promoting and protecting Tharu culture.

Rasuwa District

Rasuwa is Nepal's smallest district. It lies in the north of Kathmandu, and has 18 Village Development Communities, of which 11 are located within the Langtang National Park. The district's 2001 population was 44,731.¹¹⁷ The main social groups in the district are Tamang, Sherpa, Gurung, Brahmin, Chhetris, Magar and Dalits.

The study was carried out at Thulo Bharkhu in Syaphru VDC.

¹¹⁵ Information and communication needs and challenges are interconnected because information sources, especially mass media, can also play a critical role in enhancing voice and communications through right programme formats and content.

¹¹⁶ A small IPs group with around 3,500 members of which around 3,000 reside in the district.

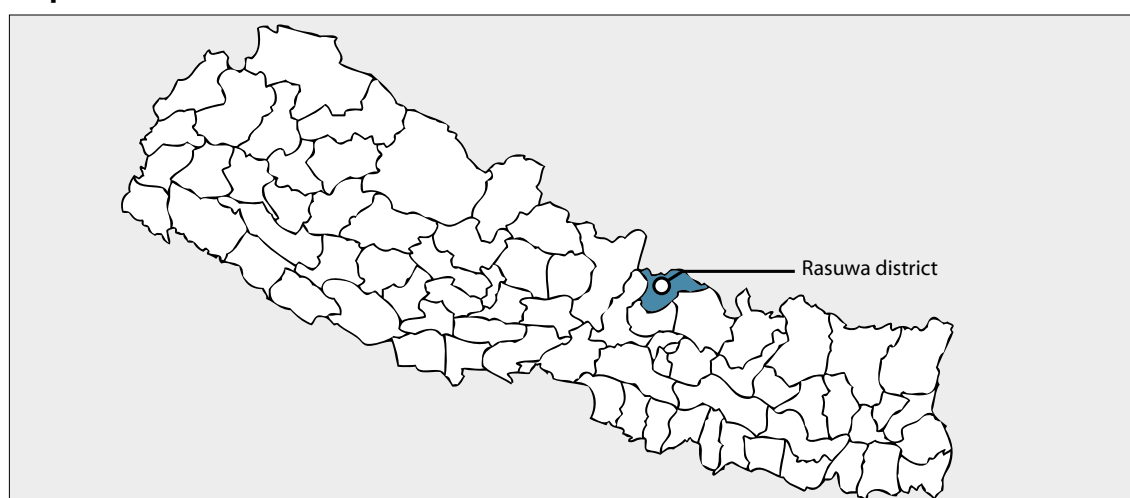
¹¹⁷ ICIMOD. CBS. 2003. Mapping Nepal Census Indicators & Trends. Kathmandu; Field study.

Thulo Bharkhu is located at an altitude of 1,860 metres above the sea level. The mountain settlement has a proposed secondary school, which is to hold classes up to grade six. It does not have a health centre. Agriculture and animal husbandry are the main vocations of the villagers. However, production in the village is insufficient to feed the families for six months of a year. The main crops are maize and potatoes. Some households also operate small tourist lodges, while others trade agricultural products with Tibetans across the border.

Most of the educated young men and women have left the village in search of employment elsewhere. Those who stay behind usually work in the fields or as wage-labourers in infrastructure projects.

There are several district-level projects underway, such as rural and agricultural roads, drinking water, suspension bridges, school construction, tourist trail construction, micro-hydro and alternative energy. The local-level projects are generally selected based on recommendations by the VDCs. Some of the national projects underway in the district are road construction and a buffer-zone management programme.

Map 4: Location of Rasuwa District



The findings were drawn from two ethnic groups: Tamang (74.2 percent) and Ghale (25.8 percent). More than 54 percent of the respondents were men and around 45 percent were women. Almost 83 percent of the respondents belonged to the 11-40 years age group and with 33.6 percent from the 21-30 years age group. Among the Tamang respondents, 17.4 percent were illiterate, 26.1 percent had completed primary level education, 17.4 percent had completed lower secondary and 30.4 percent had completed secondary education. Among the Ghale respondents, 12.5 percent were illiterate, 62.5 percent had completed primary education and 12.5 percent had completed secondary education.

About 65 percent of the Tamang respondents said they were farmers, while the remaining 35 percent were unemployed and dependent on their families. About 62.5 percent of the Ghale respondents said they were farmers, 25 percent of Ghale men said they were skilled labourers and 25 percent said they were unskilled labourers. Among Ghale women, 25 percent of respondents said they were teachers.

Development situation

During focus group discussions, the villagers listed healthcare as a major problem. There was no healthcare facility in the survey settlement. They had to travel to Syafrubesi, about two hours by jeep on the dirt road, to treat simple ailments. The 2001 census figures show that Rasuwa had one health institution for 2,354 people and the contraceptive prevalence rate was 40.22 percent. Most of the people (67.39 percent) did not have toilets and only 9.79 percent had modern toilets with flush.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁸ ICIMOD. CBS. 2003. Mapping Nepal Census Indicators & Trends. Kathmandu.

The village did not have a secondary school. The other barrier to education was language. Nepali and not Tamang was the language of instruction. The literacy rate for Rasuwa was 34.3 percent in 2001 (24.8 percent for women). These numbers were below the national literacy rate average, which in 2007 was 70 percent overall and for women was 43 percent¹¹⁹. Some 54 percent of the population had completed primary school and around 10 percent had not attended school. The district had 131 schools.

The students had to travel two hours on foot everyday to attend secondary school at Dhunche, the district headquarter. In the focus group discussions, the villagers said they wanted education in their mother tongue. The government had introduced multilingual education in Rasuwa district but the villagers did not fully understand the dialect used. The villagers have also requested government assistance to establish a health post and to upgrade the village school, but they have not received any response.

Villagers in Rasuwa faced a unique problem of sustainable livelihoods. "Wild animals destroy all our crops," the villagers said, "and we have to keep watching our cultivation from the sowing of seeds to the ripening of the crop. Even after all that we get to harvest only half of the production, the wild animals take the rest." They have demanded compensation from the wildlife department or that the wild animals be killed.

For villagers living in Langtang National Park, the park-people conflicts remain unresolved. The villagers feel that the park is a major obstacle to their development, because every project has to be approved by the wildlife department and there have been instances where park officials have rejected some local projects. The district receives 50 percent of the park royalties for use in development projects from the central government.

Another major livelihood issue is access to natural resources. The village in the field study lies near a major hydroelectric project, but the electric power supply in the village is not reliable. The electricity generated by the plant is distributed nationwide. Villagers demand an uninterrupted power supply as well as the right to purchase stocks in the company that produces the electricity. Consent and equal distribution of natural resources remain major issues and demands among Nepal's IPs.

Access to information

Despite its relatively short distance from Kathmandu (half-day by car in good conditions), Rasuwa district lags behind in terms of access to information and media. Thulo Bharkhu did not have fixed-line telephones. The villagers used mobile phones but not everyone could afford these services. Some parts of the settlement did not receive mobile signals.

A quarterly publication existed in Dhunche, the district headquarters, but there were no daily or weekly newspapers. In mid-2009, because bad roads had disrupted traffic, the district had not received any newspaper from Kathmandu for about two months.

Rasuwa was one of the few districts in Nepal that did not have a FM radio station in 2009. The villagers of Thulo Bharkhu could receive radio broadcasts from neighbouring districts. One of the stations that the villagers listened to had news in the Tamang language. However, the dialect used did not match the local version and the villagers could not fully understand the content. The villagers also said the programmes on radio were not tailored to address their needs and concerns. The issues of women, especially indigenous women, were rarely covered. The villagers wanted radios to offer more local news and also more information on agriculture and public health in the local language.

Radio played an important role in bridging the information gaps in Rasuwa. Over 19 percent of the villagers said radio was very reliable and 52 percent found it "somewhat reliable." The respondents said coverage of indigenous peoples' issues was high only on radio. The reason for this could be that radio is the only medium available.

¹¹⁹ See UNESCO Institute for Statistics, <http://stats.uis.unesco.org>

Many homes in the field survey site had television sets, DVD players and video cassette players. But television signals from the national broadcaster were not received in the village. It was unclear if women have control and access to the information sources that are available in the household, compared to men.

Voice and communications

The mass media did not serve the villagers of Thulo Bharku as a platform for communicating their concerns. Their conflicts with the park officials remained more or less unreported and were rarely discussed in the form of letters or listener feedback in newspapers, radio and television. Illiteracy in the local language was high. Only 25 percent of the respondents in Rasuwa said their reading in the local language was “good” and only 19 percent could write well in the language. Literacy in the national language was much higher compared to the use of mother tongue.

The villagers of Thulo Bharku did not know any local journalist and had no idea about a journalist’s potential role in amplifying local voices and concerns. The villagers had also not attempted to reach out to the media to seek support for highlighting their demands.

Mobile phone ownership was high (97 percent) followed by radio (71 percent) and television (58 percent). VCR/DVD ownership was 65 percent. The villagers found information received on mobile phones “very useful” but it was used largely for personal communications and not developmental messaging.

Information and communication needs and challenges

The survey site lacked access to the mass media as well as ICTs. Nepal has been a leader in the community radio movement in South Asia but Rasuwa was one of a few districts that did not have a FM station as of late 2009. Participants at the focus group discussion said they would like to have their own FM radio station because that could help them amplify local concerns.

Participants in the focus group discussion said there was very little content about IPs on TV channels that could be received in Dhunche, the district headquarter. They had also noticed that both radio and television only focused on entertainment. The mass media did not cover local issues or challenges.

Language was another major barrier to communication. The media did not have programmes or content in their mother tongues and therefore villagers did not pay much attention to the media. One nearby station had programmes in the Tamang language, but the local villagers did not understand it fully. This underlies the key challenges in the promotion and standardization of languages spoken by IPs, which is also a major issue for IPs at the national level.

The district received broadcasts from Radio Nepal in Kathmandu and Radio Pratidwani in Makawanpur district. One respondent said, “Both radios have no programmes related to our local problems. That is why we need a local FM.” She also added that only a local radio could give a voice to their problems and provide them with relevant information.

Rasuwa is also one of the few Nepali districts that did not have a local newspaper. The villagers felt that newspapers could contribute towards their empowerment only if they were published locally and there were information centres in village where the people could read them.

Tehrathum District

Tehrathum is a mid-hill district of Nepal located in the eastern region. It covers an area of 679 square kilometres. In 2001, Tehrathum had a population of 113,111. Women accounted for 51.4 percent of the total population.¹²⁰ The Limbu represented about 40 percent. Other major social groups are Brahmin, Chhetri, Tamang, Newar and Dalits.

According to the 2006 participatory assessment of poverty, about 33 percent of the households in the district are classified as “very poor” with an additional 52 percent categorized as being

¹²⁰ ICIMOD. CBS. 2003. Mapping Nepal Census Indicators & Trends. Kathmandu; Field study.

“poor” or “medium poor”. IPs and Dalit account for 57.5 percent and 18.4 percent of the “very poor” category, respectively.¹²¹

In term of basic infrastructure, the district has 144.6 kilometres of roads, of which 6.5 kilometres are blacktopped driveway. These roads reach 15 VDCs in the district. An additional 67 kilometres of roads are under construction. Only 1,255 households of 20,373 (6.2 percent) have access to electricity, while over 16,000 households (78.5 percent) have access to clean drinking water.

The field survey was conducted at Musangkhel in Basantapur VDC.

Map 5: Location of Tehrathum District



The findings were drawn from responses of an indigenous group called Limbu. Approximately 59 percent of the respondents were women and 41 percent were men. Almost 83 percent of the respondents were from the 11-40 years age group and 33.6 percent from the 21-30 years age group. About 12 percent of the Limbu respondents were illiterate; 33.3 percent had completed primary education; only 11.9 percent had completed lower secondary education and 28.6 percent had completed secondary education.

About 53 percent of the respondents said they were farmers, while about 42 percent said they had no employment and depended on their families or charity. Approximately 29 percent of the male respondents and 12 percent of female respondents said they were skilled workers.

Development situation

Based on the 2001 census, Tehrathum had one health facility for 3,535 people and the contraceptive prevalence rate was 30.65 percent. Over 45 percent of the population did not have toilets and only 10.14 percent had modern toilets with flush.¹²²

The literacy rate for men and women in Tehrathum was 59.3 percent in 2001, which was close to the national average. Women's literacy rate was only 48.2 percent, which is much lower than the national literacy rate for men. About 41 percent of the population had completed primary schooling and around nine percent did not have any education at all. In 2009, the district had 359 schools, including nine private schools.

During the focus group discussion, the major concern of the villagers was the lack of infrastructure, particularly roads, which was the major obstacle in bringing their products to the markets. The

¹²¹ About 6,729 of 20,373 households in the district were classified as “very poor”; 6,046 were “poor”; 4,621 were “medium poor”; and 2,977 were “well off”. Among the very poor, 3,867 were IPs and 1,235 were Dalit households. See, DDC Tehrathum. Jilla Bikas Yojana 2066/67 (District Development Plan 2009/10). p. 7.

¹²² ICIMOD. CBS. 2003. Mapping Nepal Census Indicators & Trends. Kathmandu.

villagers began building a road to link to Basantapur, which is about 7-8 kilometres away, in 2008. The road had not been completed in August 2009 for lack of resources.

The community had a school with a large number of Limbu students yet the teachers could not teach in the Limbu language. Based on the focus group discussion, most Limbu students could not write in their own language, even college-level students. The parents had requested Limbu-speaking teachers. However, they said that the non-Limbu headmaster refused to accept this demand.

Access to information

Tehrathum district lies in the eastern region and has a large number of print and broadcasting media. The district receives about 18 national and international satellite television channels. It can also receive broadcasts from 13 radio stations, including large national broadcasters.

Radio Menchayem is the district's local radio station, which was established in January 2008 (see Box 1). This station has programming in the local language and has been very effective in informing people. It uses a 100-watt transmitter and it reaches 28 of the district's 32 VDCs and some neighbouring districts. Radio is a major source of information, especially to find out the market prices of agricultural products.

Radio ownership was highest (71 percent) at Musangkhele, followed by mobile phones and television sets. Over 26 percent of the respondents said information on radio "very useful" and the majority (45 percent) said radio was "somewhat useful". Generally, about 60 percent respondents found the information on radio "very reliable" and "somewhat reliable".

The preference for information on radio also indicates that the programming is relevant and understandable, which could also be due to the use of local language. A few respondents said that the representation of indigenous peoples' issues on radio was "high" while a larger number (48 percent) said it was moderate.

The district has had newspapers since the mid-1970s but the publications have not been regular or sustainable. The earliest newspapers were handwritten and posted in public places. A weekly has been published in the district since 2003. This weekly, *Naba Bihani*, is published in Nepali and was the only newspaper available at the time of the study. Efforts had been made to publish *Pirimyok*, a Limbu language newspaper, but it stopped publication three years ago for financial reasons.

Naba Bihani does not reach the village where the survey was conducted. Some villagers said they read *Kantipur*, a private newspaper published from Kathmandu, when they were visiting the district headquarters. However, they did not mention *Gorkhapatra*, the government newspaper that has supplements in languages spoken by IPs.

Television does not have programming in the local Limbu language. The language programming on national television has only music videos. However, the better quality of TV entertainment programming on Indian channels has resulted in lower viewership for Nepali stations. The villagers said they occasionally watched films in the Limbu language and those that dwelt on their culture and traditions.

The villagers also obtained information from informal sources such as teachers and health workers. Face-to-face interactions at the local weekly markets also served as an important source of information. In Nepal's eastern hills, women seek and obtain information through these interactions with peers while fetching water and firewood and herding cattle.

Voice and communication

The district is fairly well-connected in terms of telephony. There is a potential for enhancing communication among the Limbu through the use of ICTs. In mid-July 2009, Tehrathum had 771 fixed-line telephones and about 12,000 mobile phones. Nevertheless, broadband Internet connectivity is not available, which explains the low Internet use. There were four Cyber Cafés

in the district, all located in the district headquarters. Generally, ICTs are largely used for personal communications but there are opportunities for extending their use for building awareness of indigenous peoples' rights as well as for advancing development.

The Tehrathum district post office was in the process of setting up a telecentre in mid-August 2009, with telephones, computers and Internet connection. The head of the post office said the centre could help them raise additional revenue since it had been difficult to cover costs "only by distributing letters and parcels". The telecentre had not begun operating in August 2009. There were also plans to start providing Internet services from two other post offices in the district.

Mobile phone ownership was high but it was not very reliable. Telephones were used only for personal communications.

The local radio in Tehrathum had Limbu staff members and also programming in the local language. The station offered programmes to teach the local language and provided programming focused on local issues, including a 'lost and found' section where people could broadcast messages seeking help for locating missing cattle or other personal goods. The radio had also developed some partnerships with local IPOs for supporting programmes on issues affecting IPs. Though the station was generally inclusive of IPs voices, residents at the field research site said that they had not yet had an opportunity to talk 'on air'.

The presence of Limbu staff members gave some representation of local diversity at the radio station. It provided a mechanism for assuring voices and participation of IPs. The participation of local people has enhanced the coverage of local issues on radio. The station also has a communication mechanism for people to call-in and inform the station about local events and issues (see Box 1).

Information and communication needs and challenges

The local radio in Tehrathum exemplifies how media can enhance both information and Communication for Empowerment of the IPs. It also serves as one model of how local media can establish partnerships with other organizations, such as IPOs, for financial sustainability of the operation. Even in Tehrathum, it is important to ensure that the programmes are inclusive and cater to the larger community of listeners to ensure pluralism. There have been times when the radio was labelled as being close to one political party or being a "Limbu radio". Also, misrepresentation was one major issue of concern regarding media coverage of IPs issues in Nepal. The challenge is create a sustainable model where community radio can work with IPOs and civil society to ensure diversity both in structure and content.

The district has high media exposure whereas literacy rates are not very high. This is a challenge to the indigenous peoples' ability to access information and use it for participation and communication. The ability to understand media messages is critical for taking informed decisions on issues. For example, the villagers in Tehrathum said they could not fully understand the discussions related to constitution-making in the CA in Kathmandu.

There is an opportunity for introducing media literacy programmes in the district to enhance the ability of villagers to interact with the media and actively participate in public discussions. Media literacy programmes can also assist in improving the quality of debate presented in the media.

The district has access to a large number of broadcasts. But many of the programmes on these stations are insensitive or ignorant of the rights and issues of IPs. Building awareness of journalists in general can result in more informed coverage of issues related to the IPs.

Box 1: Radio Menchayem

Radio Menchayem is run by a cooperative based in Kathmandu. It has a full-time staff of seven men and four women, including eight Limbus, two Newars and one individual who is not from an indigenous community. It also has 16 volunteers, including eight women. The station broadcasts for 10 hours of which two hours are allotted for programming on IPs, or 14 hours a week.

Limbu language programming includes programmes in three dialects: Panchthare, Chathare and Phedape. It also has programmes in Tamang, Sherpa, Magar and Nepali languages.

The station seeks programme production support from different IPOs. The Hyugu Paropkar Samaj (Newar), Kirat Yakthum Chumlung, Magar Sangh, Sherpa Sangh, and Tamang Ghedung have actively supported the station. Programmes were produced and hosted by individuals recommended by the IPOs. (There are issues about fairness and professionalism in this model of cooperation because the support could extend to influence. This is a subject for further study.) The station has covered almost all indigenous peoples' events and the IPOs are pleased with its performance. Among its programmes, Adibasi Sawal (questions about IPs), focuses on indigenous peoples' issues discussed in the CA. Another programme, Adibasi Awaj, covers issues related to ILO Convention 169.

The station announces notices about missing dogs and livestock on sale and also has a "lost and found" service of sorts. People who find money or valuables bring it to the studio, which then announces the discovery. Upon claiming the goods, the owners make a small donation to the station.

The staff said the station receives about 75 letters every day. It also receives first-hand feedback from people at markets and other community gatherings. Station officials said they have had good feedback on an agriculture-related programme.

The major problem faced by the station is a shortage of trained human resources and field equipment (e.g. recorders), which make it difficult to produce more effective programming for IPs.

One criticism of the radio station was that it used too many foreign words in the Limbu programme. The station officials said they could not avoid using Nepali words because there were no equivalent phrases in the Limbu language, whose standardization remains a major challenge. There are also differences in the dialects used by the Limbu living in different parts of the eastern hills of Nepal.

The station has been fairly sustainable venture. According to the staff, it recovered its operational costs in about 18 months after establishment. It manages to collect about Rs70,000 (US\$ 930) in advertising every month, which is enough for paying salaries, after deducting other costs. The station was set up with Rs1.2 million (US\$ 60,000).

Source: Interview with Ramala Singak, Station Manager and staff.

Comparative Analysis of the Three Districts

The field research provides insights into the dynamics of diversity in Nepal and how these dynamics influence the lives of the people, particularly their access to information, voice and participation in communications and development. Some of the key issues are common to all IPs. Others are more specific to the different social groups, their geographic locations and languages. These conditions are reflected in their different priorities. This section attempts to identify the commonalities and differences based on a comparative assessment of the findings from the three field study locations.

Access to information and media

The IPs living in the three different study locations had different levels of access to information. Both Kailali and Tehrathum had higher access to information sources compared to Rasuwa. Nevertheless, Kailali and Tehrathum also differed in terms of physical access, which was a result of their different geographical locations. By and large, eastern Nepal has greater exposure and access to media compared to the western part of the country. Ironically, Rasuwa district lies in the central region of Nepal, which has the highest concentration of the media, yet it lags behind the two other districts.

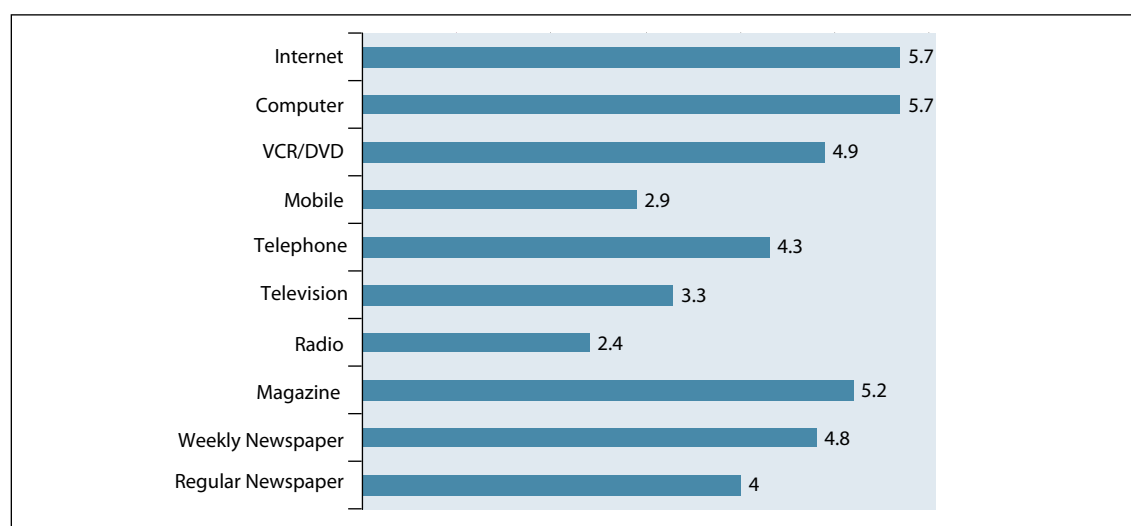
The ability to access information in the media also varies across locations and social groups. This is an outcome of the differences in languages of the indigenous groups, low literacy in the mother tongue and non-availability of information in their local languages. Most of the information is available only in the Nepali language. Literacy in the Nepali language is also low and the levels vary across groups of IPs. Language can determine the relevance of information to specific groups because anything that is not understood by the intended audiences is not useful.

At the level of the 'information product', programming formats determine the level of access to information. Generally, the media had very little content on local issues and even less on issues of interest to IPs. The community radio in Tehrathum was more advanced in terms of inclusive programming compared to radios in other districts. Overall, there is a general need for improving content in all three districts. This can be implemented by enhancing representation of the IPs in the media and building local capacity for producing locally relevant programmes.

Despite shortcomings, radio was the preferred media in terms of reliability of information. Radio ownership was also high and this suggests that it could be the medium that can provide villagers greatest access to information and voice (see Figure 5). Mobile phone ownership was also high across the three districts. However, the mobile phones are used more for personal communications and not as a primary source of information.

Figure 5: Reliability of Information Across Districts

(Mean Value from 1=very good to 6=not applicable)



Source: Field survey.

Across the study locations, the villagers relied on traditional local sources to access information. These included the *Katuwal* or village-criers in Kailali. Other information sources include teachers, health workers and people at the markets and social gatherings. Word-of-mouth and face-to-face meetings were also identified as information sources. Community media hubs such as telecentres could be sources of information to the villagers. Nevertheless, this remains constrained by Internet connectivity and the lack of resources to establish and run the centres. The other challenge is improving the content available for dissemination through the telecentres.

Voice and communication

Voice and communications can be enhanced when information systems allow interactivity and exchange of different views and opinions. Programme design, content planning and production can determine the extent to which people can engage and participate in discussions in the media. In the study locations that had community radios, there were programme formats that allowed people to discuss issues. The further away people were from a radio station, as in Rasuwa, the more detached they were from media content and how that could affect their lives.

The field study suggests that an increase in the number of radio stations does not necessarily lead to more inclusive voice and communication related to IPs. Rather, many stations could potentially exacerbate tension and mistrust among different social groups, especially if these radios are co-opted by political parties or other partisan interests.

Kailali had a number of radio stations but it did not seem to play a critical role in enhancing voice and communication of IPs and people did not consider it to be the most useful communication platform. In contrast, Tehrathum had only one station, but it stood out in terms of the people's references to its programming, representation of diverse social groups, and strong focus on local issues and communications.

Representation of indigenous peoples in the media

Not only are IPs under-represented in Nepal's media, they are not always properly and positively portrayed. During the assessment respondents from all IPs groups indicated that the lack of or negative coverage of issue related to their group was due to lack of journalists from their ethnic group in media agencies. This shows a strong need to improve newsroom diversity in order to bring in the voices and increase participation of IPs, and also to ensure more indigenous-sensitive coverage. Nepal has some media run by IPs, which can contribute towards narrowing the gaps in information and communication, but their outreach is often limited to indigenous peoples only. There is a greater need for capacity building to prepare and place indigenous journalists in the decision-making and management positions of the mainstream media. This could be a more sustainable and effective means to ensure continued, credible.

In addition, it is also important to consider the issue of misrepresentation within the fragile context of state building and strong ethno-politics in Nepal. Additional research and analysis is required to understand if the perception of negative coverage by certain journalists is due to mistrust created by ethno-politics or reflects a lack of capacity of the journalists to present objective stories in the media. Both causes would require different sets of media strategies to meaningfully address the issues.

Gender

Access to information and communications can play a critical role in gender equality and empowerment of women. It is important in societies such as Nepal where patriarchal norms still determine access, voice and participation of women in all spheres of life. The understanding of the gender dimension in Nepal is still constrained by the lack of desegregated data. Observation of proxy indicators across the three field study locations suggest that women, particularly in IPs groups, have much lower literacy and education compared to the national average and that of men. Therefore, they naturally face enormous challenges in accessing information and participating in informed discussions.

Generally, media content production is still dominated by men. In addition, it was unclear to what extent women had control over access to information and whether they had equal opportunities to voice their views through existing communication channels. As alternative, women have been using informal channels to seek information through face-to-face communications and discussions with peers, teachers, female community health workers and other women in the markets.

Development situation

There are significant variations between the districts in the levels of education and literacy, which could be influenced by factors such as geographic location, language and the dynamics of social exclusion. These conditions also influence level of access to information and communications among different social groups.

Access to infrastructure and basic services such as electricity was a major factor affecting the choice of the preferred communication mediums. The levels of poverty and economic opportunities in the field research locations also influenced the choice of medium. Table 7 provides some key data that show the specific realities in each of the three study districts.

Table 7: Comparative Dataset for the Three Study Districts

Comparison parameter	Durgauli, Kailali	Syaphru, Rasuwa	Masankhel, Tehrathum
Location	Mid-western Terai (plains)	Central, Mountain	Eastern, Hill
District HDI in 2004	0.400 – 0.449	0.35 – 0.40	0.5 – 0.54
Population (2001)	616,697	44,731	113,111
Largest ethnic group	Tharu	Tamang	Limbu
Proportion with no education	53%	34%	8.7%
Proportion in farming (major IP group)	46.9%	64.6%	52%
Agriculture (major crops)	Rice, wheat, pulses, sugarcane	Maize, potatoes	Maize, potatoes
Read in local language*	57.5%	25.1%	4.76%
Write in local language*	55%	19.3%	4.76%
Read in national language*	85%	45%	57.1%
Write in national language*	85%	45%	57.1%
Most common communication channel	Television – 75%	Radio – 71%	Radio – 73.8%
Most trusted/reliable communication channel**	Television	Mobile phone	Radio
Most useful communication channel**	Telephone	Mobile phone	Radio/ Mobile phone
Most 'high' coverage of ethnic issues	Weekly newspaper	Radio	Radio

Notes: * Based on “very good” responses to question of language ability.

** Based on “very reliable” and “very useful” responses to the questions.

Development challenges affect the ability of people to access information and participate as equals in the development process, as suggested by the assessment of these three districts. At the same time, having limited information, voice and communication opportunities can slow the development progress and the empowerment of IPs.

Summary of Key Information and Communication Needs, Challenges and Opportunities Identified through Field Research

Information needs

The study has identified a range of information and communication requirements that could inform efforts to reduce the lack of access to information in the study areas. A principal requirement is information in support of better education, health care, sanitation, agriculture, natural resource management and enterprise development. In addition, there is a need for coverage of local news and informed discussions in the media, with particular attention to issues related to IPs, and programmes that promote local culture and languages. Both needs can be met by mainstreaming information and communications into existing development programmes.

Challenges

Lower literacy rates, especially in the mother tongues of IPs, remain the most formidable challenge for increasing access to information and communication. In general, the literacy rates of IPs in all survey districts are much lower than the national average, particularly for women when compared to men. Other challenges to effective communications are limited infrastructure and

basic services such as electricity, roads and education opportunities.¹²³ High levels of poverty limit the purchasing power of residents to buy household communication devices such as televisions, computers and mobile phones and to pay applicable charges or subscribe to regular media products. The communication challenges include under-representation of IPs in the media in terms of ownership, control and content.

Opportunities

Media and communication can be used for promoting the languages spoken by IPs and as an empowering mechanism at the community level. The relatively high ownership of radios in Nepal provides opportunities to use the medium for help people to gain access to information and communication. The radio station in Tehrathum has attempted to do this and there is room to upgrade the effort using lessons from community radios in other parts of the country. The use of local languages can also contribute towards preserving and promoting indigenous peoples' languages. There is also an opportunity to support the establishment of a community radio station in Rasuwa district, which currently lacks one, and develop the station as a model that existing stations could learn from in terms of programming for empowerment.

Mobile phones are emerging as a medium with promise in terms of reach and affordability, especially as prices continue to fall with more players joining the market. They are also less demanding on electricity supplies. Projects using mobile phones for information and Communication for Empowerment could be piloted, and the lessons could be relevant not only for Nepal but for all countries in the region where mobile telephony is expanding.

The capacity building of journalists from indigenous groups can enhance the quality of content in the media. Projects could also train non-IPs for better understanding and reporting on issues related to IPs. Improved content could inform the planning of interventions for addressing the development challenges of IPs.

¹²³ Roads in the Hills and Mountains and even in the plains are in bad condition and can be impassable seasonally as was the case during the study period.



A blue-toned map of South and Southeast Asia serves as the background. A light gray callout box with a white border and a pointer directed at India contains the section title. The map shows the outlines of countries in the region, including India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan, and various Southeast Asian nations.

4. Analysis of the Findings from the National Overview Study and Field Research

4. Analysis of the Findings from the National Overview Study and Field Research

Development Situation for Indigenous Nationalities

Although official data show progress in human development and poverty outcomes of the IPs, it is clear that there is still much to achieve in terms of education, health, food security, the environment, gender equality, agriculture and livelihoods. From this study, it is evident that improved access to information and increased opportunities for communication are indispensable to the development and empowerment of IPs.

Information can be a catalyst for change and empowerment. Access to information and communication opportunities are key to poverty reduction because such access can help to bridge information gaps and help to overcome disempowerment resulting from poor physical access to public services. It also could generate demand for making the delivery of public services more effective. The impact of access to information on service delivery may be most evident in the areas with the least physical access.

Poor communications can exacerbate the challenges in addressing the development problems of IPs. This is because development can be effective only when messages are clearly understood within the framework of languages and cultures of the relevant social groups. Given the diversity of languages and cultures in Nepal, this places a huge burden on the development process.

Communication mechanism can assist in promoting and reviving local languages. The starting point would be using oral communication channels for disseminating information in local languages. Among the available options in Nepal, local radio stations would be the most effective medium for this purpose. An emerging opportunity includes the use of the mobile phone, which is presently used for personal communications rather than for sharing information related to development. There are increasing opportunities for using mobile technologies for strategic C4E interventions.

Communication and Information Needs

At the national level, the constitution-making process remains at the heart of the empowerment of IPs in Nepal. In this process, the primary demands of the IPs focus on the right to self-determination and other political rights. Issues such as improving livelihoods remain lower on their priority list. Nevertheless, these development issues are real and need to be addressed in conjunction with the political demands. Therefore, information and communication needs must be addressed at two levels:

- Facilitating understanding of information on the process of political transformation and decision-making; and
- Improving communications among indigenous groups themselves in order to have more coherent messages to strengthen their positions.

In districts and villages, equal access to information and communication opportunities could help ordinary villagers to improve livelihoods by enhancing voice and participation.

IPs are under-represented in Nepal's media. There is a need to improve newsroom diversity in order to bring in voices and increase participation of IPs in communication opportunities. Nepal has media run by IPs that can contribute towards narrowing the information and communication gaps. But there is a greater need for capacity building to prepare and place indigenous journalists in the decision-making and management positions of the mainstream media. This could be a more sustainable and effective means to ensure continued, credible and adequate media coverage of indigenous peoples' issues, including those related to women.

Currently, Nepal officially recognizes 59 groups of IPs. There is an ongoing process to identify and categorize groups that were not included in the earlier classification. Nepal has about 54 IPOs

and a very strong representative organization. However, there is a need to enhance the ability of IPOs to interact and communicate with the rest of the Nepali society. Low media coverage and misrepresentation of issues affecting IPs make this interaction a challenge.

Appropriate Communication Channels for Empowerment, Inclusion and Participation of Indigenous Peoples

Radio appears to be the communication medium with the potential to address the needs of all IPs regardless of their economic and social status. Radio content, and content of all mass media for that matter, needs to be planned carefully to take into account the needs of specific groups. Television is the medium of choice in areas that are more accessible and have access to electricity. While being effective, television is also a medium where competition for getting and retaining audiences is intense. Therefore use of television for the empowerment of IPs would require strong community- supported initiatives that are pro-IPs while being professional and credible.

The coverage of indigenous peoples' issues in the media in all communities surveyed varied from "moderate" to "very low". Overcoming this challenge would require efforts to make journalists in the mainstream media aware of issues and concerns of IPs. Greater understanding of the issues by the journalists can result in more and improved coverage. It is necessary to invest in enhancing the capacity of journalists from indigenous communities if they are to be supported to take up jobs in the mainstream media. Mainstream media in non-indigenous languages is likely to have larger audiences, at least until Nepal's multilingual education efforts produce a new generation of IPs literate in their mother tongues and other members of society begin learning the languages spoken by IPs.

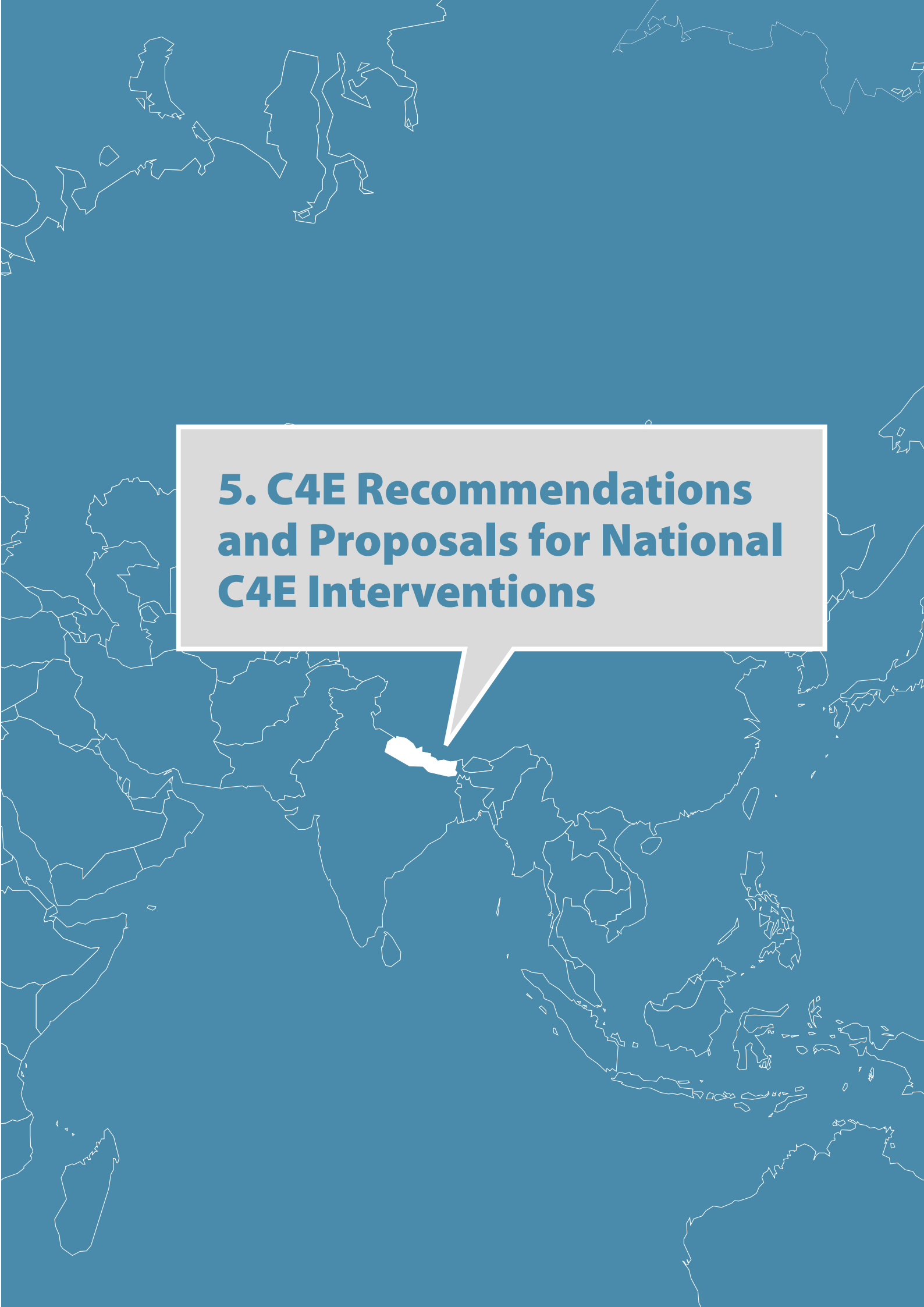
A multi-media approach to Communication for Empowerment can help to address immediate as well as longer-term needs of the IPs. Short-term projects can have a developmental role in supporting the revival of indigenous languages and cultures, and information exchange can be more effective in languages that are easily understood by a large number of people. The medium- and long-term efforts should focus on establishing regional media run by IPs in areas where their numbers are high and where people do not have (or have very low access to) existing media. Building the capacity of journalists from indigenous communities to prepare them better to take up mainstream media jobs can be another medium-term activity.

The growth of mobile telephony in Nepal is an opportunity that has not received as much attention as it should have from the development community. Some companies have begun group messaging and opinion polling via mobile phones in partnerships with the broadcast media. The existing systems can serve as a platform for initiating information and communication activities for the development and empowerment of IPs. The use of mobile devices can be combined with other ICTs including the Internet once Nepal builds infrastructures to support the growth of Internet and wireless communications.

Nepal has a large number of rural telecentres, community learning centres and community media centres but none of these were effective in the field survey locations. Nonetheless, these centres can serve as important nodes or points of contact in the villages. They can be developed and used more effectively in the coming years. Nepal has plans to lay down optical fibres to connect all districts. Pilot projects for empowering IPs to use ICTs should start now, to prepare Nepal better to take advantage of the opportunities that the convergence of media, mobile phones and Internet may offer.

Communication for Empowerment should focus on establishing and supporting more community- based media initiatives and replicating best practices in indigenous communities. No single model may work for the diverse groups of IPs in Nepal, but there are common problems that have resulted from inadequate communications that can be addressed through community-based initiatives that have been successful elsewhere.





5. C4E Recommendations and Proposals for National C4E Interventions

5. C4E Recommendations and Proposals for National C4E Interventions

Indigenous peoples account for approximately 37 percent of Nepal's population. With few exceptions, they lag behind others in terms of poverty outcomes and other development indicators. Empirical data indicates that several groups of IPs have even poorer outcomes when compared with other excluded groups. As a collective group, IPs face many development challenges, including access to basic public services and voice and participation in programmes aimed at improving their livelihoods.

The national C4E process emphasizes effective communication and access to information as integral parts of democratic governance and sustainable development for poor and excluded groups, particularly the IPs. The existing gaps in access to information and communication channels have limited their voice and participation, leading to wider disparities and inequalities.

This study has identified both challenges and opportunities. Opportunities to enhance Communication for Empowerment and development of IPs include Nepal's efforts to expand democratization by setting up systems that are inclusive, the largely open legal and policy frameworks for media, and the decreasing prices and greater availability of ICTs, among others. The convergence taking place in media and communications technologies may be an opportunity not only for enhancing information exchange but also for supporting and promoting the revival of indigenous languages. Effective communication systems and channels can also provide development agencies and government with a bridge to extend democratic governance and development to the remotest corners of the country and provide IPs with space to exercise their voice and participate in decisions that affect their livelihoods.

Recommendations

The recommendations have been generated through analysis of the findings and inputs from the National Stakeholder Consultation in Kathmandu on 19-20 January 2010. Various stakeholders in Nepal, including government officials, policy makers, civil society and IPOs, recognize the need to include IPs and other excluded groups into the discussion in the ongoing constitution-making process and state restructuring. The recommendations place importance on developing and harnessing the media and ICT sector to improve democratic governance and accelerate development progress that is inclusive, transparent and participatory. In this regard, media has a critical role to play in providing information and reflecting different viewpoints to facilitate informed public discussion and bring the voices of IPs into mainstream national development debates and outcomes.

Based on the findings from the C4E study and assessment, the proposed recommendations focus on the following priority areas:

- Enhancing knowledge of IPs issues;
- Building capacity of IPs journalists and media professionals;
- Increasing access to information and media;
- Strengthening voices and participation of IPs in the media and communication platforms;
- Mainstreaming C4E, media and ICTs and the indigenous peoples' rights into existing development programmes and projects;
- Promoting the role of indigenous women in media;
- Exchange of experiences and lessons learned on C4E of the IPs.

Enhance knowledge of IP issues

Insufficient knowledge among the indigenous groups, general public and policy makers on the benefits and challenges of federalism present a major challenge in the current political debate.

There is a need to promote greater understanding of the demands and claims of the indigenous peoples' groups to avoid misrepresentation and misinterpretation that could exacerbate tensions in Nepali society.

Nepal's open media and civil society provide an environment for generating and sharing knowledge on federalism and issues related to IPs. Furthermore, the country has ratified ILO Convention 169 and adopted UNDRIP, which help promote social inclusion, voice and participation of IPs.

The proposed areas for C4E intervention are to:

- Support production and dissemination of knowledge on IPs' issues, claims and demands for media coverage;
- Raise awareness and knowledge of journalists on covering IPs' issues;
- Raise awareness of youth from indigenous communities about the media and encourage them to participate in public discussions on indigenous peoples' issues in the media through media literacy initiatives;
- Support interactive media formats and programmes to encourage greater exchanges of views and opinions between IPOs and decision makers or opinion leaders in both mainstream and community media.

Building capacity of indigenous journalists and media professionals

Nepal has vibrant and diverse media outlets, including print and broadcasting. Nevertheless, low representation of journalists and media professionals from indigenous groups remain one of the key challenges. In addition, journalists from other social groups tend to have limited knowledge about issues related to IPs, resulting in poor reporting and coverage of their issues. Hence, there is a need to enhance capacity of journalists and media professionals from indigenous groups in the following areas:

- Support a range of training programmes (including specializations such as investigative and in-depth reporting) for addressing the needs of different media;
- Support and promote 'citizens journalism' including the use of New Media by individuals and IPOs;
- Support orientation programmes of media professionals to enable them to better understand the realities, rights and issues affecting the IPs.

Increasing access to information and media

Limited access to information by IPs is a key challenge in making informed choices. At the policy and legislation level, the constitutional guarantee for the Right to Information and Freedom of Expression is an essential basis for implementation. The constitution-making process in Nepal provides an unprecedented opportunity to ensure that the new constitution includes these rights. In doing so, there is a need for C4E interventions to:

- Support efforts to inform all about these rights for ensuring the enjoyment of the rights by all, including IPs;
- Ensure availability of information in the indigenous groups' languages;
- Initiate efforts to make all public information easily available to all citizens, with special efforts to enhance the access of IPs;
- Work with the High-Level Commission for IT and the National Information Commission to develop appropriate applications for facilitating information access for IPs in collaboration with IPOs.

Strengthening the capacity of the IPOs and the indigenous community in establishing or improving indigenous community media could help overcome challenges to access to information. Priority areas for intervention are to:

- Set up pilot indigenous peoples' media and ICT initiatives at locations that have low media exposure and high populations of IPs;

- Support existing community media initiatives to improve inclusiveness of the diverse indigenous groups, including programmes in indigenous languages;
- Establish partnerships with the private sector and civil society organizations to devise sustainable models of engagement that include the relevant indigenous peoples, and are responsive to their priorities and rights.

Strengthening voice and participation of IPs in the media and communication platforms

Existing local communication channels, such as community radio stations, can promote voice and participation of IPs in the public discourse at the national and local levels. Indigenous peoples' issues are inadequately covered and highly politicized, despite the large number of community radio stations in Nepal. In addition, the local radio stations produce relatively little local news and programmes related to IPs.

Strengthening existing local media and communication channels and platforms, including radio, to better serve the poor and marginalized, in particular the IPs, can help address these challenges. Recommended areas for intervention are to:

- Conduct a strategic review of Nepal's radio sector to identify areas of intervention to ensure access, voice and participation of marginalized groups;
- Develop series of strategic responses based on a community media performance assessment conducted in partnership with media and indigenous peoples' organizations;
- Restructure the operations and management to ensure voices and inclusive community participation, including proportionate representation of IPs at all levels;
- Build capacity, including in-house training and coaching of the community media;
- Consider setting up model community radio stations for serving marginalized groups, including IPs.

Mainstreaming C4E, media and ICTs into existing development programmes and projects

Support to media and communications have largely been ad-hoc and preoccupied with advocacy and development messaging rather than development of the media to be a mechanism for inclusive participation. There is a need for media development activities that can help to narrow the existing the gaps in access, voice and participation for IPs and other excluded groups. Mainstreaming C4E, media and ICTs in existing development programmes and projects are equally important. Recommended areas for intervention are to:

- Formulate a separate programme in support of C4E of IPs focusing on the role of media and access to information in promoting social inclusion in Nepal;
- Assess the potential for establishing a regional mechanism for capacity development and exchanges among IPs groups;
- Organize a consortium of donors and a national multistakeholder groups to support media and C4E initiatives;
- Identify linkages with other programmes supporting social inclusion, civil society and democratic participation.

Strengthening the role of indigenous women in media

Indigenous women are the most marginalized and underrepresented in media among IPs. Strengthening women's movements, especially among indigenous peoples' groups, can potentially enhance the role of women in media, which could increase the number of women in journalism and management positions in media. Simultaneously, increasing sense of ownership among women of their local media can lead to greater visibility of women and impact on the media. More efforts to identify strategic responses and build capacity of indigenous women in media can be promoted by:

- Convening the national meeting among indigenous women and women from other marginalized groups to analyze the present situation and identify the reasons for low representation of indigenous women in media;
- Building capacity for indigenous women in the media, including training and coaching of women journalists;
- Supporting the production of media programmes focusing on indigenous women's rights and development challenges, and coverage of issues relevant to women's lives;
- Promoting a gender policy for radio stations to ensure the equal participation of women.

Exchange of experiences and lessons learned on C4E of IP

There is a need to generate knowledge and capture lessons learned on indigenous media and C4E experiences as well as to establish a platform for knowledge exchange on C4E. Proposed areas for C4E of indigenous peoples interventions are to:

- Explore potential collaborations with existing regional and national forums and organizations;
- Establish a regional knowledge sharing mechanism to enhance knowledge and implementation of the C4E initiatives;
- Document issues related to indigenous peoples, their cultures and livelihood outcomes, also in video, for sharing the knowledge and experiences with the larger community and society of IPs;
- Set up a mechanism for archiving indigenous knowledge related to C4E.

Table 8: Priority Areas for C4E Interventions

Issues/challenges	Opportunities	Recommendations	Proposed areas for interventions
1. Lack of adequate knowledge among the IPs, the general public and policy makers on the benefits and challenges of different constitutional arrangements to recognize indigenous rights.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nepal has a fairly open media and civil society that is conducive to knowledge generation on constitutional options, federalism and IPs issues and dissemination. Nepal has ratified ILO Convention 169 and endorsed the adoption of UNDRIP, including article 16 on the media. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support informed public debate on constitutional recognition of IPs rights and IPs issues. Take effective measures to make state-owned media (until they are converted into public service) inclusive and reflective of IPs issues and the diversity in terms of demands and claims. Encourage privately owned media to adequately reflect issues concerning IPs and newsroom diversity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support production and dissemination of knowledge on IPs issues, and rights for media coverage. Raise awareness and knowledge of IPs rights among journalists covering IPs issues. Raise awareness of youth from IPs communities about the media and encourage them to participate in public discussions on IPs issues in the media through media literacy interventions. Support interactive media formats and programmes to encourage greater exchanges of views and opinions between IPOs and decision makers/opinion leaders in both mainstream and community media.
2. Low representation of journalists and/or media professionals from IPs groups and their limited capacity; journalists from other groups have limited knowledge about issues related to IPs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nepal has a vibrant media and a diversity of outlets in print and broadcasting. There is growing interest among educated youth to join the media. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance capacity of IPs journalists, and support other media professionals in better understanding and reporting on IPs issues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support a range of training programmes (including specializations such as investigative and in-depth reporting) for addressing the needs of different media. Support and promote 'citizens journalism' including the use of New Media by individuals and IPOs. Support orientation programmes of media professionals to enable them to better understand the issues affecting the IPs.
3. Limited access to mainstream media and lack of adequate media owned by IPs, and content in indigenous languages.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nepal has vast experience in setting up community media initiatives. Nepal has a liberal radio licensing regime and regulatory framework. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen capacity of the IPOs/ communities in establishing or improving indigenous community media and ICT interventions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set up pilot IPs media/ ICT initiatives at locations that have low media exposure and high IPs populations. Support existing community media initiatives to improve inclusiveness of the diverse IPs groups, including programmes in indigenous languages. Establish partnerships with the private sector and civil society organizations to devise sustainable models of engagement.

Issues/challenges	Opportunities	Recommendations	Proposed areas for interventions
<p>4. IPs have limited access to information to benefit from existing knowledge needed for advancing their voice, participation and development.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nepal is drafting a new constitution and its draft includes guarantees for Right to Information and Freedom of Expression. Nepal also has a Right to Information Act, which provides for an information commission to oversee its implementation. The Information Commission has been in place since 2008. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assure constitutional guarantees for implementation of Freedom of Expression and Right to Information to all. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support efforts to inform all about these rights for ensuring the enjoyment of the rights by all, including IPs. Ensure availability of information in the IPs languages. Initiate efforts to make all public information easily available to all citizens, with special efforts to enhance the access of IPs. Work with the High-Level Commission for IT and the National Information Commission for developing appropriate applications for facilitating information access for IPs in collaboration with IPOs.
<p>5. Limited voices and participation of IPs in public discourse at the national and local levels, which will influence/shape the policy making process as well as decisions affecting their lives.</p> <p>Despite a number of existing community radios, IP issues are inadequately covered and highly politicized.</p> <p>Local radios broadcast national news and have low production of the local news and programme related to IPs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Through the existing of local communication channels, such as community radio, IPs can voice their concerns and participate in the decision making process affecting their lives. This could be an empowering mechanism for IP to improve their well-being and livelihoods. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthening of existing local media and communication channels and platform, such as community radios to better serve the poor and marginalized, in particular the IPs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a strategic review of Nepal's radio sector to identify areas of intervention to ensure access, voice and participation of marginalized groups. Develop series of strategic responses based on a community media performance assessment conducted in partnership with media organizations. Restructure the operations and management to ensure voices and inclusive community participation, including proportionate representation of IPs at all levels. Build capacity, including in-house training and coaching of the community media. Consider setting up model community radio stations for serving marginalized groups, including IPs.

Issues/challenges	Opportunities	Recommendations	Proposed areas for interventions
6. Indigenous women are marginalized and underrepresented in the capacity of journalists, in management positions and as news sources. Furthermore, the mainstream media has often misrepresented women and their images in reporting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing women's movements particularly that of indigenous groups enhances the role of women in media, which could result in an increased number of women journalists, media managers and news sources. Increasing sense of ownership among women of their local media leads to greater visibility of women and impact of the media. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance and strengthen the role of indigenous women in the media by identifying strategic responses and capacity building. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Convene the national meeting among women from marginalized groups, such as IPs to analyze the present situation and identify the reasons for low representation of women. Capacity building for women in the media, including training and coaching of women journalists. Support for production of media programmes focusing on women issues and coverage of issues relevant to women's lives. Gender policy for radio station to ensure the equal participation of women.
7. Support to media and communications have largely ad-hoc and preoccupied with advocacy and development messaging rather than development of the media to be a mechanism for inclusive participation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a large donor presence in Nepal, including media organizations and associations. Donor focus on constitution making, human rights and peace building are areas where the media can play major roles. Media remains a profession of choice among the youth of Nepal. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore opportunities for mainstreaming C4E, media and ICTs in existing development programmes and projects, and those in the pipeline. Focus on media development activities that can narrow the existing gaps in access, voice and participation for IPs and other excluded groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formulate a separate medium- to long-term programme to support of communication for empowerment of IPs. Assess the potential for establishing a regional mechanism for capacity development and exchanges among IPs groups. Organize a consortium of donors and a national multi stakeholder group to support media and C4E initiatives. Identify linkages with other programmes supporting social inclusion, civil society and democratic participation.
8. Inadequate exchange of experiences and lessons learned on C4E of IPs within the country and beyond Nepal's borders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UNDP has a regional initiative on Indigenous Voices: Communication for Empowerment for Asia's Indigenous People. Regional success stories have not been adequately disseminated and shared. There are regional media organizations and associations in South Asia, East Asia and those with an Asian and global reach. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generate knowledge and capture lessons learned on indigenous media and C4E experiences. Establish a platform for knowledge exchange on C4E. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore potential collaborations with existing national and regional forums and organizations. Establish a regional knowledge sharing mechanism to enhance knowledge and implementation of the C4E for IPs initiatives. Document issues related to indigenous peoples, their cultures and livelihood outcomes, also in video, for sharing the knowledge and experiences with the larger IPs community and society. Set up a mechanism for archiving indigenous knowledge related to C4E.

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Appendix I: Field Research - Household Survey Questionnaire

The purpose of the survey: to gain an understanding of the community's use of information, communications and media with relation to its development.

Question	Response
Gender	Male Female
Age Group	10-20 21-30 31-40 41-50 51-60 61-70 71-80 81 above
Education	None Primary Secondary Junior High Secondary Senior High Tertiary (College) Tertiary (University) Post graduate
Employment	Farmer Unskilled worker/laborer Skilled worker Business owner Government worker None - dependent (on family/charity)
Literacy: Local language reading Local language writing National language reading National language writing	Good Moderate Poor None
Household ownership (how many?)	Regular newspapers Magazines Radio Television Telephone (fixed land line) Telephone (mobile) VCR/DVD Computer Internet
Access outside household to	Regular newspapers Magazines Radio Television Telephone (fixed land line) Telephone (mobile) VCR/DVD Computer Internet

Question	Response
Reliability of information received via; Regular newspapers Magazines Radio Television Telephone (fixed land line) Telephone (mobile) VCR/DVD Computer Internet	Very reliable Somewhat reliable Half reliable – half unreliable Not very reliable Not reliable at all Not applicable/don't know
Usefulness of information received via; Regular newspapers Magazines Radio Television Telephone (fixed land line) Telephone (mobile) VCR/DVD Computer Internet	Very useful Somewhat useful Half useful – half not useful Not very useful Not useful Not applicable/don't know
Amount of Representation of Indigenous issues in: Regular newspapers Magazines Radio Television Telephone (fixed land line) Telephone (mobile) VCR/DVD Computer Internet	Very high High Moderate Low Very low Not applicable/don't know
Quality of Representation of Indigenous issues in: Regular newspapers Magazines Radio Television Telephone (fixed land line) Telephone (mobile) VCR/DVD Computer Internet	Very fair Fair Neither fair nor unfair Not fair Very unfair Not applicable/don't know
I would like to see more coverage of Indigenous issues in: Regular newspapers Magazines Radio Television Telephone (fixed land line) Telephone (mobile) VCR/DVD Computer Internet	Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree Not applicable/don't know

Question	Response
<p>Do you feel you have an opportunity to respond to what you see or hear in the following media?</p> <p>Regular newspapers</p> <p>Magazines</p> <p>Radio</p> <p>Television</p> <p>Telephone (fixed land line)</p> <p>Telephone (mobile)</p> <p>VCR/DVD</p> <p>Computer</p> <p>Internet</p>	<p>A good opportunity</p> <p>A slight opportunity</p> <p>Not much opportunity</p> <p>No opportunity</p> <p>Not applicable/don't know</p>
<p>Do you feel your interests as a member of your Indigenous group could be better served by the following media?</p> <p>Regular newspapers</p> <p>Magazines</p> <p>Radio</p> <p>Television</p> <p>Telephone (fixed land line)</p> <p>Telephone (mobile)</p> <p>VCR/DVD</p> <p>Computer</p> <p>Internet</p>	<p>A lot better</p> <p>Somewhat better</p> <p>Not much better</p> <p>Not at all any better</p> <p>Not applicable/don't know</p>
<p>Do you feel the development prospects of your Indigenous group are currently well- served by the following media?</p> <p>Regular newspapers</p> <p>Magazines</p> <p>Radio</p> <p>Television</p> <p>Telephone (fixed land line)</p> <p>Telephone (mobile)</p> <p>VCR/DVD</p> <p>Computer</p> <p>Internet</p>	<p>Very well served</p> <p>Quite well served</p> <p>Not really well served</p> <p>Not served at all</p> <p>Not applicable/don't know</p>
<p>Do you feel the development prospects of your Indigenous group could be better served by the following media?</p> <p>Regular newspapers</p> <p>Magazines</p> <p>Radio</p> <p>Television</p> <p>Telephone (fixed land line)</p> <p>Telephone (mobile)</p> <p>VCR/DVD</p> <p>Computer</p> <p>Internet</p>	<p>A lot better</p> <p>Somewhat better</p> <p>Not much better</p> <p>Not at all any better</p> <p>Not applicable/don't know</p>
What other sources of information are important to you?	
How well do these sources (each one) represent indigenous issues?	<p>Very fair</p> <p>Fair</p> <p>Neither fair nor unfair</p> <p>Not fair</p> <p>Very unfair</p> <p>Not applicable/don't know</p>

Appendix II: Research Data for Nepal

Table 1: Caste/ethnicity of households percentage

Caste/ Ethnicity	District						Total
	Kailali		Rasuwa		Tehrathum		No. of house holds
	No. of households	%	No. of households	%	No. of households	%	
Dalit	2	100.0					2
Ghale			8	100.0			8
Limbu					42	100.0	42
Magar	1	100.0					1
Tamang			23	100.0			23
Tharu	37	100.0					37
Total	40	35.4	31	27.4	42	37.2	113

Table 2: Gender status of interviewee by district in households (HHs) and percentage

District	Gender				Total HHs
	Female Interviewee		Male Interviewee		
	HHs	%	HHs	%	
Kailali	15	37.5	25	62.5	40
Rasuwa	14	45.2	17	54.8	31
Tehrathum	25	59.5	17	40.5	42
Total	54	47.8	59	52.2	113

Table 3: Interviewees by gender and caste/ethnic groups (%)

Caste/Ethnicity	District					
	Kailali		Rasuwa		Tehrathum	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Dalit		100.0				
Ghale			50.0	50.0		
Limbu					59.5	40.5
Magar		100.0				
Tamang			43.5	56.5		
Tharu	40.5	59.5				

Table 4: Access to information resources

Information Resources	District						Total	
	Kailali		Rasuwa		Tehrathum			
	HHs	%	HHs	%	HHs	%	HHs	%
Regular Newspaper	3	7.5	1	3.2		0.0	4	3.5
Weekly Newspaper	1	2.5	1	3.2		0.0	2	1.8
Magazine		0.0	1	3.2		0.0	1	0.9
Radio	28	70.0	22	71.0	31	73.8	81	71.7
Television	30	75.0	18	58.1	11	26.2	59	52.2
Telephone	6	15.0	3	9.7	1	2.4	10	8.8
Mobile	36	90.0	30	96.8	25	59.5	91	80.5
VCR/DVD	14	35.0	19	61.3	5	11.9	38	33.6
Computer	3	7.5		0.0	1	2.4	4	3.5
Internet	1	2.5		0.0		0.0	1	0.9

Table 5: Level of education by gender

Level of Education	District											
	Kailali				Rasuwa				Tehrathum			
	Female		Male		Female		Male		Female		Male	
	HHs	%	HHs	%	HHs	%	HHs	%	HHs	%	HHs	%
None			1	9.1	4	36.4	1	9.1	3	27.3	2	18.2
Primary	2	6.9	2	6.9	3	10.3	8	27.6	6	20.7	8	27.6
Lower Secondary	6	33.3	3	16.7	3	16.7	1	5.6	2	11.1	3	16.7
Secondary	3	10.3	7	24.1	2	6.9	5	17.2	10	34.5	2	6.9
Higher Secondary/PCL			7	50.0	1	7.1			4	28.6	2	14.3
Bachelor's Degree	3	50.0	3	50.0								
Master's Degree			2	100.0								
Non Formal Education	1	25.0			1	25.0	2	50.0				

Table 6: Employment status according to district and gender in households (HHs) number and percent

Employment	District											
	Kailali				Rasuwa				Tehrathum			
	Female		Male		Female		Male		Female		Male	
	HHs	%	HHs	%	HHs	%	HHs	%	HHs	%	HHs	%
Farmer	6	40.0	5	20.0	9	64.3	11	64.7	13	52.0	9	52.9
Unskilled worker/labourer			2	8.0			1	5.9				
Skilled worker			4	16.0			2	11.8	3	12.0	5	29.4
Government worker	2	13.3	1	4.0								
Teacher			5	20.0	1	7.1	1	5.9	3	12.0		
None – dependent (on family/charity)	7	46.7	8	32.0	3	21.4	1	5.9	6	24.0	3	17.6
Business					1	7.1	1	5.9				

Table 7: Reliability of information resources by district

District	Reliability of Information Received via	Very reliable		Somewhat reliable		Half reliable - half unreliable		Not very reliable		Not reliable at all		Not applicable/ don't know	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Kailali	Regular Newspaper	4	10.0	19	47.5	1	2.5	1	2.5			15	37.5
	Weekly newspaper	1	2.5	11	27.5	1	2.5	2	5.0			25	62.5
	Magazine	2	5.0	8	20.0							30	75.0
	Radio	5	12.5	24	60.0	3	7.5	3	7.5			5	12.5
	Television	11	27.5	25	62.5			1	2.5			3	7.5
	Telephone	10	25.0	8	20.0			2	5.0			20	50.0
	Mobile	10	25.0	20	50.0			3	7.5			7	17.5
	VCR/DVD	1	2.5	1	2.5			2	5.0			36	90.0
	Computer	1	2.5	1	2.5							38	95.0
	Internet	2	5.1									37	94.9
Rasuwa	Regular Newspaper	2	6.7	8	26.7			1	3.3			19	63.3
	Weekly newspaper	1	3.6	7	25.0							20	71.4
	Magazine	1	3.6	7	25.0							20	71.4
	Radio	8	25.8	16	51.6	3	9.7	1	3.2			3	9.7
	Television	2	7.1	9	32.1	3	10.7	1	3.6	1	3.6	12	42.9
	Telephone	4	16.0	1	4.0							20	80.0
	Mobile	13	44.8	2	6.9			3	10.3			11	37.9
	VCR/DVD	2	6.7	1	3.3	6	20.0	9	30.0	1	3.3	11	36.7
	Computer	3	10.7	3	10.7							22	78.6
	Internet	3	10.7	1	3.6							24	85.7
Tehrathum	Regular Newspaper	3	7.1	9	21.4	6	14.3	4	9.5			20	47.6
	Weekly newspaper	2	4.9	2	4.9	4	9.8	5	12.2	3	7.3	25	61.0
	Magazine			1	2.4	2	4.9	3	7.3			35	85.4
	Radio	13	31.0	7	16.7	15	35.7	7	16.7				
	Television	8	19.5	4	9.8	5	12.2	6	14.6	1	2.4	17	41.5
	Telephone	6	14.6	8	19.5	1	2.4	2	4.9			24	58.5
	Mobile	7	17.1	17	41.5	7	17.1	3	7.3			7	17.1
	VCR/DVD			7	17.1	2	4.9	5	12.2	9	22.0	18	43.9
	Computer											41	100.0
	Internet	1	2.4									40	97.6

Table 8: Usefulness of information resources by district

District	Usefulness of Information received via	Very useful		Somewhat useful		Half useful		Not very useful		Not useful		Not applicable	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Kailali	Regular Newspaper	4	10.0	18	45.0	1	2.5	2	5.0			15	37.5
	Weekly Newspaper	1	2.5	11	27.5			3	7.5			25	62.5
	Magazine	1	2.5	8	20.0							31	77.5
	Radio	2	5.0	25	62.5	4	10.0	4	10.0			5	12.5
	Television	8	20.0	24	60.0	2	5.0	4	10.0			2	5.0
	Telephone	9	22.5	5	12.5	1	2.5					25	62.5
	Mobile	7	17.5	15	37.5							18	45.0
	VCR/DVD	1	2.6	1	2.6			2	5.1	2	5.1	33	84.6
	Computer	2	5.0									38	95.0
	Internet	2	5.0							1	2.5	37	92.5
Rasuwa	Regular Newspaper	2	6.5	6	19.4	2	6.5					21	67.7
	Weekly Newspaper	2	6.7	5	16.7	2	6.7					21	70.0
	Magazine	1	3.3	6	20.0	2	6.7					21	70.0
	Radio	6	19.4	20	64.5	1	3.2	1	3.2			3	9.7
	Television	3	10.3	11	37.9	2	6.9	1	3.4			12	41.4
	Telephone	4	16.0									21	84.0
	Mobile	14	46.7	1	3.3	2	6.7					13	43.3
	VCR/DVD			4	13.3	7	23.3	7	23.3			12	40.0
	Computer	4	13.8	1	3.4							24	82.8
	Internet	2	6.9	1	3.4							26	89.7
Tehrathum	Regular Newspaper	2	4.8	8	19.0	11	26.2	2	4.8			19	45.2
	Weekly Newspaper	2	4.8	5	11.9	3	7.1	3	7.1	1	2.4	28	66.7
	Magazine	1	2.4	3	7.1	1	2.4					37	88.1
	Radio	11	26.2	8	19.0	19	45.2	4	9.5				
	Television	5	11.9	5	11.9	8	19.0	4	9.5	3	7.1	17	40.5
	Telephone	4	9.5	7	16.7	6	14.3	1	2.4			24	57.1
	Mobile	11	26.2	13	31.0	8	19.0	1	2.4			9	21.4
	VCR/DVD	1	2.4	4	9.5	4	9.5	6	14.3	6	14.3	21	50.0
	Computer			1	2.4			1	2.4			40	95.2
	Internet							1	2.4			41	97.6

Table 9: Development service/prospects of IPs by information resources

District	Development prospects of IPs group are currently well-served	Very well served		Quite well served		Not really well served		Not served at all		Not applicable/ don't know	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Kailali	Regular Newspaper	1	2.5	13	32.5	5	12.5	7	17.5	14	35.0
	Weekly Newspaper			10	25.0	5	12.5	4	10.0	21	52.5
	Magazine			9	22.5	4	10.0	1	2.5	26	65.0
	Radio			22	55.0	6	15.0	6	15.0	6	15.0
	Television			19	47.5	5	12.5	7	17.5	9	22.5
	Telephone			26	65.0	2	5.0			12	30.0
	Mobile			27	67.5	2	5.0			11	27.5
	VCR/DVD			1	2.5			1	2.5	38	95.0
	Computer							1	2.5	39	97.5
	Internet							2	5.0	38	95.0
Rasuwa	Regular Newspaper	4	12.9	9	29.0	3	9.7			15	48.4
	Weekly Newspaper	3	9.7	10	32.3	2	6.5			16	51.6
	Magazine	3	9.7	9	29.0	3	9.7			16	51.6
	Radio	8	25.8	19	61.3	2	6.5	1	3.2	1	3.2
	Television	8	25.8	12	38.7	3	9.7	1	3.2	7	22.6
	Telephone	1	3.6	4	14.3	1	3.6			22	78.6
	Mobile	5	16.7	7	23.3					18	60.0
	VCR/DVD	4	12.9	11	35.5	4	12.9	1	3.2	11	35.5
	Computer			2	6.5	2	6.5			27	87.1
	Internet			2	6.5	2	6.5			27	87.1
Tehrathum	Regular Newspaper	4	9.5	16	38.1	8	19.0	3	7.1	11	26.2
	Weekly Newspaper			16	38.1	4	9.5	7	16.7	15	35.7
	Magazine			13	31.0	4	9.5	2	4.8	23	54.8
	Radio	8	19.0	24	57.1	6	14.3	1	2.4	3	7.1
	Television	4	9.5	19	45.2	5	11.9	2	4.8	12	28.6
	Telephone			11	26.2	4	9.5	1	2.4	26	61.9
	Mobile	1	2.4	11	26.8	4	9.8			25	61.0
	VCR/DVD	1	2.4	13	31.0	3	7.1	2	4.8	23	54.8
	Computer			1	2.4			2	4.8	39	92.9
	Internet			1	2.4			2	4.8	39	92.9

Source: C4E Household survey, Nepal, 2009.

B. Data by gender

Table 10: Ownership of information sources by gender (%)

Source of Information	Female	Male	Total
HHs ownership of Regular Newspaper	1.9	5.1	3.5
HHs ownership of Weekly Newspaper	0.0	3.4	1.8
HHs ownership of Magazine	0.0	1.7	0.9
HHs ownership of Radio	70.4	72.9	71.7
HHs ownership of Television	48.1	55.9	52.2
HHs ownership of Telephone	9.3	8.5	8.8
HHs ownership of Mobile Phone	79.6	81.4	80.5
HHs ownership of VCR/DVD	44.4	23.7	33.6
HHs ownership of Computer	1.9	5.1	3.5
HHs ownership of Internet	0.0	1.7	0.9

Table 11: Level of education by district and gender

Level of Education	District					
	Kailali		Rasuwa		Tehrathum	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
None		100.0	80.0	20.0	60.0	40.0
Primary	50.0	50.0	27.3	72.7	42.9	57.1
Lower Secondary	66.7	33.3	75.0	25.0	40.0	60.0
Secondary	30.0	70.0	28.6	71.4	83.3	16.7
Higher Secondary/PCL		100.0	100.0		66.7	33.3
Bachelor's Degree	50.0	50.0				
Master's Degree		100.0				
Non Formal Education	100.0		33.3	66.7		
Total	37.5 (N=15)	62.5 (N=25)	45.2 (N=14)	54.8 (N=17)	59.5 (N=25)	40.5 (N=17)

Table 12: Representation of indigenous issues in information resources by gender (%)

Information resources	Very high		High		Moderate		Low		Very low		Not applicable	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Regular Newspaper			100.0		50.0	50.0	69.2	30.8	33.3	66.7	49.2	50.8
Weekly Newspaper			50.0	50.0	20.0	80.0	87.5	12.5	31.8	68.2	50.0	50.0
Magazine					33.3	66.7	75.0	25.0	40.9	59.1	49.4	50.6
Radio			66.7	33.3	61.3	38.7	36.7	63.3	40.6	59.4	50.0	50.0
Television			100.0		40.0	60.0	41.7	58.3	32.3	67.7	59.6	40.4
Telephone			100.0		33.3	66.7	100.0		40.0	60.0	46.4	53.6
Mobile			100.0		40.0	60.0	40.0	60.0	66.7	33.3	44.9	55.1
VCR/DVD					50.0	50.0	63.6	36.4	58.3	41.7	43.5	56.5
Computer						100.0			100.0		46.8	53.2
Internet		100.0				100.0			66.7	33.3	47.7	52.3

Table 13: Quality of indigenous issues in information resources by gender (%)

Information resources	Fair		Neither fair nor unfair		Not fair		Very unfair		Not applicable	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Regular Newspaper	45.5	54.5	42.9	57.1	50.0	50.0			50.0	50.0
Weekly Newspaper	25.0	75.0	52.9	47.1	40.0	60.0			47.7	52.3
Magazine	20.0	80.0	63.6	36.4	33.3	66.7			47.3	52.7
Radio	56.0	44.0	46.5	53.5	37.5	62.5			45.9	54.1
Television	61.5	38.5	32.1	67.9	28.6	71.4			54.7	45.3
Telephone	100.0		100.0			100.0			44.0	56.0
Mobile	100.0		100.0			100.0			43.4	56.6
VCR/DVD	57.1	42.9	50.0	50.0		100.0	100.0		48.0	52.0
Computer						100.0			48.2	51.8
Internet				100.0		100.0			48.6	51.4

Table 14: Other reliable sources of information for IPs (%)

Other Source of Information	Female	Male	Total	
			HHs	%
Other important source of information (Katuwal)	40.7	59.3	54	47.8
Local Teacher	51.1	48.9	45	39.8
Local Health Assistant	60.0	40.0	45	39.8
Social Gathering	51.1	48.9	90	79.6
Haat Bazaar	68.3	31.7	41	36.3

Table 15: Reliability of information by gender

Information resources	Very reliable		Somewhat reliable		Half reliable - half unreliable		Not very reliable		Not reliable at all		Not applicable/ don't know	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Regular Newspaper	33.3	66.7	47.2	52.8	42.9	57.1	83.3	16.7			46.3	53.7
Weekly Newspaper	50.0	50.0	35.0	65.0	80.0	20.0	85.7	14.3	66.7	33.3	42.9	57.1
Magazine	33.3	66.7	43.8	56.3	50.0	50.0	66.7	33.3			47.1	52.9
Radio	50.0	50.0	38.3	61.7	61.9	38.1	54.5	45.5			50.0	50.0
Television	55.0	45.0	52.9	47.1	100.0		50.0	50.0			43.8	56.3
Telephone	55.0	45.0	52.9	47.1	100.0		50.0	50.0			43.8	56.3
Mobile	33.3	66.7	51.3	48.7	42.9	57.1	55.6	44.4			52.0	48.0
VCR/DVD	100.0		77.8	22.2	25.0	75.0	43.8	56.3	50.0	50.0	43.1	56.9
Computer	25.0	75.0	50.0	50.0							48.5	51.5
Internet	33.3	66.7	100.0								47.5	52.5

Appendix III: Summary of Focus Group Discussions with IPs Leaders in Kathmandu

Access of indigenous peoples to media/ICT

Three focus group discussions were organized at the initiatives of Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities (NEFIN) at NEFIN, the Centre of Constitutional Dialogue and Kirat Yakthung Chumlung (KYC). The first discussion of nine NEFIN Secretariat members included four CA members. The second discussion had 15 CA members. Thirteen IPOs officials/representatives took part in the third discussion organized at the office of KYC. Each session lasted for about three hours. The major subjects for discussion were:

- Media/ICT related laws, policies and practices in relation to increasing access to media/ICTs;
- Situation of access of IPs to media/ICTs;
- Key concerns of IPs about the prospects for development and self-determination;
- Prospects for improving media access of IPs for empowerment.

Summaries of each discussion was prepared and the conclusions of all discussions were compiled. The main conclusions of three discussions are as follows:

1. The mass media have contributed immensely to the entrenchment and promotion of dominant values and ideas to perpetuate traditional political domination and cultural hegemony, as they are mainly owned by dominant high caste groups. Print media are predominantly under the control of dominant group members. Media bias and stereotyping is rampant. IPs have relatively better access to broadcast media, particularly radio. Radio is used only for entertainment, not for useful information.
2. IPs have limited access to ICTs. Large populations of IPs lack skills and motivation to navigate complex information spaces and thus, the knowledge gap is widening between the digital elites mostly belonging to dominant groups and users of traditional means of communication who are mostly IPs.
3. In general the IPs, except Newar, have no access to ICTs. They have no computers and no knowledge/skills to operate computers. In IPs concentrated areas, there are no network connections to reach, select and process information from various sources. Where there are limited facilities there is no support to impart and enhance skills even for simple applications.
4. The digital divide is large because members of dominant groups have better education, incomes, and connectivity and are capable of manipulating policy for information technology. Widening disparities in new technology use is exacerbating existing knowledge disparities and further marginalizing the subordinated peoples.
5. Media content and images are highly influenced by Hindu cultural values and somehow try to justify that dominant groups have ruled through consent rather than coercion. Mainstream media repeatedly present ideas and values of traditionally dominant groups in ways intended to make people feel that they have been working for the benefit and welfare the subordinated groups.
6. Representation of the issues, problems and demands/claims of IPs by mainstream media are prejudiced, fragmented, negative and sometimes damaging. Indigenous claims like right to self-determination, right to self-government, autonomy, collective rights, linguistic rights, special measures/affirmative action have been often presented ambiguously and mostly negatively to shape public opinion against these demands.
7. Media coverage of indigenous issues is extremely limited and only those aspects are covered that are in the interest of dominant groups. Usually the activities of IPs that turn violent are covered. Development concerns of IPs are rarely covered.

8. Government, major decision-making institutions and mass media ignore the rights of consultation and participation as ensured by ILO Convention 169 and the right of free, prior, informed consent of indigenous peoples as envisioned by UNDRIP while making decisions that affect them.

Appendix IV: List of Focus Group Discussion Participants and Interviewees in Kathmandu

Group 1: NEFIN officials

Pasang Sherpa, President, NEFIN and CA member
Ram Bahadur Thapa Magar, General Secretary, NEFIN and CA member
Bhimraj Rajbansi, Treasurer, NEFIN and CA member
Ms Tasi Shyangbo Mugali-Gurung, Secretary, NEFIN and CA member
Prakash Mandal, Vice President, NEFIN
Jyoti Danuwar, Activist and indigenous intellectual
Ms Soma Rai, General Secretary, National Indigenous Women's Federation
Ms Phulmati Tharu, Treasurer, National Indigenous women's Federation
Ms Bhagawati Tamu, Tamu Hyul Chhoja Dhi
Dr. Mukta Singh Lama-Tamang, Anthropologist and Manager, ILO Pro 169 project.

Group 2:

Arjun Limbu, President, Kirat Yakthung Chumlung
Ms. Sumaya Rai, President, Kirat Rai Yayokkha
Raj Kumar Lekhi, General Secretary, Tharu Kalyankarini Sabha
Ms Bimala Sunuwar, Sunuwar Sewa Samaj
Kungsang Yonjan, Indigenous Lawyer
Ms Rajani Maharjan, Newa Deya Dabu
M.S. Thapa-Magar, CA member and Lawyer
Ms Lucky Sherpa, CA member
Ms Seeta Gurung, CA member
Durgamani Dewan, President, Kirat Yakkha Chhumma
Ms Chini Mayan Majhi, Nepal Majhi Utthan Sangh.

Group 3:

Prithvi Subba Gurung, CA Member
Suresh Ale Magar, CA Member and Founder General Secretary, NEFIN
Jip Tshiring Lama Sherpa, CA Member
Indra Bahadur Gurung, CA Member
Ms Shanti Jirel, CA Member
Pari Thapa, CA Member
Ms. Laxmi Kumari Chaudhari, CA Member
Ms Pramila Rai, CA Member
Nagendra Dhimal, CA Member
Ms Rupa Chaudhari, CA Member
Ms Urmila Pun, CA Member
Prof. Dr. Om Gurung

Interviews in Kathmandu

Jitpal Kirat, Vice Chair, National Foundation for Development of Indigenous Nationalities (NFDIN)
Lok Bahadur Thapa Magar, Member-Secretary, NFDIN
Krishna Prasad Devakota, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Local Development (MLD)
Baburam Gautam, Under Secretary MLD
Pushpalal Shakya, Joint Secretary, National Planning Commission
Tirth Dhakal, Under Secretary, National Planning Commission
Ms Mandira Sharma, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Women and Social Welfare
Janardan Nepal, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Education
Purna Kumar Sherma-Limbu, Minister for Local Development
Rakam Chemjong, Minister for Peace and Reconstruction.

Appendix V: List of People Met during the Scoping Mission

Anne-Isabelle Degryse-Blateau, Country Director, UNDP Nepal
Bishal Khanal, Secretary, National Human Rights Commission
Chandra Singh Kulung, Senior Advisor, NGO-Federation of Nepalese Indigenous Nationalities
Dr. Chaitanya Subba, PhD. Former member, National Planning Commission
Dibya Gurung, Natural Resource Management, UNDP Nepal
Dharmendra Jha, President Federation of Nepali Journalist
Gopal Guragain, Radio Journalist/Director, Communication Corner P. Ltd.
Jitpal Kiran, Chairman, National Foundation for Development of Indigenous Nationalities (NFDIN)
Jorn Sorensen, Deputy Country Director, UNDP Nepal
Jyoti Sanghera, Deputy Head, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)
K.B. Rokaya, Commissioner, National Human Rights Commission
Keith Leslie, UNDP
Khim Ghale, Association of Nepalese Indigenous Journalist (ANIJ)
Lars Petersen, DANIDA, HUGOU
Larry Taman, International Project Manager, Support to Participatory Constitution Building in Nepal, UNDP Nepal
Lok Bahadur Thapa, Member Secretary, National Foundation for Development of Indigenous Nationalities (NFDIN)
Lucky Sherpa, member, Constituent Assembly
Dr Marcus Brand, Support to Participatory Constitution Building in Nepal, UNDP Nepal
Manohar Bhattarai, High Level Commission for Information Technology
Mukta Lama, National Project Coordinator, ILO
Nima Lama Yolmo, Foreign Secretary, Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities (NEFIN),
Nirmal Rijal, Country Director, Equal Access Nepal
Pramod Tandukar, Executive Director, Association of Community Radio Broadcaster Nepal (ACORAB)
Rekha Shrestha, UN Resident Coordinator's Office
Sakuntala Kadirgama, Support to Constitution Building Project
Sangini Rana Magar, National Indigenous Women Federation - Nepal (NIWF-N)
Sangita Khadka, Development Communication Officer, UNDP Nepal
Sharad Neupane, Assistant Resident Representative, Governance unit, UNDP Nepal

Shanker Subba, Lawyers' Association for Human Rights for Nepalese People (LAHURNP)
Sumitra Gurung, National Coalition Against Racial Discrimination
Suman Basnet, Regional Coordinator, Asia Pacific AMARC Nepal
Tek Tamata, Programme Analyst, Governance Unit, UNDP Nepal

Appendix VI: List of Official Interviews

Kailali

Narbhupal Paudel
Head, Tikapur Post Office

Teknath Adhikari
Head, Nepal Telecom

Jhanakdatta Adhikary
Secretary, Durgauli VDC

Rasuwa

Shiva Ram Pyakurel
Information officer of District Development Committee

Arjun Prasad Lamsal
Head, District Post Office

Om Prasad Bastola
Head, Nepal Telecom

Rajendra Acharya
Secretary, Syafru VDC

Tehrathum

Pashupati Acharya
Local Development Officer,

Naindra Prasad Dahal
Head, District Post Office

Govinda Sangraula
Head, Nepal Telecom

Hikamt Bahadur Khadka
Ilaka (area) Post Office

Surendra Khadka
Secretary, Basantapur VDC

Appendix VII: Field Research Team

Kailali: August 19-24, 2009

1. Krishna Chaudhari
2. Amrit Rai

Rasuwa: August 19-24, 2009

1. Khim Ghale
2. Mangal Bahadur Menyangbo

Tehrathum: August 31-September 6, 2009

1. Krishna Raj Chaudhari
2. Mangal Menyangbo

The Communication for Empowerment Project

In the context of UNDP's work on Access to Information, **Communication for Empowerment** is an approach that puts the information and communication needs of disempowered and marginalized groups at the centre of media support. The approach is rooted in the knowledge that one of the challenges facing developing countries is the lack of inclusion and participation of poor and vulnerable groups in decisions that impact on their lives. Many factors hamper inclusion, one of these being the lack of available information on issues that shape their lives, and a lack of capacity to communicate their interests into public and policy debate.

In 2006, UNDP through the **Oslo Governance Centre** developed a guidance note on *Communication for Empowerment* in close cooperation with the **Communication for Social Change Consortium**. The purpose of this guidance note is to turn the above insights into mainstream planning tools. These tools will in turn facilitate an understanding of the information and communication needs of the impoverished and marginalized. It is also suggested that *Communication for Empowerment Needs Assessments* should become a permanent fixture in the national development plans and programs of governments, civil society organisations and international development partners.

In Asia, the Communication for Empowerment initiative includes Lao PDR and Nepal. It is implemented through the Asia Regional Governance Programme and the Regional Indigenous Peoples Programme of UNDP Regional Centre in Bangkok under the regional initiative on *Communication for Empowerment of Asia's Indigenous Peoples*. 70 per cent of the estimated 300 million indigenous peoples in the world live in Asia, representing about 5 per cent of the total global population. As a consequence of inadequate access to information and communication channels, indigenous communities have little voice and few mechanisms to fully participate in the decision making process and media generated discussions affecting their lives.

This report is part of a series of pilot Needs Assessments in five Least Developed Countries, to be followed by a global synthesis report. The global report will also contain tools for implementing *Information and Communication Needs Assessments*, and it will develop a strategy for incorporating **Communication for Empowerment** into national planning strategies and development projects. Both the national reports and the global synthesis report are part of a project undertaken by the **UNDP Oslo Governance Centre** and the **Communication for Social Change Consortium**, with funding provided by the **UN Democracy Fund**.