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# Resettlement of Bhutanese refugees: a misery or solution

A case study on Bhutanese refugees from Rogaland and Alta, Norway

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Joint Masters in Migration and Intercultural Relations

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2011

# UNIVERSITY OF STAVANGER

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## List of Abbreviations

UDI	Norwegian Directorate for Immigration
UNHCR	United National High Commissioner for Refugees
IOM	International Organization for Migration
NAV	The Norwegian Labor and Welfare Administration
IMDI	The Directorate of Integration and Diversity
AID	Ministry of Labor and Social Inclusion
MFA	Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

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**Annex**

Questionnaire and Interview questions for Bhutanese refugees

Specific Interview questions

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## **Executive summary**

Being a refugee from a different culture, tradition and religion, Bhutanese refugees face difficulties in adjusting to a new country and a new environment. The objective of this research was to explore the conditions and quality of the life of Bhutanese refugees that have resettled in Norway and as important has been to make a comparison about the experience of those that first settled in Nepal and then resettled in Norway. To what degree have they been successfully integrated in Norwegian society? Primary data has been collected through available literature in data bases and libraries. The refugees living in Rogaland was selected for most of the interviews. The questionnaires were filled out by Bhutanese refugees living in Alta. All together 27 Bhutanese refugees were interviewed, and 2 were questioned through a questionnaire.

The majority of the Bhutanese are in the 36 to 45 years age group. Many of them are taking introductory courses dealing with the Norwegian society and language. Young Bhutanese refugees are more strongly affected by an acculturation process than older people. Based on the Migration Integration Policy Index (2007), the integration of Bhutanese refugees is measured in relation to family unification, long-term residency, anti-discrimination, access to labor markets, political participation, education and access to nationality. Most of these criteria have been used in connection with the respondents in this study that are resettled in Norway along with family members. The majorities of the respondents are dependent on financial support from their respective municipalities for their daily expenses and most are not able to save money. Even though they cannot save money, they are satisfied with the amount they earn or the support they get from the municipality. None of the Bhutanese refugees are politically active at the present. Nine of the Bhutanese refugees were attending the normal Norwegian school, while the remaining ones were going to language training classes. Three respondents felt that they were discriminated against because they had problems getting access to the labor market. Most Bhutanese refugees have some Norwegian friends, and they are participating in social events. Bhutanese people are very religious people, and therefore freedom of religion is needed for their integration at the same time as freedom of speech makes their integration more successful.

The Bhutanese refugees that have been resettled in Norway show a high degree of satisfaction. They have access to facilities such as housing, clothing, education, the labor market, citizenship,

etc., in Norway to a degree that they could not dream of having access to in Nepal. Most are eager to integrate into the Norwegian society, which they think will bring them more advantages and satisfaction. On the one hand, they certainly miss Nepal and their original culture, their relatives and also the Nepali speaking people from Nepal. Bhutanese refugees in Nepal do not look upon their resettlement in Norway as misery but as a solution to their miserable life in the refugee camps. Here, however, it is necessary to add that the relative few numbers of interviews and the few questionnaires received make it a little risky to make a bold final conclusion. It will take some more years before it is possible to evaluate if the resettlement in Norway was a good solution in the long run. Nevertheless, this study casts important light on a small and little known group of refugees in Norway, and the new knowledge presented here is of great value in itself. Considering that an overwhelming majority of Bhutanese refugees are very content with their new life in Norway and the help they get from the Norwegian government as well as the municipalities, reflects positively on the different kind of practices the Norwegian government are willing to use to accommodate refugees in Norway.

## **1. Chapter I: Introduction**

### **1.1. Background**

Norway prides itself on using large sums of money on humanitarian efforts, and there is good reason for their pride, both in respect to the assistance the country provides to third-world countries and in respect to refugees (Gibney, 1990, p. 3). It is worth noting that foreigners experience the Norwegian society as closed in nature and most of the assistance given is generally aimed at populations well outside of Norway's borders. However, a relative small number of persons formally recognized as refugees by UNHCR have been admitted to Norway during the last decades (Gibney, 1990). These refugees have arrived either through resettlement programs or through individual applications. Norwegian politicians like to describe its immigrant policies as "strict entry-generous stay". This means that if you enter the country border you are allowed to stay but entering Norway is like winning a battle (Skjeie, 2006). The best method to enter as a refugee in Norway is through a resettlement program. UDI (Utlendingsdirektoratet) is responsible for the settlement of refugees in Norway.

Refugees are selected for resettlement for humanitarian reasons. Resettlement in a third country gives refugees the opportunity to establish a new social status and a new social identity (Neuwirth, 1988). UNHCR (United Nation High Commission for Refugees) is resettling refugees in many countries on a humanitarian basis. Bhutanese refugees are among the thousands of refugees who are resettled in other countries. According to Center Refugee Backgrounder No. 4 (2007), UNHCR is settling Bhutanese refugees in Norway because they are unable to return to Bhutan and are not integrated in Nepal. According to IOM (International Organization for Migration), each year Norway accept a certain number of refugees according to a quota system. Norway has so far accepted around 330 Bhutanese refugees from Nepal and is planning to receive more in the near future. UNHCR is resettling Bhutanese refugees from Nepal in Norway under a resettlement program. Selected Bhutanese refugees from Nepal have already been resettled in Norway (UN News Service, 2010). They are doing this to prevent them from harm

and human rights abuses in their original country and Norway is also helping them to adapt and enjoy a new life in a new place. However, this might not be the best and final solution for them.

According to Convention and Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees (p. 3), New York, 31 January 1967, the definition of a refugee is the following: “As a result occurring before 1 January (events occurring in Europe and elsewhere before 1 Jan 1951) and owing to well founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion.”

This thesis focuses on the social conditions of Bhutanese refugees and their integration process in Norway, and it also tries to compare their previous living conditions with their present conditions in Norway. It has been of prime importance to try to find out their own opinion about their situation through the research conducted in the study.

## **Chapter I**

Chapter one consists of an introduction to the research. The Bhutanese refugees who are resettled in Norway might not necessarily be happy to be in a new place with a different culture, religion, traditions and language, and this new cultural environment might create misery in their life. Research questions, research theory, the objective of the study, the importance of the study, methodology, research plans, analysis, research site selection, experience during research and limitation of study are all addressed in chapter one.

## **Chapter II**

Chapter two uses the exiting literature to set the stage and to place the Bhutanese refugees in an historical context both in Bhutan and in respect to their life in Nepal.

Bhutanese refugees are normally refugees from southern Bhutan, who took refuge in Nepal in 1991. The majority of Bhutanese refugees are descendents of Nepalese migrants who began migrating to Bhutan in the late 1800s. From the 1980s the Nepali-speaking people were brought to settle in Southern Bhutan to clear the forest and establish farmland that could provide food for the whole country (IOM, 2008). During that time Bhutan passed a Citizenship Act which

provided full citizenship to Nepali-speaking Lhotsampas (southern people) but later the Act was made much stricter. Every citizen was issued a land tax receipt (COR Center Refugee Backgrounder No. 4, 2007). Bhutanese Druk (Buddhist population) populations became worried by the fast growing population of Lhotsampas. Almost half of the total population in Bhutan turned out to be Lhotsampas (Ramakant & Misra, 1996). In 1988, a population census was carried out and people that could not produce documentation of the 1958 Land tax receipt were re-classified as 'illegal-immigrants'. From 1981 Jigme SingeyWanchu adopted a 'One Bhutan, one people' policy, which aimed at unifying the country under Druk culture, language (Dzongha), dress (gho, kira) and religion (Buddhism) (IOM, 2008). The Lhotsampas resisted this policy because they had their roots in the Nepali culture, they spoke the Nepali language and the majority of them followed the Hindu religion. They protested against the new government policy which had led to torture, rape and abuses of Human Rights. More than one million Lhotsampas had to escape as refugees into Nepal in 1991. They were settled in refugee camps in the eastern part of Nepal (COR Center Refugee Backgrounder No. 4, 2007).

Most Bhutanese refugees lived in seven camps in Nepal. The Refugees in those camps were not allowed to work, and they had limited freedom of movement. The Nepal government was not in a position to integrate them because it was going through political and economic problem of its own during that time. In order to be integrated Bhutanese refugee needed freedom of movement and the right to work and earn a living. The Nepal government was not able to provide that. Only a small number of refugees were able to receive legal citizenship in Nepal, and basically this happened when they married a Nepali citizen. Several talks with the Bhutan government about repatriation failed and the Nepal government accepted that the refugees could be resettled in third country. According to UNHCR, some of the Bhutanese refugees were resettled in Norway based on the quota system provided by Norwegian government according to the UNHCR convention related to the Status of Refugee in 1951 and signed by Norway. Bhutanese refugees are today living in different places in Norway and the majority of them belong to the Hindu religion.



Refugee integration is handled by IMDI in Norway. The country has integrated the refugees by providing them with access to nationality, access to residency, family unification as well as access to employment, education, health facilities, political participation and anti-discrimination.

### **Chapter III**

This chapter includes the theoretical background used in the research for this study. Different kinds of acculturation, integration and identity theories were used in the interpretation of the situation of the Bhutanese refugees in Rogaland and Alta.

When refugees interact with other cultures than their own culture changes over time, this process is often termed acculturation. In the acculturation process, the immigrant-culture is influenced by the majority culture, and changes are a continuing process. Acculturation creates integration, assimilation, segregation and separation. Integration occurs when on the one hand refugees protect their culture and on the other hand, they try to learn the majority culture, traditions and language. In the process of integration the cultural identity of refugees starts to (re)form and over time they develop a new identity.

### **Chapter IV**

This chapter includes discussions and findings.

The majority of Bhutanese refugees are taking introductory courses dealing with Norwegian language and society, and they are getting money for the daily expenses during the introductory course period. Most of them are unmarried and belong to the age group 36-45. They are getting access to all the facilities that are considered important for successful integration; they are resettled with their family members, their children are going to school and getting student loans to study, they are getting vocational training in order to improve their skills and thereby strengthening their competitive position on the labor market. Most of them think they are not discriminated against on the Norwegian labor market, they have full access to Norwegian health facilities, and they are planning to apply for nationality. So far, none of them have been interested in joining political organizations and being active in these organizations. The refugees also have freedom of religion and freedom of speech. Bhutanese refugees are religious people, and their religion plays an important role in making their integration process a success or failure.

According to Bhutanese refugees, knowledge of the language, social contacts and an open Bhutanese community helps the Bhutanese refugees becoming integrated into the Norwegian society. They do not think that inter-marriage (Norwegian-Bhutanese) is needed to be integrated into Norway. In order to be integrated, however, Bhutanese refugees need to work hard to improve their language proficiency as well as acquiring Norwegian nationality.

Bhutanese refugees do not feel that their identity was undergoing great changes. They think though that after getting Norwegian nationality, this might change their identity as Bhutanese refugees. According to them, they also are trying to protect their own cultural identity by protecting their culture and teaching their younger generation about their original culture.

Bhutanese refugees seem to be both happy and content with their resettlement, and they appreciate the UNHCR decision to resettle them as a solution to their miserable condition earlier.

## **Chapter V**

This chapter includes recommendations and a conclusion.

Norwegian municipalities need to organize literacy classes for uneducated Bhutanese refugees better. The municipalities also need to put more energy into organizing social gatherings where Bhutanese can meet the locals in their community. Introductory courses should be given to people of all ages. More of them need to be settled into cities to make them socially and economically active. In the case of the Bhutanese refugees themselves, they need to organize cultural programs where they also invite Norwegians.

The social and economic conditions of Bhutanese refugees are very good in Norway. They are enjoying good facilities, a good quality of education, access to citizenship, etc. They would not get the kind of infrastructure and amenities in Nepal that they get in Norway. Based on my research and reflecting on the opinion of Bhutanese refugees, it can safely be concluded that resettlement into Norway has been a solution rather than misery for the individuals in question. The refugees are trying actively to integrate into Norwegian society and they develop a new identity gradually.

## **1.2. Statement of the problem**

Nepal's culture and language is similar to what the Bhutanese refugees know from their homes in, Bhutan. Resettling in a totally different country, however, meant that there would be some greater problems concerning language, adjustment problems, culture as well as a new climate, etc. Humanitarian organizations, especially UNHCR have been taking action in resettling those refugees that were recognized by them as refugees (Center Refugee backgrounder No. 4, 2007). According to UNHCR, refugees who are interested in a resettlement program are selected by the third countries. Refugees can apply to resettle in another country, but the final decision of resettlement depends upon the country where they want to be resettled. Refugees can only move/immigrate to the country they are selected for, if they want to settle in a safe place and get UN support. IOM and Norway are giving Introductory Integration Courses, like courses on language, history and culture courses to help them adapt to the Norwegian society. Refugees with a different religion, culture, tradition and language, might face discrimination in the new society and facing a whole range of new challenges. All these types of problems might put them in a more difficult situation than the one they had to face in the previous host country. In that respect the resettlement of Bhutanese refugee can be both positive and negative.

## **1.3. Research Question**

The aim of the research for this thesis has been to find out whether a resettlement program for Bhutanese refugees in Norway has been a solution or misery for them? Whether resettling them in the new country solved their social, economic and cultural problems, or if their problems increased because they can neither go back to their home, nor can they be integrated into the third country? It is further an aim to grasp the ongoing integration process that the Bhutanese refugees are involved in and how they are actively trying to integrate themselves in Norway. This work focuses mainly on the integration of Bhutanese refugees in Rogaland and Alta, Norway.

## **1.4. Theory**

This research is to a large degree based on theories of identity formation in a social and cultural context. This research also focuses on the effect of the integration process of Norway.

The theoretical part of the thesis is based on the central concept of 'integration'. Refugees are far from their homeland and have to try to adjust to the new society. According to Barry and Sam (1980), there are four types of cultural orientation that can occur as an outcome of the acculturation process: assimilation, integration, separation and marginalization. The thesis is based on the concept of 'integration as a process of change and individual experience' and further that 'integration is a possible solution for refugees' condition'. The study focuses especially on social, economic and cultural conditions in the relation to the analysis of the integration of Bhutanese refugees.

The study also uses identity theory, focusing on the identity formation of Bhutanese refugees. The notion of 'identity' is connected to the concept of 'self' and 'others'. Along with the identity theory, the study also talks about J.W. Berry's 'Acculturation' process because integration is the outcome of the acculturation process.

## **1.5. Objective**

The general objective of the thesis is to find out whether resettlement of Bhutanese refugees is the right decision or not? The specific objectives are as follows:

- To find out the condition of Bhutanese refugees resettled in Norway.
- To compare their settlement in Nepal with their resettlement in Norway.
- To find out whether they are successfully integrated into the Norwegian society or not?

## **1.6. Importance of the study**

This study will show whether the resettlement of Bhutanese refugees is a wise decision for them? The study will give an overview of the Bhutanese refugee's situation in Norway and their condition in Nepal as well. This study can also be an information source for the people who want to know more about Bhutanese refugees living in Norway. Presently there is very scant information about them.

## **1.7. Methodology**

### **1.7.1. Research site selection**

The interviews was conducted in the Rogaland region of Norway; Haugesund, Kopervik, Ølen and Førre. Questionnaires were collected from Bhutanese refugees from Alta, who are working in Oslo. The total number of Bhutanese in the Rogaland region is 83, not including the new-born children. One major reason to select the Rogaland region was that it was easy to do the interviews with regards to travelling costs and travelling time.

The random sampling was used to choose the respondents. Among the total 83 refugees in the Rogaland region, refugees between 18 to 70 years old were chosen for interviews.

### **1.7.2. Nature and source of data**

Both primary and secondary data has been applied in order to attain the necessary required information for this research study. The primary data was collected basically through field observation and interview. The secondary data was gathered by applying various educational materials published by various authors, research papers and reports, journal articles, thesis, library material, web pages, non-governmental organization reports and blogs. This helped me to understand and address key issues regarding Bhutanese refugees and their integration in Norway.

According to Holliday, 2009, qualitative research will always involve a quantitative element and vice versa (Holiday, 2009, p. 2). This research used both qualitative and quantitative research methodology for the study. Both descriptive and exploratory research methods were used. Especially, the exploratory method was used to find out the facts related to social and economic conditions of Bhutanese refugees, while a descriptive method was used to describe their resettlement experience.

The following research methods were adopted in this research.

#### **1.7.2.1. Questionnaire**

Bhutanese refugees in Norway were resettled in different places and it was therefore impossible to do interviews with all of them so a questionnaire method was used to collect information from them. The questionnaire was distributed through mail. The questionnaire included both close-end and open-end questions.

The response to the questionnaires was low, only two questionnaires were returned. One of the main reasons for the low return is that the Bhutanese refugees were not interested to fill out the questionnaire because most of the Bhutanese refugees are not educated so they do not have the necessary skills to fill out the questionnaire.

The information about Bhutanese refugees' income, social condition, areas where they are living and their reactions towards the resettlement were mainly gathered with the help of the questionnaire method. Simple and direct questions pertaining to the research question of the study were asked.

#### **1.7.2.2. Interview**

According to Patton (1987) and quoted by Lioyd-Johnsen (2004, p. 24) "Interviewing people can be invigorating and stimulating. It is a chance for a short period of time to peer into another persona's world". The interview method is used to get a better understanding of peoples' social conditions, their norms and their relation to others in the society around them. This method was helpful to get a better understanding of basic facts, which were impossible through the

questionnaire method. An interview helps the researcher to find out important data as they keep on discussing different topics with the respondents. Detailed interviews were conducted with twenty seven Bhutanese refugees covering their condition in Bhutan and Nepal, their reasons to apply for resettlement in Norway and their opinions regarding resettlement. Respondents in the age group from 18 to 70 ages were selected for the interview. Old people, men as well as women and teenagers, all have a different opinions and experiences regarding resettlement. That was one reason why different groups of people were included to find out their opinion and experience about resettlement and integration. The series of interviews and meetings helped me to gain information regarding their condition and their integration process.

### **1.7.2.3. Observation**

The method of observation was used to grasp some phenomena, which cannot be captured by the questionnaires and interviews but still are of interest to the researcher through observation. It is an important method to collect qualitative data. This is the method in which data are collected by the researcher by seeing and feeling. Therefore, the results of the data were very realistic and appropriate. This method was used to study the living conditions, clothing, daily life and practices of Bhutanese refugees.

## **1.8. Research plan**

The total duration of this research study was seven months. The research was divided into the review of literature, questionnaire filling, interviews, data analysis, report writing, report review and final submission of the report.

## **1.9. Data processing and analysis**

After information was collected, the data was analyzed, interpreted and presented using simple texts. According to Marshall and Rossman (1995) quoted by Liloyd-Johnsen (2004, p. 28) the method is described as “messy, ambiguous, time consuming, creative, and fascinating”.

According to Miller (1998) quoted by Holliday (2009, p. 19), “a particular area of conflict is that when a researcher comes out of field work and presents their own voice in writing”. In order to prevent this type of mistake, like letting my own voice shine through too strongly, graphs have been used. The analysis text has been divided into headings to support my arguments. The research has used simple statistical methods and figures to highlight the research result. The analysis data helped to prove the arguments that the research raised.

### **1.10. Limitation of the study**

Due to the limited number of my respondents, this research cannot be used to generalize too much the results of the research to cover the whole of Bhutanese refugee population resettled in Norway. Refugees from other places were not interested in giving interviews and filling out questionnaires. My questionnaire and interview questions also touched some sensitive issues, and I deliberately removed some questions. Being a social science researcher I also have to show respect to my respondents’ information and not use secret and sensitive information given to me during the interviews. Another problem I faced during the study was my lack of knowledge in the Norwegian language. I could not read secondary data, which are mostly in Norwegian so this study might have missed some information, which might have been important for my study.

### **1.11. Existing studies on Bhutanese refugees**



There is not much written about Bhutanese refugees in Norway. There are some reports, articles and books dealing with the conditions of Bhutanese refugees in Nepal like, A) *Bhutanese refugees in Nepal: Anticipating the Impact of resettlement* by Susan Banki, B) IOM Damak on *Bhutanese refugees in Nepal, A Tool for Settlement workers and Sponsors*. This report gives a general overview of Bhutanese refugees' background and their social and economic conditions C) Human Rights Watch (2007) *Last Hope: The need for Durable Solutions for Bhutanese Refugees in Nepal and India*. This report covers the reason for Bhutanese refugees taking asylum in Nepal and why they need a more durable solution. None of these books, journals and reports mentions the situation of Bhutanese refugees after third-country resettlement. Especially, it was difficult to find any article on Bhutanese refugees in Norway. Catherine Lioyd-Johnsen's Master's thesis on *Exploring Integration, Resettled Refugees in Trondheim, Norway, 2004*, is the same kind of study as this one, but it only gives general information about all refugees resettled in Trondheim, Norway. Marko Valenta's (2008) doctoral thesis on *Finding friends after resettlement, A study of the social integration of immigrants and refugees, their personal networks and self-work in everyday life* also give information about the resettled refugee's integration process and their social networks. There are many articles and books about other refugee groups in Norway but there is nothing available regarding the Bhutanese group. The reason might be they are few in number, and that they have recently arrived in Norwegian.

## **1.12. Experience during the data collection**

My overall thesis writing can be considered as a learning period because every day I have learned new things and practiced different methods of data collecting.

After I started thinking about selecting my thesis topic, I decided I would write my thesis on refugees, but I was more uncertain about which group I should choose because there is the different type of refugees; forced refugees, climate change or natural disaster refugees, etc.

According to Holliday (2009, p. 33), one of the important tasks of qualitative data lies in establishing the research setting-exactly where, when and with whom the research will take place.

I wanted to choose a topic that also interested me personally. I learned from the news that Bhutanese were resettled in Norway from Nepal, so I chose Bhutanese as my area of study because they are resettled refugees, and because I can speak the Nepali language.

According to Mason (1996) quoted by Lloyd-Johnsen (2004, p. 28), “a researcher cannot be neutral... objective or detached, from the knowledge and evidence they are detached”. Being a social science researcher I tried hard not be biased and to get misled from my objective but sometime there was some situation there you have to analysis critically their answers.

The observation method helped me to gather information that I did not get from their answers. The most important information I gathered from observation was that they are still trying to protect their tradition and culture. According to the Nepalese culture, guests are god so you have to take care of them. I spent a few days with Bhutanese people, and they were taking care of my comfort all the time. For them, I am not a master's student who is there to gather information but a guest and an insider who can communicate with them in Nepalese and was there to listen to their problems.

According to Mohammad (2001) quoted by Lloyd-Johnsen (2004, p. 29), “the notion of insider/outsider refers to the boundaries of difference and similarity. This boundary is said to circumscribe identity, social position and belonging and as such marks those who do not belong and hence are excluded”.

I learnt during my data collection period that the people you interview are more comfortable with people who share the same culture/language/tradition. When you are an insider it is easy to mix with them rather than being an outsider.

## 2. Chapter II: Social and historical Context of the Bhutanese refugees

### 2.1. A general introduction about Bhutan

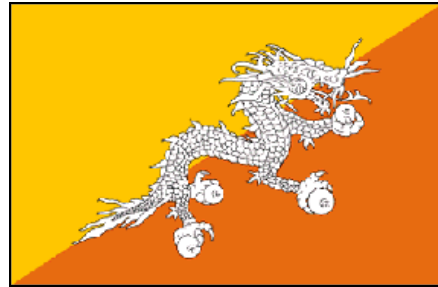


Figure 2.1: Bhutan's flag (Bhutan's flag, n.d)



Figure 2.2: Bhutan's map (Destination Bhutan, n.d)

Bhutan is an independent nation in the Eastern Himalaya. It is a land-locked country, which is one-third the size of Nepal (Hutt, 2003). Bhutan is the only surviving country with a monarchy in the south Asian region and the only country, which measures the Gross National Happiness. Due to its landlocked nature, not only trade and commerce but various other activities have been

severely constrained. Though the country is rich in nature, its resources are not being properly exploited (Brown, 2007).

There are various theories regarding the derivation of the name 'Bhutan'. One theory is that it is derived from the Sanskrit word 'Bho-ant' which means end (mjung) or tail of Tibet (bod), what you see when look down to the country from Tibetan Plateau. Another theory is also derived from the Sanskrit word 'Bhu-uttan' which means highland or head of India when you look at the country from the Indian Plains. The third theory is that Bhutan is the corrupted word of 'Bhuttia-Sthan', which means the land of Bhutias (Dorji, 2008). The final theory is that Bhutan was known as 'Bhotanta', the term 'Bhot' implies Tibet and 'Anta' denoted the end (Brown, 2007).

### **2.1.1. Geography**

The total area of Bhutan is 46, 500 square kilometers (18000 square miles), and with a population of about 6, 95,000 presently. Bhutan has borders with Assam, Bengal, Arunchal Pradesh and Sikkim in India to the south and south-east and by the Tibet Autonomous Region of China in the north and north west (Dorji, 2008). Bhutan is thinly populated because only 8 percent of the total area can be used for settlement and agriculture on a sustainable basis (Rennie & Mason, 2008; Crins, 2008; Dorji, 2008). Most of the lands are covered by forest while less than half percent of the total land is populated. The populated areas are occupied by the four largest towns; Thimphu (capital) and southern towns of Phuntsholing, Geylegphug and Samdrup Jongkhar (Hatt, 2003). Bhutan's geography is made up of mountains, hills, spurs and valley and most settlements are found in low valleys and on gentle slopes (Rennie & Mason, 2008, Crins, 2008). Geographically, the Bhutan is divided into three zones; foothills, central belt and highlands. The climate in the foothills is hot and humid and is unhealthy, especially during the monsoon. The central belt consists of the mountain valley with moderate rainfall and finally the Highlands with snow-capped mountains, which are covered by the snow throughout the year (Dorji, 2008, p. 2). Bhutan has numerous rivers and streams, which flow from north to south. The rivers are used to transport logs in summer and to generate hydro electric power (Dorji, 2008).

### 2.1.2. Economy

Around 80 percent of the populations are involved in agriculture (Pommaret, 1998). Animal husbandry and horticulture is the other major occupations of Bhutanese. People in the mountains sell Yak milk products such as cheese and butter. Bhutanese vegetables and fruits are processed in fruit preserve factories and distilleries. Preserved food is exported to other countries. There are some small-scale factories such as candy, pencil, slate, matches, basket making, weaving center, metal works, etc. (Dorji, 2008).

The Bhutan economy has expanded with the development of two cement factories, a hydroelectric plant and a plant for the production of calcium carbide. Trade is also increasing in Bhutan. Export of cement, wood and agricultural products are helping Bhutan earn foreign currency.

Tourism and the Druk-Air company also contribute to GDP (Gross Domestic Product) of Bhutan but in a small amount only (Pommaret, 1998). In 1974, the government of Bhutan decided to admit tourists for the first time (Edmunds, 1990).



Figure 2.3: Agriculture in Bhutan (Lamsang, 2010) (Wangdi, 2011)

### 2.1.3. Religion

According to the Bhutanese tradition, the history of Bhutan began in the 17<sup>th</sup> century A.D when the Tibetan king, Songtsen Gampo, constructed the first two Buddhist temples: Kyichu in the Paro valley and Jampa in the Chockhor valley at Bamthang. In the eighteenth century, a Tantrist from Swat (present day Pakistan) arrived in Bhutan (Dorji, 2008). His name was Pamasambhava but he is known as Guru Rinpoche ‘the precious master’ in Tibet and Bhutan. He introduced tantric Buddhism. Before Guru Rinpoche, there are two saints who emerged in the late fifteenth century; Pema Lingpa who is also known as *Terton* (Discoverer of treasures) and Drukpa Kunley (Divine madman). Pema Lingpa was born in Bumthang as a reincarnation of Guru Rinpoche. He received his title as *Terton* because he discovered important techniques of Guru Rinpoche, which was hidden centuries before. The Royal family of Bhutan is the direct descendents of Pema Lingpa. Drukpa Kunley is famous for his extraordinary ability to get evil spirits and demons to vanquish and for his sacred devotional songs and techniques (Edmunds, 1990; Dorji 2008).

In the sixteenth century, there were struggles between the different sects of Buddhism, and these struggles were so intense that they threatened to tear the country apart. But the situation changed after the arrival of mighty Ngawang Namgal, who arrived in Bhutan in 1616 from Tibet. He dominated the history of Bhutan for three centuries and he is known by the title, *Shabdrung*, which means ‘At whose feet one submits’. He was not only the temporal but also the spiritual leader. He was the person who gave Bhutan its first written laws and set up the networks of Dzongs, massive fortress monasteries, from which the country was governed. Through his networks of Dzongs, he could unify Bhutan for the first time in its history. With the death of Shabdrung, the dual system of government where the civil power was vested in a *Druk Desi* and the religious authority was resting with the *Jey Khempo* was weakened. Finally, the system collapsed at the end of the nineteenth century (Edmunds, 1990).

In the nineteenth century, two powerful regional governors or *Penlops* dominated the country; they were the Penlop of Para and the Penlop of Tongsa. The Penlop of Paro was in favor of maintaining the Bhutanese tradition with ties to Tibet whereas the Penlop of Tongsa, the mighty

Ugyen Wangchuk, favored strengthening Bhutan's links with the British Empire in India and he became the official intermediary between the British and Tibet. In 1907 with both religious and civil support, he established the first hereditary monarchy of Bhutan by abolishing the old theocracy. He took the title Druk Gyalpo, meaning 'Precious Ruler of the Dragon People' (Edmunds, 1990).



Figure 2.4: Druk culture (Rod, 2009)

#### 2.1.4. People

The original inhabitants of Bhutan were the *Monpas*, a people of Mongolian stock that lived in the dense forests of the Southern Himalayas. This group of people is found in Trongsa, Zhemgang and Dagana. Another ethnic race is *Milo*, who lives in the western parts of Bhutan. In the Dzongkha language, *Milo* means one who does not go back. Around the 9<sup>th</sup> century, during the reign of King Relpachen in Tibet, the Tibetan army invaded Bhutan. Some soldiers liked the country and decided to settle down in Bhutan, who is called *Milo*. *Lhotshampas* (Southerners) are the inhabitants of Southern Bhutan. They originally migrated from Nepal and settled down in

Bhutan. Tribal people known as *Tabab-Damted (Doya)* live on the banks of the Am-mo-chuu River under Samtse Dzongkhag. The population was very scanty and led an isolated life. Their clothes and customs are quite different from elsewhere in Bhutan. They get their income from the sale of a special betel-leaf called 'Paney-Todum,' which is very popular in Bhutan. The other races of Bhutan are *Laya, Lingzi, Merak* and *Sakteng*. *Laya* and *Lingzi* are found in the mountains of Northern Bhutan. *Merak* and *Sakteng* are found in the Eastern part of Bhutan (Dorji, 2008, p. 5).

#### **2.1.5. Dress**

The men wear a garment called *gho* which resemble the Scottish Kilt. Women wear a long robe called *kira* which is wrapped around the body covering it from neck to ankle. The monks wear red robes with sleeveless tops. The required dress for men is a *gho* (gown), *kerey* (belt), a short shirt for summer and long trousers for winter and traditional Bhutanese shoes (*tsholham*). The required set of clothes for women is a *kira*, a *gutsum* (petticoat), a *wangju* (blouse), a *tyoko* (jacket), *kerey* and the traditional Bhutanese shawl known as *zomilham*. Bhutanese men and women wear *kabney* (long sash) when they go to dzongs, monasteries or attend official functions. The *kabney* is very important because it indicates the rank structure of officials, both secular and religious. Males wear a white *kabeny* with long fringe at both ends while women wear them with decorated designs, which are also called *rachu*. The knighted officials, with a title of Dasho conferred by the King of Bhutan, wear red *namza* without fringes at the end which signifies their equality with the monks. The Knighted officials also wear a sword both on official duties and on ceremonial occasions along with their *namza*. At the Royal Advisory Council, the High court, the National assembly council members wear blue *namza*. The ministers wear orange while His Majesty Druk Galpo and His holiness Je Khenpo wear yellow *namza* (Dorji, 2008, p. 6).





Figure 2.5: Bhutanese girls (Bhutan Photo Gallery, n.d) and boys (Salesin, 2002) in traditional dress

#### 2.1.6. Language

Bhutan like many other countries in South Asia is a multi-ethnic and multi-lingual state. Twenty languages are spoken in different parts of the Kingdom (Brown, 2007, p. 62). There are four major indigenous languages prevalent in Bhutan: Dzongkha (western Bhutan), Sharchap (eastern Bhutan), Bumthang (Central Bhutan) and Dzalakha (north-eastern Bhutan). Although Bhutan was never under a colonial rule, the Drukpas or the Bhutanese of today were not the original inhabitants of the country.

In addition, there is the clerical language Choke, two non-indigenous languages- Nepali (Southern Bhutan) and Lepcha and a number of minor languages and dialects. Dzongkha is the national language of Bhutan and is also used as the literary language. The word Dzongkha is derived from Dzong, which means fortress (fortified building or town), and ‘Kha’ meaning language (Brown, 2007, p. 63).

### 2.1.7. Food

*Koencho la choeypa phu, ngenlong la jinpatang* means ‘Make offerings to the gods above; give alms to the poor below’. Food always plays a great role in Bhutanese life. The grand offering in monasteries during special prayers and rituals is based on a philosophy that the blessings of the Buddha and our karma have enabled us to have food, so we have to show gratitude to the gods by offering Three Jewels (Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha) and sharing food with others (Choden, 2008).

Bhutanese start their morning with offering water in the seven bowls on the altar. The meal is not eaten before food is offered to Buddha and the deities. Some of the people offer food by tossing it into the air or put it to the side of their plate before they begin to eat. Bhutanese, who give cash and food in abundance during religious observances, are admired and it is said they can afford it due to their good karma. Their acts in this life will continue to give them ever greater prosperity in the next life (Choden, 2008).

Bhutanese foods are hot and spicy. When using meat, it is either dried or with lots of fat. Their national food *hemadatsi* is made entirely with chillies (*heyina*). They treat chilly as a vegetable rather than spice, and serve it in a cheese sauce. Tea is generally considered as the mostly used beverage but in Central and Eastern Bhutan a drink with 20 percent alcohol is common drink. Tea with salt and butter; *seudja* or tea brewed with milk and sugar; *nadja*, is the commonly used tea (Pommaret, 1998).



Figure 2.6: Bhutanese food (Wax, 2008; Organic pineapples, n.d, Local Produces, n.d; Cooking Bhutanese, n.d)

## 2.2. Lhotsampas (Southern Bhutanese)

Migration from Nepal to Bhutan is a historical phenomenon. In 1993, there were about 156, 000 Nepalese living in Bhutan. Most of them lived in the Southern part of Bhutan and were called Lhotshamkha. They live in their own enclaves and areas (Brown, 2007; Ramakant & Misra, 1996; Choden, 2008).

The southern regions are inhabited mainly by peasants of Nepalese origin. They have Bhutanese citizenship and most of them are officially designated as Southern Bhutanese. They wear Nepalese national dress, speak Nepali and believe in Hinduism (Pommaret, 1998).



Figure 2.7: Lhotshampas (McMahon, 2008)

The Lhotshampas comprise different groups of people. The upper castes are Bahun-Chettris who are Hindu by faith and speak Nepalese. They believe in caste purity, diet restrictions and do not marry outside their caste. The non-Brahmins are referred to as Mathwali. They drink alcohol and do not maintain caste purity. They can be either Hindu or Buddhist, and they speak the language that belongs to the Tibeto-Burman group. Both groups either came directly from Nepal or from the Nepalese speaking regions of the Indian state of West Bengal. The Lhotshampas are living in the southern districts of Samste, the southern part of Chukha, Dagana, Tsirang, Sarpang and Samdrupjongkhar. Fear of malaria and sub-tropical heat prevent the people of the central valley to migrate to the southern plains and this is one reason that there is infrequent cultural integration and interaction among the Druk and Nepalese speaking people (Choden, 2008).

The main food of Lhotshampas is rice. They also consume dried fish called Sidra. Much of their proteins come from lentils and pulses which they call *dal* which is eaten at most meals. *Gundruk* is one food that is an exclusive specialty in their cuisine. *Gundruk* is preserved vegetables made by material like mustard greens, stems and leaves from turnips and radishes. During the special occasion like *Dasai*, they also make fried bread called *Sel roti* (Choden, 2008).



Figure 2.8: Sel roti (left) (Neupane, n.d) and Gundruk (right) (Nepali Khanekura, n.d)

Among Lhotshampas, the birth and death are considered to cause pollution or impurity so the woman who gives birth is put in separate place. She has to cook food separately and use separate utensils. At the end of three weeks the mother bathes at the communal water-tap outside the house. After the bath, she is allowed to join the family members again. If there is death in the family, everyone, especially the sons, must mourn for thirteen days. During the period of mourning, they consume food without salt, oil, chilly, garlic, onion, tomato, etc. The food should be cooked by the mourning person because of fear of contamination (Choden, 2008).

Despite several steps taken by the Bhutanese government to control conflict between communities, the conflict has assumed critical proportions owing to the emerging clash of interests between the Northern Bhutanese and the settlers in the South. Nepali settlers, who constitute a substantial segment of the Bhutanese population, have been living until recently in harmony with their Bhutanese brethren. The Bhutanese are very proud of their own culture and traditions and easily feel threatened by Nepali settlers. Strong conflicts arose when the authorities gave the Nepali migrants too many concessions (Ramakant & Misra, 1996).



Figure 2.9: Lhotshampas in traditional dress (Bhutan, n.d) (Bhutan the last, n.d)

Migration has been common throughout the centuries, but new settlers from surrounding areas have led to an uneven distribution of the population. The people with a background in Tibetan culture migrated into Bhutan Himalaya from the North, settling in the northern and central region where the distinctive lamaistic Buddhism dominated and where the people were active in a mixed economy of agriculture, trade and the raising of livestock. They are settled in South-western Bhutan close to the Nepali dominated areas. The main policy was to try to accommodate and assimilate this group into the mainstream of the Drukpa culture. This policy of assimilation of this segment of the population into the mainstream often had repercussions leading to serious problems (Brown, 2007, p. 76).

Bhutan's third King Jigme Dorje Wangchuk was quite conscious of the problem of social disintegration, which erupted because of ethnic conflicts. Knowing the pluralistic reality of the Bhutanese society, he made serious efforts to integrate the Bhutanese of Nepalese origin in the state and social structure. They were given representation in the Tshogdu when it was established in 1953. They were recruited into the army and the police. They were also selected for various civil services in the Kingdom (Brown, 2007, p. 47)

Bhutanese, however, remained uncompromising as far as national Drukpa identity was concerned (Brown, 2007, p. 47). In 1986, a special Dzongkha Advisory committee was formed who published several basic books like Dzongkha Dictionary and the Miri Pinsun Integrated Dzongkha language book for Nepali's speaking Bhutanese (Brown, p. 64). Nepali, which is not

considered as an indigenous language, is spoken by a considerable number of people of Nepalese origin (Brown, 2007, p. 65).

### **2.3. Reasons to take refuge in Nepal**

The great majority of Bhutanese refugees are descendants of people who in the late 1800s began to immigrate to Southern Bhutan. From 1980s onwards, Nepali-speaking people were brought by government contractors from other parts of Bhutan to settle in Southern Bhutan, to help clear the forests and establish rich and terraced farmlands of great importance in providing the main food supplies for the country (IOM, 2008). Around that time Bhutan passed its first citizenship Act, and full citizenship was granted to people in Southern Bhutan. This tightened the requirements for becoming Bhutanese citizen by naturalization. Under Bhutan's National Law of 1958, the Lhotshampas enjoyed Bhutanese citizenship and were allowed to hold government jobs. Every citizen was issued a land tax receipt (COR Center Refugee Backgrounder No. 4, 2007). Many Lhotshampas (people from South) were high-ranking government officials and educators. According to the 1988 census, they made up 45 percent of the total population of Bhutan. Between 1958 and 1985 the Bhutanese government introduced several integration programs and also promoted intermarriage between the Lhotshampas and other ethnic groups of Bhutan (IOM, 2008).

Bhutan's king and the ruling Druk (Buddhist population) majority became increasingly worried about the rapidly growing Lhotsampas (Southern people) population. In 1988 the Bhutan government conducted a population census in Southern Bhutan. As part of the census every citizen was required to produce the 1958 Land tax receipt. In the aftermath of this census the Lhotshampas were re-classified as 'illegal-immigrants' despite being able to produce the land tax receipts. In 1981 Jigme Singey Wanchu adopted a 'One Bhutan, one people' policy (IOM, 2008). Bhutanization aimed at unifying the country under the umbrella of Druk culture, religion and language (COR Center Refugee Backgrounder No. 4, 2007). The Lhotsampas resisted this policy because they were strongly attached to their Nepalese cultural heritage (IOM, 2008). The

policies imposed the Druk dress code and cultural customs on the Lhotsampas and they were prohibited from using the Nepali language in schools. Nepali teachers were dismissed and the burning of Nepali books was reported. The government also established new rules for eligibility for Bhutanese Citizenship, and these rules disenfranchised many ethnic Nepalese, depriving them of their citizenship and civil rights. When the Lhotsampas began to organize politically to protest against the policies, the authorities declared the activities subversive and unlawful. Some Lhotsampas became activist in the Bhutanese People's Party, which called for more democracy in Bhutan. Other smaller ethnic communities also began to fight for a more democratic political system as well. Large-scale protests in 1990 led to violent clashes with the police and army and led to mass arrests. According to World focus, Lhotsampas were targeted by the Bhutanese authorities who not only destroyed their property but also arrested and tortured them. It was also reported that the army had begun to take women away from their homes. These activities were part of the tactic in a widespread campaign of ethnic cleansing of the minority population (World Focus, 2009). Individuals were forced to sign so-called 'voluntary migration certificates' and were expelled from the country. In December 1990, the authorities announced that Lhotsampas who could not prove they had been residents of Bhutan in 1958, would have to leave Bhutan. Many refugees from Bhutan took refuge in Nepal. In 1991, more than one million Lhotsampas from Bhutan took refuge in Nepal. Seven refugee camps were established in Nepal's eastern Jhapa and Morang districts with more than 108,000 refugees in 2007 (COR Center Refugee Backgrounder No. 4, 2007).





Figure 2.10: Bhutanese refugees camp location in Nepal (Bangladesh is Directly, 2010)

#### 2.4. Bhutanese refugees' resettlement to third countries

Several attempts to resolve the Lhotshampa refugees' situation came to nothing. Bilateral talks have been held between Nepal and Bhutan with the intention of facilitating the return of some refugees to Bhutan. The Government of Bhutan in June 2003 claimed that only 24% of the populations in one camp were 'genuine' citizens of Bhutan. Even that small number was not permitted to return. However, camp residents maintained that they were of 'genuine' Bhutanese background. They attacked Bhutanese government officials, who came to visit the camp, thereby stalling any further discussion of repatriation. Not a single refugee has been permitted to return (Banki, 2008).

Due to the economic conditions in Nepal, local integration of more than one million refugees is impossible in Nepal. Lhotshampa refugees are therefore mostly confined to camps and unable to pursue secure livelihoods. Thus, the larger majority remains dependent on international humanitarian aid. WFP (World Food Program) is responsible for food and income generation programs whereas UNHCR (United Nation High Commissioner for Refugees) is responsible for fuel and housing. Bhutan's refusal to accept any Lhotshampas back into the country and

programs initially designed to prepare refugees for repatriation has been scaled back. International humanitarian organization budgetary constraints have led to cuts in food, fuel, housing materials and clothing and this in turn has led to a more difficult daily life for the refugees (Banki, 2008).

According to Human Right Watch (2007), despite the refugees' desire and numerous high-level meetings between the governments of Bhutan and Nepal to resolve the refugee crisis over the past 16 years, Bhutan has not permitted a single refugee to return home. Local integration has not been possible for political reasons. Due to political reasons in Nepal, the Nepali government was not in a situation to allow refugees two basic rights that are prerequisites for local integration: freedom of movement and the rights to work and earn a living. Only a small number of refugees have been able to acquire legal citizenship in Nepal. This has mostly occurred through marriage or close relations with descendants. Even though they have resided in Nepal for more than 15 years and their population consists of new-born children in Nepal, there is no provision for Bhutanese refugees to acquire Nepalese citizenship, and this makes the refugees politically insecure.

The repatriation of Bhutanese refugees is difficult, firstly because of the political issues. It is feared that repatriation will destabilize Bhutan. A further complication is that much of Lhotshampa property and land is now in the possession of others, one of the main reasons that repatriation is a 'closed door' (Adelman, 2008, p. 40)

Repatriation and local integration is not realistic possibilities for the great majority of refugees. Therefore resettlement to a third country has emerged as a more durable solution for the problem (COR Center Refugee Backgrounder No. 4, 2007). In 2007, the Government of Nepal accepted the option of third-country settlement. The refugees were very suspicious about resettlement, especially after the first departures to U.S.A, Australia and New Zealand. But with time people's attitudes towards resettlement have changed. Many of the anti-settlement leaders are now also applying for the resettlement program. Some small groups (led by Tek Nath Rijal, leader of the Bhutanese People's Party) are still actively opposing the resettlement in the camps (IOM, 2008). The 'anti-resettlement' refugees have discouraged resettlement in a number of ways, from

publishing statements to issuing threats to engaging in actual violence against ‘pro-resettlement’ refugees (Banki, 2008).

Various efforts were made by UNHCR to conduct information campaigns for all camp residents from Nov 2007, which included distribution of pamphlets in the local language and English. Even though the pamphlets give much information about resettlement, it lacked any description of many aspects of the resettlement process. There is also confusion regarding the process of applying and interviewing for resettlement. Depending on the resettlement country, refugees might need to meet UNHCR, resettlement country representatives and IOM staff. The time period from the first interview to the flight departure takes six months on average (Banki, 2008).

Another reason for discouragement for resettlement among refugees is rumors. Rumors are spread around the refugee camps mentioning that refugees are sold to resettlement countries for slavery and that old people and infants are not accepted for resettlement. On the other hand people in favor of resettlement have received money from UNHCR to say positive things about foreign countries, etc. (Banki, 2008).

All resettled refugees are encouraged to study the language of their new country to help them adjust to their new environment in the new country. Children will usually be enrolled in public schools soon after arrival, and adults may also be eligible for educational opportunities, including vocational training and university study. In European countries refugees are first placed in reception centers where they receive lodging, food and clothing. They also receive cultural and practical information and instructions in the new languages (Neuwirth, 1988). In Norway refugees are kept for six months in such centers for the introductory program. Bhutanese refugees have so far been resettled in New Zealand, Canada, Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway and Australia. There are also a few Bhutanese people in USA. They are mostly living in Atlanta, New York City, San Francisco and Washington D.C (COR Center Refugee Backgounder No. 4, 2007).

## **2.5. Norwegian government interest on Bhutanese refugees**

According to UNHCR, Norway has signed the UN Convention related to the Status of Refugees 1951, and therefore, it is obligated to grant refugees permission to enter the country. This is the main reason that Norway has accepted Bhutanese refugees. The other reason was the failed negotiations between Nepal and Bhutan about the return of Bhutanese refugees to Bhutan. In September 2007 the Nepalese government signed a memorandum of understanding with IOM to carry out resettlement activities in Damak, the Nepali town closest to the camps (IOM, 2009). According to Christer Lænkholm, “the Nepalese authorities have consistently seen the refugee as the responsibility of the Kingdom of Bhutan and have pressed for resettlement and repatriation as a solution, not integration”.

The program to resettle Bhutanese refugee living in Nepal, one of UNHCR’s largest and most promising resettlement programs began in November 2007. Since then more than 30, 000 refugees have already expressed their interest for resettlement (UN News Center, 2009). IOM organizes the refugee departure in cooperation with the resettlement countries and UNHCR. IOM processes individual refugee resettlement cases in the resettlement countries, conducts health assessments and cultural orientation courses based on the requirements of each resettlement country and organizes all transportation from the refugee camps to final destinations (IOM, 2009).

IOM organizes about 1,500 refugee departures every month by charter flight from eastern Nepal to Kathmandu. From there it then takes the refugees from Kathmandu to their final destinations on commercial flights (IOM, 2009). Until 2009, about 22, 060 refugees from Bhutan left their camps in Nepal for resettlement in USA, 1,006 for Australia, 892 for Canada, 316 for Norway, 305 for Denmark, 299 for New Zealand and 122 for the Netherlands (ibid.). Every year Norway accepts a certain number of refugees recognized by UNHCR.



Figure 2.11: Resettlement of Bhutanese refugees in Norway (Time Zone Map, n.d)

## 2.6. Quota Refugees in Norway

Under the quota refugee program, Norway admits about 1000 refugees per year (Gibney, 1990, p. 10). The Norwegian quota refugee system has been aided enormously by the orderly and systematic nature in which it has been run. The numbers that are established have not changed. The quota refugees live in refugee camps before they are resettled in society where they learn Norwegian history, culture and language, which greatly aid their acceptance into Norwegian society (Gibney, 1990, p. 5).

There are both positive and negative sides connected with the Norwegian quota system. The positive side is that Norway is providing vital assistance to help with the refugee problem. It is admitting 1000 refugees per annum on the quota basis. The drawback is that the quota refugee program has allowed Norwegian officials to ignore the other refugee's admissions. Assuming

that there are a finite number of refugees who can be received by Norwegian society and that for every refugee who is admitted, some other refugee from somewhere else will not be able to gain admission because Norway is taking only certain number of refugees (Gibney, 1990, p. 5).

Bhutanese refugees are accepted on a quota refugee program. They spend some time in a refugee center where they become familiar with Norwegian culture, tradition, language, etc. After that they are settled in community.

## **2.7. Resettlement Policy in Norway**

Norway offers resettlement opportunities within annual quotas. According to UDI (Norwegian Directorate of Immigration / Utlendingsdirektoratet) (2005), a resettlement refugee is a person who risks persecution in his or her home country, and who stays in another country where he or she cannot be granted permanent residence or be safe, and who is therefore resettled in a third country. The difference between asylum seekers and resettlement refugees is that most resettlement refugees have had their case processed and have been recognized as refugees by the United Nations Nation High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The size of the annual quotas is set by the parliament following proposals made by the Ministry of Labor and Social Inclusion (AID). The annual quota is 1, 200 each year (ibid). AID allocates the annual quotas taking into account the advice of UNHCR and Norwegian government agencies, notably the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (UDI) and the Directorate of Integration and Diversity (IMDi). Within this quota, UDI resettles refugees in close co-operation with UNHCR. Most offers of resettlement are made on the basis of UNHCR referrals (UDI, 2005).

In order to get the resettlement opportunity to go to Norway, refugees need to meet certain criteria. The criteria are:

- Refugee must meet criteria of the 1951 UN Convention or be granted a permit (subsidiary protection)

- He/she should be in need of resettlement.
- Exclusion- persons that come under the exclusion clauses of the 1951 UN Convention. A person is excluded if he/ she committed a crime against peace, a war crime or a crime against humanity, of he/she has committed a serious non-political crime outside the country of refuge prior to his/her admission to the country as a refugee or he/she has been guilty of acts contrary to the purposes and principles of UN, shall, as a rule, not to be considered in the short term as well as in a longer perspective.
- State security- Norway will not accept persons who are deemed to be a threat to state security.
- Behavior- Persons of known criminal behavior or heavy drug users are, as a rule, not to be offered resettlement in Norway.
- Female profile- 55% of the total resettlement places should be allocated to women and girls. Furthermore, 15% of all resettled refugees should fall into the category ‘women-at-risk’, excluding dependents (Lloyd-Johnsen, 2004, p. 30).

The average processing time for UDI to make in resettlement cases is 3-4 weeks after reception of the applications.

## **2.8. Refugees policy in Norway**

For many years, many refugees from different countries have been taking refuge in Norway. Norwegian politicians describe its immigration policies as “strict entry – generous stay”. “Generous stay” means if you enter the country you are allowed to stay but entering Norway is like winning a battle’ (Skjeie, 2006). UDI is responsible for the settlement of refugees in Norway. In order to obtain refugee status, a refugee has to fulfil the requirements of the Norwegian Immigration Act. Regarding Norwegian legislation, refugees, who satisfy the requirement of the 1951 Refugee convention, have a legal right to be granted asylum. Section 17 of the Norwegian Immigration Act states that ‘Any refugee who is in the realm or at the Norwegian border has on application, the right to asylum/refuge in the realm’ (UDI, 2005).

## **2.9. Refugee Integration policy in Norway**

### **2.9.1. UNHCR'S Conceptualisation of Integration**

According to the principle established at the International Conference on the Reception and Integration of Resettled Refugees in Sweden (2001), the UNHCR has formulated nine distinct goals to be operationalised in the planning of integration programmes for resettlement countries (Lloyd-Johnsen, 2004, p. 31).

#### UNHCR's Nine Integration Goals

1. To restore security, control and social and economic independence by meeting the basic needs, facilitating communication and fostering the understanding of the receiving society.
2. To promote the capacity to rebuild a positive future in the receiving society.
3. To promote family reunification and restore supportive relationships within a family.
4. To promote connections with volunteers and professionals able to provide support.
5. To restore confidence in political systems and institutions and to reinforce the concept of human rights and rule of law.
6. To promote cultural and religious integrity and to restore attachments to, and promote participation in, community, social, cultural and economic systems by valuing diversity.
7. To counter racism, discrimination and xenophobia and build welcoming and hospitable communities.
8. To support the development of strong, cohesive refugee communities and credible refugee leadership.
9. To foster conditions that support the integration potential of all resettled refugees taking into account the impact of age, gender, family status and past experiences (ibid).



## **The essential elements of an Integration Programme**

- Placement: advance selection and development of placement communities.
- Reception: arrangements for meeting resettled refugees on arrival and helping them with initial accommodation.
- Assessment and early social support: systems and resources for assessing the need for and providing early settlement support; family reunion provisions.
- Income support and establishment resources: financial assistance to meet household establishment costs and income support prior to paid employment being secured.
- Language assistance: interpreters, translators, bilingual workers and volunteers.
- Language training: language instruction for children and adults; education for school-aged children and young people.
- Orientation: per-arrival orientation and presentation of written material; post arrival orientation.
- Housing: longer-term housing
- Employment and Training: employment placement assistance.
- Health: health care on arrival and arrangements for ongoing care.
- Hospitable and welcoming communities: provision for issuing entry visas, travel and identity documents and permanent residence status for those offered resettlement, a media strategy (ibid).

The above points are essential in an integration program, and therefore the Norwegian government is following it in its integration program.

### **3. Chapter III: Theoretical framework**

#### **3.1. Bhutanese refugees and theories on international migration**

There are different theories on migration but not all of these theories cover forced migration similar to the Bhutanese refugee situation. The study will focus on *Identity Theory*, but it will also try to analyze other theories, which might be related to the migration of Bhutanese refugees.

##### **3.1.1. Network Theory**

According to Massey (1993), “Migrant networks are sets of interpersonal ties that connect migrants, former migrants, and non-migrants in origin and destination areas through ties of kinship, friendship, and shared community origin. They increase the likelihood of international movement because they lower the costs and risks of movement and increase the expected net returns to migration”. Many migrants emigrate because those who are connected with them have already emigrated. Bhutanese refugee’s migration to Norway can be linked with *Network Theory* because networks can also attract possible migrant through demonstration effects. If other Bhutanese refugees had not decided to resettle in other countries, the resettled Bhutanese refugees in Norway might not have applied for resettlement in Norway. So, we can argue that a *Migratory Network* somehow influenced Bhutanese refugees to resettle.

#### **3.2. Theorizing Identity**

According to Philip Gleason (1983), identity is important when talking about immigration and ethnicity, but it is difficult to define what is meant by identity. Gleason describes ‘identity as a new term, as well as being an elusive and ubiquitous one’. Identity is a discussion about the questions ‘who am I and where do I belong?’ As Erikson noted in 1950, ‘we begin to

conceptualize matters of identity at the very time in history when they become a problem (Gleason, 1983, p. 928).

Stuart Hall describes identity as not “an already accomplished fact” but “a production which is never complete” (Lloyd Johnsen, 2004, p. 13)

According to Finn S. Nielsen (2000), Identity is ‘what a person identifies with’ and thereby understands him or herself as ‘a person’s identity is constructed in society, or in meetings between the self and the generalized other. In addition to individual identity, different collective identities exist and are constructed in meetings with other groups (Pedersen, 2011, p. 48).

The meaning of identity in the Oxford English Dictionary is ‘the sameness of a person or thing at all times or in all circumstances; the condition or fact that a person or thing is itself and not something else; individuality, personality’ (Gleason, 1983, p. 911).

In identity theory, the self is reflexive in that it can take itself as an object and can categorize, classify, or name itself in particular ways in relation to other social categories or classifications. Identity is formed during this process of self-categorization or identification (Stets & Burke, 2000). The core of an identity is the categorization of the self as an occupant of a role, and the incorporation, into the self, of the meanings and expectations associated with that role and its performance (Ibid). These expectations and meanings flow from a set of standards that guide behavior. In addition, as McCall and Simmons make clear, the naming within identity theory includes all the things (including self and other) that take on meaning in relation to our plans and activities. More recently, identity theorists have drawn on this meaningful relationship between persons and things to incorporate the concept of resources (things that sustain persons and interactions) as a central component in identity processes. Much of the meaningful activity within a role that is governed by an identity revolves around the control of resources; this feature as much as anything, defines the social structure (Stets & Burke, 2000).

In a more popular language one’s identity is composed of the self views that emerge from the reflexive activity of self-categorization or identification in terms of membership in particular, groups or roles (Stets & Burke, 2000).

According to Finn S. Nielsen (2000) quoted in Pedersen (2011, p. 48), identity is ‘what a person identifies with’ and thereby understands him or herself as ‘a person’s identity is constructed in society, or in meetings between the self and the generalized other. In addition to individual identity, different collective identities exist and are constructed in meeting with other groups.

According to Erikson, identity formation began where the notion of ‘identification’ left off. One of the areas where identification may most easily take place is that of social values and attributes. Identification is about what our society or parents told us and how we accept it. Erikson argues that identity was not the same as role playing, it was not just self-conception or self-image, and it was not simply an answer to the faddish question, “who am I?” (Gleason, 1983, p. 915).

Identity can be classified in different categories; ethnic identity, gender identity, etc. According to Richard Alba (1990), ethnicity is a symbolic entity “concerned with the symbols of ethnic cultures rather than with the cultures themselves”. Alba argues that symbolic ethnic identity can change according to the different situation and the social needs (Cerulo, 1997, p. 389).

Place of origin as well as refugee history can influence identity. Economic, social, political and cultural relationships that refugees encounter in their host countries can also influence identity formation (Hanafi, 2010).

### **3.3. Bhutanese refugees and identity formation**

What is the identity of Bhutanese refugees in Norway? Are they as Kurahashi (2005) mentioned, “in between”? Are they Bhutanese-Nepalese or Bhutanese- Norwegian or Bhutanese refugees?

How do Bhutanese refugees form or reshape their identity in order to survive in Norway, a country which is vastly different from their own country and Nepal, where they took refuge before they were resettled?

McDowell (1999) looks at the concept of identity in relation to displacement. The author discusses research that is done on the interaction between populations of migrants, refugees and host populations. McDowell argues that “migration changes individual and group identities, affiliations and cultural attributes and practices, among both the mobile population and the

‘host’. McDowell concludes by saying, “movement involves the remapping of cultural identities and practices for all those involved” (Lloyd-Johnsen, 2004, p. 14)

The central thread of the multi-vocal, multicultural, multi-racial work connects together issues of identity, home and language (Kurahashi, 2005, p. 86).

According to Stuart Hall defining individual ‘identity’ is as a ‘production’ that is never complete; it is always part of a process, and is always constituted within, not outside, representation. Elinor Ochs who is a linguistic anthropologist, explains that people “construct satisfactory lives and a coherent sense of self-plot of the manifold, shifting, momentary identities” that are multiple, yet perfectly compatible. On cultural identity, Hall and Ochs – analyze identities in the context of power, institutions, politics, language, ethnicity, and race. They maintain that we all experience “constant transformation” and have various cultural makers of “unstable points of identification” (Kurahashi, 2005, p. 87).

Kurahashi mention that participants (who had migrated to Germany in their early age, or they are second or third-generation immigrants) in the drama *Undesirable Elements- Berlin* reveals that their sense of individual identity are fluid, changeable, yet directly connected to their homelands, despite the fact that German laws and policies have historically tried to impose compartmentalized and ethnically categorized labels. Participants’ stories highlight how their ethnic names play a significant role in the process of (re)forming their individual senses of identity. Sometimes they reject their names, often they are fiercely attached; but no matter the reaction, each participant demonstrates a unique and tenacious link to his or her ethnic names. Ethnic names are symbolic and significant because they are the first form of assigned self-identification and one of the one constant that travel with them through time and across diverse geographies and cultures (Kurahashi, 2005, p. 87). Are Bhutanese refugees also going through the same (re)formation of their identity? Do their ethnic names link them to their homeland, even though they are trying to form a new identity in Norway? Do they have a complex relationship with their ethnic name because it is easy to guess and make them different from the majority?

According to Blazan, a participant of *Undesirable Elements- Berlin* –you can change your name because your identity changes all the time. There are many phases in your identity formation

(Kurahashi, 2005, p. 89). Identity cannot be fixed; it changes according to time, the situation and your comfort.

The mother tongues embody the plurality and ‘multiculturality’ and multi-geography of the people’s history, culture and individual identities of a people. As a social constructivist linguist Elinor Ochs argues: “Language acquisition is closely tied to social identity” and social identity manifests itself as “a range of social personae, including social statuses, roles, positions, relationships, and institutions and other relevant community identities” (Kurahashi, 2005, p. 97).

Identity as a rational construction implies certain transnational linkages, shifting location, image representation, power relations, self-perception, social and legal positions (Lloyd-Johnsen, 2004, p. 14).

These aspects influence migrant identities, and they start forming new identities. Identity construction is linked with integration. The identity construction is influenced by the host society attitude and perceptions towards refugees.

### **3.4. Acculturation**

Acculturation was initially studied almost entirely within the discipline of anthropology; it is now an important concept in the fields of ethnic studies, social psychiatry, cross-cultural psychology, etc., (Yang, 2008). For the past century, the predominant conception of acculturation has presumed that minorities react to prolonged intercultural contact by assimilating to the dominant society, by separating from it, or by becoming bicultural, either successfully as bicultural integration or unsuccessfully as bicultural marginalization (Rudmin, 2006).

According to Redfield (1936), ‘acculturation comprehends those phenomenon which results when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original cultural patterns of either or both groups. Acculturation can be conceived to be the processes of cultural learning imposed upon minorities by the fact of

being minorities (The Titi Tudorancea Bulletin, 2010). According to Berry, when people of many cultural backgrounds come to live together in a diverse society, when an individual move between cultures, he or she is required to make psychological adaptations and to start an acculturating process in the host country. The term acculturation has been coined to describe all the processes of change that take place when individuals of different ethno-cultural groups come into prolonged contact with one another (Yang, 2008).

According to Lonner and Berry (1987) quoted by Yang (2008), some key elements can be distilled from these definitions. First, there needs to be *contact and interaction* between two cultures. Secondly, the result is some change in the culture or psychological phenomenon among the individual who come in contact with other cultures. Third, there is an activity during and after contact, which is a *dynamic ongoing process*. Hence, acculturation is a process that takes place over time, and results in changes both in the culture and in the individual.

### **3.4.1. Acculturation Theories**

There has been increasing international migration over the last few decades throughout the world. According to Berry (1997) acculturation is becoming recognized as a universal human process that impacts on all people globally. In order to understand this dynamic and accelerating process, it is necessary to examine the major theories of acculturation in the literature. The theoretical conceptualization of acculturation has shifted away from a one-dimensional assimilation model, towards an understanding that acculturation is a complex, multi-faced process (Yang, 2008).

Berry (1980) expanded the view of acculturation to include varieties of adaptation and specifically identified the following four: assimilation, integration, rejection, and de-culturation. The importance of Berry's model was that it recognizes the importance of minorities in multicultural societies, emphasizing that minorities have a choice in the matter of how far they are willing to go in the acculturation process (Padilla & Perez, 2003, p. 37). According to Berry, while acculturation is a neutral term in principle (that is, change may take place in either or both

groups), in practice acculturation tends to induce more change in one of the groups than in the other (Berry & Sam, 1980).

According to Mofel, if individuals show more knowledge of their heritage cultures than they do of the new contact cultures, the model holds that they are less acculturated; similarly, if the person possesses more knowledge of the host cultures, then they are more acculturated (Padilla & Perez, 2003, p. 38).

More recent researchers point out that the conceptualization of acculturation allows for bi-dimensional or multidimensional conceptualization while emphasizing culture pluralism. Acculturation is regarded as a multidimensional process that includes an orientation or 'attitude' toward both the ethnic group one belongs to and the larger society, as well as towards other ethnic groups (Yang, 2008, p. 27).

Currently, the most popular and widely used bidimensional model is that of Berry that uses the concept of the dimensional model, where culture maintenance and cultural adaptation constitute relatively independent dimensions; increasing identification with one culture does not necessarily require decreasing identification with the other. It has been suggested that researchers pay attention to acculturation as an important variable that can influence individual's values, whereas investigations of acculturation use more multidimensional conceptualizations in an effort to understand the cultural orientation and functioning better (Yang, 2008 p. 28).

In this study attempts are made to analyze whether Bhutanese refugees are going through these kinds of acculturation processes. How are their culture and traditions affected when trying to adapt to Norwegian culture and traditions? Do the children of Bhutanese refugees prefer to communicate in the Norwegian language rather than their mother tongue?

### **3.4.2. Acculturation strategy/ model**

According to Barry and Sam (1980), there are four types of cultural orientation that can occur as an outcome of the acculturation process: assimilation, integration, separation and marginalization (AISM). According to Berry, immigrants and ethnic groups use different strategies to adapt to the



host society. Acculturation strategies have been shown to have a substantial relationship with positive adaptation. He modified the two underlying fundamental attitudes, referring to them as cultural maintenance and cultural adaptation. Berry argues that immigrants and ethnic groups adapt to cultural change as a result of their contact with the dominant group by using one of four strategies or modes: assimilation, integration, separation and marginalization.

When individuals do not wish to maintain their cultural identity and seek daily interaction with other cultures, then the *Assimilation* strategy is used (Berry & Sam, 1980). It occurs when the maintenance of the original seems to become undesirable, while the adaptation to the culture of the majority group becomes highly important. In contrast, when the non-dominant group places a great value on holding onto their original culture, and at the same time wishes to avoid interaction with others, the *Separation* alternative is defined (when this mode of acculturation is pursued by the dominant group with respect to the non-dominant group, the Segregation is the appropriate term). When there is an interest in both groups for maintaining one's original culture but being in daily interactions with other groups, *Integration* is the option; here, some degree of cultural integrity is maintained, while in contrast the individual seeks to participate as an integral part of the larger social network of a multicultural society. Integrated individuals are called bicultural individuals, who have more fluidity between their culture of origin and the new host culture. Therefore, integration represents a successful transition; balancing the host-country culture with the traditional values of one's own cultural origin. Finally, when there is little possibility or interest in cultural maintenance, and little interest in having relationships with others (often for reasons of exclusion or discrimination), the *Marginalization* is defined (Berry & Sam, 1980, p. 297).

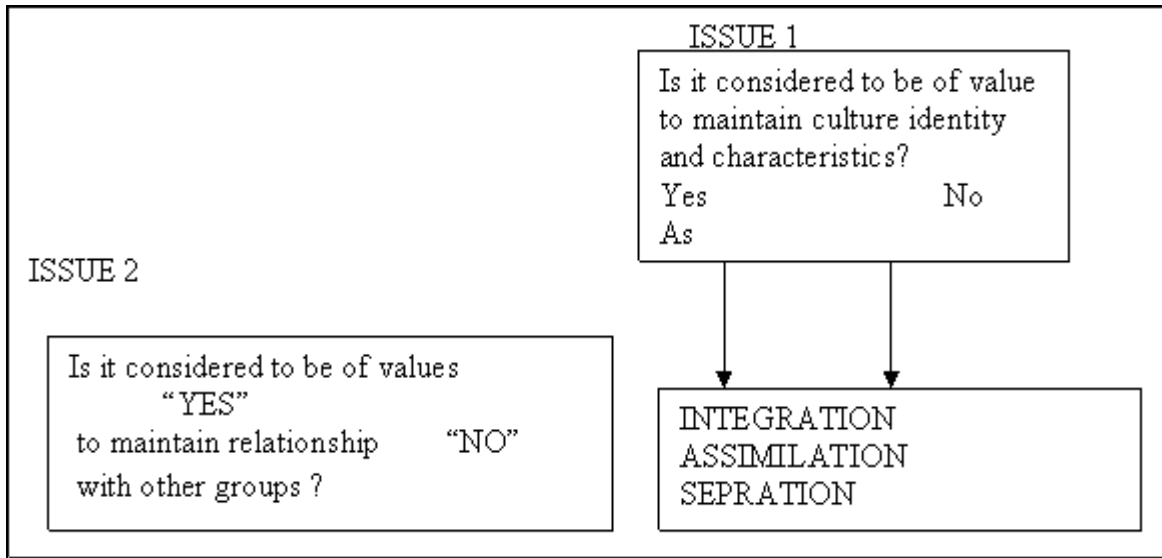


Figure 3.1: Berry's Acculturation model (Berry & Sam, 1980)

## **4. Chapter IV: Discussion and Findings**

### **4.1. Bhutanese refugee condition in Nepal**

The refugee camps serve the basic needs of the Lhotshampa population. Reports of malnutrition and disease outbreaks were common in the first few years after the establishment of these camps but later the situation improved. Due to the extended periods of living time in the camps, the number of chronically ill and psychiatric patients increased. The available camp space became overpopulated and the average area per person became sub-standard (Adelman, 2008).

Bhutanese refugees in camps often lack basic services, they are subject to degrees of ‘ware housing’, the indefensible practice of depriving refugees of the right to earn a livelihood and also their right to move freely and have access to the justice system. Legally, Bhutanese refugees are restricted in their movement and prohibited from traveling outside their camps without Special Permission. In practice, the government tolerates refugee movement outside the camps, but this right can easily be suspended. Refugees are not permitted to work legally, making the pursuit of livelihoods quite difficult. In practice some refugees do work as framers, tradesmen and teachers but the salary of the teacher is lower than those of daily laborers (Adelman, 2008).

Women and children live a hard life in the camp areas. Especially those women that go out from camps and into the jungle in search of firewood face danger. The Nepal’s Maoist rebels operate near the camps and they have a strategy of trying to recruit the younger generation among the refugee into their movement (Adelman, 2008).

Lhotshampas are a relatively well-educated refugee population. Around 13% of the registered refugees have passed the 10<sup>th</sup> grade while 35% of them can communicate in English (Banki, 2008).

Some of the registered Bhutanese refugees are able to obtain Nepalese citizenship through false documents and through intermarriage. Those refugees with some form of citizenship may be less eager to resettle because they have put down roots in Nepal (Banki, 2008).



Figure 4.1: Bhutanese refugees in refugee camp (Leopold, 2009)

Bhutanese refugee conditions were not good in the camps, so they prefer the option of resettling in the third country. They want to have better life and future. According to one of the respondents, if he did not apply for resettlement he always would be in the camp where he and his family had to face scarcity of everything. His children would not have any future. They would be refugees who can speak Nepali but do not have Nepali citizenship.

## 4.2. Bhutanese refugees in Norway

In 2009, there were 316 Bhutanese refugees resettled in Norway (Bhutanese Refugee Resettlement Passes, 2009). According to IOM Norway, the Bhutanese refugees are mainly

located in Oslo, Vadsø, Alta, Bodø, Skien and Bamle (Telemark), Rogaland and Trondheim (Sør Trøndelag).

#### **4.2.1. Language**

Nepali is the most common language spoken by Bhutanese refugees. They also speak the Dzongkha language and English. The young generation does not know much about Dzongkha language as most of them are born in refugees camps in Nepal.

#### **4.2.2. Religion**

The main religion of Bhutanese refugees is Hinduism. 60% of the refugee people follow Hinduism while the remaining 40% of the refugees follow Buddhism, Kirat and Christianity (IOM Damak, 2008). The upper caste Brahmin and Chettri are Hindu by faith and follow caste purity. The non-Brahmins are mostly people of mongoloid descent who can be Hindu or Buddhist (Choden, 2008). Hindu Bhutanese refugees celebrate Hindu festivals like, Dashai, Tihar (festival of light), Akadashi, Holi (festival of color) etc. Buddhists celebrates Buddha Jayanti (Birthday of Buddha), Loshar (New Year) etc.

In Rogaland, some of the refugee are also participating in a weekly *Bhajan* group, a religious group, and eat vegetarian food cooked by the people who are following the Hindu religion. If they go to somebody that is not following their religion, they don't eat food from that house. They are very strictly following the rules of their religion. The young generation is not following these rules to the same degree and eats food anywhere as well as non-vegetarian food. They think that they should be more flexible because they have to live in Norway. Bhutanese refugees are strongly devoted towards their religion and culture, and these aspects also play a large role in their willingness towards integration. If they have to compromise in their religion their resettlement might not be a happy solution for them.

### **4.2.3. Dressing**

The younger generation among the Bhutanese refugees wears western style clothing. Older women wear the traditional Nepali clothes such as sari and men wear daura suruwal (IOM, 2008). Bhutanese refugees in Norway wear Western clothes that are available in the local shops. They wear sari, kurtha surwal or traditional dress at festivals or special occasions but old women wear traditional dresses daily.

### **4.2.4. Family Structure**

Bhutanese refugees have patriarchal families. Male members are the head of the family. According to IOM, an average family size is three persons in the case of Bhutanese refugees. Bhutanese have a joint family as well as single family structure (IOM Damak, 2008).

Bhutanese refugees in Norway have a joint family structure. Parents and children above 18 years live together in one home. Living together is one of their cultural traditions.

### **4.2.5. Age and marital status of the Bhutanese refugees**

Altogether 27 Bhutanese refugees were interviewed and 2 filled out the questionnaire. The Bhutanese refugees in Norway cover the spectrum from new born children to people 80 years old. Bhutanese refugees between the ages of 18 to 75 were interviewed so that the study can get the opinions and perspective of different age groups regarding resettlement. Each person has his/her own opinion. The younger and the older generation have different views which seem due to their age gap and adaptation willingness. In general, the older generation faces more difficulties than the younger generation in regard to the adaptation to the new environment. The older generations are more used to the routines practiced in their previous daily life.

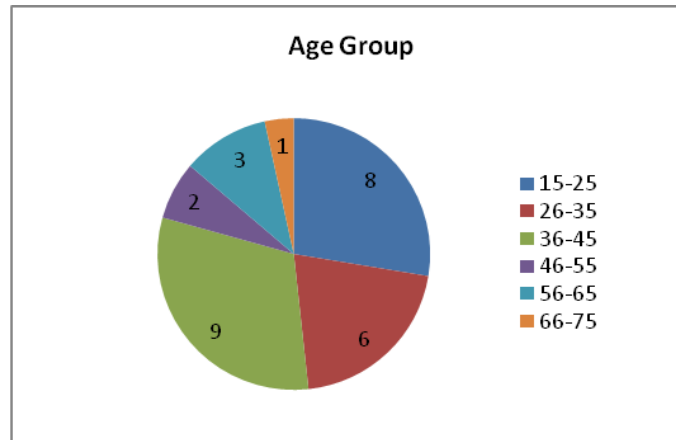


Figure 4.2: Age group of respondents (Source: Field Survey, 2011)

The majority of the respondents are in the age group 36-45 while only person is in the 66-75 age groups. The second largest group is the 15-25 age groups. The respondents in this age group represent the younger generation who are going to schools and colleges.

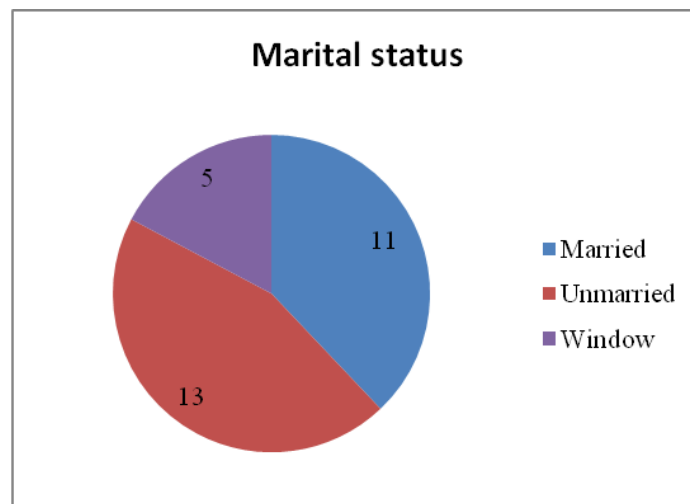


Figure 4.3: Marital status of respondents (Source: Field Survey, 2011)

Five of the Bhutanese refugees who are resettled in Rogaland area are single mothers. According to them, the UNHCR representative in Nepal recommended them to select Norway because of its good welfare system. 13 of the respondents are unmarried and 11 are married. The married

refugees settled in Norway with their spouses and other family members.

### 4.3. Introductory program for integration of Bhutanese refugees

In Norway, IMDi (The directorate of Integration and Diversity / integrerings- og mangfoldsdirektoratet) collaborates with municipalities and the directorates for the satisfactory and stable settlement of refugees. When municipalities settle refugees, they receive grants and accept certain obligations in relations to the refugees in accordance with the Introductory Act (IMDI, 2008). The Introductory Act entitles and obliges newly arrived immigrants to participate in a full-time introduction program for up to two years, with a possibility for a one-year extension. The goal of the introductory program is to provide basic Norwegian language skills and basic insight into Norwegian society and to prepare participants for participation in the labor market. The municipalities and NAV (The Norwegian Labor and Welfare Administration) cooperate closely on the introduction programs for newly arrived immigrants (ifacts 2011, p, 39).

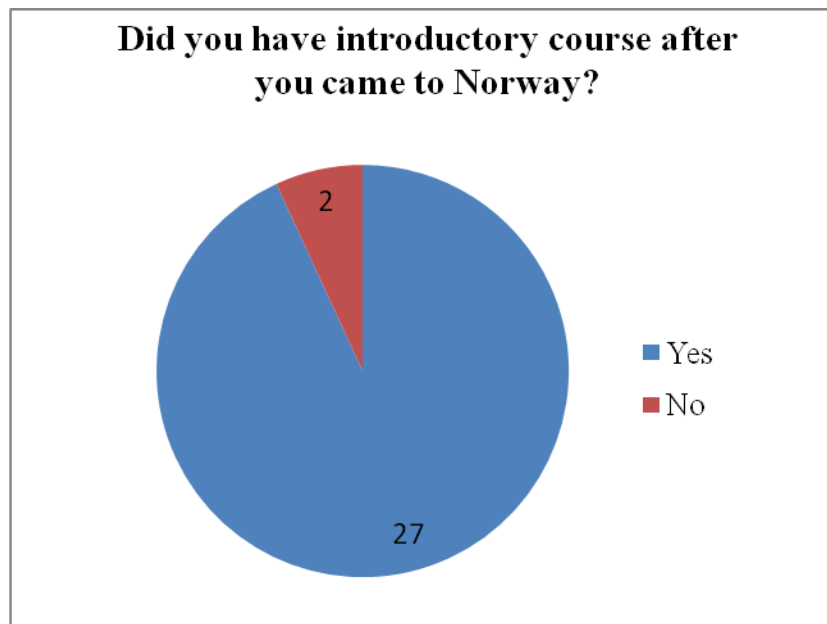


Figure 4.4: Respondents who are taking introductory course (Source: Field Survey, 2011)



Most of the Bhutanese refugees arrived in Norway in 2009, while some of them arrived at the end of 2010. Among 29 respondents, twenty seven respondents are taking introductory courses while two of the respondents are not taking the introductory course because they are over 60 years. According to the Introductory Act, those resettled refugees who are in between 10 to 55 are given an introductory course, while those who are not taking an introductory course are above 55 years. In the introductory course they are learning language, culture, rules and regulations of Norway. Those who came at the end of 2010 are only learning Norwegian language.

All the Bhutanese refugees think that the introductory course is very useful for them. They also get a chance to meet refugees from other countries who are resettled like them. According to them, if they were not given the introductory course, then their life would have been very hard, and they would have regretted very much that they had applied to be resettled in Norway. Overall, they are satisfied with the introductory course provided to them.

The majority of the Bhutanese refugees are not getting any other support then the financial support given by the municipality during the introductory period. Some said that volunteers from NAV (The Norwegian Labor and Welfare Service) are helping them to adjust in a new environment, and this help can be considered as a facility.

#### **4.4. Acculturation of Bhutanese refugees**

According to Redfield, Linto and Herskovits (1936) quoted by Berry and Sam (1980), ‘acculturation comprehends those phenomenon which results when a group of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups’.

According to Berry, acculturation is an important variable in cross-cultural research because it helps to highlight and explain the great heterogeneity existing within ethnic immigrant groups and the crucial point is that not every person in the acculturation group will necessarily enter the acculturation process in the same way or to the same degree. Zan and Mak conclude that most of

the acculturation scales (language use, social affiliation, daily living habits and cultural identity) measured the behavior and attitude aspects of acculturation (Yang, 2008).

Being a refugee group, Bhutanese refugees are adopting to the majority Norwegian culture. Young Bhutanese refugees are more adapted to Norwegian society than their parents. They prefer to communicate with each other in the Norwegian language rather than their original language. In daily use, they use Norwegian words for everything. Bhutanese refugees, who are culturally, and religiously different from the Norwegian majority, are trying to adopt their religion to the new environment. There will always be some questions as to how they are adapting. Are they in the middle of a process of acculturation, and if so- in which groups of acculturation do they presently belong?

#### **4.4.1. Behavior and attitude of acculturation**

Bhutanese refugees are an economically and socially struggling group in Norway because they are not working (see in Figure 4.11 Occupation in section Occupation), and they are trying to socially adjust (see Figure 4.12 Social contacts with Norwegian and Figure 4.13 title-Participation in Social gathering) in Norwegian society. They are scattered throughout Norway, and at the same time, they are a closed community, even separated in the locations where they live. This research tries to analyze in which group they belong if following Berry's acculturation model and also using Zan and Mak's behavior and attitude of acculturation measure.

##### **4.4.1.1. Language use**

Language is necessary for integration and to survive in Norway. In Norway, 'language is a key to integration in Norwegian society' (Sigmundsen, 2008).

According to Blommaert & Verschueren (1998, p. 192), language can be an identity marker and "an unifying force", but it can also be "a battle field". They further explain that language can as well be used as a tool of "oppression & discrimination". Language can make people insiders and

outsiders. Those who do not know the language of a certain community can easily be considered outsiders and might not be accepted in that community.

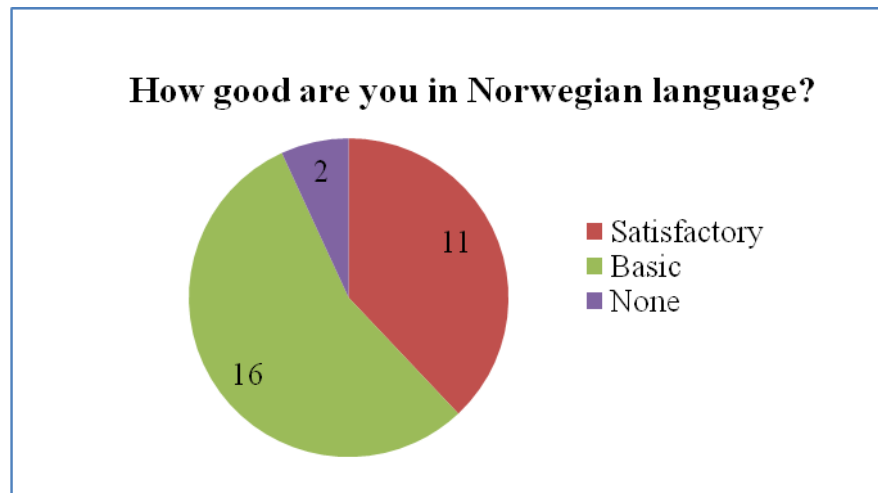


Figure 4.5: Fluency in Norwegian language (Source: Field Survey, 2011)

Among the 28 respondents, the majority think that their knowledge of the Norwegian language is basic while the remaining think that it is satisfactory. Young Bhutanese refugees who are attending schools are mastering the Norwegian language much better than their parents and grandparents. They often communicate with their Norwegian friends in Norwegian and through this practice they improve their Norwegian language skills much faster than the older generations. The older generation mainly communicated with each other. Those who are older than sixty years are not taking introductory courses and they cannot speak Norwegian. All the Bhutanese refugees use the Nepalese language to communicate with each other at home.

All of the Bhutanese refugees think that language is essential for integration in the Norwegian society. The general perspective among the Bhutanese refugee is, 'if you don't know the Norwegian language, it is difficult to survive in Norway because to buy food, to make a friend and to find a job, language is needed'.

Those who are not taking language training, they think that if you don't know Norwegian language, you have to stay at home all the time, this is because if you go out you may get lost,

and it will be difficult to find your way back. One of the Bhutanese refugee women told that ‘if you cannot speak Norwegian language the best way to do shopping is to take 100 or 200 kroner with you and then just give the money to the cashier when you come to the cash register. They think Norwegian people are trustworthy and that they will return the right amount of money back. You neither have to speak with them nor have to ask for the total amount of money’.

Bhutanese refugees know the importance of the Norwegian language and they never miss the language class given in the introductory program. They want to be fluent in Norwegian language and they are working hard to achieve Norwegian language skills.

#### **4.4.1.2. Social affiliation**

Bhutanese refugees organize some cultural activities throughout the year. They are living in different parts of Norway and in each part they have formed a group. Through these groups they organize these events. In Rogaland, they have a group called “Bhutanese group from Haugesund”.

Bhutanese refugees in Rogaland are also a member of a Red Cross society and a sewing and knitting group. They are also members of some health clubs. They are affiliated with their ethnic groups, but they are also trying to be a member of other social clubs in their community. They are interested in being part of the same social groups that their neighbors or friends are members of. They want to make new friends and participate in their social activities.

#### **4.4.1.3. Daily living**

The younger generation of Bhutanese refugees goes to the local school. The ones over schooling age attend the introductory course to learn the Norwegian language. In an introductory course, they learn skills that may help them to earn money. For example some of them are learning cooking, some are learning gardening and some are learning to be hospital helpers. Most of the women are learning cooking. Those who are neither in school nor in an introductory course work at home. Bhutanese refugees were still not very active economically when this research was carried out. They are still depending on municipality support for their living. The respondents

from Alta that filled out the questionnaire are working in restaurants and the cleaning sector in Oslo. Many of them are more economically active than those interviewed in Rogaland.

#### **4.4.1.4. Cultural identity**

Cultural identity is a matter of ‘becoming’ as well as of ‘being’. Cultural identities come from somewhere; they have histories (Brazile & Mannur, 2003, p. 236). According to 2010 The Social Report, n.d, common characteristics and ideas may be clear markers of a shared culture identity, but essentially it is determined by the difference: individuals belong to a group, and a group defines itself as a group, by noticing and highlighting differences with other groups and cultures. Bhutanese refugees are trying to protect their cultural identity by organizing cultural programs and religious gatherings. For them, cultural identity is important because it will give them a feeling of where they come from and who they are. Bhutanese refugees are also trying to make Norwegian friends, an aim in itself but also helping them to understand the Norwegian culture and form a new identity.

Bhutanese refugees are not fluent in language, but they are trying to improve it. They are living in close community but at the same time they are trying to explore outside of their community. They come under integration because on the one hand, they are trying to preserve their culture and tradition while on the other hand; they are interested in learning the majority culture which is Norwegian culture in this case. They realize the importance of the language in Norwegian society and are therefore trying hard to learn it even though it is totally different from their own language. They want to have social contact with Norwegian people, and they are willing to learn the culture, tradition and daily life of Norwegians. Thus they can be considered as an integrated group based on Berry’s model of acculturation.

#### **4.4.2. Factor influencing Bhutanese refugees’ acculturation**

There are many factors that influence the acculturation process such as: gender, socio-demographic status, length of residence in the host country, social support in the new culture,

and discrimination, whether personal or institutional, which affects the amount of stress experienced by an acculturating individual (Yang, 2008).

#### **4.4.2.1. Gender and acculturation**

Acculturation processes may be influenced by gender. Several studies on gender differences in acculturation and ethnic identification reveal that females tend to have a stronger identification with their original culture than males (Dion and Dion, 2001).

According to Yong (2008), women face more problems in a new society compared to men. If they are married, they have to perform the traditional female role of mother and wife. They even lose autonomy due to the economic and linguistic obstacles they face within the host country. Often the ones that depend economically on their husband, experience a feeling of isolation and loneliness. Since the husband work, the wife stays home and does not have so much contact with the outside world.

Female refugees are facing problems in learning because most of them have never been to school. They are not facing isolation and loneliness in Norway due to the close community of Bhutanese refugees. They are meeting other Bhutanese daily so they are not feeling lonely. But they sometime miss their relatives who are still in Nepalese camps.

#### **4.4.2.2. Socio-demographic status**

Socio-demographic factors that have been found to be associated with acculturative stress are age, gender, language competence in host country and social-economic status. Socio-economic status factors, such as education and employment, provide some with resources to deal with the larger society, and these are likely to affect one's ability to function effectively in new circumstances (Yong, 2008).

Bhutanese refugees are located in different parts of Norway and most of them are not economically active. Many of them are getting education and learning skills which might help them to get job in the future.

#### **4.4.2.3. Length of Residence in the Host Country**

According to Aroian, the period of the greatest psychological strain for immigrants is just after their arrival in a new country (Yong, 2008). People start to adapt with their new environment when they start to love their life in the new country.

Bhutanese refugees have been resettled in Norway on a humanitarian basis since 2009. They are a new refugee group in Norway. There are already refugees groups from different parts of the world in Norway – refugees from Iran, Vietnam, Somalia, Palestine, Afghanistan etc., and some of these refugees have been in Norway for a very long time. The old refugees have moved much further along in the adaptation process. The acculturation process is influenced by length of residence in the host country. Bhutanese refugees need some more years before they are better adapted to the Norwegian society.

#### **4.4.2.4. Characteristics of the Host Society**

The characteristics of the host country and their attitude towards immigrants may mediate the stress response and may determine the outcome of the adaptation to the new environment. It is believed that the greater the disparity between the immigrant culture and the host culture, the greater is the acculturative stress (Young, 2008).

According to Bhugra (2004), new immigrants continue to face difficulties with both language and ethnicity, and encounter problems with transferring the qualifications they have already acquired to the home country (Yang, 2008). They are more likely than others to be alienated

from mainstream society and to experience poverty, isolation, depression, domestic violence, and substance abuse. Prejudice and discrimination by the receiving population may also be a source of stress (Yang, 2008). Culturally plural societies with a multicultural ideology and the existence of a broad network of social and cultural groups, may provide support for those involved in acculturation processes and show greater tolerance for or acceptance of cultural diversity (Berry & Sam, 1980; Yang, 2008).

Norway does not show much openness towards immigrants. Norwegian immigration rules are very strict. In order to enter and stay in Norway you have to either be a skilled professional or UN recognized refugee or student or come for family unification. In order to survive in Norway it is necessary for refugees or immigrants to learn the language. If you do not know the language, you will have problems knowing what is going on in society around you, and will also experience problems in the work place or in the kinder garden (Sigmundsen, 2008). Bhutanese refugees have come to realise that Norwegian people are very reserved; they do not open towards immigrants who do not know the Norwegian language and have accepted that fact, therefore it is even more important to learn the Norwegian language in order to improve the social contact with the majority group. The Bhutanese fear alienation in the Norwegian society.

#### **4.4.2.5. Social support**

Some researchers regard social support as ‘social capital- the quantity and quality of interpersonal ties between people’. Previous researchers have confirmed social support as an important concept with a positive relationship with health status and mental health. It is sustained by initiating and enhancing copying behavior and it fosters promotion of an increased sense of personal competence. These factors lead to diminished distress and enhance overall perceptions of well-being. According to Finfgeld-Connett, social support promote interpersonal process that is centered on the reciprocal exchange of information and it is context specific (Yang, 2008).

Bhutanese refugees are getting social support from other refugees. When they are in need, their fellow refugees from their own country help them, and that is also a main reason to prefer to live



close to each other. Whenever they need help and company, they can find other Bhutanese refugees. They are also gradually getting help from their Norwegian friends. As their process of integration in the Norwegian society continues, there will also be an increase in the social support they get from the local Norwegian society where they live.

In conclusion, the Bhutanese refugees are not an old immigrant community. They get social support from both Bhutanese and Norwegian friends. Women have a stronger challenge with learning the language since many of them were illiterate when they arrived in Norway.

In the Norwegian society it helps a lot to know the language to be successfully integrated in the society. Bhutanese are learning language and trying to learn Norwegian culture and tradition. They want to be part of Norwegian society without losing their own identity. Thus it can be said that they are part of an integration process of acculturation.

#### **4.5. Integration of Bhutanese refugees**

The meaning of integration in both social and civil terms rests on the concept of equal opportunities for all. In social–economic terms, migrants must have equal opportunities to lead a life just as dignified, independent and active as the rest of the population. In civil terms, all residents can commit themselves to mutual rights and responsibilities on the basis of equality (Niessen, 2007). Integration means creating links with those who are not from the same community or same place. It is a two-way process where immigrants are included in society, participate in the labour market and have equal opportunities. This requires immigrants to learn the language, getting the right qualifications for work and respect the laws and regulations of the new country. It also requires that the general population accept foreigners as part of a new multicultural environment both at work and in the community (IMDi, 2008).

According to Hageland (2003) quoted by Lloyd-Johnsen (2004, p. 33), “integration policies are necessary to help immigrants to maintain their own culture and identity and to counteract the pressure towards assimilation [...] in Norwegian society”. In a government white paper from

1996-97, integration was described as “a notion that signifies the aim of equality through equal opportunities, rights and duties to participate for all, irrespective of origin”.

Integration involves mixing with the majority culture without losing your own culture and distinctiveness. Both the majority community and the minority community need integration, but both sides need to respect the respective cultures, religions, languages and traditions. Integration is impossible unless both groups are ready to accept each other in the community.

Around the world, there is a debate about how best to integrate refugees. The debate focuses on how they should be integrated and what kind of conditions they should meet to become good citizens of the country. According to the Migration Integration Policy Index (2007), access to labor markets, anti-discrimination, access to nationality, long-term residency, political participation, education, family unification and health facilities are important elements in integration (Niessen, 2007). Using these key points this thesis tries to find out the degree of integration among Bhutanese refugees from Rogaland and Alta.

#### **4.5.1. Access to employment**

During the introductory program, refugees are given different type of training depending upon their qualification and interest. The goal is to prepare refugees for the labor market with the required skills. Refugees are free to select jobs according to their qualification. Recognized refugees may get tax reduction in their first year of residency (Einarsen, 1994, p. 49).

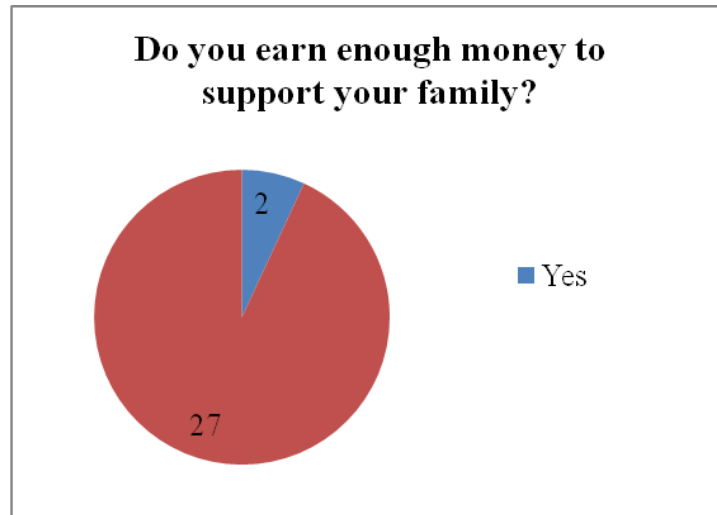


Figure 4.6: Economic condition of Respondents (Source: Field Survey, 2011)

Among the 27 refugees, who were interviewed, the majority said that they don't have enough money to support their family. According to Bhutanese refugees, pensioners gets NOK 11 400, refugees above 25 years gets NOK 10 250 and refugees below 18 years get NOK 1 100 kroner per month. Those who are in high school get student loans to support their daily expenses.

Only the two that filled out the questionnaire and that were working in Oslo thought that they had enough money to support their family.

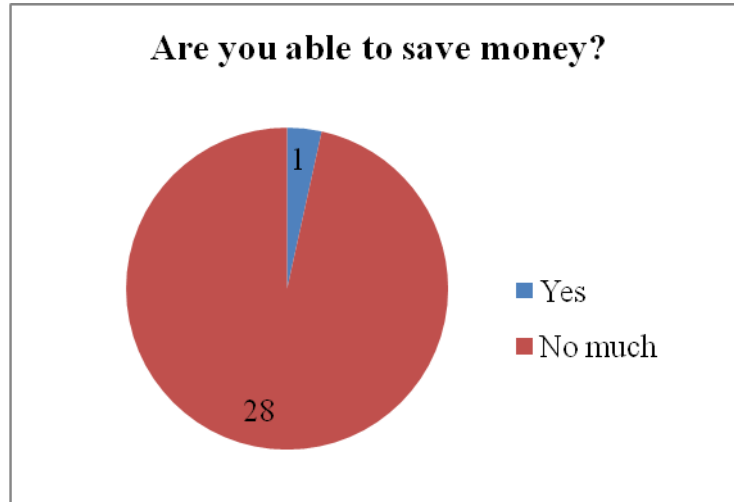


Figure 4.7: Saving among respondents (Source: Field Survey, 2011)

Twenty eight refugees said that they cannot save money on the amount they get from the municipality. Only one respondent said that he can save some money from the job. Those Bhutanese refugees who are in high school /videregående skole said that the money they get as student loan (lånekassen) is enough for them, but they cannot save any money.

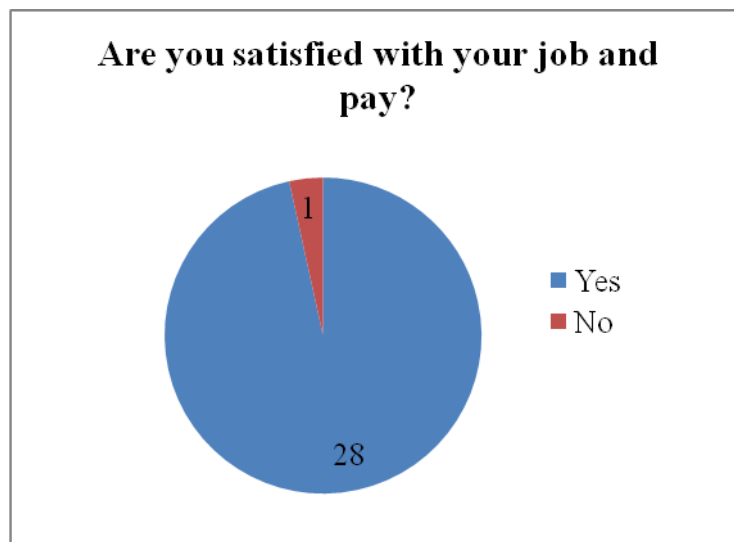


Figure 4.8: Satisfaction of respondents in their income or grants (Source: Field Survey, 2011)

There is only one refugee that is not satisfied with the support she gets from the municipality because she cannot save the money. However, according to her, the support she is getting from her municipality is “good money without working”.

The majority of respondents are satisfied with the support they are getting from the municipality and their job. According to them, if they wanted to live life like the local people then the money they are getting would not be enough for their living. However, they came from much worse economic conditions and in that respect they are satisfied with the benefits that they are receiving now.

#### **4.5.2. Family unification**

Family unification is one of the important aspects of integration. If a refugee migrates alone, then that person might face psychological problems and face difficulty in adjusting to the new environment. That is one of the reasons why family unification is important in integration. In Norway, family reunification with a refugee takes place according to regulations in the Immigration Act. Normally only the closest family members such as spouses and co-habitants that have lived together for at least two years and children less than 18 years of age is granted a residence permit to be reunited with refugees (UDI, 2011, Einarsen, 1944, p. 47).

The Norwegian government has realized the importance of Bhutanese refugee's family values and has allowed them to come with their family members. All of the respondents of Rogaland and Alta resettled together with their family members.

#### **4.5.3. Access to Nationality**

Access to nationality is very important for refugees because they leave their country with the great fear for their future. They lost their identity and have lived their life as a refugee in another

county. The opportunity to apply for nationality gives them a new identity even though they come from a wholly different part of the world.

Bhutanese refugees had to leave Bhutan, even though they were citizens of Bhutan. Most of them either lost or left their citizenship in Bhutan before they took refuge in Nepal. They do not have citizenship of Bhutan and of Nepal either. Therefore access to nationality in Norway is very important to them.

In Norway, to apply for citizenship the person has to meet certain eligibility criteria. Compared with other migrants, refugees enjoy the citizenship facilities if the refugees are recognized by the government. If the refugees want to get the Norwegian citizenship, they have to leave their previous citizenship. In order to get citizenship in Norway, the refugee must have stayed for seven years in Norway with the residence or work permit. If a refugee is married to a Norwegian, then it will take three years to get a citizenship. According to the Norwegian Law, a child does not become a Norwegian citizen automatically, even if he/she is born in Norway. Different rules apply for the citizenship depending on when the child was born. If a child was born after August 31<sup>st</sup>, 2006, he/she can acquire Norwegian citizenship if any of his parents are Norwegian and parents do not need to be married. If the child is born before September 1<sup>st</sup> 2006, he/she will acquire citizenship by birth but on condition that one of the parents is a Norwegian citizen, and that they are married (UDI, 2004).

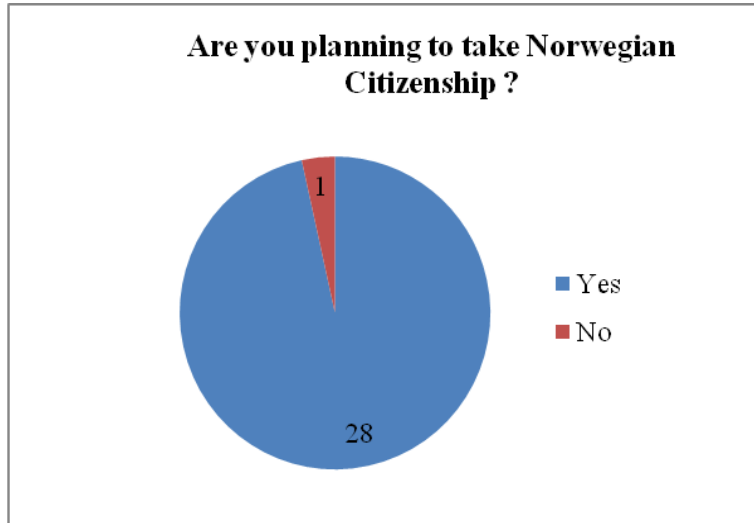


Figure 4.9: Access to nationality (Source: Field Survey, 2011)

Two questionnaire respondents and twenty-seven of the interview respondents are planning to take Norwegian citizenship. They can apply for Norwegian citizenship after seven years of their stay in Norway.

In Nepal, they were living in a camp and were not allowed to go outside the camp. Even though they were descendents of Nepalese who migrated to Bhutan in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Nepal government cannot integrate them due to its Maoist insurgency and developing economic condition. The third-country resettlement of Bhutanese refugees was preferred because then Bhutanese refugees might want to acquire Norwegian citizenship and thereby also develop a feeling of belonging. It is important to them to try to remove the refugee tag from their identity.

“Having citizenship of one country is like having a home, a secure feeling that you and your family members will be safe, a feeling confident that you will not be chased away from there too and also have the more important freedom to travel anywhere”.

Bhutanese refugees only have a refugee travel document (according to UDI, refugees who have been granted protection and refugee status in Norway are entitled to have a refugee travel document). Those who have been granted a travel document are not allowed to contact their authorities in their home country. If they do so, they will no longer be refugees. They can travel

in Europe but cannot travel outside Europe to meet their family members or relatives because they need visa to travel outside Europe. They are not allowed to travel to Bhutan.

The only respondent, Bishnu Upreti (name changed), who is not planning to take Norwegian citizenship, wants to go to India. According to him, he has many relatives in India, and India is near to Bhutan. He is not planning to take Norwegian citizenship because he does not like Norway. He is a Hindu priest and engages in religious activity. He resettled in Norway in 2009 with his family members. In the beginning he was not keen on the resettlement process. His son and daughters thought that the resettlement in Norway would give them more opportunities to improve their career. Bishnu accepted the resettlement because of the opportunities for his family.

He is a Hindu priest and he used to participate in many religious activities in his everyday life while he was living in Bhutan and Nepal. After he moved to Norway he could not continue those activities. He had to limit his religious activities to his own home. For this reason unlike other Bhutanese refugees, he is not planning to take Norwegian citizenship. He misses his religious activities. For him, Norway is *Narke*, which means like hell (in Nepali language). He thinks if you cannot do religious activities, you will definitely go to hell. According to him performing religious activities and worshipping gods will open the door of heaven and also keep your mind at peace. Living in Norway makes it difficult to continue his religious activities that are considered as sin for him.

He thinks Norway is not a suitable country for him to live in because the people in Norway follow Christianity. He cannot find a temple to follow his own religion. He cannot prevent outer influence that impact on his religion. It seems that his religious faith for him is a major hindrance to live in Norway. He would rather prefer to resettle to a country where people follow Hinduism, for example, Nepal or India.



#### 4.5.4. Education

Access to education is very important to enter the labor market. Educated people are important for the development of a country. Access to education can create a skilled labor force needed for the country's development. In Norway, those who go to high school or those that are studying a higher degree get student loans. Access to education is not difficult in Norway.

Schooling is obligatory in Norway. All boys and girls from 6 to 16 must attend school. Most schools and universities are free of charge. All the children of foreign nationals are included in the public school system of nine-year compulsory education and are supposed to participate in the common curriculum as applied at their respective schools (Einarsen, 1994, p. 48).

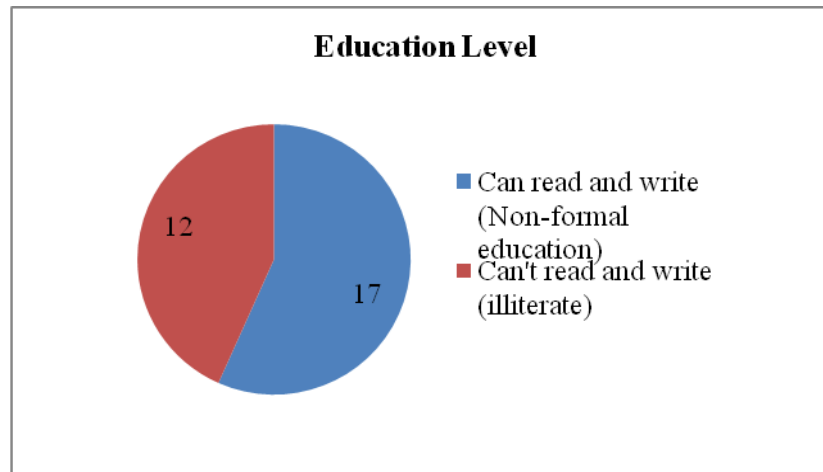


Figure 4.10: Education level of respondents (Source: Field Survey, 2011)

The majority of the respondents can read and write. Twelve of the refugees who were interviewed cannot read and write. Most of them are female. According to them, in Bhutan girls were not given priority in relation to education. Among the young generation of Bhutanese refugees many got education inside the camp in Nepal. Schools there gave education in English, Dzongkha language and other subjects. After they finished schooling, they would have to attend colleges outside the camps because there were no facilities of higher education inside the camps.

Among the respondents, only two people have completed the bachelor degree while another two had finished intermediate level (12 years education).

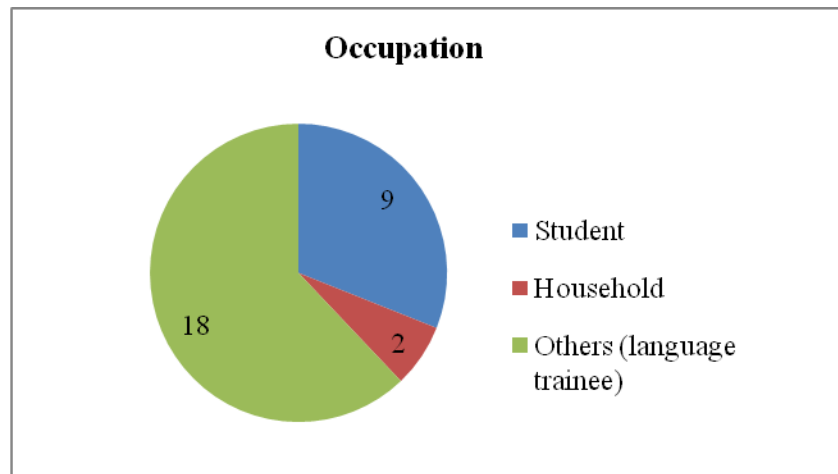


Figure 4.11: Occupation (Source: Field Survey, 2011)

Among 29 respondents, 9 of them are presently attending high school/Videregående skole, while 18 Bhutanese refugees were taking language courses. Their language training is considered as an occupation in this research because they are taking the language training five days a week, and it is a three-year course under an introductory program so it is a kind of occupation for them. Two of the respondents are neither taking language training nor doing anything else because they are above 60 years (see Figure 4.4).

#### 4.5.5. Social contacts with Norwegians

In order to see the social integration of Bhutanese with the Norwegian society, questions regarding their social contact with Norwegian people were asked. Social contact is very important to understand their interaction with the Norwegian culture.

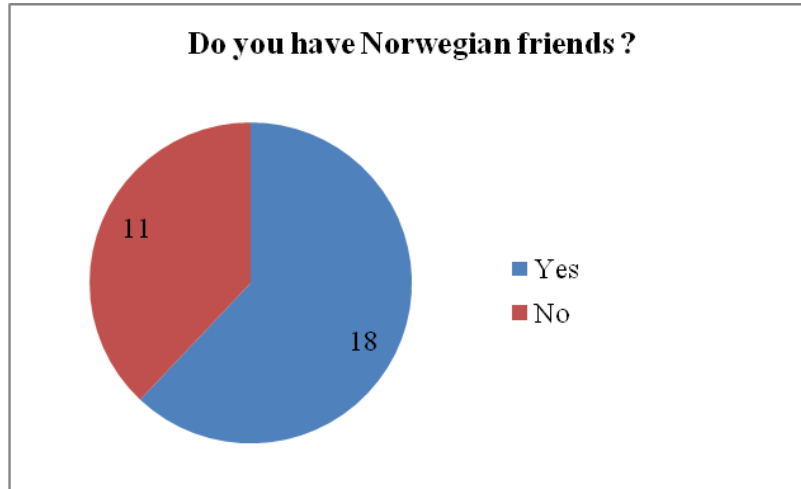


Figure 4.12: Social contacts with Norwegian (Source: Field Survey, 2011)

The majority of the people interviewed have Norwegian friends. Among those who have Norwegian friends are many that are going to Videregående skole. Some have joined a community knitting and sewing group and are taking language courses. Among those that go to language training, they get much help from the teacher and a volunteer regarding how to get better contacts with Norwegian generally. According to Bhutanese refugees it is their experience that Norwegian people are not so open with other people, but on the other hand they are also very reserved among themselves.

Raju Pant (name changed) is a 38 year old Hindu man. He was resettled in Norway in 2010 with his sister-in-law and her family. They arrived in Norway in winter. They stayed inside their house most of the time because it was cold, dark and a lot of snow outside. After a month he was depressed by the weather of Norway because he was used to live in a warm place with sunshine throughout the day. He asked municipality people to send him back to Nepal. He later joined introductory courses and then he started to feel better. When summer came he started to enjoy the weather and places in his surroundings. His homesickness and depression went down. He says his condition was miserable during the starting period because he did not understand the language and he was staying inside the house all the time. He is still attending introductory courses. He is still not fluent in the Norwegian language but now he understands normal conversation in everyday life. That has made his life easier. According to him language is a basic

need if you want live in Norway and if you do not understand the language, you cannot develop social contact with Norwegians and you cannot live in Norway. Social contact with Norwegians is important to live in Norway

All of the immigrants feel that the Norwegian are reserved because all the people interviewed in the immigrant community said so. According to them they feel they are reserved because the only thing their neighbor say to them is ‘hei’ and another reason is everyone (immigrants or refugees) says Norwegian are reserved so Bhutanese refugees also feel like them are reserved. It can be their stereotype on Norwegian.

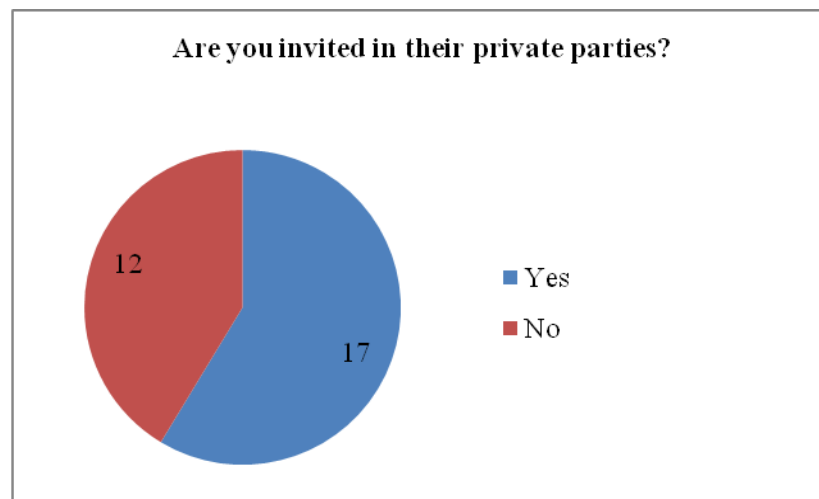


Figure 4.13: Participation in social gathering (Source: Field Survey, 2011)

Bhutanese people are in some cases invited to birthday and Christmas parties by their Norwegian friends. They are also invited to parties that are organized by the sewing and knitting group. According to them, Bhutanese refugees have not invited Norwegian friends to have dinner in their home because they have a different taste of food. They think the Norwegians will not like the taste of their food, which might be too spicy and hot for them.

After living in Norway for more than two years Bhutanese people still eat the same kind of food they were eating in Bhutan and in Nepal.

#### **4.5.6. Anti-discrimination**

Anti-discrimination is one of the methods to measure integration. In a society there might be different groups of people with various religious beliefs and cultures of anti-discrimination regarding the respect of the beliefs of others without discrimination. According to the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Racial Discrimination, discrimination includes any restriction, distinction, exclusion or preference based on race, color, descent, or national or ethnic origin, which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercises, on an equal footing of human rights and fundamental, freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life (Sleeper, 2003, p. 31).

There are two kinds of discrimination- direct and indirect. The European Union Equality Directive defines direct discrimination as what occurs when “one person is treated less favorably than another is, has been or would be treated in a comparable situation on the grounds of racial or ethnic origin”. Direct discrimination is clearly based on the concept of equality as a consistent treatment. The European Union Directive defines- “indirect discrimination as the apparently neutral provision, criterion or practice that would put persons of a racial or ethnic origin at a particular disadvantage compared to others, unless the provision, criterion or practice is objectively justified by a legitimate aim and the means of achieving the aim are appropriate and necessary” (Sleeper, 2003, p.32).

The Norwegian anti-discrimination act covers discrimination in relation to race/ethnicity, religion/belief, national origin, descent, colour and language, but the definitions do not ban discrimination on the grounds of nationality. Ethnic discrimination cases do not get priority for legal aid or interpreters. The act established the Equality and Anti- discrimination Ombudsman and Tribunal, which offers independent legal advice to victims and carries out investigations into their cases, but it cannot take a case to court on behalf of a victim, or bring a case in its own name (Niessen, 2007).

It is important to find out whether Bhutanese refugees feel they are directly or indirectly discriminated against in society. Discrimination cause problems in the integration process so it is important to know whether they are discriminated or not.

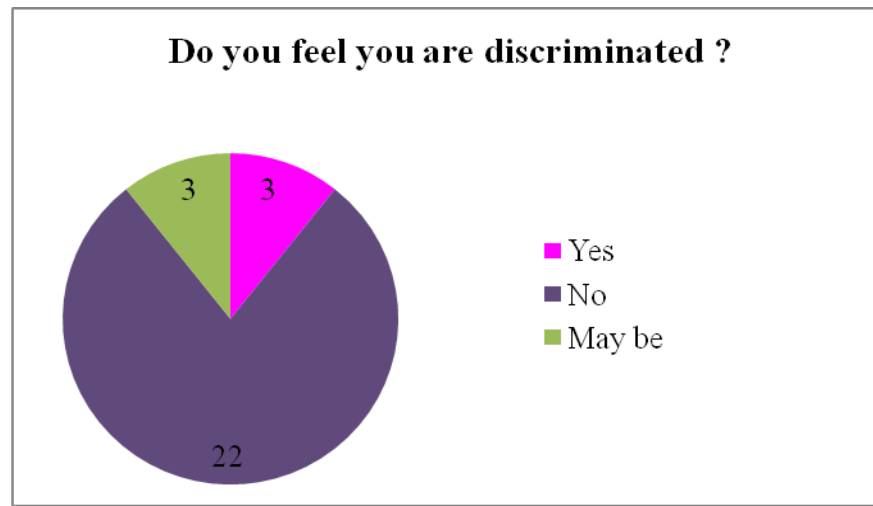


Figure 4.14: Anti-discrimination (Source: Field Survey, 2011)

Among the 29 respondents, twenty two of them think that they are not discriminated against by their neighbors or any other Norwegians. Three of them think that they are discriminated and the other three are not sure whether they are discriminated or not.

According to the respondents, they experienced discrimination in the labor market and in school. One Bhutanese student said that he is discriminated against in class as his Norwegian friends do not talk with him in class. Two others said they felt discriminated because they have difficulty in getting access to the labor market compared with Norwegian people. The majority of Bhutanese has not completed their introductory course and has therefore not tried to enter the labor market yet.

#### 4.5.7. Political participation

Foreigners who have resided in Norway for a period of three years have the right to participate in local elections to vote and to stand for election (Einarsen, 1994, p. 49). Refugees are allowed to establish their own organisation in Norway. They can represent their organisation in the election.

Their organisation is supported by municipalities and the national government. Government informs migrants or refugees about their political rights (Niessen, 2007).

In order to vote in Norwegian municipal elections Bhutanese need to stay in Norway legally at least three years. Bhutanese people are so far more focused on their social than their political condition, and in their opinion, they have not had any time so far to think about Norwegian politics and participation in some political group. According to one of the respondent, he wants to involve himself in Norwegian politics after some time but until that time he will be more focused on his integration in Norway.

#### **4.5.8. Health facilities**

According to UDI, Norway does not exclude refugees on medical grounds. Refugees in refugee camps get health care from government but after settling in society they have to pay for the health services (UDI, 2010).

The Bhutanese refugees of Rogaland are satisfied with the health services provided by the Norwegian government. One of the interviewed women was sick and she got full treatment in her home. According to her, Norwegian health care is very good, nurses and doctors are very helpful and medical facilities are modern. The most important benefit according to her was that you did not have to worry about the sick bill because all health facilities were provided free by the Norwegian government.

#### **4.5.9. Access to residency**

After three years of legal residence in Norway, the refugee may apply for a permanent residence permit. The long-term residency permit is favourable in relation to refugee integration in Norway as it allows a long-term residency, equal access to employment and social security; and it gives them equal rights to move, live and hold a long-term residence permit within the Schengen area.

In Norway, all adult refugees have to pass a language test, take an integration course and show a permanent source of income before they get a permanent residence permit (Niessen, 2007).

#### **4.5.10. Freedom of speech**

Freedom of speech is important for the integration process. If integration involves the political participation of a refugee, then it is necessary that they are allowed to express their views freely. Freedom of speech is not only important in political participation but also important in other important aspects of integration policy for refugees. If refugees are not given a chance to complain about their problems or discrimination they face, then the integration process will not succeed.

According to Bhutanese refugees, freedom of speech is needed as part of integration and they need freedom of speech to be happily resettled in Norway. If they cannot give their true opinion about how they feel, how their situation is in Norway and what they want in Norway, the integration process will fail. Integration means to accept them, their cultures and also that the larger society tries to adjust to them.

#### **4.5.11. Freedom of religion**

Realizing the importance and seriousness of freedom of religion for the integration process, the Norwegian government allows refugees to follow their own religion without interference. The Norwegian government is granting freedom of religion but certain religious practices are restricted (Skjeie, 2006).

Bhutanese refugees are very religious and for them freedom of religious belief is very important. Every Bhutanese refugee has a place at their home where they worship their Hindu gods. Every morning they worship their gods, and after that they start their daily work. They have a special



place in their bedroom where they put either the statue or picture of their god. They organise religious gatherings every week in their community.

According to them, they are happy to resettle in Norway. The only thing they miss from their earlier life in Nepal is a temple and other religious celebrations that they were used to enjoy in Nepal. Religious freedom is very important for Bhutanese refugee integration in Norway.

#### **4.6. 'Integration' for Bhutanese refugees**

For Bhutanese refugees integration means to learn the Norwegian language, having social contact with Norwegian friends and equal access to employment opportunities.

Some of them shared some of their experience with each other after they settled in Norway. When they started learning the Norwegian language, their teacher taught them to pronounce some Norwegian words by making faces. If they were not able to pronounce correctly, the teacher used to hold their mouth and to move at a different angle to teach them. For them it was very funny to see their friends trying so hard to pronounce words.

Bhutanese children learn their Bhutanese national song in refugee camps in Nepal. Only very few of them know the national language. However, they don't want to remember the Bhutanese national song because they want to live in Norway and never want to go back to Bhutan.

The part of Bhutan and Nepal where they lived before never had snow throughout the year so Bhutanese refugees were not used to walk on snow. Two of the respondents broke their bones while walking on snow. One of the respondents broke her leg twice. Especially, some of the women wear traditional Sari, which is not comfortable when walking in the snow. Their view regarding the weather of Norway is

'Everything is good in Norway except the winter season. It is worse for old people who were not used to live in snow. The first time, we were happy to see snow because it felt like a cotton field everywhere but after a month we were depressed by the weather. The days were short and cold. Most of us missed the sun'.

All of the respondents told that the Norwegian people are honest and they won't betray you. They are confident that they won't be betrayed by Norwegian people. That is one of the main reasons that they are happy to be resettled here. Among the resettled refugees, there are some single mothers who are uneducated and for them 'Norwegian society is ideal'.

The first time when they eat bread and boiled potato they feel like crying because they were used to eat hot food with spices. Everyone said that the Norwegian food is healthy. But they are not used to eat this kind of food. They still eat the same type of two Nepali style dal (pulses) and bhat (rice) that they used to eat before. They buy their food, spices and other things from an Asian food shop. They cook food the way they have always cooked food. They feel as if they have settled in a mini Bhutan here within Rogaland. Even though they eat traditional food it does not mean that they don't like bread, boiled potato, etc. They eat it but not frequently. They like to learn about Norwegian food, culture and traditions because according to them, since Norway accepted them and took them out from their miserable condition, they have an obligation to learn what is needed for them to be integrated into Norwegian society.

Bhutanese refugees are also participating in celebrating Christmas and 17th May (constitution day of Norway). Christmas is a big occasion for them to mix with Norwegian people. Bhutanese refugees are trying to participate and celebrate Norwegian festivals and special days.

*Inter-marriage is not needed to be integrated*

Except one respondent, all the respondents think that inter (Norwegian- Bhutanese refugees) marriage is not essential in the process of integration. According to them, integration means respecting each others culture, tradition and religion. The Bhutanese refugee who said that it is needed, she is more interested in Norwegian tradition and culture. In her opinion, Norwegian society is open while the Bhutanese refugee community is religious. She is even planning to adopt Christianity because it is more important to her than Hindu religion.

#### **4.7. Bhutanese refugee's opinion regarding being Norwegian**

There are some political and scholarly debates in Norway about immigrants becoming Norwegian. In general to become Norwegian at least one parent need to be Norwegian or share the same history or need to have Norwegian blood. So questions were asked about what Bhutanese refugees think about being Norwegian.

All of the twenty seven interviewed Bhutanese refugees replied that they are not becoming Norwegian yet. According to them, they are still Bhutanese in their heart and in documents (their travel document shows that they are Bhutanese refugees). They want to live in Norway but at the same time they want to preserve their culture.

According to Bhutanese refugee opinion if they want to be like Norwegians or to be Norwegian

- They have to learn the Norwegian language.
- They should have a Norwegian passport.

#### **4.8. Are Bhutanese refugees “in between”; are they Bhutanese-Nepalese or Bhutanese-Norwegian or only Bhutanese refugees?**

Cultural identity is a matter of ‘becoming’ as well as of ‘being’. Cultural identities come from somewhere, and they have histories (Brazile & Mannur, 2003, p. 236). Common characteristics and ideas may be clear markers of a shared cultural identity, but essentially it is determined by the difference: individuals belong to a group, and a group defines itself as a group by noticing and highlighting differences with other groups and cultures. Any culture defines itself in relation, or rather in opposition to other cultures. People who feel they belong to the same culture have this idea because they rely partially on a common set of norms, but the awareness of such common codes are possible only through confrontation with their absence, namely, with another culture (2010 The Social Report, 2008).

Every culture is continually forced to determine its position (s) toward alien elements, in order to preserve or redefine its entity. The possible step in order to defend the culture is, first a sense of the threat to one's own identity, of alienation. The threatening intrusion by a defensive posture enhances its specificity by heavily emphasizing the otherness of the 'alien' culture (2010 The Social Report, 2008). The research tried to find out how Bhutanese refugees see their cultural identity- are they actively trying to prevent being mixed with the majority group, or are they trying to create a new identity for themselves?

At this stage they are actively trying to protect the cultural identity they had before coming to Norway from outside influences. They are teaching their children their culture, traditions and religion as much as possible. They urge their children to participate in cultural programs and organize events during their festivals so that their children can learn their culture. They also to a degree try to prevent the children from mixing too much with the new culture. This can make them alien in the new society but according to them it is worse 'if they cannot preserve their culture, then their children will forget their origin and their culture and tradition'.

One of the respondents told that he never rejects his identity as Bhutanese, but he rejects his identity as a Bhutanese refugee sometime. If he introduces himself as a refugee to other he feels sad. He is not ashamed to be a refugee, but he feels that it is difficult to develop a new identity. Even though he rejects his identity as a refugee he has a close attachment to his ethnic name. According to him when he applied for a visa outside Europe, he did not get a visa because he is a refugee: but how then can he say his identity has changed?

For Bhutanese refugees the ethnic names are symbolic and significant because the names are part of their identity and the last name will stay with them until they die. According to them, the ethnic name is a constant, and wherever they go or dress, their identity will never change.

They think that their name makes them different from others because they are different in origin. In order to be mixed with the majority community, they do not want to change their name. They would have to make it short so that other Norwegians can pronounce it more easily. For them their name itself is their identity, and that must not be allowed to change.

Even though Bhutanese refugees did not realize that they are going through (re)formation of their new identity in Norway, they are trying hard to adjust to the new society by participating in social groups or in sports. They are more open with their Norwegian class mates than with Bhutanese people because of the strict culture among themselves. They are naming their new-born children in English which shows that they are (re)forming their identity.

Bhutanese do not consider themselves to be ‘in between’, Bhutanese-Nepalese, Bhutanese-Norwegian. In their opinion they are similar to Nepalese in language, facial structure, culture, tradition and religion. However, they do not want to call themselves Bhutanese-Nepali. They do not want to call themselves Bhutanese-Norwegian either because they are living in Norway only from 2009 or they have no citizenship.

The majority of Bhutanese refugees think that their identity as Bhutanese refugees has not changed. They consider themselves as Bhutanese refugees with Nepali origin. Even though their identity is continuously changing as they move to different countries and meet new people with different cultures, Bhutanese refugees think that it will take time to become Bhutanese-Norwegian.

#### **4.9. Bhutanese refugees’ suggestions regarding their integration**

Bhutanese refugees find these points regarding their integration in Norwegian society as important:

- Bhutanese people need to be fluent in Norwegian language.  
The language is the key to be able to do most of the things in Norway. Without language people feel like handicapped. Bhutanese refugees think that language is very important for their integration.
- They must interact with more Norwegian friends rather than being confined within their own community.

Most of the time Bhutanese people hang around with other Bhutanese people. In order to integrate they need to interact with Norwegian friends. If they are only hanging around with other Bhutanese, they will be separated rather than integrated.

- To invite Norwegian neighbors and friends in their homes.

More social contacts with Norwegian neighbors and friends will help them to know each other's culture. Their neighbors and friends might tell them many things that they need to know about Norway. Bhutanese refugees can show through action that they are interested to get to know the Norwegian way of life and they also want to be part of Norwegian society. Most importantly they can tell their Norwegian friends that they also exist in Norway.

#### **4.10. Bhutanese refugees' resettlement is a solution for them**

All of the Bhutanese refugees agree that their resettlement in Norway is a good solution for their miserable condition. The UNHCR and IOM are doing their job to resettle refugees as best they can. The condition in refugees' camps in Nepal was not so good. They had to depend upon the international organizations for everything, for example- food, health services, education, construction material, etc. They were not allowed to go outside the camp and work. Freedom of movement was restricted outside the camp.

According to them, they do not want to go back to Bhutan because they were chased away by the Bhutanese authorities. They love Bhutan because it is their home country, but they have bad memories from Bhutan from the time they were asked to leave Bhutan and they do not want to go back.

Nepal is the country of their ancestors. They met people who had a similar culture, similar traditions and religion in Nepal. However, they were facing economical problems and the political situation in Nepal was not favoring their integration in Nepal.

## **4.11. Comparison between Nepal and Norway**

In order to show if their resettlement in Norway has been a positive or negative decision, some questions were asked regarding their condition in Nepal and Norway. Comparison between Nepal and Norway will help to show their actual condition.

### **4.11.1. Housing condition**

Bhutanese refugees from the Rogaland areas are living in houses which were arranged by their municipality. Bhutanese refugees living in Haugesund, Kopervik and Karmøy have relatively modern houses in comparison to Bhutanese refugees living in Ølen. Ølen is a countryside area and thinly populated. People living in Ølen said that they have great nature and a friendly neighborhood. A total of 5 Bhutanese refugee's families are settled there.

Bhutanese refugees were used to live in houses made of mud, bamboo stick and tin roofs in Nepal. A small camp house was shared by all family members. The toilet was also made with mud and a tin roof. They were not allowed to move freely outside the camp.

### **4.11.2. Dress**

In Nepal, they were used to wear clothes distributed by international organizations. Women usually wore sari or kurtha (a typical women's dress in Nepal) while men wore daura suruwal or pants. In order to wash the clothes, they went to public places.

In Norway, both Bhutanese men and women wear western clothes. According to them the western clothes are comfortable and easy to wash. They are using washing machines to wash the clothes and driers to dry the clothes. They said the washing machine save them much time.

### **4.11.3. Education**

According to Bhutanese refugees, Norway's education system is better than in Nepal. The Norwegian education system has a higher quality and lessons are taught by qualified and experienced teachers. Norwegian degrees provide possibility of employment opportunity in many European countries. The Norwegian government gives loan for a student to do higher education, in Nepal that possibility did not exist. The younger generation has much more opportunities and the hope of a better future in Norway than in Nepal.

### **4.11.4. Access to labor market**

Bhutanese refugees were not allowed to work outside camps in Nepal. Bhutanese refugees worked outside camps without letting the authorities know, and was therefore paid less money than normal work rates. It was difficult to find a job as you had to show your citizenship while applying for the job. If you mentioned that you were Bhutanese, you either did not get the job or you got a lower salary than the usual market price.

It is possible to apply for a job in Norway as a refugee. Refugees were given training during the introductory course and the knowledge acquired helps them finding a job. Knowledge of Norwegian language will help them to get a job. They are not restricted in their access to employment like in Nepal.

### **4.11.5. Citizenship**

Even though Bhutanese refugees were descendents of Nepalese that migrated to Bhutan in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, there is no provision for giving citizenship to refugee in Nepal. Some of the Bhutanese got citizenship by marrying Nepalese men or women but in Norway they can apply citizenship after certain period of time.



#### **4.11.6. Facilities**

Bhutanese refugees are getting financial support from the municipalities. If the money they get every month is not enough they can request that it should be increased and the municipality they live in might increase the amount of money. Volunteers from NAV (The Norwegian Labor and Welfare Administration) are helping them to settle in a municipality. Volunteers teach them how to do shopping in Norway and other daily stuff. They are happy to get such help and all the other facilities.

#### **4.11.7. Norway is in ‘Europe’**

According to the Bhutanese refugees, the negative point of Nepal is that it is a developing country while Norway is highly developed. Everything (houses, road, clothes, education, etc.) is better in Norway than in Nepal. The only disadvantage they have in Norway is that they miss their relatives, traditions and cultures from Nepal.

Based on the observation during my field work, all the interviewed people and their family members are satisfied with living in Norway. No one showed any sign of dissatisfaction or psychological stress. All were busy adapting themselves to a new lifestyle. Every one or two years, they travel to other European countries to visit friends and relatives there. They also travel to other places in Norway like Haugesund, Stavanger, Trondheim, Telemark and Oslo. They are eager to save enough money for traveling. Their house is well furnished and the kitchen is well equipped. All the children are going to local schools. Some of the children are going abroad sometimes with their classmates on tour. Observing the conditions for their resettlement it does not look like misery for them. They are enjoying all the facilities that they get and that they might not have been able to get access to if they were integrated in Nepal or repatriated in Bhutan.

All families were settled together, which is one of the main reasons for their satisfaction with the resettlement. Another point is that many families were settled in the same areas. All the ones in the same area live in walking distance from each other so that they never risk feeling totally lonely in a new country. The final point is their freedom to follow their religion without interference. The Norwegian government provides freedom of religion to all immigrants so Bhutanese do not have to compromise their religious activities which make their settlement happy for them. Sunita Phuyal (name changed), 59 years, is a Hindu mother of four children. She is illiterate and a widow. Her husband died in a refugee camp in Nepal. She heard about the resettlement to the third country during the time when there was debate going on among Bhutanese refugees whether to apply for resettlement or not. The leaders of the Bhutanese refugees in Nepal were against the resettlement because they were still advocating repatriation. Those who applied for the resettlement were criticized and threatened that if repatriation would occur anytime in the future, they would never be allowed to return back to Bhutan.

For the ones who were favoring the resettlement, there was a risk that they would never be sent back to Bhutan if the resettlement application was rejected and if the repatriation occurs anytime in the future. Sunita knew that living with the ones who supported repatriation would be difficult if they were rejected, she still secretly applied for resettlement. When she told this to her children they were not happy. They were used to live in a camp in Nepal with many friends and relatives. They were afraid that they would have to leave their friends and family. However, she had already been through so many challenges in her life, she took a chance.

Her application was accepted. In August 2009 she was sent to Norway with her children. When they arrived in Norway, they were uncertain how to start their new life in a totally unknown country. They were afraid of the challenges they had to face in Norway during the process of settlement. She thinks that they have gone through all of those challenges and finally started to get used to living in Norway.

Now her children go to school every day and they are planning to receive higher education. She is learning the Norwegian language. They receive support from the municipality. She is very happy that her children are getting education and she thinks it will lead them to a better career in the future. This would never have been possible if they continued to live in the camp in Nepal.

According to her, resettlement in Norway was the best decision she had made after leaving Bhutan.

The increase in their standard of living, the modern facilities and the high level of income compared to Nepal are other important points that make Norway better than Nepal. All the above points prove that they are happy with their resettlement in Norway compared with continuing to live in a refugee camp in Nepal.

## 5. Chapter V: Recommendation and Conclusion

### 5.1. Recommendation

Bhutanese refugees have been happy with their resettlement in Norwegian society. They are trying to integrate into the Norwegian society. Some recommendations for the successful integration of Bhutanese refugees are:-

A) For Norwegian municipalities

- Literacy courses: – Most of the Bhutanese refugees are uneducated. They need to have basic education. The introductory course in Norwegian does not seem to be sufficient. They need to have some long term basic education courses along with their Norwegian language course.
- Social gathering: - The municipality needs to organize more social activities so that they can introduce themselves to Norwegian people. If municipalities are not organizing such activities, there will be a risk that they will just limit themselves to contacts with their own Bhutanese community.
- Economically active:- Bhutanese people are only focused on the introductory program. It would be better if younger people (who learn Norwegian language quicker and are more productive) are taught skills that they can use to enter the labor market quicker.
- Introductory program: - During the introductory course period (one to three years) they have little contact with other people. They are busy with their courses and trainings. It would be better if they were also put into training groups and sports clubs so that they can make new friends and socialize with others.
- Information about Norway: - IOM is responsible for giving general information for Bhutanese before they come to Norway. This might not be enough information for them. Most of them still feel that it is difficult to adjust to the Norwegian weather. If they are

provided with more detailed information, especially about how to cope with the difficulty winter time, it would be more easy for newly arrived Bhutanese refugees to deal with it.

- Settlement in cities: - Some of the Bhutanese refugees were resettled outside cities where very few people are living so it is difficult for them to socialize with other people. If they were settled in cities, it might be easier for them to socialize.
- Language: - People who are over 55 are facing difficulty in learning the Norwegian language. Volunteers should motivate them to learn the language. They are depending on younger people for everyday activities because they cannot express what they want.

B) For Bhutanese refugees

- Organizing social activities:- Bhutanese refugees need to organize some social activities, cultural programs and invite Norwegian friends and their families so that more people will know about their culture and life style. Similarly Bhutanese people can learn about the Norwegian culture from them.
- Participate more actively in different clubs and social events:- Bhutanese refugees need to join some clubs (sports, culture) etc., so they can meet Norwegians and people from other countries. They should also try to participate in the events that their Norwegian friends organize in order to get to know more about Norway.

## 5.2. Conclusion

Bhutanese refugees are satisfied with their resettlement and that they moved away from the camp life in Nepal. They have a hope to get a new identity in Norway. They want to get Norwegian citizenship in the future. Bhutanese refugees took refuge in Nepal in 1991 because the majority of them were descendants of Nepali that had migrated to Bhutan. The Migration Integration Policy Index (2007) takes family unification, health faculties, education, access to residency, access to nationality, anti-discrimination, political participation and family unification as important measures of integration. It was realized that the freedom of speech and freedom of religion is essential for the integration of Bhutanese refugees, and all of this they have been

given in Norway. This makes it easy for them to adjust in a new society. It is very important for them to enjoy religious freedom because they are a religious people and one of the reasons they had to leave Bhutan was that they refused to leave their own religion. Freedom of speech and freedom of religion in Norway is making their life easier. Bhutanese refugees think that their original identity has not changed much and they do not feel that they are 'in between'. They think that they are still Bhutanese. They do not think they are 'in between', which means between two identities (e.g. Bhutanese-Nepalese or Bhutanese-Norwegian). The main reason that Bhutanese refugees fled from Bhutan was that they did not want to accept the Druk culture that was forced upon them by the Bhutanese government. They do not want to call themselves Bhutanese-Norwegian, except for one of the refugee interviewed; all of them want to take Norwegian citizenship. This is two contrary arguments and shows their confusion relating to their identity in the long term. This is one of the important issues that should be taken care of during the long term integration process. They are enjoying good housing conditions, sufficient clothes, education, facilities, access to the labor market and financial support from the Norwegian government and they also have access to citizenship. They would not have got these facilities if they were repatriated in Bhutan or integrated in Nepal. Their children are studying in Norwegian schools with a high standard, and they are enjoying the facilities they are receiving in Norway. Seen from the point of the Bhutanese refugees, the resettlement of Bhutanese refugee has not meant misery to them but has been a solution to their miserable life in refugee camps. However, it is bit early to conclude and it will take some more years to evaluate if the resettlement in Norway has been a happy and good solution for all involve.

## Annex:

### Questionnaire and interview questions for the Bhutanese refugees

#### Place

State:

Commune

#### 1. GENERAL INFORMATION:

- (a) Name :
- (b) Caste :
- (c) Age : Gender:
- (d) Occupation :
- (e) Education Level : Class/level:
- Can Read and Write (Non-formal Education)
- Can't Read and Write (illiterate)
- (f) Marital Status :
- Married  Unmarried
- Divorced  Separated
- Other (pls. specify, if any)
- (g) Resettled
- With family member  Alone
- Family member join later

#### 2. SPECIFIC INFORMATION:

##### I. Settlement in Norway

1. Number of years or months you started living in Norway?
2. Did you receive introductory program when you came to Norway?  
Yes No

2. If yes, for how long did you take the course?
  
3. What type of course is it? Did you learn the language, history, social behaviour, religion, laws, rule and regulation of the country?
  
4. How useful was the introductory course in your practical life?
  
5. Are you getting any special facilities from the Norwegian government for being a refugee?

## **II. Social condition**

6. How good are you in the Norwegian Language?

Fluent

Satisfactory

Basic

7. Do you have Norwegian friends?

Yes

No

8. How is your neighbour and work mate behaviour towards you?

9. Are you invited in their private parties?

Yes

No

10. Do you feel you are discriminated by local people being an immigrant?

11. Do you feel, you are integrated in Norwegian society?

## **III. Citizenship**

12. Are you taken or planning to take Norwegian citizenship?



Yes

No

13. If yes, why are you planning to take Norwegian Citizenship?

14. If No, are you planning to go back?

Yes

No

15. If yes, where in Nepal or Bhutan?

#### **IV. Economic status**

16. Do you earn enough money to support your family?

Yes

No

17. How much money do you think sufficient for your monthly expenses?

18. Are you able to save money from your salary?

19. Are you satisfied with your job and pay?

#### **V. Comparison between Nepal and Norway**

20. How do you feel after resettling here?

21. Do you think UNHCR is doing the right things by resettling Bhutanese refugees in third countries?

22. What differences do you find between Nepal and Norway?

23. What are the advantages or disadvantages of Norway and Nepal?

Norway:

Nepal:

24. If Bhutan allowed Bhutanese refugee to return home are you interested to go back? If yes why?
25. In your opinion, what must be done so that Bhutanese refugees get better integrated into Norwegian society?
26. Lots of people think resettlement is not the solution rather cause of misery for the Bhutanese refugees, do you agree with this? If yes, why? If not, why?
27. Do you think fluency in the Norwegian language will help you to integrate in the society?

### **Identity**

28. How you can keep your identity as Bhutanese in Norway?
29. What strategy you can have to keep up your identity?
30. What do you think about Bhutanese identity?
31. How can your children threaten Bhutanese identity?
32. Is your identity as Bhutanese refugee is changing?

### **Acculturation**

33. Do you celebrate Christmas?
34. Are you adopting Norwegian culture? Is Norwegian culture is influencing Bhutanese culture?
35. Which language do you prefer to communicate in home or with other Bhutanese people? Do you use Norwegian language or your mother tongue?

## **Specific Interview Questions**

1. What is the age of the respondents?
2. What is the person position in the society?
3. What story do you tell to you children about Bhutan and Nepal?
4. What is your previous experience present experience?
5. Did anyone do intermarriage with Norwegian?
6. What do you think about the intermarriage, is it good or bad?
7. Is new generation becoming more Norwegian?
8. Will it affect Bhutanese tradition and culture?
9. As you are resettled in Norway, do you feel you are becoming more Norwegian?
10. In your opinion, what is mean by becoming Norwegian?
11. Do you feel like you are forming new identity rather than identity of being refugee?
12. Do you think you are adopting more Norwegian culture and tradition?

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