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## **LOCAL KNOWLEDGE: THE HUMAN CAPITAL FOR COPING WITH CRISIS GENERATED BY ECONOMIC BLOCKADE**

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### **Abstract**

*To analyze how local knowledge helped people to cope with the crisis occurred by economic blockade in Nepal for a five months long (from September 2015 to January 2016) is the purpose of this paper. The incidence of economic blockaded is not only seen in Nepal but also in the world. Actually, economical blockade is the imposition of power used by a country over another country to influence socioeconomic status for their economic benefits, achieving moral or ethical goals. It generally blocks the supply of fuel and medicine along with other essential commodities to a landlocked country. It is the unnecessary power imposition by any country or state to another that violates the basic right (education, health, social security, food, energy and transportation) of people. Furthermore, it creates an additional burden to the people in their daily life. There are various modes of economic blockade exists. Generally, obstruction of economic resources, control over trade, withdrawn of business and deferment of assistance are adopted by the country in terms of the blockade. However, control over trade is taken as very effective one and India adopted it over Nepal due to the dissatisfaction over the newly formed constitution in Nepal. In a condition, people motivated to identify locally available resources and*

*utilize its maximum. They used their local knowledge (the human capital) and creativity with confidence that helps them to cope with the crisis and made them self-reliant.*

### **Keywords**

Economic Blockade, Local Knowledge, Human Capital, Cope, Crisis, Self Reliant, Resources

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## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1 Context of Economic Blockade**

The newly constitution of Nepal (a federal democratic republic country) promulgated in 2015 by the historic constituent assembly (Paudel, 2015). Just after the proliferation of the constitution a violent conflict between the Madhesi group and the state of Nepal started. It occurred due to the displeasure among the Madhesi people in terms of the provisions stated in the constitution regarding Madhesi people's rights. Similarly, India has also shown its discontent over the newly formed constitution of Nepal however, it was welcomed internationally along with some regions of Nepal domestically (Supreme Court, 2015).

Finally, it became the issue of tremendous discontent led to shut down economy followed by a general strike in the name of movements in Madesh (Paudel, 2015). However, the constitution has lively, contemporary and the flexibility of contextual adjustments besides dominion, independence and veracity. Other side, India also imposed the power over Nepal to influence socioeconomic status for achieving the moral goal of dissatisfaction. These two prolonged tactics created an additional burden for the people in their daily life living regarding shelter and foodstuffs; those were poorly wounded by the earthquake and the general people as well (Supreme Court, 2015). Even though, it was the time of commencement of rehabilitation and reconstruction program by the government of Nepal for the earthquake affected people (OCHA, 2015).

Because, delivery of fundamental commodities likewise food materials, petroleum gas, and medicines those were essential for daily life of people became scarce due to hindrance in the delivery. As a consequence, the lives of the people became hardship and a situation of humanitarian crisis in site occurred.

Similarly, this economic blockade provoked economic and social conditions of the country as well as people of the nation (Human Rights Watch, 2015) because; labors and workers became jobless due to the closure of markets and industries. In the same way, the

production of the farmers was not properly supplied to the consumers in the market result in the wastage of food materials likewise green vegetables, fruits, eggs, fish and meat. The author observed that it was very difficult for people to acquire even minimum health and education services during this period. The essential services of government of Nepal likewise health, education, banking and marketing, especially in the Terai were totally closed and people were deprived from them. This physically challenged to people, especially children, pregnant women, marginalized (poor, Dalits) communities, people with disability. Gradually they faced a problem and felt jeopardy in terms of daily life living during crisis.

Hence, the government of Nepal had made its attempt to address the situation via dialogue with Madhesi political leaders as well as with government of India to discard from the pessimistic consequences generated by the hindrance in the delivery system and hasten the remedy and reform to the earthquake affected people (Paudel, 2015) and initiate its sustainable economic and social development for Nepali people making them self-reliant, strong and independent.

## **1.2 Understanding Economic Blockade**

Laywer (2006) defined economic blockade as the use of supremacy by one nation over another nation that pressurize on the actions of the country without infringing the intercontinental rule. He mentioned that the main objective of the economic blockade is to produce disruptions in the economy of the country by depriving of raw goods in the markets in term of vending the supplies. Furthermore, he added that a financial barricade is conceded by the country over the blockade state or nation in terms of the exclusion of doing business, money, and other financial bonds in the form of either concurrent or meticulous porch. Finally, the author came to understand that an economic barricade is normally associated with politics. Sometimes it becomes the concern of the army and sometimes it happens devoid of armed maneuver.

In this regards, Mujahid (2014) highlighted the application of main four methods of economic blockade here. Those were deferment of assistance, control over trade controls, blacklist the corporations and snooze economic possessions. He described deferment of assistance as cutback of aid in terms of armed, development, ballot adjacent to credit, endowment, subvention, and backing for scientific or other support from intercontinental association.

Furthermore, he defined the trade controls (both goods and services) as squeezing the

allocation and confining the authorization of export and import. It followed the boycott, embargo, deferment of accord of trade, and prohibition on export of tactical and highly developed technology export.

Similarly, he illustrated blacklist of business as withdrawal of cooperation together with trade and venture. Finally, he explained snoozing economic possessions as freezing of bank chattels of the target government, attention, rejection to refinance and suspension of joint projects.

Finally, by analyzing the situation in Nepal the author came to understand that India applied trade controls (both goods and services) type of economic blockade over.

### **1.3 Theoretical Perspective of Economic Blockade**

Economical blockade is connected with an interest group theory where international rules regarding connection with the aimed countries and their inferences are considered as the result of international politics within the domestic setup because the nation has not sovereign rules in terms of international affiliation and government has to face the political attention of the constituency (Golliard, 2013).

Similarly, Braton (2013) highlighted the conventional theory describing that how economic sanction is imaginary in terms of financial demands and in which target country is obliged for tolerable manners by the sender states sourced by the interruption of economic relations.

Furthermore, Kamitake (2009) added that the economic blockade fully relies on the basic financial hypothesis in which, generally intercontinental deal enables state for constructive revenue while extraction of such deal diminishes the revenue of the country. He also mentioned that in this condition country demands for the reimbursement in terms of upholding financial relationship if it is greater than the country has. In addition, the conservative premises imagine that political transform is directly relative to financial destitution (Braton, 2003). He added that once the monetary sanction led economic pain originated, the probability of political compliance increased. Finally, the premise normally disagrees that the principal factor of triumph of financial monetary that is the degree of inconvenience practiced in the target country.

### **1.4 Reason of Economic Blockade**

International monetary obstruct generally happens because it is taken as financial stick that is used by any nation over aimed country to influence the economy of the state via creating

financial compulsion (A. Mohamed, n.d.). According to him, the blockading nation uses this weapon against another blockaded nation for its monetary profit, achieving moral or ethical goals, and striking economically as a retort against dissatisfaction.

Furthermore, he discussed about the key purpose of the economic blockade that it aimed to bring certain change in the policies of the nation, to weaken the economic and political situation of the target nation, to deteriorate the self-protective strength of the target nation and to conquer the latent preparation of the next country in terms of self-protection. He added that, there are many types of international bans concerned with trade, investment, finance and technology. He mentioned that each ban has its own bat. He added that in trade type of ban, export and import to the aimed nation are either totally or partially prohibited based on the context. Furthermore, he explained that the main strategies used by the nation for this type of ban were control over export and import, termination of the contract and barricade the navy.

India adopted the same strategy here, i.e. control of trade over Nepal. India made an economic blockade over Nepali first time in 2045 B.S. (Supreme Court, 2015). The ban was due to the dissatisfaction regarding proliferation of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal via installation of the democratic system in 2047 B.S. After that, this time in 2015, India repeated its ban again by showing its displeasure against the newly formed constitution of Nepal, 2015. The main concerned raised by the India was an amendment of the constitution in line with the demand of a Madhesi people.

From the above discussion, the author came to understand that international economics of the country always relies on the political, ethical and economical interest of that country. Once it is not fulfilled, discontent occurs and country shows its response to another state via adopting various modes of ban to damage the economic status of that nation.

### **1.5 Impact of Economic Blockade on People's Life**

It was observed that there was not only a violation of the international ruling occurred by US embargo over Cuba in October 2008 but also it mauves the economical, ethical and political grounds; therefore, the international community has denounced it (Amnesty International, 2009). During the period, US prohibited financing and made control over trade. Similarly, it narrowed down the export of essential medicines, medical accessories and expertise to Cuba that badly affected the economic condition and the public health of people.

Similarly, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHRR) (2000)

also highlighted that the economic sanction noticeably smashes the rights of the people that the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) ensured. In addition, it pointed out that economic sanction generally interrupts the allotment process of food materials; water, sanitation and hygiene supplies and essential medicines that jeopardizes the fundamental education and health rights of the people.

Furthermore, Hamas took over of Gaza and Israel imposed its power in terms of a land, sea and air (OCHA, 2015). During that period it was observed that the blockade reduced Gaza's GDP by 50%, the unemployment rate reached on average up to 43% that was measured as the highest in the world.

### **1.6 Coping Strategy of People against Economic Sanction**

A study conducted jointly by Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), World Food Program (WFP) & Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) (2012) observed that people suffered from economic sanction use a diverse coping strategy that not only engender earnings for people but also minimize the expenses. Furthermore, the survey highlighted that 54% of people bought lower quality food, 59% of them backed up from their relatives and friends, 34% of people shrink the number of their daily meals in the Gaza Strip during economic sanction. Besides that, 38% of people bought food materials on credit, 34% of people consumed accumulated food materials. Similarly, 41% of people from Gaza Strip postponed the payment of utility bills to hoard the earnings (FAO et al., 2012). Moreover, carbon monoxide poisoning is becoming common in the Gaza Strip; therefore, most of the households were forced to use generators to cope with power shortages (United Nations, 2010).

In addition, Center for Energy and Environmental Policy (2010) highlighted the scenario of U.S. ban over Cuba, where Cuban people faced economic problem after narrowed down of exporting foodstuffs, technology of Cuba was not owned by the other nations. Then after, Cuban people started to use their local knowledge for self-sustaining and mobilized domestic resources like the use of wood consumption. It also mentioned that they used the knowledge of reusing and recycling the things. Furthermore, Cuban people started using the skill of making the oil from sesame seeds as well. Finally, they realized that they are 85% dependent of its trade on the Soviet bloc. In this way Cuban people to reduce their dependency and became self reliant.

## **2. Methods**

As Tuli (2010) mentioned, the author believed in multiple realities that is generated from the subjective state and society. Therefore, in the understanding of the author Kranti has a different perception and realities about the economic blockade over Nepal from India and how he practiced his local knowledge to cope with the crisis occurred by the blockade. Exploring these different perceptions and experiences is very important of knowing social process. Therefore, in this paper, the author tries to draw the connotation from multiple realities expressed by the participant which is the ontological premise of the author of this research. Similarly, he observed the activities of the participant during economical blockade and felt that those were the coping strategies adopted by him against the economic blockade.

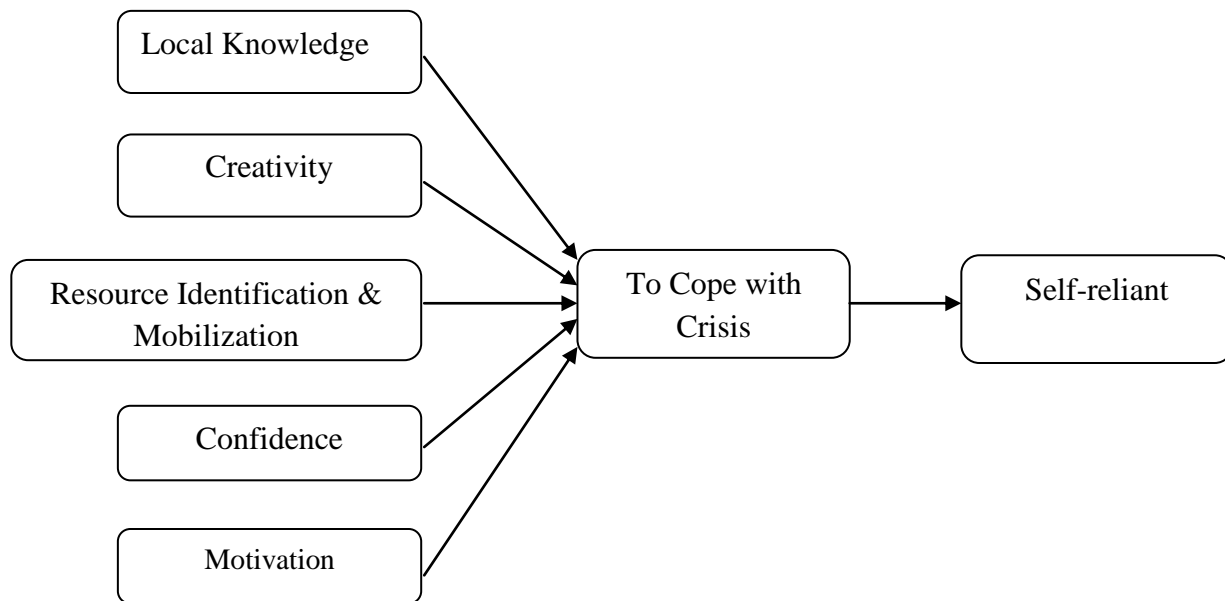
Therefore, that observed activity helped the author to generate the meaning about coping strategies over economical blockade. Here, the author tries to generate meaning through the perception of Kranti. Therefore, this research is the result of the engagement of authors with hi the participant during the blockade. Again, as researcher, the author tried to strengthen his idea of coping with the crisis generated by the economic blockade and he always encouraged participants to express his own value without forcing.

For this research, the author used the ethnography research method because he has to interpret about the coping strategies of the Nepali people during the crisis occurred by economical blockade. In his understanding ethnographic method was helpful for the topping, culture, local points of view, experiences of personal and indigenous knowledge, skill and occupation of the particular marginalized group, communities and organization (Reeves, Peller, Goldman & Kitto, 2013). That is why for this ethnographic paper, he selected Chapali VDC of Kathmandu district because he had a depth involvement with Kranti during economic blockade and his best practices to cope with it there. Furthermore, field notes were gathered through interviews with Kranti and by his observation.

In this paper, the author tried to be an ethical researcher by respecting all behavior perspectives and understanding of Kranti. Furthermore, he maintained a quality standard through trustworthiness. In this paper, he included the information after getting his permission. In addition, he tried to verify the information that was generated from him through his observation.

### 3. Findings

The participant in the research was Kranti. He is living in Chapali VDC of Kathmandu district with his wife, a son and a daughter. He is 40 years old with a diploma in computer. His hometown is Naktajhij VDC of Dhanusha district Terai. By occupation, he is a business person (flax) right now. He has the rich knowledge of computer software, hardware and flex board-designing, printing, supplying and establishing. However, he has the sufficient knowledge about production of vegetables as well as crops. He is very much energetic, supportive of others with creativity. He always tries to do something innovative via using and mobilizing local resource whatever he has.



**Figure 1:** Conceptual framework derived based on the findings

He constructed his own TAHARA (thatched roof) in Chapali by taking a land on lease. The main objective was to establish his business of flexes and office to manage staffs, labors, vehicles, motorcycle, flex machine and required instruments and materials he has as well as residential purpose. The TAHARA constructed by him is his own design and creation. It was constructed by his labors. He also supported his ten neighbors to construct such TAHARA with a minimum wage because that was eminent in the area in term of comfort ability, safety and cost effective. Hence, people are still requesting him for constructing such a TAHARA. However, his business of flex become CHAUPAT (worst) after the earthquake, he is taking it as an opportunity and constructing it as the off time business.



He faced a huge economical problem that year because his business was totally affected by the earthquake from April-August 2015 and by the economic blockade from September 2015 to January 2016. After the earthquake, it was very difficult for him to manage his business, office, staffs as well as family. He always looks for the new opportunities like vehicle on business. He has his own personal car and TATA mobile vehicle (to carry the flex boards). The author observed that he makes a rent of the car as well as vehicle and drive himself as well in the absence of the driver. He had to wait about a week in the queue of fuel at petrol pumps for petrol and diesel. Finally, he makes some earning via using such fuels in the crisis occurred by the economic blockade started in September the rehabilitation phase of the earthquake. Through that, he managed the staffs and family. However, due to the longtime run of blockade, he cannot make to sustain all staffs. Finally, he makes them leave for a certain period.

Other side, the author observed that he has sufficient open land (on lease) surrounded by his TAHARA too. As mentioned above, it was observed easily that he utilized best of his farming knowledge because he farmed vegetables like tomato, cauliflower, chili, onion and garlic as well as paddy and wheat. For that, he mobilized his labors in the off-season of business, in the morning and evening. He also earned by selling the vegetables in the nearby general store and sometimes he just replaced new vegetables with his tomatoes and cauliflowers based on his requirements. In this way, he managed his food items and vegetables during the crisis of economic blockade and it was very much cost effective. He also kept and continued the relationship with his neighbors and relatives likewise, niece, son in law, brothers, by sharing his vegetable products during the period too. He is continuing his farming these days too, and he has sufficient vegetables right now. He has not to buy vegetable from the market.

Another problem, he faced during the blockade was a shortage of gas. He never minded, it's because he replaced that problem by using the locally available resources and equipments with him. Like, he had purchased plywood during the construction of TAHARA. There was lots of wastage part of plywood (small and not used for furniture works). He planned to sell it to KABADI (people who collects wastage materials) before. However, he used those wastages as firewood that time. He has the iron angel cutter to cut, weld, and develop a frame for flex board. Therefore, he used such cutter to cut the long pieces of plywood for firewood. For that, his labor helped him.

Other side, to cook food, stove (CHULHO) is needed. Therefore, he used his innovative

idea to form CHULHO. For that, he used wastage steel water filter and made a hole at bottom. He made a pipe with wastage CGI (Corrugated Galvanized Iron) sheet (JASTA PATA) (remaining from TAHARA construction and thrown as KABADI) and fit in a whole. He constructed a tripod stand with the wastages iron angles via welding it. He has also wastage parts of computer, i.e. wire, cooling fan and wastage battery with inverter (used to run flex printing machine). Therefore, using those materials he developed air fan. Finally, a new and an innovative CHULHO constructed. He used such firewood and CHULHO during the crisis. After that, he developed a modified CHULHO one by using such air fan, electric switch and battery. These days he is using such modified CHULHO for cooking food.

In this way, he utilized his existing local knowledge and locally available resource to cope with the crisis like an economic burden to manage business, staff and family, insufficiency of food materials, vegetables, and gas. Finally, he survived well independently during the economic blockade. In the same way, the author observed his strategy that was economical in such condition that he used maximum the stored food items he had likewise GUNDRU (dried leafy green vegetables), dry items of vegetables, grains, wheat, maize and rice etc. He has a contact point for general store nearby his residence. Therefore, he generally used to buy and store the items likewise tea, sugar and milk powder for six months on credit because his business is seasonal. This strategy was also supported him to survive those days.

He is really a role model in terms of locally available resource identification and maximum utilization, use of local knowledge and self-reliant. He also expressed that if every Nepali started resource identification and maximum utilization, used local knowledge in general days too will really helpful to make Nepali people self reliant and country as well because we have sufficient water, jungles as the key resources to produce electricity, irrigate land for production and use firewood.

He also realized that, of course Madhesi people have a right to fight for their rights and it is right to agitate for their rights and entitlements. However, the process applied by them to obstruct the border was not fair for the Nepali people because it totally affected the business, industry, production and general life of the people and violates the rights of other Nepali people as well. He also expressed that the way adopted by India over Nepal those days was also an unnecessary power imposition due to its personal interest and benefits and that creates an additional burden for the Nepali people and life.

## **4. Discussion**

Economical blockade is the imposition of power by a state or country over another state or country to influence other countries' behavior or policy that generally violates the law (Laywers, 2006). The understanding of the government of Nepal over economic blockade was that Indian government's move to impose unofficial blockade against Nepal where the supply of fuel, medicine, other essential supplies were blocked and that was not suitable from the human rights point of view (INSEC, 2015). Similarly, the author also observed from the field that economy blockaded by India over Nepal was an unnecessary power imposition and that creates an additional burden for the people of Nepal in terms of their daily life living.

There are various modes of economic blockade likewise deferment of assistance, control over trade controls, blacklist the corporations and snooze economic possessions (Mujahid, 2014). However, it was observed that India adopted trade control model of economic blockade over Nepal.

It was observed from the various literatures that blockade happens from the security point of view of the country to attain its economic benefits, moral or ethical goals where country imposed trade and industry monetary as a response against the dissatisfaction over another country (A. Mohamed, n.d.). He added that there are many types of the embargo. However, control over trade type of ban is related to total or partial prohibition of export and import to the aimed nation based on the context.

It was also observed by the government of Nepal that the Indian authorities continued to stop the goods carrier vehicles, Liquid Petroleum Gas (LPG) bullets and oil tankers to Nepal (INSEC, 2015). The reason behind it was displeased against the newly formed constitution of Nepal, 2015 and asking for the amendment of the constitution in line with the demand of a Madhesi people (Supreme Court, 2015). It was also observed from the field that it is due to the fulfillment of the personal interest of the India.

Similarly, different literatures show that there is a violation of international rule, ethical, political, economical, fundamental rights of people likewise health, education and social security rights were influenced by the economic sanction and the reduction of the Gross Domestic Product of the country took place (OCHA, 2015). The same status author observed in the case of Nepal as well that the fundamental health, education rights of the people dishonored when the interruption of the allotment of food materials, water, sanitation and hygiene supplies and

essential medicines during blockade by India (OHCHR, 2000).

It was also observed in the case of Nepal that though it was solely dependent on fuel supplies from India social, economic and humanitarian situation of Nepal adversely affected by a month long blockhead (INSEC, 2015). Similarly, economic blockade generated severe fuel deficiency disrupted to everyday living of people in terms of education, health, water and sanitation, energy, food, transportation and brought the economy virtually to a standstill. The author observed that Kranti faced his business of flex totally closed. He faced a problem in managing office, staffs and his family in terms of food, gas and economically.

As FAO et al. (2012) suggested a variety of strategies applied by the people likewise buying low quality food, back up from relatives and friends, shrink the number of daily meals, buy food materials on credit, consume accumulated food materials and postpone the payment of utility bills to hoard the earnings during economic blockade to cope with the situation the author also observed these things happened in the field because Kranti used the stored food items he had likewise GUNDRU (dried leafy vegetable), dry items of vegetables, grains, wheat, maize, and rice.

He stored the items likewise tea, sugar, and milk powder from the nearby general store on credit. It is observed in the literatures that people have the knowledge of self-sustaining ways using domestic resources like use wood consumption during the crisis to reduce the dependency and make them reliant (Center for Energy and Environmental Policy, 2010). In the case of Nepal, people use firewood, electric induction, rice cooker and CHULHO in the shortage of gas, started trekking in the absence of transportation those were the choices against the crisis (INSEC, 2015). He also observed in the field that Kranti constructed a local CHULHO via using local and unusable materials that they had used the wastage plywood as firewood.

## **5. Conclusion**

In reference to the different literature and findings from the field my conclusion is we have also to identify our locally available resources and utilize its maximum. Of course, we have our own local knowledge and that is our human capital. However, we are not motivated to apply such assets in general days and in a proper way with confidence. When we faced a problem, we started to search the alternatives. Even though, we have or can use our local knowledge because it does not only help us to cope with the crisis but also make us self-reliant. Once Nepali people

become self-reliant Nepal becomes an autonomous country in terms of fuel and materials those are supplied from other countries which are the basis needs of the Nepali people for their survival and daily life. Because, we have sufficient water, jungles as the key resources to produce electricity, irrigate land for production, and use firewood. However, we are not using it properly and making a concern of economic development of Nepal and Nepali people.

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