**Field and Interview Note**

Field workers: JS and OC

Interviewees: HK, NL

Note Taker: OC

Note Checked and Edited by: JS

Language of Interview: Nepali/English

Note Transcribed by: OC

Place: 1st floor, USAID office, Maharajgunj

Time: 2:00 -3:00 Pm

Date: 3 September 2014

**Major Highlights:**

* Official permission is required by USADI for sharing of information regarding to any USAID funded project.
* Informal relation matters in aid funded projects.

JS and OC arrived at USAID office at Maharajgunj for meeting at 1:45 in the afternoon. Meeting is scheduled for 2:00 Pm. Their ID cards were being checked at the first gate. JS and OC were told to move ahead from the next door where comes security check, as it is being done by security guard. Then JS and OC were accompanied by a female staff all the way up the meeting hall. When we reached to the meeting hall, she asked us to take seats then made call to HK and NL to inform our arrival at the office for meeting.

Then she left the meeting hall, shortly after HK and NL arrived at meeting hall. JS introduced himself and OC to HK and NL. JS mentioned that he met HK quite a few times before as well. Meantime, OC gave one document to HK and NL along with the business cards of JS and of his own. Shortly after introduction and exchange of business card, JS initiated talk by describing about quick outline of the research project.

JS further explained that we are looking at the chain of foreign aid through maternal and child health projects especially in two countries Nepal and Malawi. While looking at this very link/chain that helps to connect two different worlds, we will may attention on, who are involve in this chain and working as intermediary organizations locating themselves in various positions and different levels? Eventually what value these actors are adding in this particular sector?

JS added, currently we are doing mapping of all the projects, whose objectives are explicitly focused on improving maternal and child health in the country. In doing so, we will go back to 1990 and up to the present and document details of the projects. This project will incorporate from FCHVs at the community level to donors at top level.

JS went on further explaining, once we complete mapping process and select 4 projects for detail study, we will go/attend and observe field sites and meetings on top of interviewing people. It is kind of doing institutional ethnography. For the academic purpose we have use the word ‘brokerage’ for the intermediary organizations. Another aspect we would be looking at this project is how the idea of projects comes around? How policies get translated into projects? How USAID works with other organizations to implement projects at the community level?

After listening to JS, HK asked to him what your capacity/position is for this project. He further told that it is not difficult to get information but it is important to be clear about the background of the study. Perhaps the information you collect today might go in publication from somewhere in the future. Nepal Health Research Council (NHRC) is there for providing ethical approval of such kind of research to conduct in the country.

JS replied to HK, I work at the University of Edinburgh and I am a key person for this research and my signature on the every official document for this research will be authentic one.

 HK further asked, what is objective of this research? We need to make it clear to our boss as well. Once we speak with you it will go into the public in one or other form, we are not allowed to do so. This is our institutional limitation. We do not have such authority to speak in the forum without informing to our boss. Even in the government meetings we are not allowed to share freely each and everything.

HK suggested to JS that you could write an official letter in the university letterhead asking for access to information then we will go along formal process. Also you could write to email to Shanda and mentioning some of the potential questions we will discuss and CC to us (HK and NL). He further said you know all about the health sector of Nepal. JS, I will write an email to Shanda, HK if you do so then Shanda will be involved in discussion as well.

JS also mentioned that inception workshop of this research was held in July we invited people from government, USAID, World Bank, ST participated in the workshop from USAID. Now we are doing mapping of the all the projects on maternal and child health in Nepal since 1990.

HK: even you go talk to the contractors of USAID they will contact us for the approval for participating in the interview/meeting to talk further on specific projects.

NL: how do you use the findings?

JS change has taken place in the world of aid in recent years in Nepal; more and more contractors are emerging to work by adopting different modalities than that of the previous ones. We want to document such practices and processes as they go along, anyone can use the findings for their benefit in Nepal and Malawi.

Additionally, we are interested to explore further on how informal relationship helps to run formal one?

HK: it requires much more accountability from the part of people/organization with whom you interview/speak to. . NL added, if you explore on this matter (importance of informal relationship to run formal one) further and develop a working modality that will contribute to NGOs to operate in a smooth way.

NL: further asked question, how do you manage this complexity of research project? JS we are working with ethical approval.

NL: before making any information public, it is better to circulate it to the organization to see if there is any sensitive issues to be kept confidential. She further explained, it is not only a matter of information about one single project but also it is about the relationship of two governments.

JS: in our previous project also worked by signing the MOU with USAID/NFHP. But the issue of our previous research project has become a sensitive one now; it was a case of misoprostol. Where looked at how did evidence turn out into the policy? We do not know whether that is added to policy or not. One of the finding of the previous research was evidence does not automatically help in formulation of policy. This research is an expansion of the previous one with focus on donors as well. HK suggested that, we have time, so better to follow official process for gathering information.

JS: we want to make our finding useful to USAID as well. Meanwhile NL asked a question, does informal relationship works in other countries as well? I am curious to know more about it? JS answered; yes it does in Malawi as well which they call ‘big man syndrome’ people follow what big man said to them. HK also added an example from Nepal, in meeting if DG says about anything other staff will began to work on his idea without questioning on it.

JS: I had meeting with DP, who was in USAID before and now is working on DFID. His personal skills and relationship matter a lot in his professional growth and transfer.

HK: what did he say to you? JS, he told frankly.

HK: personal relation has been working more importantly in making formal things happen. He gave an example there is program organized JS, then to make this program grand your informal relation has significant role because, people will participate in the event as it is JS’s program.

HK: further explained that certain people are already informed or aware who works in USAID or DFID? Who moves where? in terms of moving from one organization to another to join job in new project. These all are largely influenced by informal relation. This is our third meeting with you (JS and OC) today, wherever we go to participate in the meeting we ended up seeing/meeting the same people from long because only limited number of people working in the same sector. This is how it works.

HK, please do not mind JS. JS no mind at all. If you go to Suhaahara project for information, they ask at the USAID office for permission, because funding for this project is from us.

With this talk JS concluded the discussion and then we moved from office of USAID, HK accompanied us up to the security place.

*Reflection*

*We come to know quite a bit about the bureaucratic system of the USAID aid. These people, with whom we had informal talk, looked very willing to share their ideas with us but it requires official permission for them to do so.*