



Globalization, Negotiating Technology, and Indigeneity in Nepal

Dilli Bikram Edingo¹
University of Guelph, Ontario, Canada

Abstract: This paper explores how indigenous peoples negotiate with their state and mainstream narratives by glocalizing indigenous political and cultural identities through virtual spaces offered by digital technology or information and communication technology (ICT). The first section makes an announcement of its concern about how globalization and indigeneity at some points can involve themselves in an act of mutual making, a process of glocalization (localization + globalization). The second section offers a theoretical paradigm of globalization as a network of techno-culture and indigenous identity politics. The third section focuses on the Nepali indigeneity in the light of mutual influence between it and global indigenous issues as well as ICT. As indigenous peoples cannot stop the irresistible influence of global networks and flows (e.g., sociocultural and economic), they have to rather locate their political and cultural issues and identities in the very loci of globalization, mainly in the networks of techno-culture and international indigenous politics. The Nepali indigenous community organizations' intermediary efforts have been rendered successful by the use of ICT and the strategic deployments of international indigenous forums like the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII).

Keyterms: globalization, glocalization, negotiating technology, indigeneity, online cultural identity, network of identity politics, indigenization

Introduction

The transcultural perspective opens a possibility for globalization not as homogenization but, rather, as further differentiation of cultures and their “dissemination” into transcultural individuals, liberating themselves from their dependence from their native cultures. The global society can be viewed as the space of diversity of free individuals rather than that of fixed groups and cultures.

¹ Dilli Bikram Edingo is a graduate student. E-mail: dilliedingo136@gmail.com

It is an alternative to the clash of civilizations and a hope for lasting peace.
(Epstein, p. 328)

Epstein (2009) presents a paradoxical and problematic scenario of cultural differences working as the essential constituents of globalization. Epstein perceives globalization as a kind of heterogenizing process to disseminate various cultures. Though this notion of globalization generously supports the existence of local indigenous differences, it does not propose any clear idea of how indigenous identities, characterized by locality (local or traditional cultures and political rights), can be distinctly established within the socio-cultural, political, and cultural heterogeneity of globalization; though the idea of “further differentiation of cultures” seems to support indigenous peoples, the idea of “liberating themselves from their dependence from their native cultures” pushes them into a zone where they cannot assert their cultural and political identities. It is very difficult for indigenous peoples to preserve (social, political, cultural, and genealogical) identities in the mobile and ever-changing transculture of the “global society.” In the clash between the global and the local, indigenous peoples can hardly oppose the larger global forces and influences. So the burning problems, today, are: how can indigenous peoples locate their distinctive cultural and political identities in globalization? How do indigenous peoples adjust themselves to the “global society”? How can the local indigenous interests be recognizably reconciled with global interests?

The purpose of this article is to demonstrate how, through the process of globalization, indigenous communities can re-/establish their political identity at both national and transnational levels and their cultural identity in the online world of ICT. Though the global influences and interests cannot be avoided, indigenous interests can be embodied in global networks by appropriating global policies and technologies to local uses and interests—this is a way of rescuing native cultures from the danger of being erased/under a threat by the global cultural economy. Global forces, factors, powers, and various networks not only dominate indigenous people, but also free them from a local or national level of hegemonic relations. As a way to ally with international indigenous communities, local indigenous peoples locate their political rights in the international or global power-networks of indigenous identity politics. Moreover, this kind of reconciliation, in terms of indigenous communities, between the global and the local is not the kind of hybrid culture that can be seen in the urbanized modern centers where a high degree of hybridization occurs, but the kind of reconciliation that recognizes local indigenous cultural heritage predominantly. Indigenous communities create their own kind of virtual cultural networks globalized by digital technology.

This paper focuses on the indigenous communities of Nepal, how they suffer from the national or local socio-cultural hegemony and political binaries/structures, and how globalized politics and emerging techno-culture affect indignity in Nepal. Paradoxically, they have to situate themselves in the loci of globalization in order to

assert their cultural and political identities; Nepali indigeneity chimes with various factors like international indigenous movements and trends of indigenous identity politics and all other networks of globalization.

Broadly speaking, the Nepali society has been divided between Hindus and indigenous peoples who are non-Hindus. Gurung (2007) and Hangen (2007) mention that from the very inception of modern Nepal in the latter half of the eighteenth century, Nepal remained a Hindu state until the Peoples' Revolution-1990. The Hindu religion was declared as the state religion and Hindu ideology as the state ideology. The ideological, political, and cultural hegemony of Hindus over the native indigenous peoples of Nepal excluded non-Hindu indigenous peoples from state mechanisms of power and policy-making levels, and hence treated these indigenes as a second category of citizens in their own country. Gurung (2007) further argues that the Hindu rulers of Nepal created five caste-hierarchies to "accommodate the tribal natives [indigenous ethnic peoples] between the pure and impure castes" (p. 13). The main law of the state² that had been solely guided by Hinduism until the People's Revolution-1990 deprived the native indigenous peoples of equal rights as citizens. From the perspective of the discourse of binary, self-and-other, Hindus became the dominant "Self" and Nepali indigenous peoples the dominated "Other." As a result, Nepali indigenous peoples have been deprived of having access to the state level of policy making and their cultures have been marginalized from the protection and cultural policies of state. Only the cultural and religious systems or rites and rituals of Hindus were given priority also in the state media. Even after the nation embarked on the republican set up in 2006, the mainstream media which includes the state media and private media at the national level has failed to be democratic and inclusive in addressing the indigenous issues. So the development of the internet in its present form in the 1980s and the early 1990s, the Peoples' Revolution-1990 in Nepal, and the recognition of international indigenous people's issues in the United Nations (UN) by revising and renaming the International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention 107 as Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention in 1989 (ILO-169) occurred simultaneously.

In the new national and international political milieu after 1990, Nepali indigenous peoples have begun to use virtual spaces offered by the Internet along with the establishments of various indigenous community organizations in Nepal. For instance, the organizational website of Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities (NEFIN), the umbrella organization of fifty-six Nepali indigenous community

² The main law of the Nepal state is called the "Muluki Ain," meaning "Law of the State", introduced in 1854 as elaborated by Gurung (2007) and Hangen (2007). The "Muluki Ain" based on Hinduism authenticated the five caste-hierarchies: the *tagadhari* (wearers of the Holy Cord, a symbol of High caste) includes Brahmans, Chhetris, Thakuris, and Newar Brahmans; the *namasinya matawalis* (non-enslavable alcohol drinkers) includes the indigenous ethnic peoples; the Impure but Touchables includes the Dalits like Kasain, Dhobi, Kusule, Kulu, Musalman, etc.; and the Untouchables includes Kami, Damai, Sarki, Gaine, Badi, Pode, Chyame, etc. The Hindu dominated state imposed the discriminatory caste system upon the native tribes or indigenous peoples and others dwelling in Nepal. The system worked effectively until the People's Revolution-1990.

organizations, www.nefin.org.np, localizes the issues about the rights of indigenous peoples over land and environment, rights of equal access to media and politics, and proportional representation of native and disadvantaged peoples in the different levels of state mechanisms and policy-making levels that have been recognized by the international indigenous forums like the Permanent Forum for Indigenous Issues (PFII). At the same time, NEFIN also globalizes the discriminatory socio-cultural and political policies imposed by the state upon the Nepali indigenous peoples. This process of glocalization is made faster, easier, and more successful by the use of ICT because Nepali indigenous peoples still have only nominal access to the channels associated with the Nepali mainstream media and state mechanisms. Nepali indigenous peoples align themselves with global forces and locate their cultural and political problems in global networks of techno-culture and indigenous identity politics.

Globalization as Glocalization: Networks of Techno-culture and Indigenous Politics

Globalization is a pervasive and worldwide political, economic, cultural, and technological network that extends beyond geographical proximity around the globe. So “globalization is ‘a process (or set of processes) that embodies a transformation in the spatial organization of social relations and transactions, generating transcontinental or interregional flows and networks of activity, interaction, and power’” (Belton, 2010, pp. 194-195). The transnational flows and networks of activity, interactions, and powers as such have made the entire world into a single global society. As this paper attempts to study the cultural and political identities of Nepali indigenous peoples represented by the proposed communities, it focuses on two important dimensions of globalization: techno-cultural and political networks.

Techno-cultural networks have ensued from the revolution in science and technology in general and in particular ICT. Emphasizing on the network of technology as the most powerful or effective of all networks, Castells (2005) contends:

... the network society is global; it is based on global networks. So, it is pervasive throughout the planet, its logic extends to every country in the planet, as it is diffused by the power embedded in global networks of capital, goods, services, labour, communication, information, science, and technology. (pp. 4-5)

Globalization also refers to the worldwide distribution of scientific achievements and technological processes and products. Appadurai (2008) terms such flows as “technoscape”: “the global configuration, also ever fluid, of technology, and of the fact that technology, both high and low, both mechanical and informational, now moves at high speeds across various kinds of previously impervious boundaries” (p. 218). The technological flows pervade through the entire traditional, local, or “previously

impervious boundaries” of indigenous cultures, systems, knowledge, practices, concepts, and politics. The technological processes and products move to the indigenous localities.

More specifically, the global network of technology is based on the flows of digital media, which designates the most appropriate media also for indigenous peoples to promote and disseminate their issues and voices globally. Young and Bhawuk (2008) relevantly argue that “[g]lobalization is essentially a technologically driven process of change toward increased informational and communicative interconnectedness and functional interdependence among people across societies and nations” (p. 301). The networks of digital technological processes have formed a kind of virtual layer that covers the entire world. The immediacy and urgency of the global network is realized in the instant flows and connections of information as Barker argues that the “digital universe is overflowing with information” (p. 348). The development of the internet and the ever-increasing popularity of the World Wide Web, since the last decade of the twentieth century, have transformed the world into digitalized bytes which are interconnected and at the same time separate bundles of information as well.

The World Wide Web is a virtual space where the global networks, relations, and activities engage people in the functional structure of human-machine-human interactions and/or human-machine interactions. Barker terms the virtual space as such as cyberspace, “a spatial metaphor for the ‘nowhere’ place in which the electronic activities of computers, cable systems and other digital communications technologies occur” (p. 348). Cyberspace is a symbolic space, an online space where people perform various personal to family and community activities both individually and jointly. So a question may arise, such as: what is the significance of online communities and activities in terms of real identities and real world problems?

Cyberspace is a handy forum for organizing campaigns, planning some projects or movements, and for having interactive discussions that can be rendered into real implementations in the offline world. Belton acknowledges cyberspace as “a space wherein myths and stereotypes can be challenged, human-rights violations reported, consensual knowledge shared, and claims asserted. It is also a space wherein interdependent local, regional, and global online communities can be built, later to metamorphose into offline communities” (p. 200). As online contents are a representation of real events in a particular location, they are as important as the form or medium that refers to cyberspace or any digital devices like smartphones and digital cameras. Indigenous peoples can disseminate their issues or indigenous contents in the cyberspace for a global support and a wider advocacy.

The inclusive, democratic, and interactive zones in cyberspace are the Web 2.0 applications such as Wikipedia, Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, and blogs. The networked online communities and alliances of unknown people, who remain scattered in different and distant places, are based on both the local and the global issues of common

interests. Highlighting the manipulative impact of online activities upon real world activities, Wojcieszak precisely argues, “social media are organizing online activism that moves offline” (as cited in Harlow, 2011, p. 226). Social media has offered faster channels to inform people, newer ways to manipulate them, and more effective ways to involve larger numbers of peoples in protests or any campaigns. So these ways have proved useful also to indigenous movements both at national and international levels.

Next, globalization is also a transnational network of political issues that arise from similar communities in the world. One of the major international issues related to problems of local politics is the indigenous politics that specifically refers to various rights of indigenous peoples such as the indigenous right to local lands and the environment, the right of autonomy, and rights of equal access to health, food, economic, and education facilities. These issues have been considered as issues widely worth discussing in the UN debates and summits mainly from the 1990s. Merlan (2009) terms such political trends in the UN as “recognition politics” (p. 304), and also establishes a close association between “the emergence of recognition politics” (p. 304) and a liberal modern democratic political system that together affect local and national levels of relations among the dominant communities, dominated indigenous communities, and the state.

Furthermore, indigenous politics has been internationalized or globalized under the concept of global governance, which Meyer (2012) defines as “global political management” (p. 328); global political governance refers to international attempts to address problems of international or transnational concern that are either within a definite locality or outside a particular authority. Meyer points out that the important rights of indigenous peoples who need to be concerned by global governance are “those protections that help them to secure their unique cultures, resources, and habitats” (p. 329). As a network of indigenous identity politics and techno-culture, globalization involves a dynamic interaction or mutual influence between the local and the global.

As a process of reconciliation or of mutual constitution between the local and the global as such, Robertson (2006) defines glocalization as “a global outlook adapted to local conditions” (p. 477). Barker expresses a similar opinion that “the global and the local are mutually constituting” (p. 162). So concepts of the global and the local are inherent in the notion of glocalization in that the global refers to the developed western powerful countries and their productions and the local refers to local indigenous cultures and the politics of developing countries. Glocalization, understood as networks based on mutual influence between the local and the global, involves two processes: flows from above and flows from below. Technological products and processes mostly flow from above, from the developed countries to indigenous localities of developing countries. As indigenous peoples cannot stop the flows, they instead appropriate those

forms by using them to diffuse their indigenous contents such as traditional knowledge, cultural heritages, and life styles.

Next, the process of forming political networks in which social and political movements are mainly endeavored to accomplish forms the category of globalization from below³ as argued by Belton:

... indigenous peoples' appropriation of global ideas, tools, and institutions as part of the 'globalization from below' movement. This movement consists of those marginalized people who come together over various issues related to human rights, the environment, and poverty to pressure home governments and corporations into changing stances. (p. 196).

The concept of the flows of content from below or the globalization of the local refers to the articulation of indigenous political and cultural issues in global networks of technology. Though this logic of "globalization from below" sounds relevant from the perspective of initiation of movements, it is no more relevant because the indigenous politics has already established its global networks; instead, there exists a dialogic relationship between the global and the local indigeneity⁴. As a result of long endeavors of indigenous peoples and organizations working in their support, the international indigenous forums were formed, and they still need the constant efforts of indigenous peoples from around the world. But at the same time, the international indigenous networks or forums like the UN desks and the World Bank help indigenous peoples and their communities solve problems at local and national levels. These concepts provide a theoretical framework to study Nepali indigeneity as embodied in the Limbu, Tamang, and Magar organizational websites as well as in that of NEFIN.

³ One of the concepts associated with globalization is that there exist economic, socio-cultural, technological, and power hierarchies among the developed or industrialized countries and the developing Third World countries; so there are two types of globalization: globalization from above and globalization from below. For instance, Dahal (2010) argues that the "[g]lobalization from above brings about hegemonic elites, and economic and cultural hegemony. Multinational corporations creating bourgeois elites who bring cars, music, and a different way of life into developing countries fall under the category of globalization from above" (p. 53). Contrarily, the category of globalization from below includes mainly the political movements, indigenous movements, and social movements; for instance, Dahal further writes that "[t]he emergence of women's rights in developing nations and organizations like grassroots Africa Watch, Amnesty International, and Peoples Against Torture are examples of globalization from below" (p. 53). From this perspective, all the indigenous movements and politics about identities and human rights of equity and equality at all local, regional, and global levels belong to the category of the globalization from below.

⁴ The argumentative and theoretical stand in this paper is that, in terms of establishing indigenous cultural and political identities, globalization involves a two-way process; logically there exists a dialogic relation between the hierarchical nations and the relation is made possible by ICT and digital products and processes.

Indigeneity in Nepal: Appropriating the Global and Negotiating Technologies

Nepal is a multiethnic, multilingual, multireligious, and multicultural nation⁵. One hundred and twenty-six caste/ethnic groups, who follow the ten major religions⁶, live in Nepal, and one hundred and twenty-three languages are spoken as mother tongues. Fifty-nine ethnic communities have been recognized, so far, as local or native indigenous nationalities⁷ by the government of Nepal. These indigenous peoples have long been excluded by the state. So despite the fact that globalization rapidly and badly influences indigeneity, it also plays a vital role in indigenous peoples' endeavors to free themselves from local dominant group's (Brahmans', Chhetris', and Thakuris') hegemony and domination. Mainly digital technology and the Internet have proved helpful in negotiating their situation. The impact of globalization and ICT upon the political and cultural aspects of Limbu, Tamang, and Magar communities is remarkably propitious as reflected by the official websites of their community organizations as well as that of NEFIN. As an intermediary effort, Nepali Indigenous organizations glocalize indigenous policies and technologies. The Internet empowers indigenous peoples with a negotiating ability to deal with their situation, works as a negotiating space and handy channel, and offers an online space where discourses are generated in order to expose the Nepali indigeneity to the global society. The Nepali indigenous peoples have used the international indigenous policies and ICTs strategically to glocalize their issues, and also used the cyberspace as a virtual space through which indigenous cultural performances are instantly and globally accomplished.

Intermediary Efforts of Indigenous Organizations: Glocalizing Indigenous Identity Through ICT

The Nepali indigenous community organizations play an intermediary role among the communities, their local organizations, and international indigenous organizations. For instance, Limbus' community organization "Kirat Yakthung Chumlung" (KYC) established in 1989, Tamangs' "Nepal Tamang Ghedung" (NTG) in 1988, Magars'

⁵ Defined by the Nepal Law Commission (2007).

⁶ National Planning Commission Secretariat (2012) reports that the ten religious communities are Hindus, Buddhists, Muslims (the followers of Islam), Kirants (the followers of Kirant Religion), Christians, the followers of Prakriti, the followers of Bon, Jains, Bahais, and Sikhs

⁷The fifty-nine castes registered in the record of National Foundation for Indigenous Nationalities, a government department, dwelling in the different geographical ranges: in the Mountain Region (Himalaya): 17—Barah Gaunle, Bhote, Byansi, Chhairontan, Dolpo, Larke, Lhomi (Shingsawa), Lhopa, Marphali Thakali, Mugali, Siyar, Sherpa, Tangbe, Thakali, Thudam, Topkegola, and Walung; in the Hilly Region: 24—Baramu, Bhujel, Chepang, Chhantyal, Dura, Fri, Gurung, Hayu, Hyolmo, Jirel, Kusunda, Lepcha, Limbu, Magar, Newar, Pahari, Rai, Sunuwar, Surel, Tamang, Thami, Kumal, Yakkha, and Tin Gaunle Thakali; in the Inner Tarai: 7—Bankaria, Bote, Danuwar, Darai, Majhi, Raji, and Raute; and, in the Tarai: 11—Dhanuk (Rajbanshi), Dhimal, Gangai, Jhangad, Kisan, Kushbadia, Meche, Rajbanshi (Koch), Satar (Santhal), Tajpuri, and Tharu.

“Nepal Magar Association” (NMA) in 1982⁸, and NEFIN in 1991 play a vital role in coordinating the indigenous communities in Nepal, and peoples within their communities as well as other indigenous peoples from around the world. NEFIN was established “with the goal of securing indigenous peoples’ rights, including documenting, preserving and promoting cultures, languages, religion, customs, traditions of the Indigenous Nationalities of Nepal and to assist them in developing and obtaining equal rights” (Asian Indigenous Peoples CCMIN). These are non-profit making and non-partisan organizations formed in order to raise their community issues, establish solidarity with other indigenous peoples, and promote, propagate, and preserve their overall identities. Though they are non-political organizations by theory, they designate a forum for the related communities to expose their political rights collectively and make their peoples aware of contemporary problems, changes, and other serious issues like equal access to state mechanisms (bureaucracy, army, and police), media, and policy-making levels of the state. As a member of NEFIN, each of the indigenous community organizations also plays an intermediary role between NEFIN and their peoples. Therefore, all of the indigenous community organizations are different types of forums for the indigenous peoples of Nepal to establish local and transnational relations based on common interests and issues. The similar issues, goals, and interests as reflected by the organizational websites bring them into a state of solidarity; some of the objectives of each indigenous organization are as follows:

Organizations and sources	Language, Script, and culture	Political issues/networks, and awareness of rights and legal system	Local environment , resources, and land
Objectives from “Introduction” to KYC	*To undertake various activities for uplift of Limbus, their language, including Kirat-Srijonga script, literature, religion,	*To conduct research on subjects related to Limbus and promote awareness among them. * To make the Limbus, as well as other ethnic groups of Limbuwan, aware of the constitution of Nepal, their constitutional rights and the prevalent laws of Nepal.	*To conduct effective programs to curb the destruction of the environments and

⁸ Following Hangen who describes the emergence of these community organizations in the 1980s and the 1990s as a form or stage of Nepali indigenous movement, the organizations have frequently been referred to as Nepali indigenous movement in this paper, too. The indigenous movement was initiated long before in different ways. For instance, during the 104 years Ranarchy, many Limbus who could read and write in the Srijonga script, invented by King Srijonga in the ninth century and then revived and propagated by scholar Srijonga Thebe in the eighteenth century, are said to have escaped from the eastern part of Nepal to Sikkim—one of the states of India at present—with important documents and initiated informal programs of awareness individually. Next, the great Guru of Limbus Falgunada Lingden brought socio-cultural changes adopting Hindu rites and rituals of birth, life, and death—Limbu content in Hindu forms of rites and rituals.

	and culture.	<p>*To undertake activities for the achievement of Limbuwan autonomy under the federal system to ensure country's national integrity and sovereignty as well as sustainable development by promoting communal harmony among different ethnic groups and communities.</p> <p>*To work for human rights, indigenous rights and women's rights and children's rights.</p>	ecosystem.
Objectives from "About Nepal Tamang Ghedung: Introduction"	*To preserve, promote the language, scripts, arts, literature, history, religion and culture, and socio-eco-political and civil rights of the Tamang Peoples in Nepal.	<p>*To promote the human rights, women, children and indigenous peoples' rights on the basis of Universal Declaration of Human rights, Bills of rights and emerging rights in the international arena.</p> <p>*To make Tamangs aware of the constitutional and legal system and the customary rights and promote the democratic rights, culture and values in Nepal.</p> <p>*To contribute in the national and international standard setting processes for the establishment of the rights of indigenous and tribal peoples and marginalized communities who are historical victims of racial, ethnic or national, linguistic, religious and regional discrimination.</p> <p>*To develop and promote friendly relations and partnership with other ethnic communities to strengthen the national unity and all round development of the country and to network with the national and international organizations of similar objectives.</p>	

<p>Objectives from “Ke Ho Magar Sangh? Introduction” to NMA</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Develop Magar languages and make effort for state recognition of the same. * Help create broader national culture and unity through reciprocal cooperation with other Indigenous Peoples Organizations. * Establish close ties with national and international organizations to implement the study, research and development of the Magar culture and their languages. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * To conduct research on subjects related to Magars and promote awareness among them. * To undertake activities for the achievement of Magarat autonomy under the federal system to ensure country's national integrity and sovereignty as well as sustainable development by promoting communal harmony among different ethnic groups and communities. * To work for human rights, indigenous rights and women rights. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Make efforts for establishing rights of Magar community on indigenous natural resources.
<p>From “NEFIN’s Objectives”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Preservation and promotion of language, literature, script, religion, culture and education of Indigenous Nationalities and assist to acquire their rights. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Develop unity among Indigenous Nationalities and fraternity among them. * Develop leadership and assist capacity building for Indigenous Nationalities by coordinating with their organizations. * Lobby for special affirmative action for the development of the Indigenous Nationalities who are severely marginalized and are on the verge of extinction. * Voice for solidarity against discriminations based on race, origin, ethnicity, language, religion and gender and promote international fraternity. 	

		* Lobby with the government for the compliance and implementation of ILO Convention No. 169, Universal Declaration of Indigenous Peoples Rights including United Nation Declaration of Human Rights and other instruments.	
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All of the three organizations—KYC, NTG, and NMA—coincide with one another in their struggle for their cultural, linguistic, and political identities. Such local or national identity issues push them towards the same extreme at which the indigenous communities of Nepal stand in a dialogic relation with the state or their government. So they form a kind of local network or unity which is further connected with an international network or unity as elucidated by their common efforts to work with international forums to uplift human rights, children’s rights, and the rights of indigenous peoples over local lands and the environment in different parts of the world. NEFIN’s intermediary role between the local and international or global indigenous organizations such as the Asian Indigenous Peoples’ Pact (AIPP) and PFII forms an effective international network and unity. Though it also intersects with what KYC, NTG, and NMA are concerned with, NEFIN plays a wider role by coordinating and facilitating the local, regional, and international indigenous organizations. So NEFIN itself is a forum of glocalization, circulating both the local and the global or international indigenous contents through which the indigenous organizations assert their existence.

The involvement of the Nepali indigenous organizations in the process of glocalization—which involves them in networks of mutual support—is necessarily represented on online space. As the umbrella organization of the Nepali indigenous communities, NEFIN forms a national network of its fifty-six member community organizations⁹. As it is a member of the AIPP, it is also a regional network of indigenous

⁹ The fifty-six indigenous community organizations which are the member organizations of NEFIN, as mentioned in “Jatiya Sangh Nepal Adivasi Janajati Mahasangh,” are as follows:

1. Kisan Samudaya Club, 2. Nepal Kumal Sudhar Samiti, 3. Nepal Ganagai Kalyan Parishad, 4. Tamu Hyul Chhaujadhhi (Gurung Rastriya Parishad), 5. Nepal Chepang (Praja) Sangh, 6. Nepal Chhantyal Sangh, 7. Jirel Sangh Nepal, 8. Nepal Jhangada (Urawam)Kodrem Sudhura, 9. Tajpuriya Samaj Kalyan Parishad, 10. Nepal Tamang Ghedung, 11. Tanwe Samaj Sewa Sangh, 12. Tokpegola Samaj Sewa Samiti, 13. Thakali Sewa Samaj, 14. Thami Sewa Samaj, 15. Tharu Kalyankari Sabha, 16. Danuwar Jagaran Samiti, 17. Nepal Darai Utthan Samaj, 18. Dura Sewa Samaj, 19. Dhimal Jati Bikas Kendra, 20. Newa Deya Dabu, 21. Nepal Pahari Bikas Sangh, 22. Nepal Baram Sangh, 23. Nepal Bote Samaj Sewa, 24. Bhujel Samaj Sewa Samiti, 25. Nepal Bhote Janajati Sewa Samiti, 26. Nepal Magar Association, 27. Nepal Majhi Utthan Sangh, 28. Mugal Janajati Samaj Kalyan Kendra, 29. Meche Samaj Siwiyari Apat, 30. Kirat Yakkha Chhumma, 31. Kirat Yakthung Chumlung, 32. Kirat Rai Yayokkha, 33.

peoples of the Asian continent. Moreover, as it is also a member of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII), it also designates a channel for global networks of indigenous peoples around the world. It is a collective effort, power, and embodiment of the Nepali indigenous peoples. It is a common forum for them to struggle for their rights, represent their voices, and raise their issues nationally, regionally, and globally. For instance, as reflected by its official website, it channels the indigenous problems and issues to the AIPP and the UN indigenous desks, and simultaneously supports the Nepali indigenous peoples by attempting to localize the promises made in the UNPFII and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). Freedom of indigenous peoples from any kind of discrimination, freedom for their social, cultural, and economic development, rights of access to opportunities and decision-making levels, self-determination, and autonomy or self-governance are some of the major achievements guaranteed by the UNDRIP. The indigenous community organizations coordinated through NEFIN have localized the UNDRIP promises.

So NEFIN is a channel through which Nepali indigenous peoples and the international indigenous forums involve themselves in the act of mutual formation or influence, in the process of glocalization. These offline activities are recognized and approved as dynamic consequences by the global community, and become real and authentic as soon as they are connected to cyberspace. Cyberspace has been a useful tool to globalize the collective efforts and mutual supports in the networks of indigenous organizations; without the support of the online network, the organizations would be limited to their geopolitical particularities in a traditional way of such organizations' existence, beyond the reach of the world population and beyond "recognition politics" (Merlan, 2009, p. 304); that is, by entering into cyberspace, Nepali indigenous peoples have been able to make their political identity globally recognizable.

The Impact of Internet upon Negotiation Ability of Nepali Indigenous Peoples

The impact of digital technology or ICT can be seen not only upon the mutual relations of the local, such as KYC, NTG, and NMA, and the global indigenous organizations such as AIPP and PFII, but also upon the ways they function, and the ways they implement their plans to achieve their goals. Updated by the use of Internet and digital

Rajbangsi Samaj Bikas Samiti, 34. Raji Shalma Samaj, 35. Rong Sejum Thee (Lapcha), 36. Larke Samaj Kalyan Kendra, 37. Walung Sewa Samaj, 38. Lhomi (Shingsa) Kalyan Kendra 39. Nepal Sherpa Sangh, 40. Byansi Shauka Samaj, 41. Nepal Santhal Adivasi Utthan Sangh, 42. Siyar Samaj Kalyan Kendra, 43. Sunuwar Sewa Samaj, 44. Bayu Gukhata Kolu Pandakmi (Hayu), 45. Nepal Hyolmu Kasmaj Sewa Sangh, 46. Marphali Thakali Samaj Sewa Sadan, 47. Teen Gaunle Thakali Sewa Samiti, 48. Nepal Dolpo Janajati Bikas Kendra, 49. Thudam Sewa Samaj, 50. Sural Jati Utthan Samaj, 51. Nepal Dhanuk Samaj, 52. Kuchbadiya Utthan Sangh, 53. Barahgaunle Samaj Sewa Samiti, 54. Lochhodhun Lhopa Sangh, 55. Nepal Raute Bikas Sangh, and 56. Nepal Kusunda Bikas Samaj.

devices, native or tribal organizations can work faster and more effectively than ever before; they can easily circulate messages and maintain their networks with other organizations. They can archive remote and native heritages and their issues in the websites so as to gain wider recognition. Highlighting the impact of ICT upon the development of organizational ability, Edwards (2004) argues that “[t]he internet can improve the capacity of organizations to maintain networks and to coordinate actions. Moreover, if organizations are online, they can advance their points of view directly to a wide public, bypassing the traditional media” (pp. 166-167). Internal communications among and within the Nepali indigenous communities and external communications with other indigenous organizations as well as with other indigenous peoples around the world have been made faster and easier than ever before. The organizational websites of all KYC (www.chumlung.org.np), NTG (www.tamangghedung.org.np), and NEFIN (www.nefin.org.np) reflect the fact that Nepali indigenous peoples have used the internet multi-dimensionally: they update news about indigenous peoples daily, and they use the website as an authentic space to disseminate official or administrative decisions, press releases, achievements, or any upcoming events. Edward rightly argues that the “internet is a powerful tool to build an organization, to collect money, to assemble information and to recruit and mobilize people” (p. 166). The Internet has enabled the native organizations to communicate their issues and perform globally through the online networks. So the websites of KYC, NTG, and NMA are the mobilization-oriented, information-oriented, and community-oriented sites.

Furthermore, the revolution in ICT or digital technology offers the dominated and fragmented Nepali indigenous peoples a mediating alternative channel through which they are united to raise their voice. They had remained fragmented right from the time of the inception of modern Nepal because the discriminatory structure of the state mechanisms guided by Hindu ideology rarely gave them an opportunity to be united¹⁰. The Nepali indigenous peoples had/have been bound to remain as the fragmented and dominated Other, unable to speak or raise their voice for equality and the rights of a citizen. How the discriminatory structure and mechanisms of the state dominate the

¹⁰When King Prithvi Narayan Shah annexed the then small states into Gorkha State in the latter half of the eighteenth century, modern Nepal is supposed to have begun. Since then, modern Nepal ruled by Hindu Monarchs remained a Hindu State. So by principle, Hindus ruled the nation in a way to meet their cultural, linguistic, and religious needs; the administrative structure of the state excluded the indigenous peoples. Influenced by Hinduism, the Muluki Ain declared by Janga Bahadur Rana was/is discriminatory. Furthermore, King Mahendra Bir Bikram Shah imposed the totalitarian political system Panchayat in 1960, and also imposed monolingual and monocultural policies upon the indigenous peoples. He imposed homogenizing cultural, linguistic, educational, and political policies which are also reflected in slogans of the Panchayat period: *Hamro Raja Hamro Desh* (Our King our nation)/*Pran bhanda pyaro chha* (King and/or nation are/is lovelier than our soul/life)/*Eutai Bhasa Eutai Bhes* (One language one culture/costume). Hence, the Nepali indigenous peoples were politically, culturally, and linguistically suppressed until the kingdom of Nepal was declared a secular state after the Peoples’ Revolution-1990.

indigenous peoples is elucidated by the following facts¹¹ extracted from “Facts, Figures, and Information on Indigenous People”:

- 65 percent of ancestral land of indigenous people is occupied by national park and conservation and have forced majority of indigenous people to migrate elsewhere.
- There are public holidays in the name of dog, cow, and crow but there are no public holidays for many indigenous festivals.
- Many Indigenous people eating beef are jailed for 10 years¹² for the alleged killing cow and ox because the cow is national animal of Nepal. But Bahun and Chhetri restaurant owners freely sell beef steak and no legal action is taken against them.
- Police and army celebrate Hindu festivals such as Dasai, Tihar, Basanta Panchami spending millions of rupees from national revenue.
- Buddhist indigenous soldiers are forced to worship Hindu religion in police and army barracks.
- Spending over 200 millions rupees to preserve dead Sanskrit language. No sufficient but budget to print indigenous language text books and hire teachers to teach indigenous language. (NEFIN)

These facts are enough to argue that the ruling caste have long exerted their hegemony over the dominated indigenous Others because the former are endowed with power by the Hindu state-principle. But as a stage of change in both the local and international political scenario, from the decades of the 1980s and the 1990s, the Nepali indigenous organizations began to be established, representing the authentic and collective voice of the marginalized indigenous peoples. The advent of the Internet, in its present form, in the 1990s began to offer the suppressed indigenous peoples of Nepal an alternative medium to communicate their issues to the world. In this sense, the Internet is a negotiating technology for the Nepali indigenous peoples who have become abler to negotiate their disadvantaged and hegemonized situation.

Online Space as a Negotiating Space and a Handy Medium

To further elaborate the idea of negotiating technology, ICT or digital technology also plays a complementary role to make the dialogic relations among the Nepali indigenous peoples, their government or state, and the international indigenous forums such as the

¹¹Preserving the same content of the source “Facts, Figures, and Information on Indigenous People,” some grammatical or linguistic changes, in the extracted points, have been made.

¹² Even though the nation has been declared a secular nation, any act of killing cows and oxen or eating beef is considered illegal because the discriminatory Muluki Ain is still in effect. In Hindu religion, cow is worshipped as Laxmi, the mother Goddess of richness, prosperity, and money. The cow has been the national animal because all the legal systems and documents in the past were guided by Hinduism under the Hindu monarchs. Though some acts and articles in the Muluki Ain have been amended in different times, they are rarely in favor of indigenous peoples.

Asian Indigenous Peoples' Pact (AIPP) and PFI dynamic, urgent, and immediate. The Nepali indigenous organizations such as KYC and NTG are the authentic and recognized forums for the previously fragmented and dominated native peoples to consolidate their issues, which have reached the glocal (local + global) community through ICT. The organizational websites have been a consensual, authentic, and effective online space to present themselves in unity with their genuine issues, and thereby speak in an authentic and united voice. Such a united voice, consolidated by the glocal networks among local communities and international indigenous organizations, comes into a dialogical and dynamic interaction with their government. For instance, KYC or Limbus, NTG or Tamangs, and NMA or Magars have long struggled to gain rights such as priority of rights over the local resources, equal or proportional representation, and all other human rights. Their struggle gets international support because of the global governance which refers to "those protections that help them to secure their unique cultures, resources, and habitats" (Meyer, 2012, p. 329). The focal concern of the global or international indigenous organizations or agents such as the UN and its wings like PFI is to address the indigenous problems prevailing in any part of the world. So the Nepali government is under the pressure of a common voice from local, regional, and international indigenous organizations; that is, the idea of emancipation is inherent in idea of globalization that advocates for the local indigenous communities to be free from the national or local discriminations or local hegemony. Consequently, the hegemonized indigenous peoples of Nepal have begun to achieve some of the goals as mentioned in "Major Achievements of Indigenous People":

- Social inclusion became agenda of all political parties
- 36% IPs [indigenous peoples] representation in CA [constituent assembly]
- MLD [Ministry of Local Development] formed Adivasi Janajati [indigenous nationality] District Coordination Committees in all 75 districts
- MLD issued directives to DDCs [District Development Committees] and VDCs [Village Development Committees] to spend at least 20 (later 35) percent of the grants they received on Janajati, Dalit, children, people with disabilities and women
- DCCs and IPOs at the village level have begun to receive grants from DDCs and VDCs.
- Terai Janajatis received citizenship certificates and have become capable of claiming lands and other state goods, services and opportunities
- Funding support from international agencies to more than one dozen IPOs

- Increased number of organizational forums and fronts formed by Janajatis. (NEFIN)

The dialogic interactions and relations are abstract unless they are rendered into forms of communication. As the indigenous peoples and their organizations form the foremost beneficiaries of the interactions, they are required to communicate as much as they can. So the use of the Internet has proved a helpful medium to communicate about the dialogic interactions between the native tribes and their state. As the marginalized indigenous peoples of Nepal do not have considerable access to state services and the mainstream media, they depend significantly on digital technology, cyberspace, and Web 2.0 applications; that is, the organizational websites of KYC, NTG, and NMA constitute a category of alternative media and a forum for Limbus, Tamangs, and Magars to ally with other local indigenous peoples as well as with international indigenous organizations and communities, and also work as a kind of negotiating space where they propose their issues for negotiation, respond to others, and discuss final achievements or disagreements.

Furthermore, the websites work not only as an alternative medium and a handy online forum but also as a handy or immediate means of communication or channel to inform and mobilize indigenous peoples about any urgent upcoming events such as interaction programs, political and cultural programs, festivals, and protests that are not given importance or space in the Nepali mainstream media; for instance, the political issue of federalism characterized by ethnic identities¹³ rarely gets priority in the Nepali mainstream media. On the contrary, this is given priority on the websites of KYC, NTG, NMA, and of NEFIN, and also in the social media used by networked indigenous peoples. The Indigenous peoples cannot be stopped from having access to the open websites of the indigenous organizations and social networking sites that are the online channels connecting all the concerned peoples. These peoples are then informed through press statements, announcements, and appeals to participate in the common programs organized by indigenous organizations. For instance, Limbu (2009), secretary of central committee of KYC, invites people to participate on the 25th anniversary of KYC in the “Nimantrana” and pleads publicly on behalf of KYC and Limbus with the

¹³ In political debates of Nepal after the Peoples’ Revolution-2006, the phrase “federalism with ethnic identities” or “federalism characterized by ethnic identities” has become a controversial but unavoidable phrase. Nepali indigenous organizations and the majority of indigenous peoples as well as some political parties such as, to mention few of them, the Federal Socialist Party, the Social Democratic Party, the Madhesi Peoples’ Rights Forum, and the Federal Limbuwan State Council, have taken a political stand that, in the upcoming re-structuration of the nation into a federal model, ethnic identities (histories, languages, cultures, abilities, and natural resources) must be the criteria of sketching the federal states—“a statute with federalism, federalism with ethnic identities.” On the contrary, the majority of Hindu elites who have long held a sway over the state mechanisms and some political parties like the Nepali Congress (NC) and the Communist Party of Nepal—United Marxist-Leninist (CPN-UML) have stood against the “federalism with ethnic identities.” These people and parties directly or indirectly control the Nepali mainstream media as well.

Regmi government¹⁴ not to decrease the numbers of proportional representation of indigenous peoples in the upcoming second election for the constituent assembly in “Press Bigyapti” of the KYC website. Similarly, “Tamsalingka lagi Mukkhya dalka karyalayama Ghedungle Dharna Dine” and “Akhandit Tamsalingko lagi tin mukkhya dallai Tamang Ghedung ko Gyapan Patra”—the news about a demonstration and a memorandum in the NTG’s website—show that Tamang indigenous peoples demonstrated in front of major political parties’ offices tendering a memorandum about a sketch of the impending Tamangsaling State in the upcoming Statute, participated in demonstrations with other indigenous organizations demanding the guarantee of federalism with identity before the dissolution of the Interim Constituent Assembly-2007 of the kingdom of Nepal, and actively engaged Tamang indigenous peoples in the Tamang populated areas of the country in an awareness of their rights and critical circumstances. Likewise, the news-archive in NEFIN’s website shows that cyberspace, mainly the organizational website, was used to make an announcement and appeal for participation in the celebration of the International Day of the World’s Indigenous Peoples, in the demonstration in front of the south gate of the Sigh Durbar¹⁵, and in the demonstration of the former Kamlaries¹⁶ against violence against the pro-Kamlaries. These instances establish the argument that cyberspace or the Internet as a negotiating space and a handy channel has facilitated ways to disseminate news online, as well as appeal, inform and mobilize people.

Online Discourse as a Global Exposure of Nepali Indigeneity

Organizational websites are not only the media to inform and mobilize peoples, but also a virtual space where online discourses are generated in favor of indigenous peoples and against rival elements such as the Nepali mainstream media and discriminatory state policies. Arguing for the importance of online political discourse, Soriano (2012) succinctly writes: “The online communicative environment is expected to revolutionize political discourse as it extends to cover underrepresented groups and ideas” (p. 33). The online discourse on the website of NEFIN is found to concentrate on the topics of

¹⁴ The government led by the incumbent prime minister Mr. Khil Raj Regmi.

¹⁵ The Singh Durbar, literally Lion Palace, is located in the compounded area at the center of Kathmandu. Most of the government departments or offices, ministries are located inside it. The phrase Singh Durbar refers to not only the Lion Palace, but also the entire area as the administrative center of the nation—a trope for power center of the nation.

¹⁶ Tharus are one of the native indigenous communities living in the western Terai belt of Nepal. These native people have been replaced from their lands by other communities migrated from hilly regions. Because of their poor economic condition, their young daughters are compelled to work as housemaids, until they reach the age of marriage, in the elite families of other castes. Such girls are called Kamlaries, who have long been victims of domestic and gender violence. In the half of June, 2013, the former Kamlaries came to street demanding for security and a guarantee of human rights of mainly the pro-Kamlaries.

local governance, proportional representation in the Constituent Assembly and in various government mechanisms, and the implementation of the ILO-169 by the Nepali government. Similarly, federalism with identity, a proposal of the Limbuwan State and the Magarat State, a demand for equal access to opportunities and a guarantee of indigenous rights as proclaimed by the UN wings like ILO-169 and PFII in the organizational websites of KYC, NTG, and NMA are the issues that generate discourse in support of the Nepali indigenous peoples. As these online environments and discourses get exposed to the global public for a wider offline support, they have successfully created an offline pressure on the Nepali government and the major political parties. In this sense, even though the digital technology and Internet or cyberspace flow from the powerful and developed countries towards indigenous localities, Nepali indigenous peoples have been offered a strategic opportunity to articulate their marginalized conditions and discriminations in the very flows and networks of globalizing technologies, politics, and ideas.

The focus on the excessive dependence on online activities as such may evoke some relevant questions: do the indigenous peoples have access to information and communication technology? Has the consequence of the global flows of digital technology been in favor of the Nepali indigenous peoples? The impact of digital technology is not only on the organizational functions, but also on the stratified traditional structure of the Nepali society based on Hindu ideology. In the new social hierarchy characterized by the socio-economic or material factors of a digital divide that refers to the hierarchy between digital “haves” and “have nots” (Barker, p. 347; Vie, p. 10), global indigenous peoples often belong to the category of Other or “have nots.” As the majority of economically marginalized or disadvantaged “have nots”¹⁷ or indigenous peoples dwell in remote areas, whereas the flows of technology can be seen mostly in urban areas, Appaduria’s concept of the global flows of technology also rarely embraces them. In the newly emerging hierarchy of the digital divide, Nepali indigenous peoples, however, belong to the group of digital “haves” and they have experience of the global fluidity of digital technology because a larger number of Nepali indigenous peoples, compared to non-indigenous ones, go to work in foreign countries as manpower. This fact is also bolstered by the NEFIN’s comment that the “[m]ajority of Nepalese migrated abroad are indigenous youths.”¹⁸ They come back home with digital devices for information and communication for themselves and their family members as well as for some relatives. They are literate and capable enough to enter cyberspace,

¹⁷ Economic factors, gender discriminations, ability to use technological products and processes, and age differences play a determinant role in creating the digital divide. For Barker, a digital hierarchy of “haves” and “have nots” is the result of gender and economic factors; for Vie, both material access and ability to use technological products and processes productively are responsible factors. For Appadurai, an odd distribution of technology in rural and urban areas is responsible for creating a digital divide.

¹⁸ This is one of the facts about Nepali indigenous peoples listed by NEFIN under the title “Facts, Figures, and Information on Indigenous People” on its website.

use the Web 2.0 applications, participate actively on social networking sites, and connect the online world with the real world, using easily available common digital devices like mobile phones or smartphones and cameras. In this sense, the digital “haves” include here the marginalized and disadvantaged Nepali indigenous peoples as well. The previously marginalized indigenous communities of Nepal are now emerging as a dominant class within the digital hierarchy as opposed to the traditional class hierarchy predicated on Hindu ideology (also see Edingo, 2013). Pondering over such a change in the hegemonic relations between the Hindus and the indigenous peoples, Lecomte-Tiloune and Dollfus (2003) rightly argue that “Nepalese society . . . seems recently to have witnessed a counter process to that which was imposed on local [tribal] communities” (p. 6). The major contributing factors to the Nepali indigenous peoples’ negotiation with the state for equality and equity are the global flows of digital technology, political awareness and information, and the impacts of international indigenous forums and ICT as well as of the strategic uses of them in a way appropriate to their locality. More pointedly, ICT offers a space in which global discourses about the indigenous issues are exposed to the global public.

Strategic Deployments of Global Policies and ICTs

The strategic use of digital technology and indigenous forums is twofold: Nepali indigenous peoples use cyberspace as an alternative forum where they can deny or correct any stigmas or misrepresentations, or any disqualifiers imposed upon them on the one hand, and on the other hand, they use it also as a space where they present their localized concepts and processes¹⁹ about global criteria of judging and defining indigenous peoples and their rights. In Belton’s words, “[t]he Internet and other forms of ICT offer indigenous peoples spaces from which they correct misrepresentations rapidly, raise awareness about human-rights issues, engage in interpersonal communication, and tell their stories” (p. 198). This notion applies to Nepali indigenous peoples as well. For example, the international concept or definition of indigenous peoples is indigenized or localized to include the native Nepali tribes, and hence the process of indigenization or localization of the global is a strategic process of negotiation. One of the broader definitions given to indigenous peoples is the definition

¹⁹ The international indigenous forums like the UNPFII prescribe general criteria for advocating and implementing the indigenous rights—for example, self-governance or local governance, priority of rights over the local environment and resource and right of socio-cultural and political identities. As these general criteria are rendered to meet the local needs, their adoptions and implementations are locality specific; for instance, the Newars of the Kathmandu Valley understand the recognition and preservation of native cultures as guaranteed by the UNDRIP to mean the recognition and preservation of their Guthi system, a social or clan organization that maintains the social order of Newar society. So for them, the Guthi is a localized concept of what the article 3 of the UNDRIP promises: “Indigenous peoples have the right to self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.”

associated with the UN “Study of the Problem of Discrimination against Indigenous Populations”:

Indigenous communities, peoples and nations are those which, having a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories, consider themselves distinct from other sectors of the societies now prevailing on those territories, or parts of them. They form at present non-dominant sectors of society and are determined to preserve, develop and transmit to future generations their ancestral territories, and their ethnic identity, as the basis of their continued existence as peoples, in accordance with their own cultural patterns, social institutions and legal system. (The Concept of The Indigenous Peoples, 2004, p. 2)

One of the basic criteria of recognizing indigenous peoples is that they are the first settlers in a place, the settlers before colonial expansion. The notion of colonial presence does not include the Nepali indigenous peoples because they were never under direct colonial rule, though its indirect effects cannot be ignored. They define themselves as the first settlers of their territories, the settlers since before the expansion of the kingdom or the inception of modern Nepal in the latter half of the eighteenth century. As authenticated in the website of the umbrella organization NEFIN, the localized definition of the Nepali indigenous peoples covers all of their historical, cultural, political, and linguistic aspects:

- * First settlers prior to the formation of Gorkha and Nepal state.
- * Dominated group and no representations in state organs.
- * Not included in the Hindu caste system.
- * Own language, culture and religion different from the rulers.
- * Listed by Nepalese Government Indigenous Act 2002. (“Definition of Indigenous”)

Except for the notions of non-Hindus and the settlers before the formation of modern Nepal as Nepali indigenous peoples, the other main ideas are taken from the international definition. This shows that the Nepali indigenous organizations have indigenized the global or international concept, and at the same time have globalized their native conditions and concepts as well. This kind of glocalization, a mutual making between the global and the local, has been easier than ever before because of digital technology, mainly the Internet. The contribution of ICT to the propagation and generation of discourses about the concepts is worldwide because people visit the websites from any part of the world, without knowing their geopolitical boundaries and

particularities. ICT or digital technology has become an essential element of the indigenization process.

By indigenizing the global concept of indigeneity proclaimed in the UN, Nepali indigenous peoples have strategically and successfully articulated their local (historical, social, and political) identities in a form appropriate to the context of Nepal. The adoption or appropriation of broader policies has proved a negotiating strategy for Nepali indigenous peoples to assertively locate their own concepts in the global networks or international forums in a way appropriate to their native conditions. By localizing the global or international indigenous ideas, rules, and voices, Nepali indigenous peoples and organizations create not only an alternative stream of culture and politics and an alternative concept of national development²⁰, but also participate in the formation of global networks of indigeneity. So the process of mutual influence between what is local and what is global is a process in which the endeavors of localization and globalization are accomplished concurrently; in the words of Bill Ashcroft et al., “[b]y appropriating strategies of representation, organization and social change through access to global systems, local communities and marginal interest groups can both empower themselves and influence those global systems” (p. 462). The simultaneous process of indigenization of the international and globalization of the local—a process of glocalization in order to articulate indigenous political identity—is essentially facilitated by ICT. This is one of the handy ways for Nepali indigenous peoples to embed their political issues in the global networks of technology that flow around the world. The local use of digital technology, indigenization, and appropriation of global policies and definitions of indigenous peoples are the strategic deployments of global indigenous policies and technologies.

Virtual Cultural Performance as Globalizing Physical Cultural Identity

Cyberspace, as a virtual form of ICT, is very much a part and parcel of the online cultural identity of Nepali indigenous peoples. In the preservation, promotion, and propagation of cultural performances such as Chasok Tangnam (the harvest festival) of Limbus, Chandi Dance (the harvest celebration) of Rais, and Lhosar of Tamangs, cyberspace is of paramount importance most frequently in two ways: cyberspace as an online storage and social media as a space of cultural performances. Taking Barker’s argument that “cyberspace is a dominion of playful identity construction where anything is possible” (pp. 348-349), it can be argued that the websites of Limbus, Tamangs, and Magars construct not only historical and political identities, but also their cultural

²⁰ One of the arguments put forward by Nepali indigenous peoples and their organizations is that, as Nepal is a multiethnic, multireligious, multilingual, and multicultural nation, only the overall development of the indigenous peoples (their cultures, *religions*, and languages) renders the nation into a real development; this is an alternative concept of national development in the context of Nepal because the emphasis on the prosperity of only the *Khasa* language called Nepali language, Hindu culture, and Hindu religion under the Hindu monarchism failed.

identities. The photo gallery of the Kirat Yakthung Chumlung's website www.chumlung.org.np/gallery.php offers a general view over cultural activities, typical Limbu cultural performances like ya?lang (literal translation Paddy Dance), kelang (drum dance), Ya(yeba/yema)lang/Shamans' Dance, and Chasok Tangnam, and other activities of cultural and political awareness, programs of language-development, and other Limbu-empowerment programs. The Limbu organizational website has further established a kind of glocal networks through its link page with other Limbu organizations such as Limbuwan blog spot (www.limbuwan.blogspot.com) and Limbu Library (www.limbulibrary.com) as well as with Kirat Yakthung Chumlung's own sister organizations and international chapters such as Kirat Yakthung Chumlung, Hong Kong, Kirat Yakthung Chumlung, UK, and Kirat Yakthung Chumlung, USA. Therefore, these online cultural materials embody an online cultural identity for Limbus. Using digital devices like digital cameras and smartphones, the cultural performances accomplished by diasporic Limbus are uploaded into and downloaded from YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter. In this sense, ICT has proved a helpful tool to promote, preserve, and globalize the native cultural identity of Nepali indigenous communities.

Conclusions and Future Direction

Disagreeing with Epstein who considers globalization as a process or force that liberates individuals "from their dependence from their native cultures" (p. 328), it can be clearly asserted that native cultures are not the things or burdens from which globalization is required to liberate the natives or indigenous peoples. Instead, global networks of technology and indigenous identity politics—two important concepts of globalization—enable marginalized indigenous peoples to preserve, promote, and propagate their cultural identity and empower them to negotiate local problems and issues so as to consolidate their political identity as well.

Digital devices and cyberspace or the Internet as negotiating technologies constitute an alternative medium and a forum for Nepali indigenous peoples who are non-Hindus to express their voice that was suppressed by the state guided by Hindu culture, ideology, and religion. The activities and united presence of the indigenous communities such as Limbus, Tamangs, and Magars on cyberspace via their organizational websites are exposed to the global community for much wider support than ever before. Moreover, the Nepali indigenous organizations—KYC, NTG, and NMA—form a local network or unity that is associated with international indigenous forums like AIPP and PFII through the intermediary role of NEFIN. Such an association further situates them in a better political position to negotiate with their state for their political and cultural rights and identities.

Next, by locating their issues in the globalized networks of technology and politics such as Internet spaces and through the association between local, regional, and international indigenous forums, Nepali indigenous peoples have been indigenizing

the international indigenous policies and concurrently globalizing their local issues and problems. Such glocalizing endeavors of Nepali indigenous peoples help them to be free from local hegemony and domination and discrimination at the national level. Globalization not only espouses the idea of Nepali indigenous peoples' freedom from local political hegemony, but also offers them an opportunity to be free from a cultural suppression because they can create an online cultural identity that represents the indigenous cultural heritages and performances. Cyberspace such as the organizational websites of KYC and NTG and social media have become a useful tool or medium to preserve, promote, and globalize the cultural aspects of the indigenous peoples, even when they do not have access to the Nepali mainstream media and state channels.

Finally, because of globalization, mainly global networks of techno-culture and indigenous identity politics, the marginalized voice of Nepali indigenous peoples has now emerged as an alternative voice, able to create a national or local and international or global scenario where they can engage themselves in a propitious dialogic relation with the so-called center of power that includes the state, the mainstream Nepali media, and major political parties. Because of ever-increasing global concerns with the essential factors of global networks such as the Internet, cyberspace, and global solidarity for human rights, indigenous peoples will grow abler to challenge mainstream narratives, claim over equal opportunities, and make a secure future.

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