



Production of Risks and Local Risk Governance in  
Kathmandu Valley

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The data contained in this report (including the Appendices) should be considered a work in progress; they will be built upon in subsequent rounds of fieldwork and used to refine research questions going forward.

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भोलिको काठमाडौं (Tomorrow's Kathmandu)



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## Executive Summary

### What is this about?

This research is a part of the UKRI GCRF funded project **Tomorrow's Cities**, which has the objective to encourage pro-poor risk-sensitive planning in Istanbul, Kathmandu, Nairobi and Quito. It contributes to the first of its four Work Packages (WPs). WP1, namely Understandings of Risk, broadly analyses how *understandings of risks and of the root causes of risks* (URRCRs) have emerged and are sustained in the city. WP1 has been further divided into four themes - Risk and Narratives (theme 1), Governance and Institutions (theme 2), Urban Change (theme 3), and Vulnerability and Capacity (theme 4). This study, belongs to theme 2 of WP1 and takes a community-level case, analyses the “gaps” between how risks are being produced at the community level and how they are managed by municipal and local governments and exposes the lines of disconnection between policy and practice.

### What did we do?

In this study, community refers to the people of Khokana village, which is located in Ward No. 21 of Lalitpur Metropolitan City (LMC), the main city of Lalitpur district, and belongs to the Kathmandu Valley. Information was gathered through the interviews with households (#5F+3M), the members and secretary of ward 21 of LMC or Khokana (#3), a key informant, bureaucrats of LMC (#3), and a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with the Ward Disaster Management Committee (WDMC) of LMC-21 (participants = #4M+3F). Additionally, a member of the Kathmandu Valley Development Authority, a former disaster management head of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA), and experts (#6) were also interviewed. Additionally, information collected through several informal talks with the local people, field visits, observations and transect walk in Khokana have also been used.

### What did we find?

This study found that the following risks of neglecting everyday risks could be hindrances to make a resilient community, thereby a resilient tomorrow's city. Firstly, politicians' interest in infrastructure projects is limiting government investments in risk research and planning, which is hindering local risk governance at both municipal and ward levels.

Secondly, ongoing development interventions and growing urbanization may hinder future socio-economic cohesion between old and new residents of Khokana. The local residents consider that these changing trends, firstly, destroy their productive agricultural land, and, secondly, ruin their cultural heritages and practices. Some also fear that the influx of migrants, which will be further accelerated by the ongoing development activities, will be dominant in the future, who may not respect local culture and traditions. Consequently, it may be a reason for emerging competing actors, subsequently creating conflict between old and new communities in the future. However, some believe that the construction works in general in Khokana is unstoppable as urbanization is rapid in the Kathmandu Valley. Additionally, marginalized groups have also taken the development interventions such as the fast track as the potential opportunity for them to earn cash income in the future.

Thirdly, the local government lacks representatives from marginalized communities not only in the ward committee but also in the local disaster management committee, which subdues the voices of marginalized households in local policy-making process and the implementation of plans. This tendency perpetuates their exposure to social risk, thereby decreasing their capacity to respond to natural and non-natural hazards in tomorrow's city.

Fourthly, the lack of an inclusive plan (including all “voices”) by using the available/allocated budget to understand and manage risks and hazards may further entrench existing risks, exposing the whole community to vulnerability for future disasters.

Finally, the ‘disjoint relation’ between the municipality and its wards (in terms of risk management) and between the members of the ward committee and the members of WDMC is another challenge to tackle everyday risks at the community level.

#### What does it mean?

The findings indicate that the “gaps” between the local risk governance and the management of everyday risks, and associated ruptures of disconnection between institutions and practices can be exposed by analysing the *insufficiently managed risks, ignored risks, and unknown risks* at the local and municipal levels. For instance, firstly, although the ongoing large-scale development projects and other constructional activities may trigger landslides in several places of the city, the municipal and local government are not being able to sufficiently manage the potential landslide risk where such constructional activities are going on, which may be further challenging in a place like Khokana, where large-scale development projects are being implemented.

Secondly, the existing risks and associated consequences (e.g., restricted participation) that are being produced by entrenched and hierarchical social positionality of an individual are being ignored, which can hinder the capability of marginalized households to respond to tomorrow’s risks. Although the management of such risks is not easy as they are institutionalized as ‘culture’, the policy-makers, politicians and bureaucrats have to be aware of them in advance and initiate community-level awareness activities through the local risk governance mechanism. One-way of initiating reducing such risks could be involving marginalized communities in local-level policy designing and the implementation plans.

Thirdly, the unknown risks may be induced or produced after the full implementation of the ongoing development projects in Khokana. Although these projects may also provide opportunities to local people, the surge of constructional activities and concomitantly increased migrants may not only create competing actors to harness the opportunities but also destabilise the local cultural silos, potentially leading to conflict between old and new communities. This is another domain where the local risk governance has to initiate work to make traditional communities aware of cultural assimilation in the changing contexts, which may enable communities (i.e., Newars and migrants) to tackle tomorrow’s risks conjointly.

Finally, the persistence of institutional inertia can, however, hinder and hamper DRR endeavours at both municipality and ward levels. Politicians and bureaucrats’ mentality of understanding and managing risks are still primarily relief and rescue-centric. Consequently, the investment in DRR activities is not something they categorize as ‘development’, which challenges understanding how risk and resilience are positioned and shaped by actors and planners in tomorrow’s city.

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## List of Acronyms

BS:	<i>Bikram Sambat</i> (Nepali year which is 57 years, 8 months and 16 ahead of AD)
CDMC:	Community level Disaster Management Committee
CSCD:	Champion for Sustainable Community Development
DRR/M or DRR&M:	Disaster Risk Reduction and Management
DRR:	Disaster Risk Reduction
DRRMA:	Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act
GGs:	Global Grant for Sustainability
F:	Female
FGD:	Focus Group Discussion
IOM:	International Organization of Migration
ISET-N	Institution for Social and Environmental Transition - Nepal
JICA:	Japan International Cooperation Agency
KV:	Kathmandu Valley
KVDA:	Kathmandu Valley Development Authority
LMC:	Lalitpur Metropolitan City
M:	Male
MDMC:	Municipal Disaster Management Committee
MEOC:	Metropolitan Emergency Operation Centre
MoFAGA:	Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration
MoHA:	Ministry of Home Affairs
NDRRMA:	National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority
NGO:	Non-Governmental Organization
NRs.	Nepali Rupees
N-SET:	National Society for Earthquake Technology – Nepal
R&D:	Research and Development
SDGs:	Sustainable Development Goals
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WDMC:	Ward Disaster Management Committee



## 1. Introduction

This study analyses how risks are produced by development interventions and entrenched social factors at a community level, and how local government (i.e., municipal and ward<sup>1</sup>) manage local risks. We choose this strand of analysis to expose existing gaps between risk governance and risk management practice. For this, we have selected Khokana village, which is located in the southern Kathmandu Valley, as a case study site (see figure 1). An in-depth analysis of the factors of everyday risk production at the community level lets us critically scrutinize how 'risk governance' either overlooks or takes care of 'real risks'. Here risk governance refers to *"the totality of actors, rules, conventions, processes, and mechanisms concerned with how relevant risk information is collected, analysed and communicated and management decisions are taken"* (Renn and Walker 2008: 9). Khokana, a typical Newari agriculture village (see photo 1), being a part of and located eight kilometers south from Lalitpur Metropolitan City (LMC), is on the verge of change in terms of land-based practices, urbanization and development interventions, thereby altering the idiosyncratic identity of Newari culture, society, and livelihood practices (see below).

Studying local risks and risk governance is quintessential as the lack of strong risk governance is exacerbating vulnerabilities in South Asia (Kafle 2017, Mall et al. 2019). The lack of effective implementation of existing disaster management mechanisms is also the major problem of Nepal (Piper 2013, Jones et al. 2014). Considering the risk to be reduced through local empowerment, after the implementation of Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) 2005-2015, community-based participatory approaches in risk management was promoted (Pelling 2007) and has also been found potential in reducing local risks (Allen 2006, Jones et al. 2013).

The Sendai Framework of Action (SFA) for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 has also considered implementing and promoting local governance as an important tool in reducing local risk at the community level (UNISDR 2015). However, Jones (2013) has also found that local government lacks financial resources and expertise to deal with community-level risks so without embedding Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) institutionally it can be an extra burden to local government, and Allen (2006) warned treating community-based disaster governance as a panacea to local disaster management problems. In Nepal, after the 2015 earthquake, the government has issued several DRR policies aligning international agreements such as SFA, and also designed an authorized DRR institution at the local level, i.e. municipality, rural municipality and their wards (Poudel and Blackburn 2020, see figure 1 of Appendix). But, as we analyse below, the production of everyday risks and their managements are not going parallel, surfacing a mismatch between risk production and risk management. In these backdrops, this study analyses how risks are being produced at the community and how municipal and ward risk governance is set to function, exposing "gaps" between them.

The required information was collected through the interviews with households of Khokana (#5F+3M), the members and secretary of ward 21 of LMC or Khokana (#3), a key informant, bureaucrats of LMC (#3), and a focus group discussion (FGD) with the ward disaster management committee (WDMC) of LMC-21 (participants = #4M+3F). Additionally, a member of the Kathmandu Valley Development Authority or KVDA, a former disaster management head of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA), and experts (#6) were also interviewed. For the expert interviews, we selected urban planners, geographer,

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<sup>1</sup> Ward is a lowest administrative unit of Nepal and it is governed by municipality or rural municipality.

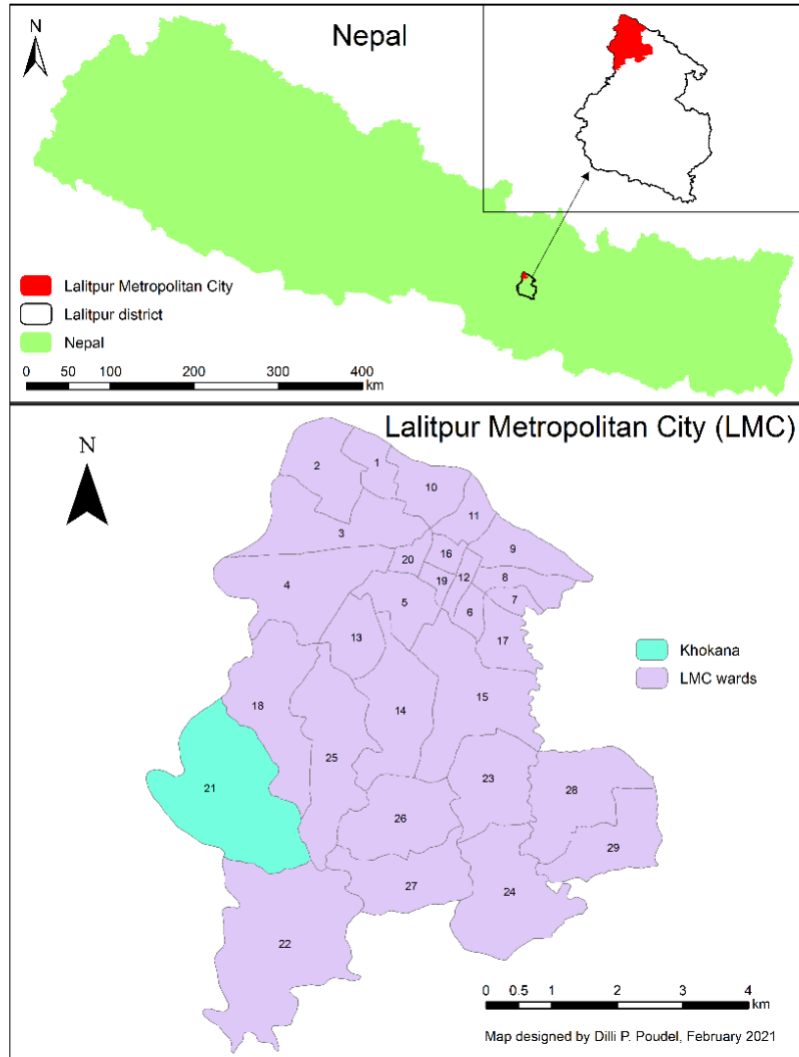
and DRR and migration experts. Except for the FGD and an interview with an expert, all interviews were conducted virtually. Besides these formal interviews, several informal talks with the local people, field visits, observations and transect walk in *tols* (lit. settlements: a socially delineated small part/section of the village) of Khokana have provided enormous knowledge which has been expressed through texts wittingly or unwittingly. Given the working document nature of this report, we will keep collecting the unmet information as we go with it, which (the report) will later be converted into a scientific paper.

In what follows, the following three sections analyze the information we have collected so far. The first section presents what risks exist in Khokana, which combines both produced and natural risks. In the remaining two sections, we describe how risk governance functions in LMC and Khokana (i.e., ward no. 21 of LMC). While presenting local risk governance, we will focus on (1) structure and function of the risk governance, (2) availability of resources to execute DRR and management activities, (3) respondents' perception about local risk management committee and their opinions concerning mobilizing it in the changing

context, and (4) coordination between LMC and ward, and, briefly, at scales (district, province, federal, NGOs). Readers may find these three sections disconnected analytically, which, however, are connected while discussing the results in the subsequent section. Finally, a short conclusion is presented in a manner that exposes 'gaps' between local DRR governance and everyday risk production.

Furthermore, although this report aims to analyze community-level risks in tandem with the strength and functions of local risk governance, the reviews of policy documents that are related to DRR and Management have also been included in Appendix. Although this section was included in the earlier report we submitted to the HUB (see Poudel and Blackburn 2020), some additional reviews focusing on local risk governance have been done in this version additionally.

Figure 1: Location map of the Study area



*Photo 1: Khokana at a glance - continuity and change (photo @ Dilli P. Poudel)*



In photo: (1) top-left is old Khokana village, (2) left-down is newly constructed houses, and (3) open space is the agriculture field of Khokana

## **2. Risk environments in Kathmandu and Production of Risks in Khokana**

If someone who visited Kathmandu during the 1970s visits now, s/he will hardly recognize the present filthy congested cores and haphazardly elongated peripheries, including its widely spread networks, markets and mode of interactions between people and commodities. During the 1970s, the population of KV was around 0.6 million (Haffner 1981) which exceeds more than four million now (KVDA 2016). This, Kathmandu being the capital of Nepal, implies that the rapid augmentation of the population in KV is primarily the result of internal migration, increasing tourism and business after the beginning of aviation in the Tribhuvan International Airport in 1949, the construction of highways to connect Kathmandu in the 1980s, and concomitant (haphazard) urbanization (interview with experts). Although KV is historically known for its Newar settlements (Malla 1978, Haffner 1981), the present spatial distribution of population, consequently, explicitly demonstrates more ethnic diversification than the concentration of a single ethnic community (Subedi 2010). Additionally, the land of Kathmandu has been modified substantially to accommodate the increased population, which, indeed, has accelerated the commodification and alteration of its geomorphology. Consequently, KV is presently characterized as a haphazardly urbanized city as the urbanization trend that is going on in the global south (Cohen 2006, Gresh n.d.) which is further marred by multi-hazards risk (Shrestha et al. 1999, K.C. and Pahari 2011,

Carpenter and Grünewald 2016, Sandholz 2016). For instance, KV is at risk in terms of exposure to an earthquake (Adhikari et al. 2018, Shrestha et al. 2018), is frequently affected by monsoon flood and inundation (flood killed 3 people in July 2019) (OnlineKhabar 2019), pollution and associated health hazards are increasing (Lee 2016, Mandal 2020), rivers banks are occupied by slum dwellers exposing them to flood hazards (Sengupta 2013), and the city is growing rapidly and haphazardly (Ishtiaque et al. 2017). The effect of climate change (Aryal et al. 2014, Wester et al. 2019) and the 2015 earthquake-triggered landslides in general (Kargel et al. 2016), undoubtedly, are the addition.

The effects of urbanizing KV are being surfaced in its peripheral villages. The major effects, according to interviewed experts, are the increasing commodification of land, decreasing agricultural practices, increasing land speculation, increasing construction activities in agricultural fields (including large-scale development projects), and deterioration of local culture (Mandal 2018, Shrestha 2018). Khokana is one such peripheral village of KV.

The production of risks in Khokana can be considered in relation to (1) natural hazards and their social consequences; (2) hazards arising from lack of space and fire; (3) development projects or externalities experienced as hazards (e.g., land use change, urbanization, and development projects); and (4) social production of risk in everyday relations and caste/ethnic affinities.

*i. Natural hazards and social consequences – “no risk for the settlement but for the agricultural land” – [a ward representative]*

Khokana is *always* at risk of an earthquake (see Shamsher 1935 [2015]). Besides the earthquake, there are *almost* no regular natural hazards in Khokana. However, respondents have mentioned landslide problems existed around 30-40 years back which was resolved after the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)'s investment in the embankment at Bhagupa of Khokana during the 1990s (around 2045 BS). Additionally, there was a devastating flood in the early 1980s (2038 BS). A local teacher said, “A big flood occurred in 2038 BS (1982/83 AD) in Bagmati river. Although I was just 4-5 years old during that flood event, I still remember it vividly”.

As the main agriculture field of Khokana (called *don-fant* locally) is at the bank of the Bagmati river, some farmers have faced landslide problems during the monsoon season. However, none of the respondents have taken landslides as a major risk of Khokana. Instead, the 2015 earthquake has created lots of fear among the villagers (Fernandez and Okazaki n. d.), as the hazard was not only fresh in their memory trace, it also affected 80 per cent of houses in Khokana (Maharjan and Shrestha n. d.), which concomitantly downsized many households economically as many villagers were compelled to either sell their land or get a loan to rebuild houses. According to a ward representative, the earthquake took the lives of nine people of Khokana (four males and five females). Although the economic support of the government for the reconstruction could have been an alternative, many households either did not have land certificates or had not transformed (did not inherit) land rights from their grandparents or parents. Hence, they could not apply for the fund<sup>2</sup>. An adult male respondent who was also leading a local resistance group against the fast track said; “The house I was living in was destroyed by the 2015

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<sup>2</sup> An individual family should have a *ghaderi* (the land where an individual construct his/her house) with *lalpurja* (land ownership document provided by the government) to claim for the earthquake relief fund. Because an individual has to prove where s/he is going to (re)construct house. The government of Nepal provided NRs. three *laks* or 3,00,000 as the relief fund to each earthquake victim whose house was damaged or destroyed by the earthquake.

earthquake. It belonged to my father and uncle. Both have two sons each. We tried to divide the assets as each family could have applied for the Reconstruction Fund but my father and uncle could not agree on asset sharing. As a result, we could not get reconstruction support. We also could not construct the house by our own source. Now, I am living in a rented house”.

The above excerpt is a representative situation of many households in Khokana. Consequently, there were about 800 households in Khokana before the 2015 earthquake, which increased to around 1000 after the earthquake. On the contrary, an educated female respondent had taken this kind of disintegration caused by land-related issues within families after the earthquake as a risk to the local Newari tradition of living in a joint family. She said, “The 2015 earthquake also eroded our traditional way of living in a joint family because we avoid land fragmentation and rather prefer to adjust to living in a small space with our senior family members”.

The family disintegration issue was the concern of only a couple of respondents [need further interrogation].

*i. Hazards arising from lack of space and fire*

Khokana is a compact settlement with small houses and is located on a ridge. The settlement lacks open spaces. The streets inside the village are not even suitable for driving cars. According to several respondents, Khokana is at a high risk of fire hazards since it lacks open spaces. The risk of fire hazard is categorized second after the earthquake. Among the four *to/s* of Khokana village, Ta-jhya (lit. ‘large window’) is at high risk of fire hazard. A female representative of the ward said that Khokana has already faced fire hazards three times in the past. Considering this, the ward with the support from a local NGO (i.e., The National Society for Earthquake Technology – Nepal or N-SET) fixed a water pump with nozzle pipes and hose in the local Rudrayani pond to mitigate fire hazards two years back (see below) (see also Rusczyk et al. 2020).

*Photo 2: A lane of Khokana (photo @ Dilli)*



Unavailability of open spaces, according to a participant of FGD, has also hindered local level development activities. For instance, she added that there was a French project, which wanted to construct a commercial building in Khokana to promote small-scale commercial activities of marginalized females but the local government could not provide a space to construct the building that eventually caused the cancelation of the project. The ward chair has also mentioned that the lack of space is not only a risk to fire hazard but also hinders local level development and construction activities.

Besides the above hazards and risks, some respondents have also remembered the hazards of smallpox and the death of many villagers which occurred several decades back. During our 2019 fieldwork, an NGO representative, taking the context of the southern KV, said that there is a risk of contamination of rainwater with septic tanks during monsoon, which risk breaking out water-borne diseases in the

community. He also mentioned an incident of a diarrhea outbreak in Bungmati and Khokana areas in 2017 [need to verify] which killed three to four villagers [need to verify].

ii. Development projects as hazards – “(agriculture) land sold, house concretized” or “Jagga chalan, ghar dhalan” – [a local school teacher]

Being a peripheral village, as stated above, it has also been a “hotspot” for several development projects (see Lama 2018) tempting the land as a subject to multiple interpretations. In KV, Khokana locates in a strategic place in two senses. Firstly, it is the nearest location from the southern plain (or Tarai) region of Nepal, which borders India, offering possibilities to connect two densely populated areas of Nepal (i.e., KV and Tarai). Secondly, it has a huge chunk of open space in the form of agricultural land, which is changing rapidly due to the effect of urbanization and where the government wants to develop a smart city in the future. Both (having open space and being the nearest from Tarai) make Khokana prominent for multiple subjectivities or interpretations. For instance, it has been a foci of several development projects such as fast track to connecting KV with Tarai, outer ring road project to connect peri-urban settlements and to develop smart cities in all four corners of KV, high-tension transmission line project to fulfill the increasing demand of power supply in urbanizing KV. Among these projects, the fast track has been subjectivated as “national pride”. As these development projects need to dispossess many people of Khokana by using/controlling their agricultural land, these projects have been differently interpreted by individuals/stakeholders, ranging from the lenses of cultural interests to political and economic interests. Some have interpreted the projects as if they restrain the continuity of local Newari tradition and culture (see also Mandal 2018, Shrestha 2018). Some consider that these projects destroy local agricultural land<sup>3</sup>, which is not only a source of local livelihood, but also a medium to sustain local culture (e.g., *guthi*<sup>4</sup>). Moreover, some interpret that the projects have to *satisfy* the local community by providing compensation<sup>5</sup> of the land that falls under the project areas as per the present market value and should offer alternative options to secure farmers’ livelihood (e.g., creating *Jyapu*<sup>6</sup> fund). However, some also consider (especially marginalized communities) that the development projects like the fast track provide multiple opportunities (e.g., business, renting, factories, and jobs) to local people. Urban experts and planners consider that the fast track reduces the population pressure in KV as it provides a medium for a fast transit of people not only in terms of the movement of people and commodity, but also in case of rescuing people during disaster which eventually reduces exposure of thousands of dwellers from multi-hazards risks. Tacitly and alternatively, some also think that the projects are being politicized by forming resistance groups, possibly with hidden political interests [need further investigation].

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<sup>3</sup> A couple of respondents said that about 800 ropanis (1 ropani equals 0.051 hectare) of Khokana fall under the fast track route. Of which, the outsiders, that is, migrants, own 192 ropanis [need further investigation].

<sup>4</sup> Guthi is a traditional organization of Newar which facilitates organizing cultural activities and festivals. Every households have to affiliate with guthi with specific role and status. Marginalized communities such as Kapali, Napit, Kushle, Shahi cannot be member of Dangol and Maharjan’s guthis but have to perform traditional tasks for them such as Kapalis play music, Napits cut nail, Shahis sacrifice hi-buffaloes.

<sup>5</sup> According to a knowhow female respondent, about 30% people whose land falls under the fast track route have already received the compensation [need further investigation].

<sup>6</sup> The literal meaning of *Jyapu* is farmer. In Newari caste system, Dangol and Maharjarn, who involve in agricultural practices, are categorized as *Jyapu*. This suggestion of establishing a *jyapu* fund was made by a local teacher and a farmer.

Besides the above subjectivities, whether the modern society, specifically youths, continues agricultural activities or not is a matter of further interrogation and investigation as the investment of labour and capital on agricultural land is less profitable than generated by using the same size of land for other purposes, such as renting it out for business. Many respondents said, “Youth are not interested in agriculture nowadays ..... [t]he present agriculture practices is sustained by either parents or grandparents generations.”

Additionally, the (natural) growth of urban areas in KV has also attracted *or* pressurized local people to sell their agricultural land to non-Newar people, that is, migrants. This has accelerated the mix of local and trans-local cultures indicating Khokana being on the verge of physical and social change at present. This has also increased fear among the villagers that there will be more migrants than local people in the future who may not like their culture and festivals. This resonates with the following excerpt stated by an educated respondent, “Although migrants are physically here, they are not socio-culturally in/of Khokana”.

The above statement (i.e., *jagga chalan, ghar dhalan*), which was stated by a local school teacher, has both denoted and connoted meanings. The denoted meaning is that villagers are selling their land for outsiders as the monetary value of land is increasing. The villagers need money for the reconstruction of their houses, and the size of agricultural land is not sufficient for earning livelihood. Whereas, the connoted meaning is that the traditional agricultural practice of Khokana upon which local culture is built is disappearing due to the above externalities (i.e., development projects) which, after all, will lead to the displacement of villagers in the future, and *end* the culture of Khokana [emphasis based on respondent’s emphasis].

iii. *Everyday social production of risk – “I feel discrimination in everyday conversation” – [a female Kapali]*

Khokana is a Newari village that comprises approximately 5,000 population with 99 percent Dangol and Maharjan families. Other (Kapali, Khadgi/Shahi/Kasai, Kusle, Napit, Shakya, Shrestha, and Thakuri) households comprise the remaining one percent. Ethnically, Kapali, Napit, Shahi and Kushle are the marginal communities in this village. The main settlement on the south consists of 90 percent of the households, while Sano Khokana (lit. small Khokana) on the north is comprised of the remaining. Except for Shakya, Shrestha and Thakuri, all other communities, including Dangol and Maharjan, belong to the lowest categories in the Newar caste system (see Nepali 2015). In this sense, Kapali, Napit, Kusle, and Shahi are the lowest among the lowest in the local caste hierarchy of Khokana. Additionally, these households do not own agricultural land, or own either very little land or have to survive by cultivating *guthi*’s land. Since these communities have specific cultural tasks to perform during festivals, each household of Dangol and Maharjan gives them two *pathis*<sup>7</sup> of paddy/wheat [need to verify] each year, which is another major source of their livelihood. However, Shahi families own more agricultural land compared to Kapali, Napit and Kusle

Although their (Kapali, Napit, Kusle and Shahi) role and status in term of access to resources, local politics and activities are similar to those people who are categorized as *dalit*<sup>8</sup> by the government of Nepal, they are not categorized as *dalit* formally, which have barred their access to materialize political

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<sup>7</sup> One *pathi* equals to approximately 3.2 kilograms, however, it varies based on what to measure.

<sup>8</sup> Lower caste communities who are also known as *dalit* were previously categorised as ‘untouchables’ (WorldBank 2006, Aahuti 2007).

opportunities (see below). For instance, each local government has to elect at least a *dalit* representative but there is no *dalit* representative in ward 21 or in Khokana. There are also no representatives from these communities in other local level organizations, such as Ward Disaster Management Committee (WDMC).

The social positionality of these marginalized communities of Khokana has also shrunk their social space and everyday relation with fellow villagers. Although there is no explicit caste-based discrimination in Khokana, a couple of respondents from marginalized households felt such discrimination in everyday gossips and during conversations with non-marginalized people. One of our female Kapali respondents said, “People do not allow us to enter their houses. Although there is no caste-based discrimination, it does exist in everyday relations. I, especially, feel it during conversations, so I try to avoid gatherings”.

The tacit existence of caste-based discrimination will probably end soon, as the government has a very strong legal provision against such activities. Their capability and positionality in terms of access to local politics and resources are negligible which can be a cause of their vulnerability to risks in the future.

The caste and class-based risk in Khokana have also been related to the possession of agricultural land. Dangol and Maharjan own most of the land and their main sources of income are also from land-based practices. But the main source of livelihood of Kapali, Napit, Kusle and Shahi is not based on land. They are traditional occupants of Khokana. For instance, Kapalis are musicians for local cultural practices and festivals of Dangol and Maharjan. Likewise, Napits are nail cutters, Kusles are sweepers and Shahis work as butchers during the festivals in Khokana. Shahis also work for funeral-related activities. By doing these non-land-based practices, Dangol and Maharjan give them two *pathis* of paddy/wheat every year [need to verify]. Additionally, marginalized communities being a protector of cultural land (symbolic: where festivals are performed or the land which provides a basis to build/exist culture and society), *guthi* also allows them to use some land for agricultural activities. Some households of these groups have also possessed land rights as *mohi* (i.e., partial entitlement on land). However, one female respondent from a marginalized household said, “Landowner has removed their name from the *mohi* rights.” [Need to verify]. Confiscating land rights further dispossess marginalized households and puts them in a more vulnerable situation.

Given the present context of Khokana, how local risk governance is functioning/working on DRR/M in terms of structure, capacity, resources, motivation and future vision is quintessential to understand risk governance at the community level. It not only provides us grounded knowledge on how the first responders of risk (i.e., community) are internalizing and practicing DRR governance at local, but also exposes how local governments are (*not*) managing the risks analysed above. Such knowledge can also be transferred to city-scale as making a resilient urban (see UNISDR 2015) is considered as an infrastructure to achieve the aims of the Sendai Framework (UNDESA 2018) which are the drivers of meeting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

### **3. Risk governance at the Municipal level**

#### *i. Structure of LMC and budget*

Of the six thematic committees of Lalitpur Metropolitan City (LMC) which are formed to execute various activities (physical development, environment management, education, planning and implementation, etc.) within the constituency of LMC, DRR section is one of them. LMC has a total NRs. five billion annual



budget. Out of the total, 25 per cent goes for the construction of physical infrastructure. For DRR and Management activities, LMC has allocated NRs 50,00,000 annually. Although DRR section demands more money, the municipal board reduces the budget size, as they also have to manage several things with a limited budget. The reduction of DRR budget is also due to the high demand for the budget on infrastructure construction, which feeble the budget demanded for DRR activities, as the investment in DRR or preparedness activities cannot be “seen” by the public (see below).

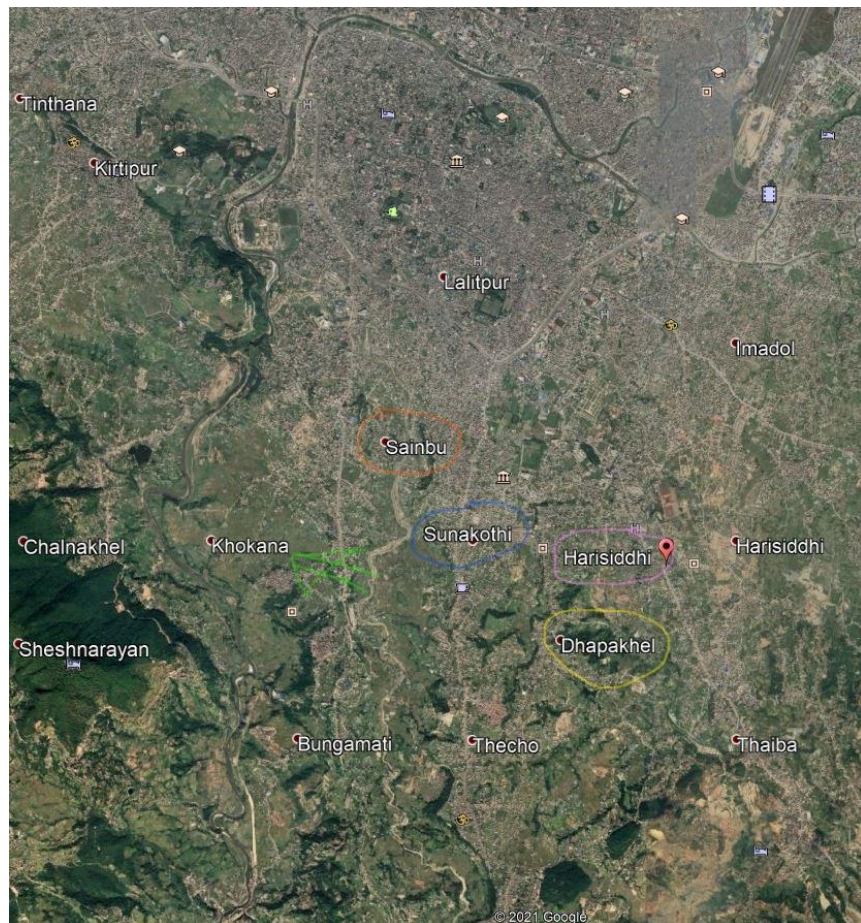
ii. Risk and management in LMC

Earthquake is a common problem of KV which has increased a lot of fear among the valley dwellers after the 2015 earthquake.

Specifically, as the DRR focal person of LMC said that fire is the main risk of Lalitpur city. It is understandable that having very compact core and narrow lanes, the city is always at risk of fire. Besides these, landslide is a growing problem in the areas outside of the Ring Road namely

Harisidhhi, Sunakoti, Bhaishapati, Dhapakhel and Bungmati, which all belong to the southern territory of LMC (see figure 2). The focal person was reasoning that these parts of LMC are growing very fast in terms of the concentration of migrants, which accelerated construction activities even in the sloppy/terraced geography, which, of course, are more prone to landslide, especially during the monsoon season. Disrupting sewage lines has also been considered as a risk by the focal person [need more info]. Finally, due to the overwhelmingly growing road traffic, road accident has also been categorized as another major risk in LMC.

Figure 2: Landslide triggered by human intervention (see circled areas)



LMC has formed the Municipal Disaster Management Committee (MDMC) under the leadership of the mayor. Based on the authorities provided by the Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act 2017 and Local Government Operation Act 2017, LMC, which has 29 wards, also issued local level Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act (DRRMA) on 13 March 2019, that further elaborated and defined the structure and roles of MDMC and WDMC. Although the number of members in MDMC is not

mentioned, there are representatives from 17 sectors/categories (LMC 2019: 6 [section 2, article 3.2]). (1) The mayor of LMC would be the coordinator of MDMC, and (2) the head of the DRR division of LMC would be the member secretary of MDMC. The rest include (3) the deputy mayor of LMC, (4) administrative head of LMC, (5) convenors of thematic committees of LMC, (6) a representative from the district administration office, (7) head of the social division, (8) head of infrastructure development division, (9) a representative or head of federal security body stationed within LMC boundary, (10) a representative or head of provincial police force stationed within LMC boundary, (11) the head of LMC police force, (12) representative of the head of nationally recognized local political parties, (13) a representative of local Red Cross Society, (14) a representative of Nepal Scout Society, (15) head or a representative of local Chamber of Commerce, (16) a representative of local NGO federation, and (17) a representative of local Nepal Journalists Association. However, the regular functions and activities of MDMC can continue even if the member representatives from the number 11 to 16 are not available (LMC 2019: 6 [section 2, article 3.3]).

Being exposed to multi-hazards risk, LMC has constructed two permanent evacuation centres with all emergency equipment and with the capacity to accommodate 300 people in each. They are in Balkumari (funded by JICA) and Bungmati (funded by IOM). For their construction, each evacuation centre costed around NRs. twenty million thousands or 20,000,000 (two *crores* in Nepali). Additionally, LMC aims to provide (1) 'search & rescue equipment' to all the 29 wards within two years, and (2) training to six volunteers in each ward who will also be provided refreshment training each year. Concerning the six volunteers, he said that LMC sends a letter to the ward office and wards suggest the name of individuals who have some knowledge of DRR. However, he was not certain how the volunteers and the WDMC collaborate for DRR [need more info]. The DRR focal officer also reported that all of LMC's policies and new constructions are women and disabled-people friendly. Additionally, LMC has just established the Metropolitan Emergency Operation Centre (MEOC) and they have recently drafted the working framework of it, which, as he said, will send the municipal board for approval soon. UNDP is supporting LMC to operate the MEOC.

Moreover, in terms of the availability of legal mechanisms, according to LMC's bureaucrats, the government has sufficiently designed policies to deal with DRR and Management activities. LMC's DRR focal person said that Nepal's DRR and Management policies are similar to that of Japan. But, he further said that Japan does what has been written in the policies. However, Nepal's major problems are, firstly, the lack of materialization of policies into practice as encoded in the policies, and, secondly, the lack of sufficient budget allocation for DRR activities.

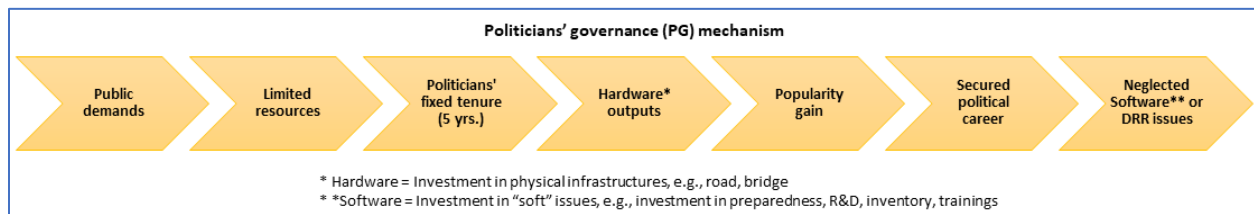
### *iii. Investment in Hardware or software Development – a dilemma*

I was surprised when I heard the terms "hardware" and "software" used by bureaucrats and politicians in a completely new sense than I was familiar with in terms of their usage in computers. For them, hardware denotes those construction and physical development activities that people or "voters" can see and feel such as the construction of a road, bridge. Whereas, the term software denotes the investment in "soft" issues such as in DRR preparedness activities, designing inventory of sewage, fund allocation for research and development (R & D), and hiring consultants- the investments of which cannot be seen or felt by people or "voters. According to a senior bureaucrat of LMC, "Leaders/representatives (or *janapratidinidhi* in Nepali) are reluctant to invest in *soft issues*. They do a secret meeting (in the municipality), discuss where to invest municipal budgets, give us the 'list' of

areas/themes where we are supposed to invest, and we follow their decisions”. As he further said, the public also demands “hardware” development, which (may) pressurize politician to do accordingly.

Talking with the bureaucrats at LMC, it was known that there is a kind of “politicians’ governance” (PG) or a “mechanism” or “PG mechanism” that politicians follow as their development visions, which, eventually, less-prioritize DRR activities (see the figure 3). The PG mechanism goes as follows. There are public demands of rapid development and the public also has many expectations from the leaders (because leaders committed them for a “better life” during the election campaign). Public demands and expectations pressure leaders. But there is a limited budget on their plate and leaders have fixed time/tenure (five years after being elected), which force leaders to do something that people can “see” and “like”. Such activities are also materialized or instrumentalized by the leaders to gain popularity, as it is very important in terms of securing their political careers. The following figure explains the ‘PG mechanism’ in LMC;

Figure 3: Politicians’ governance or PG mechanism in LMC



In such a pressurized condition where leaders have limited resources and time, they put money on hardware developments despite knowing the normative importance of DRR activities in their constituencies. One bureaucrat shared his grievance, “If we suggest leaders to do economic analysis, feasibility study and impact analyses, they blame us for not letting them do *development* in the municipality”. He added that bureaucrats have spaces to make comments and suggestions on local planning but leaders usually do not follow their suggestions.

Although many leaders understand the importance of DRR, according to a LMC’s bureaucrat, leaders have to be provided training (he said, “a respectful training”) on how to deal with soft issues and why DRR is important. Another bureaucrat said, “Higher-level politicians have less knowledge about DRR compared to the community level stakeholders as the local stakeholders participate in LMC organized programmes”. However, in the case of an emergency like the 2015 earthquake and COVID-19, they all join to solve the problem. Otherwise, they forget that risk reduction and management is also very important for the overall development of the city.

*iv. Coordination at scales*

LMC coordinates with Lalitpur district and the district coordinates with the province and the federal government. LMC only contacts district in case of need and usually do their coordination via telephone. Each year, LMC has to report on DRR related activities to district. For that, the district sends them a template of reporting which LMC fills in and share.

LMC has never coordinated with any neighbouring municipalities for DRR and management. However, according to the DRR focal person, except during situations like a pandemic, earthquake, or hazards that require national attention, the municipality has enough legal authority to work with DRR (see Appendix), so, they do not usually need any legal help from the higher-level government. Additionally,

there is an organization called the Mayors' Forum where all the mayors of the valley and beyond meet and discuss all kinds of issues, including DRR of their constituencies, and seek coordination between one another. Mayors' Forum also has access to the higher-level institutions like KVDA, MoHA (and NDRRMA), MoFAGA, MoUD where they can share their decisions and plans. According to the DRR focal person of LMC, the cabinet of government may accept their proposals as well [need further investigation]. However, interviewed bureaucrats have explicitly (and repeatedly) said that they do not have enough budget, which has been hindering the implementation of DRR programmes in LMC.

As LMC's bureaucrats said LMC coordinates with wards for all kinds of hazard and risk-related issues, LMC shares/sends their DRR policies to all ward offices and invites ward and community members to participate in various kinds of DRR-related training and refreshment programmes. Additionally, LMC provides NRs one lakh or 1,00,000 to all 29 wards every year. However, LMC's bureaucrats think that if they have enough budget for DRR, they do not even need to provide budget to each ward annually as they can share budget by opening separate funds for each ward in the municipality [not explicit information, need further investigation]. Additionally, LMC's bureaucrats believe that they can accomplish any DRR related activities through the six volunteers they have selected in each ward. However, LMC's motives (or politics) behind selecting and providing training for six volunteers in each ward where WDMC with 21 members is already (in)active (see below) need further investigation.

Although leaders do not take DRR as a big issue, according to a LMC's bureaucrat, they coordinate with I/NGOs like UNDP, IOM, JICA and ISET. According to the DRR focal person of LMC, the mentioned I/NGOs propose them DRR related programmes, which they accept. Otherwise, the five million budget of LMC, of which 2.9 million goes to 29 wards every year, does not provide them enough space to prepare the city to respond to future disasters.

v. Risk management in the future

In response to what LMC will do in 20 years, we have gotten one scenario and five areas where it has to focus very quickly to make a resilient city. Concerning the scenario, a senior bureaucrat said that in 20 years all the "hardware" developments would be completed and only then leaders/politicians will be interested to invest in "software" development, such as preparedness, early warning system, DRR activities, and R&D. However, there are areas where LMC needs to take immediate action to reduce the risk of disasters.

Firstly, LMC has to focus on retrofitting around 80 per cent of houses of LMC that are not earthquake resilient. This is extremely important because if KV faces the earthquake as of 2015 in the future, this may cause a disastrous catastrophe. Secondly, there are so many narrow roads and alleys in the core cities and in some of the peri-urban villages (e.g., Khokana), that are not even suitable for an ambulance during an emergency and may also cause a huge disaster in the hazard similar to the 2015 earthquake, they have to be extended as quickly as possible, especially in the city core. Thirdly, LMC has to commence Drill Exercise as soon as possible and be prepared to respond to future disasters. Fourthly, a massive programme on DRR awareness has to be implemented with focus on politicians. A senior bureaucrat said, "During meetings, leaders talk about making resilient and risk-free city but when we ask them to put money on DRR programmes they express unwillingness to do so." Although, a bureaucrat said, each year, LMC also organizes training programmes, focusing on politicians and ward members with the aim to make them aware of DRR policies, explain what is risk and DRR, and how to respond to hazards in each ward, politicians are still reluctant to invest in DRR and prefer to do something "visible",

that is, “hardware” development. Finally, LMC lacks sufficient staff to engage with DRR and management related activities. It only has three to four staffs in the DRR section. Additionally, as DRR focal person said, “Lack of staff is not the sole challenge. Even the limited number of staff has to involve in other work which shifts their priority from DRR.” This implies that the overburden of workload is also a hindering factor for the implementation of DRR activities in LMC.

#### **4. Risk governance at community local**

##### *i. Structure and function of WDMC*

The present WDMC has *not* been formed according to the DRR act issued by LMC in 2019. It is a previously designed Community level Disaster Management Committee (CDMC) under the National Strategy for Disaster Management 2009 and the Local Disaster Risk Management Planning Guideline (LDRMP) 2011 (see Appendix for details), which was renamed as WDMC on 22 August 2017 AD (or 6 *Bhadra 2074 BS*). One of the elected ward members said, “Since the ward office was engaged with several other development-related activities and LMC’s act had also not been designed, we renamed the previous CDMC as WDMC. The formation was also a legal requirement as the Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act 2017 had already been implemented in the country.” According to a school teacher who was also the programme manager of the Champion for Sustainable Community Development (CSCD), CSCD had facilitated the formation of CDMC in Khokana.

However, the formation of CDMC in Khokana also did not align with the LDRMP. It was customized locally. According to LDRMP, each ward had to form nine members’ CDMC. When the CDMC was formed, Khokana was a part of Karyabinayak municipality and divided into four wards. According to CSCD’s former programme manager, “Since Khokana is a small village, we agreed with the then municipality to form one CDMC with representatives from each ward instead of designing CDMC in each ward. Although representation was not proportional accordingly, we formed CDMC with 21 members, that we converted into WDMC in 2017.” He added, “We had also provided NRs 1,00,000 (one lakh rupees) to CDMC as a seed money.” NSET had provided technical supports (e.g., training) while forming CDMC.

The existing WDMC has included the representatives from (1) Nepal Scout and local Red Cross Society, (2) local health post, (3) Youth clubs (3) other organization working in DRR, (4) women organizations and a representative from disabled people, (5) local forest user group, and (6) *guthi*. Including a female elected member, there are four female representatives in WDMC. The chairperson of the ward leads the committee. Although there is a member with the surname Shahi in the present WDMC, he was not selected as a representative from the marginalized communities but rather for being the head of local scout.

Besides these, there is no representative from marginalized households not only in WDMC but also in the ward committee. It does not mean that there are no interested people from these communities-as a female Kapali said, “If they recruit or elect, I would like to join”, but because, according to the government’s categories, Kapali, Napit, Kusle and Shahi do not belong to *dalit* category. However, their social and economic status, cultural affinities, access to resources, and relations with other community members are similar to *dalit* that is categorized by the government (see section 2).

There is no frequent meeting among WDMC members. CSCD facilitated a meeting immediately after its formation in 2017. NSET also participated in the meeting. Subsequently, a month later, the ward office called for two-days training for the members, but some members did not participate in the training programme. The training was also organized by CSCD. After that, CSCD organized and facilitated a couple of meetings in the following year. However, after that members only meet if any organization (respondent also said, “like your organization”) wants them to meet or if any disaster occurs. A committee member of the ward said, “There is no regular meeting of WDMC. We only call for it as per the need. But whenever we call the meeting, only a few members participate”.

Not only is there a lack of regular meetings among WDMC members, but there is no clear way to communicate with the community as well. According to a ward representative, WDMC has not communicated with the community to collect disaster-related information yet. Nevertheless, in 2017/18, while designing the city development plan, members of the ward committee went to different groups of the community and collected information related to not only disasters but also concerning several other socio-economic issues. Although there is no regular way for the communication between ward and community, in case the ward needs the community’s opinions on any issue, the chairperson invites two to three representatives from each *tole* (lit. settlement: a socially delineated small part/section of the village) for the discussion.

Ward/WDMC has also done a couple of visible DRR and management activities in Khokana [need to verify and explore more]. Firstly, two years back they succeeded in fixing a water pump with the hose for fire hazard mitigation in the local Rudrayani pond. NSET had also supported the ward for this task. While doing this, the ward invited two to three people from each *tole* and provided awareness training concerning fire hazards. However, although how constructive/complementary involvement of WDMC’s members while doing this was is yet to be explored, these activities were *not* done by WDMC explicitly, but perhaps, by both ward and WDMC. Secondly, the ward (*not* WDMC) distributed relief material to poor people during the COVID crisis. Besides these, the ward upon the request of LMC has also sent few WDMC members and other community members for DRR training a couple of times. While asking why the ward is not mobilizing WDMC for local DRR related activities, respondents had no answer. A key informant said, “Perhaps ward does not trust WDMC’s members.”

There is no DRR related plan and programmes neither with ward nor with WDMC. However, the ward is doing disaster management activities in its constituency without letting WDMC’s members know. The same key informant said, “Even at present (i.e., in December 2020) there is an embankment programme going in Narangal of Khokana but, *I guess*, ward has not been informed and discussed it with WDMC’s members.” Additionally, the Ward/WDMC has never implemented any DRR programme focusing on marginalized communities of Khokana.

*ii. Capacity and resources of WDMC*

WDMC gets financial and other supports from three ways. Firstly, each year the ward office allocates NRs 1,00,000 (depending on the availability of funds) for regular DRR/M plan and activities, which they have to use/spend within the budgeted year. About two years back, they invested this amount to install the water pump in the Rudrayani pond. But the allocation of this budget, according to a committee member of the ward, is not based on any DRR plan of potential hazards. Secondly, LMC provides NRs 1,00,000 to each ward, which Khokana also receives every year. This amount goes to the ‘Disaster Management Fund’ of the ward, which the ward/WDMC cannot use as the previous one. This fund can

only be used during an emergency, a disaster crisis, or when the ward's yearly DRR/M fund does not suffice to manage any hazard. A ward member said, "During the COVID-19 crisis, we used both funds as the yearly disaster management fund of the ward was not sufficient." Finally, LMC and NGOs like CSCD, ActionAid, HomeNet, and Global Grant for Sustainability (GGS) also provided different types of training and awareness programmes to the members of WDMC, Ward and villagers. For instance, according to a ward member, LMC has provided training on fire hazards two to three times till date. Additionally, LMC has also provided special search and rescue training to six community members (non-WDMC) and provided relief and rescue materials in each ward.

However, according to a female ward representative, there are no trained six people in ward no. 21 or Khokana [need to verify]. Likewise, during the 2015 earthquake, CSCD with financial support from ActionAid provided five-days training related to reducing mental and physical pressure that was caused by the earthquake. The organizations called HomeNet and ActionAid provided training on how to construct a hut (locally known as *tahara*) and tackle women's violence during disasters. During the earthquake, according to a ward member, 200 households were provided relief material by NGOs. However, the frequency of training has substantially decreased after the 2015 earthquake.

Photo 3: The tahara settlers of Khokana



During our fieldwork, besides some youth and children clubs, there were no NGOs mentioned above working on DRR presently. All of them had either already phased out their programmes from Khokana or the NGOs like CSCD, according to CSCD's former programme manager, is completely passive now.

Moreover, Khokana being prone to fire hazards, the ward has installed fire extinguishers in more than ten places, an informant said. Additionally, the ward with financial support from a local NGO has also stored search and rescue material at three places: on the ground floor of the ward office; at the Rudrayani School; and at the Yuwa Prativa School.

### *iii. Members' motivation and perception about WDMC and ward*

During the FGD with WDMC's members, participants explicitly said that the ward could not mobilise WDMC for local risk management. They just form it to fulfill the legal requirement. During the COVID-19 crisis, there was a chance of mobilizing WDMC, but the ward office did not call them for a meeting and the ward members did everything alone. That was also an opportunity for the ward office to strengthen WDMC's capacity but they missed it.

The participants have explored the four reasons for not having a regular meeting and subsequently proper functioning of WDMC. Firstly, there are no topics or agendas for the meeting. One male member said, "Not having a clear disaster management plan is the major problem of WDMC". Secondly, there is a juridical flaw in the DRR act of LMC which was issued in 2019. Because according to the act (LMC 2019: [section 3, article 6.3]), WDMC's meetings must be called and coordinated by the ward chair as he is the coordinator of WDMC. But he is not only *always* busy with several other tasks but he is also the coordinator of several other local-level committees. Additionally, the ward chair is also the coordinator

of three committees of LMC. Hence, he cannot set aside sufficient time for WDMC One member said, "To have regular meetings, he has to transfer the right to coordinate WDMC's meeting to another member". Actually, according to the clause stated in section 3 and article 6.10 of the act (LMC 2019), the committee has the authority to design their working framework as per the members' wish so the transformation of authority seems legally possible if the ward wishes.

Thirdly, WDMC members have not taken local risk reduction and management tasks seriously and responsibly yet. They are not motivated for DRR. Members just want to hold a position but they are not executing the responsibilities that the position demands. One WDMC's member said, "There is a lack of willingness among the WDMC members". Finally, the WDMC members have not provided any training on DRR/M, which probably is one of the reasons for their decreased willingness on local DRR/M. The key informant said, "Although there is search and rescue materials store in three places, I doubt if the equipment work properly or not as there are no training or refreshment programmes to the members."

However, as the ward has some amount of budget allocated especially for disaster management and plan, it gives some hope in managing disaster in the future. During the COVID-19 crisis, the ward managed to provide some support to the villagers through this fund. But WDMC has to develop a mechanism to use the Disaster Management Fund in the future. They especially have to trust WDMC's members and should be ready to transfer authorities to them. A WDMC member who is also a teacher of a local school said, "There are only four elected members in the ward office but they are trying to handle several other committees and programmes. How is it possible to do several things with just four people? How would we not be passive since ward committee does not learn how to "mobilize" local committees like WDMC?"

Not being an active WDMC is also because the ward has not assigned any task to its members. As only the ward/chair has the authority to coordinate and call for WDMC's meetings, the above excerpt denotes this condition of the recently issued act of LMC. WDMC members also complained of not mobilizing them during the COVID-19 crisis, although the management of local hazards and risks is WDMC's task. That was also an opportunity for the ward office to train WDMC's members, but, according to the FGD's participants, the ward "*forgot us*" during the COVID crisis.

There are also diverse opinions on mobilizing DRR funds among the ward's elected members, as of the DRR management committee of LMC. These elected members want to "develop" their constituency by doing some visible constructional activities, which they term investment in "hardware". Disaster risk reduction programmes, whereas, need to invest in preparedness to prevent disaster assuming hazards may occur in the future. This requires investment in training, research, and other refreshment activities, which they term investment in "software". As a ward member said elected members want to invest in hardware rather than in software because they are elected for a certain period (i.e., five years) and despite knowing the importance of DRR, they want to do something that people like, which would help them secure their political career. This ideology of making "development", as described above, is working at both scales. The ward member said, "Sometime back I requested other members of the ward to use disaster fund to provide training to WDMC members, but there was a contradiction on using the budget for training as it does not show 'physical development' for the ward members. Hence, they could not reach to the conclusion and the idea of providing training did not materialize."

A couple of respondents who were not associated with WDMC also said that there is a lack of leadership in WDMC and the ward is not playing the role of guardian in the village.



For mobilizing WDMC in the changing contexts, the participants of FGD have explicitly mentioned that (1) the ward has to devolve its power to WDMC, let it select the coordinator from other than ward members, and let it do its way, (2) ward has to facilitate designing local DRR plan and WDMC has to work accordingly, (3) there should be visionary leadership and members should take local DRR/M seriously and subjectively, and (4) WDMC has to authorize to use local DRR budgets.

Additionally, other non-WDMC respondents suggested that: (5) WDMC should also include representatives from marginalized groups such as Kapali, Napit, Kushle, and Shahi and design an inclusive DRR/M plan, and (6) as the youth clubs were very active during the response of 2015 earthquake, they also have to provide training and resources for DRR/M of Khokana.

*iv. Ward's interpretation of WDMC's Members*

Ward's major complaint about WDMC's members was that members do not join meetings. Except for a few members, most of them do not respond to the ward's invitation. For instance, during the COVID crisis, according to a ward's member, they called for a meeting and sent an invitation to everyone but most of them did not join the meeting. Only one or two members joined. [Note that WDMC's members had said they were not invited to the meeting]. Another ward member said, "There should be few members in the committee. If there is more it will be difficult to manage, meet and work." In another conversation, she further said, "During the formation of the committee, people raise voice to secure "position" in the name of representation and inclusion of their caste and groups but they do not join meetings and training." It seems that members just want to hold the position but are not committed to DRR/M in the community. Additionally, a ward member said, "When LMC calls for training, we inform WDMC's members and villagers. Only a few show interest. We select from the interested ones and send them for training. However, they do not take the training course seriously, rather they take it as an opportunity to visit a new place. Some who went to the training camp in a picturesque place called Matatirth, were interested to take selfies rather than attend the training seriously.

Another ward member added, "Members from local scout and Red Cross go for training organized by LMC and other organizations but they do not share knowledge with WDMC's members and villagers." However, informants also told that although members are interested to help during disasters, they are not trained persons for disaster management.

Although WDMC has a relation with the local child club, they have never worked together for DRR. Additionally, WDMC has never implemented any programmes related to child risks [need to verify].

LMC and WDMC have not done any meeting conjointly focusing on DRR. Sometimes LMC calls for a meeting and asks the ward to send one/two members from WDMC and the ward does accordingly. Likewise, none of the LMC's members has ever visited WDMC and asked for a meeting or talked about coordination for DRR yet. District and province have also never contacted ward/WDMC for the coordination and ward/WDMC has never gone to talk with them too. However, sometimes back, district had sent an invitation to participate in the National Earthquake Day on 16 January 2020 (Magh 2, 2076 BS). But, according to a WDMC member, "Calling us for a meeting from the higher level of government is just a "drama and misuse of the budget". According to another member of the ward committee, "District contacts us for data during disaster events such as the total number of victims, marginalized households (HHs) of the ward but after receiving the data, they never contact us. We have no relation with the province government". However, the ward (and WDMC) had worked conjointly with NSET while fixing the water pump for the fire hazard in the Rudrayani pond two years back.

v. *Guthi's role in DRR and relation with WDMC*

Although there is not an explicit provision for disaster management in Guthi, it has unknowingly promoted several mitigation measurements in the village in the past. For instance, according to a school teacher, *guthi* promoted terrace farming which helps control landslides in Khokana. Guthi has also constructed resting places (e.g., *pati* and *pouwa*) which villagers use not only during normal daily lives but also during disaster events. Guthi has also been involved in constructing trails/roads which are also important for DRR/M. However, a male respondent during the household interview said that *guthi* did not do anything even during the 2015 earthquake.

WDMC has never coordinated with *guthi* in terms of disaster management. However, as this year's festival fell during the COVID-19 crisis, the ward office called for a meeting with *guthi*'s representatives and they agreed to use masks and sanitizer during the festival, since maintaining social distance was not possible during the festival.

## 5. Discussion

The above analyses show the gaps between the production of risks and their management at the municipal and ward levels, surfacing a rupture between the existing policies and their usability/applicability in terms of managing everyday risks. Explicitly, the following four risks of neglecting everyday risks can be hindrances to make a resilient community, thereby a resilient tomorrow's city. Firstly, politicians' lure of 'visible' or 'hardware' development is hindering the local risk management practice (see figure 3). The elected members or politicians prefer to invest municipal and ward budgets on physical infrastructures (i.e., hardware), which their voters can "see" and "feel", securing their political career. The 'soft' issues or 'software' like understanding, planning and researching risks are not being taken seriously, which is hindering local risk governance.

Secondly, local externalities (e.g., development intervention, growing urbanization, cultural assimilation) may hinder future socio-economic cohesion between old and new residents or create competing actors. The residents of Khokana consider that the ongoing development interventions/projects, firstly, destroy their productive agricultural land, and, secondly, ruin their cultural heritages and practices. However, many villagers also believe that the development (i.e., referring to constructional activities) in general in Khoakana is unstoppable as urbanization is rapid in the Kathmandu Valley. Additionally, the marginalized groups have also taken the development interventions such as the fast track as the potential enabling factor for them to earn cash income in the future. They believe that as they lack land possession compared to other co-villagers, the ongoing development projects may attract several business activities which may increase their chance of getting jobs in Khoakana. Some also fear that the increasing number of migrants, which will be further accelerated by the ongoing development activities, will be dominant in the future. They thought that migrants will not respect local culture and traditions, which will also be a reason for emerging competing actors, subsequently creating conflict between old and new communities in the future.

Thirdly, undermining socio-economic risks that are produced by entrenched social hierarchies (or everyday social production of risk by endogenous factors) and not having the representatives from local marginalized communities in local risk management institutions may not only increase the risk of subduing their voices in local policy-making but also perpetuate their exposure to social risk, thereby decreasing their capacity to respond to natural and non-natural hazards. Their representation lacks in

every sector of local political practices, including in the ward committee. Throughout Nepal, a ward has to elect five members including at least a representative from *dalit* group, but in LMC-21 or Khokana there is no *dalit* representative. Because although the marginalized community of Khokana whose socio-economic positionalities and access to resources (i.e., natural, political and economic) are similar to other *dalit* of Nepal, they are categorized as non-dalit locally. So local people explicitly say that there is no *dalit* in Khokana. However, being resilient is not only a condition for a household that has the ability to respond to a hazard and return to normality, it also means the households having the transformative capacity (see Maître et al., 2020) or an ability to change or challenge the underlying conditions or forces such as social hierarchies to tackle uncertainty, and thereby opening multiple accesses to respond to risks in tomorrow's city. However, how to manage the risks produced by everyday social relations and hierarchies through local disaster risk reduction and management (DRR & M) planning and policies is challenging *per se*, as the dominant groups consider such relation as 'cultural practices, which are very sensitive to jostle.

Fourthly, although the budget allocated for DRR activities is not enough, the lack of a proper plan by using the available/allocated budget to understand and manage locally produced risks may further entrench existing risks, exposing the whole community to vulnerability for future disasters.

The 'disjoint relation' between the municipality and its wards is another dimension that put local risk governance out of the track, although LMC's bureaucrats claim coordinating with wards for all kinds of hazard and risk-related issues. For instance, not having a rigorous meeting concerning DRR & M between the Municipal Disaster Management Committee (MDMC) and the Ward Disaster Management Committee (WDMC) is an example of this kind of 'disconnection' at scales. Additionally, the LMC's selection of six volunteers for DRR activities in each ward in the presence of WDMC may create confusion at local while dealing with risk-related issues or pre-empt WDMC's roles. Additionally, WDMC is backed by legal provision whereas the six volunteers are just a creation of LMC, which may discourage WDMC, or, perhaps, lead to a conflict between these two sets of systems. This anomaly deserves further investigation. However, this disjoint mechanism reveals the existence of weak risk governance at the local, indicating institutional incapability to tackle risks in tomorrow's city.

Regarding the coordination with the higher-level government institutions, although the municipality and Lalitpur district ask for necessary information (or data) with the ward (and WDMC) during hazards, how to manage everyday risks are not the subject of their coordination. This kind of patron-client relation (i.e, data gatherer and data provider) implies that bureaucrats and politicians are still influenced by the rescue and relief-centric management of risk, and they still take the natural risk as *only* risks. The use of ward or WDMC as a data provider by the municipality and the district is also a sign of "conspicuous" implementation of DRR policies. Meaning that the DRR policies are implemented *for the sake of* implementation thereby ritualizing policy implementation rather than materializing policy into practice.

The disjoint relation between the members of the ward committee and the members of WDMC is another challenge to tackle everyday risks at the community level. The reasons behind this disconnection are, firstly, the avoidance of many members of WDMC by the ward committee to manage local risks, secondly, most of the members of WDMC are also not taking the management of local risk and their responsibilities seriously and subjectively. Even if their relation improves, exclusion of *dalit* from both institutions (i.e., ward and WDMC) may keep silencing the marginal voices of the community.

These disjoint relations also imply that WDMC is not a strong and influential institution within the local governance system [i.e., Ward].

Furthermore, although the role of I/NGOs in promoting DRR activities is promising at both scales, their involvement and intervention could also not expose the root causes of the production of risks and their management through DRR institutions they promoted or formed. Additionally, although the role of youth clubs in responding to the 2015 earthquake has been recognised by both local people and ward, how they can be a part of local DRR endeavours has not been realized by the ward and WDMC yet.

## 6. Conclusion

This study, taking a case of Khokana village of Lalitpur Metropolitan City (LMC), analyses the “gaps” between the local risk governance and the management of everyday risks, and discusses some ruptures of disconnection between institutions and practices. We interpret these disconnections and risks as ‘real risks’. Broadly, the following means that how the gaps and disconnections exist can be discerned: the *insufficiently managed risks, ignored risks, and unknown risks*. Firstly, although material disaster risk reduction or DRR institutions exist at all scales, these institutions primarily focus on the management of natural risks like landslides and floods. But as we analysed, the municipality could not manage sufficiently the potential landslide risk where migrants’ concentration is high, which may be further challenging in a place like Khokana where large-scale development projects are being implemented. This also implies that the ongoing constructional activities may trigger landslides in tomorrow’s city.

Secondly, the existing risks that are being produced by entrenched caste-based hierarchy and the social positionality of an individual are being ignored. This rooted caste-based social system, which not only practices untouchability subtly but also brackets marginalized communities to access local socio-economic and political affairs, is hindering the capability of marginalized households to respond to tomorrow’s risks. Although the management of such risks is not easy as they are socialized and institutionalized in the name of ‘culture’ in the society, the policy-makers, politicians and bureaucrats have to be aware of them in advance and they have to initiate addressing such risks subtly through the risk governance mechanism locally. One way of initiating managing or reducing such risks could be incorporating marginalized or people having lower social hierarchy in local-level policy designing and the implementation plans. Supporting these marginalized groups through income-generating activities, as they lack land possession, would be another way to boost up their capacity to respond to future risks.

Thirdly, the unknown risks are unidentified risks that may be induced and produced after the full implementation of the ongoing large-scale development projects in Khokana. Although these projects may also provide opportunities to local people, the surge of constructional activities (see photo 1) and concomitantly increased migrants may not only create competing actors to harness the opportunities but also destabilise the local cultural silos, potentially leading to conflict between old and new communities. This is another domain where the local risk governance has to initiate working to make traditional communities aware of cultural assimilation in the changing contexts, which may enable communities (i.e., Newars and migrants) to tackle tomorrow’s risks conjointly.

Finally, the persistence of institutional inertia can, however, hinder and hamper DRR endeavours at both municipality and ward levels. Politicians and bureaucrats’ mentality of understanding and managing risks are still primarily relief and rescue centric (see figure 3). Consequently, the investment in DRR

activities is not something they categorize as 'development', which challenges understanding how risk and resilience are positioned and shaped by (competing) actors in tomorrow's city.

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## Appendix: DRR governance in Nepal - from relief to resilience

Although Nepal has been geographically exposed to multi-hazard risk since its existence, the history of formal disaster risk governance is relatively recent. The Natural Calamity (relief) Act 1982 was the first of its kind enacted by the government focusing on disaster management. Although this was a relief-oriented act (designing mechanisms for post-disaster victim support), it institutionalised two very important practices. Firstly, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA) was authorised as a responsible institution to formulate national policies and ensure their implementation. MoHA is still a major, influential and authorised actor in disaster management governance of Nepal. Secondly, the act initiated a process of institutionalizing scalar mechanisms for disaster management, by distributing/devolving post-disaster management authorities at different scales from the centre to the local level.

The implementation of the National Action Plan for Disaster Risk Management (NAPDRM) of 1996 subsequently institutionalised the need to take action at different stages of disaster risk management, i.e. during pre and post-disaster (Jones et al., 2014). This was significant as an early stage of shifting the emphasis of disaster management from relief and rescue to risk reduction. The implementation of the Local Self Governance Act in 1999, devolved some degree of authorities to the Districts and Village Development Committee (then local government<sup>9</sup>) and further advanced the practice of decentralization in disaster governance and encouraged district and local authorities to address local disaster related issues. Although the act provided some rules and regulations to govern disaster from the centre to local, it suffered from poor implementation as there was a lack of supporting mechanism and budget allocation (NSET, 2008: 10). This kind of ‘incomplete decentralisation’ has been observed in other disaster management contexts (e.g., Blackburn, 2014).

In 2005, Nepal agreed upon the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015 and initiated the design of policies in line with the five priority areas of HFA. Before HFA, disaster management was addressed on an ad hoc basis and was limited to relief and rescue only; however, the implementation of HFA stimulated the government to design preparedness and resilience oriented planning (MoHA, 2005). For instance, the National Strategy for Disaster Risk Management 2009 (NSDRM) was designed to facilitate the meaningful implementation of HFA through “materializing the spirit of participation” (MoHA, 2011: 1). As the implementation of NSDRM provided a necessary policy solution to implement DRR-related activities, not only to the government but also to non-government organizations, this document was widely accepted and supported at the national level (Jones et al., 2014). Actually, NSDRM was designed by the consortium called Nepal Risk Reduction Consortium (NRRC) which was formed in 2009 and approved by the government in 2011. The NRRC consisted of international financial, development, humanitarian institutions, the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank under the coordination of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (see NRRC, 2011).

The concept of forming a community-based disaster management committee (CBDM) in Nepal was initiated after the government approved the Hugo Framework for Action (HFA) in 2005, which encouraged the government to design community-centric DRR policies. The promulgation of the NSDRM 2009 was one such move of the government, which created a basis for designing the Local Disaster Risk Management Planning Guideline (LDRMP) 2011 (MoLD, 2011). Subsequently, the Nepal Risk Reduction Consortium (NRRC), which had facilitated designing NSDRM, facilitated the government to forming

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<sup>9</sup> Now the Village Development Committees (VDCs) are called *gaupalikas*. But a *gaupalika* is bigger than a VDC.



Community Disaster Management Committee (CDMC) through its one of the Flagships programs (i.e., Flagship 4), namely Integrated Community-Based Disaster Risk Reduction (see NRRC, 2011). The implementation of the Flagship 4 has downscaled disaster management in the community through Village Development Committee (or VDC). Subsequently, several other I/NGOs facilitated forming local DRR committee, which started making the community aware to include DRR component in local development endeavours and prepare disaster preparedness and response plans (e.g., Gautam, 2009; UNDP, n.d.).

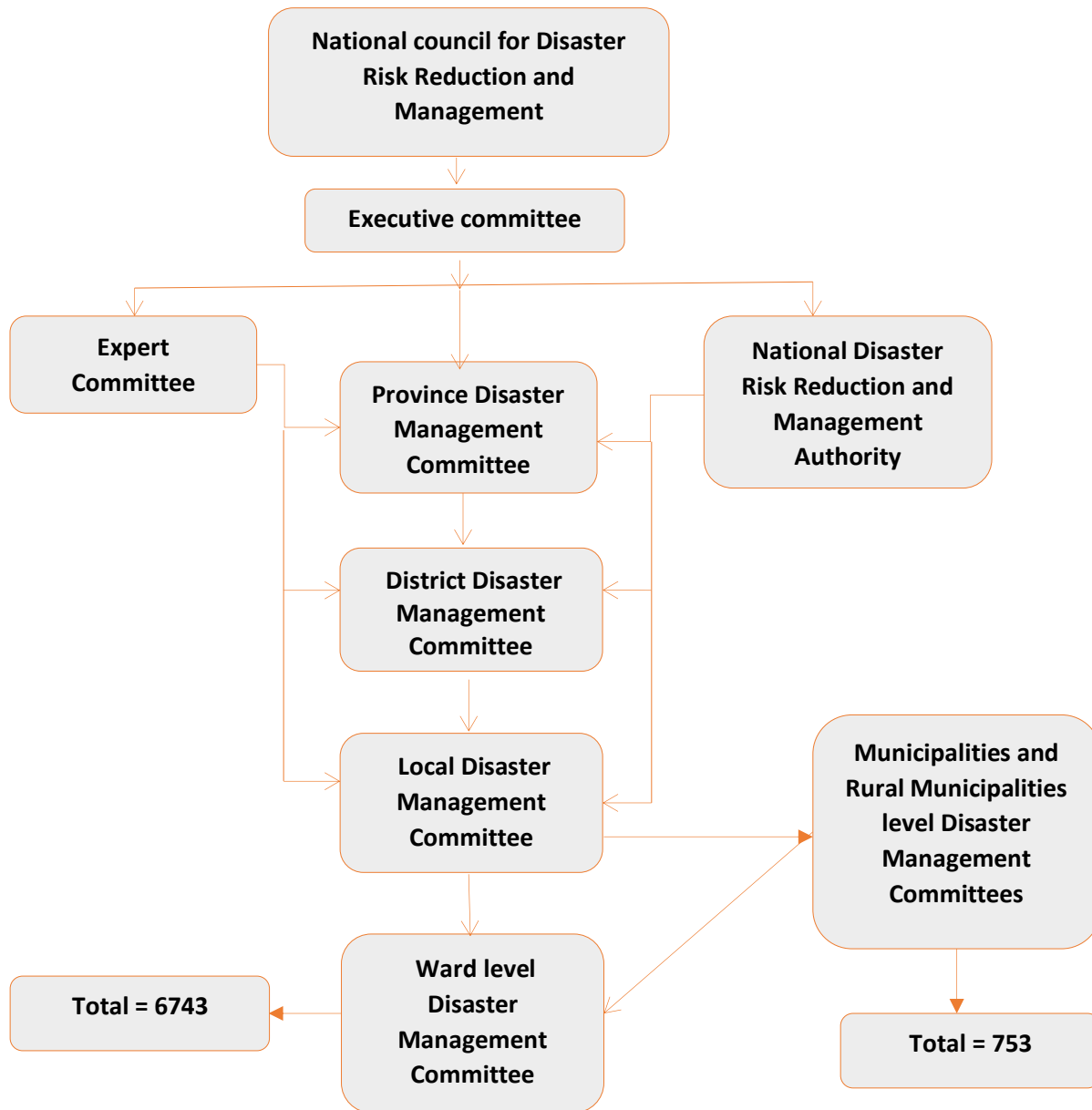
The LDRMP (2011: 10), with the following objectives, had also provided authorities to the then VDCs to initiate planning to make a resilient community.

1. Determine the minimum basis and common criteria for carrying out local disaster risk management planning
2. Analyse local level vulnerability, risk and capacity and formulate a plan accordingly with the activities prioritising disaster risk management for building a disaster-resilient community.
3. Facilitate for the institutionalisation of disaster management through equitable participation of all clusters and classes at local level policy and development programmes.

Although the HFA thereby CDMC was being implemented, there remained a lack of a motivated and active DRR governance in the country overall (Piper, 2013). When Nepal was designing the constitution of Nepal in 2015 and shifting from the unitary system to federal, an earthquake with 7.8 magnitudes on the Richter scale struck the nation. The earthquake, now known as the Gorkha earthquake, killed 8,970 people, injured more than 23,000 people, destroyed 489,852 private houses, 2656 government buildings and 19,000 classrooms, and thousands of people were displaced (MoHA, 2017b: 23). The same year, Nepal agreed upon the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (see UNISDR, 2015). The lesson learnt from the massive destruction caused by the earthquake were mirrored in the 2015 constitution as it has explicitly mentioned that “[t]he State shall formulate and pursue a policy and designing a pre-warning system, disaster preparedness, rescue, relief works and rehabilitation in order to minimize the risks of natural disasters” (see Part 4 Clause 51g CAS, 2015: 20).

After the implementation of the constitution, several further DRR focused policies have been implemented. The Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act 2017, which replaced the Natural Calamity (relief) Act 1982, is one of the most modern DRR act that is being implemented in Nepal (MoHA, 2017a). As the act came into effect after the government’s commitments on various international agreements such as Sendai Framework for DRR 2015-2030, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030 and Paris Accord 2015, it has adapted the strategies to manage DRR in alignment with these agreements. It explicitly aims to focus on different stages of DRR management cycles: preparedness, response and rehabilitation and mitigation. It commits to be proactive in the management of DRR. It has also provisioned the declaration of disaster-prone areas and/or communities to prepare and reduce risk, and also to concentrate the management efforts to those who are in need urgently. Most importantly, the act has provisioned to design DRR committees at various levels of government (figure 1). Additionally, the formation of local committees, that is, WDMC, can include the private sector, international institutions, donors, civil society organizations (CSOs) and can have their own Disaster Management Fund.

Figure 1: Institutional structure of DRR in Nepal



The government has further strengthened the decentralization of DRR governance by implementing the Local Government Operation Act 2017 (see MoFAGA, 2017). This act, which replaced the Local Self Governance Act 1999, has authorized the local government to implement, monitor and evaluate DRR related local level policies, legislation, standards and plans. Local government can implement disaster preparedness programme and plan disaster response, coordinate between government non-government organizations (NGOs) including the private sector and civil society organizations (CSOs), have a store of relief material and installation of an early warning system, and decide resettlement and rehabilitation after a disaster. Moreover, local governments are also authorized to establish a disaster management fund by getting support not only from the government but also from other national and

international donors, private sectors, and CSOs. According to an interviewed expert (2019), now all local governments have a DRR fund, although these vary in amount – nevertheless, there is a lack of knowledge about DRR programmes and how to use that fund for DRR related activities at the local level.

After the implementation of the Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act (DRRMA) 2017 and the Local Government Operation Act (LGOA) 2017, the government has also implemented the Disaster Risk Reduction National Strategic Plan of Action 2018-2030 (see MoHA, 2018a), and the National Policy for Disaster Risk Reduction 2018 (MoHA, 2018b). The plan and the policy are designed to facilitate the Sendai Framework and the Sustainable Development Goals. The implementation of the act and policy after 2017 has clearly indicated that the government has now moved to resilience and preparedness-based planning of DRR, and the federal government has sufficiently devolved the power and authorities related to DRR and management to local government, that is, municipalities and rural municipalities.

Based on the authorities provided by the DRRMA 2017 and LGOA 2017, Lalitpur Metropolitan City (LMC), which has 29 wards, also issued local level Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act (DRRMA) on 13 March 2019, which further elaborated and defined the structure and roles of the Municipal Disaster Management Committee (MDMC) and Ward level Disaster Management Committee (WDMC). Although how many members are in the MDMC is not mentioned, there are representatives from 17 categories (LMC, 2019: 6 [section 2, article 3.2]). (1) The mayor of LMC would be the coordinator of MDMC, and (2) the head of the DRR division of LMC would be the member secretary of MDMC. The rest include (3) the deputy mayor of LMC, (4) administrative head of LMC, (5) convenors of thematic committees of LMC, (6) a representative from the district administration office, (7) head of the social division, (8) head of infrastructure development division, (9) a representative or head of federal security body stationed within LMC boundary, (10) a representative or head of provincial police force stationed within LMC boundary, (11) head of LMC police force, (12) representative of the head of nationally recognized local political parties, (13) a representative of local Red Cross Society, (14) a representative of Nepal Scout Society, (15) head or a representative of local Chamber of Commerce, (16) a representative of local NGO federation, and (17) a representative of local Nepal Journalists Association. However, the functions and activities of MDMC can continue even if the member representatives from the number 11 to 16 are not available (LMC, 2019: 6 [section 2, article 3.3]).

WDMC is the main institution that works solely for DRR and directly with the community at the local level, and it is the lowest level of DRR governance in Nepal. The present WDMC with 21 members was designed prior to the promulgation of the present DRRM act of LMC, which will be restructured soon. Although the DRRM act of LMC has not specified the total number of members in WDMC, it seems that WDMC will be of similar size as the previous one. According to the act (LMC, 2019: 9 [section 3, article 6.2]) there will be nine categories of members as follows; (1) Ward chair as a coordinator, (2) Ward members, (3) Ward level government thematic and divisional officers, (4) Ward level security officers, (5) Representative or head of ward level nationally recognized major political party, (6) Local Red Cross, (7) Local Scout, (8) Representative/s (as defined by the coordinator) of INGOs, community organizations and youth clubs, and (9) Ward secretary as a Secretary of WDMC.

Although the WDMC lacks representatives from the representative/s of local marginalized communities such as Kapali, Napit and Shahi in the case of Khokana, it tries to include most of the formal organizations that exist at the ward level. However, this is the most democratic committee formed for

DRR at the local level to date. Besides this, the municipal DRR act has also assigned the following authorities to WDMC (table 1).

*Table 1: WDMC's roles, responsibilities and rights (LMC, 2019: 11 [article 7])*

1. Proposing ward level disaster response and disaster recovery-related programs to MDMC and monitoring and evaluating approved disaster management related policies and programs
2. Mainstreaming disaster risk management in the implementation of development-related activities of ward, implementing disaster reduction programs in schools and hospitals
3. Improving disaster management capacity of ward
4. Planning, implementing and instructing for the implementation of a disaster management plan, emergency action plan, rehabilitation and reconstruction plan
5. Formation and mobilization of community-based disaster management committees
6. Providing and managing training programs to ward members, civil servants, volunteers, social mobilizer and members of community-based disaster management committees, representatives of civil society
7. Making communities aware of local disasters, involving them in planning and designing disaster-related programs and preparing them for responding to disasters immediately.
8. Coordinating for search, rescue, and relief distribution and primary health care activities immediately after disasters
9. Rehearsing drill exercise
10. Helping/supporting MDMC for identifying disaster-affected households, determining their status, and distributing identity cards
11. Paying special attention to vulnerable groups specially women, children, girls, disabled individuals, senior citizens during disaster who may be victims of gender violence, trafficking and other events during a disaster, and implementing awareness program to avoid and manage such events.
12. Doing other disaster management related activities as per the direction of MDMC

The above review of policies implies that local leaders, champions and stakeholders have provided abundant policy possibilities for DRR activities from the central to the local level. The policies also authorize local government to develop community-specific DRR plans and programs.

*[This report ends here.]*