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Editorial

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KMC Journal is a refereed journal which adopts a rigorous process of screening, reviewing, editing and proofreading. The editorial board makes the first decision regarding the submitted articles as the first step of the review process. The board can reject the articles if they do not meet the author guidelines. Accepted articles are sent to two anonymous reviewers for review. Papers are accepted for review on the understanding that they have not been published or accepted for publication elsewhere. If the reviewers recommend the article for publication with some feedback, the reviewed articles are sent back to the concerned authors to revise addressing the comments and feedback of the reviewers. Finally, the editorial board makes the decision whether to publish the revised article or reject. The journal does not take any charge for publication. All the expenses are born by the Research Management Cell, Kailali Multiple Campus, Dhangadhi, Nepal.

KMC Journal Volume 6, Issue 1 includes 25 research-based articles from English education, English literature, Education, Sociology, Science, Health Education, Population, History, Agriculture and Management. All these empirical papers have been undergone the rigorous processes of reviewing, editing and proofreading. We believe that all these articles will be fruitful for the practitioners in the concerned disciplines around the globe. We request to all the valued readers, academicians and scholars to contribute by being published in the coming issues of this journal.

We express our sincere gratitude to all the authors for their appreciable contribution. We are thankful to our valued reviewers for their scholarly work and support to the Editorial Team throughout the process. We are grateful to the Research Management Cell, Kailali Multiple Campus for the publication of the journal.

Happy Reading!

Editor-in-Chief
KMC Journal

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Mapping the Landscape of Data Collection: A Reflection on the Dynamics of Fieldwork in Qualitative Research

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Abstract

This study explores the complexities of qualitative fieldwork and unpacks the fieldwork dynamics drawing on critical reflections based on the experiences of interviewing primary level teachers in exploring their identities. I argue that qualitative fieldwork is not a one-shot, linear activity but a negotiated and relational task requiring a flexible and context-specific plan. This study identifies challenges associated with the fieldwork relating to establishing and sustaining a good relationship and reciprocity between the researcher and the participants, unequal power dynamics between the researcher and the participants, participants' familiarity with and habitual response to the survey questionnaires, narrow understanding of confidentiality and anonymity as ethical considerations, unmatched gender between the researcher and the participants, and through and detailed capture of micro field jottings and writing the fieldnotes. I suggest initiating fieldwork with sufficient informal conversation and establishing a rapport to gain the participants' trust, positioning oneself as an insider to acquire valuable and meaningful data.

Keywords: Fieldwork, reflexivity, qualitative research, fieldnotes, relational, negotiated

Introduction

Qualitative research considers fieldwork as a foundation for making robust data, in which several concerned data are collected from a natural setting. The quality of data depends on one's fieldwork rigor and the fieldwork crafting skills of a researcher. Since fieldwork is a "dynamic and complex process" (Basnet, 2022; Punch, 2012), the practical aspects of doing qualitative fieldwork are discussed



less in the literature. While the number of literature (Delamont, 2016; Ellingson & Sotirin, 2020; Emerson et al., 2011; Markham, 2013; Marvasti & Gubrium, 2023) discussed the fieldwork as the fundamental departure in making the data, it is often overlooked the complexities of doing qualitative fieldwork. Considering that fieldwork in qualitative research is a nonlinear and context-specific process, the same prescribed guidelines could not work everywhere. In addition, qualitative research courses at universities fundamentally focus on data collection tools and procedures, but instead, they minimally discuss the field's complexities. For example, in the initial days of my PhD fieldwork as a graduate student, I was confused about various aspects of fieldwork, such as planning, accessing, entering, trust building, and collecting data from the natural setting. As such, these minor concerns exist, yet the powerful determinants of field rigor were minimally covered in the graduate curricula. During the initial days of my PhD fieldwork, I navigated the fieldwork literature for the comprehensive guide for carrying out the field activities, but I found it appropriate to fulfill my needs. Although a number of literature (Ghimire, 2021; Mahato et al., 2022; Mishra, 2018; Rai, 2020; Rana et al., 2019; Subedi & Gaulee, 2023) discusses various aspects of doing qualitative fieldwork, they do not offer the comprehensive guidelines covering the major practical concerns. There is a paucity of comprehensive practical knowledge about how researchers can effectively tackle the specific and contextual challenges that may emerge during fieldwork. In fulfilling such a gap, this study aims to contribute to this literature gap, drawing the applicable and context-specific practical strategies from the author's doctoral research experience. This paper offers a comprehensive guideline on the practical aspects of doing qualitative fieldwork.

This study is the outcome of my lived experiences of the PhD fieldwork, the field jotting records, and my reflexive interpretations in the field diary. While qualitative research replaces the validity and reliability by the researcher's reflexivity (Delamont, 2016), it is equally important to provide transparency on the research process and the fieldwork. I attempted to be transparent on the dynamics of my fieldwork engagement as a qualitative researcher in exploring the identity of primary teachers. Notably, novice researchers face challenges in qualitative fieldwork where reflective insights could help them plan and implement their fieldwork. For instance, Mishra (2018) states the importance of "a reflection on fieldwork helps a researcher to review critically and critically appreciate one's work and to identify challenges that can be helpful not only to the researcher but also to other researchers" (p. 27). In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic changes the conventional understanding of data collection from physical presence in the field to working from home (Flannery et al., 2023; Lobe et al., 2020). Arguably, the critical reflection of the researcher could

provide insights to the novice researcher in understanding the “issues of subjectivity and reflexivity systematically in the context of field research” (Basnet, 2022), which contributes to ensuring the rigor and executing their fieldwork appropriately. This study contributes to continuing the discourse on qualitative fieldwork and adds knowledge by unpacking the fieldwork dynamics concerning the data collection, mainly through in-depth interviews. In particular, this study unpacks the dynamics of qualitative fieldwork by exploring the following research questions:

1. In what ways is qualitative fieldwork challenging in exploring the data from the participants?
2. How do the context-specific complexities associated with the field mediate the qualitative fieldwork in obtaining the desired information?

Understanding and Approaching the Field

While fieldwork engagement is the hallmark of qualitative research in making data, it is discussed variedly regarding understanding the field and boundaries of fieldwork. The essence of fieldwork “is its ability to identify and make sense of ways of knowing and being in different social worlds” (Mosher et al., 2017, p. 145). The prolonged engagement in qualitative fieldwork is essential in building a harmonious relationship between the researcher and participants, which contributes to ensuring the research’s trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Fieldwork is the means for the researcher to collect first-hand data; “it relies on personal interaction or engagement between the researcher and those being researched in the research setting” (Pole & Hillyard, 2015, p. 3). Notably, fieldwork in qualitative research cannot be imagined without the close relationship between the researcher and the participant since mutual trust is the precondition. The beginning of the fieldwork is dominant in the ethnographic methods, particularly in the sociological and anthropological qualitative research (Markham, 2013; Marvasti & Gubrium, 2023). Later on, fieldwork became a significant component of making data in qualitative research and its various approaches, such as grounded theory, phenomenology, narrative inquiry, case study, and action research (Pole & Hillyard, 2015). While it lacks consensus in understanding the fieldwork, there is no debate on the intent of doing fieldwork for a deeper understanding of the study phenomena in the context-specific setting of the field. While the fieldwork in the ethnographic approach generally associated with the participant observation (Engert, 2022), it is equally associated with other data collections methods such as focus groups and interview.

Fieldwork is essential to gain a deeper understanding of the study phenomenon, providing empirical evidence from the original place. In addition, fieldwork is the first and foremost way to uncover the complexity of the study phenomenon. For instance, Markham (2013) states that “fieldwork is often used as a method of engaging with the phenomenon to gather information/data or to analyze practices in situ” (p. 435). Arguably, making data in qualitative fieldwork is influenced by several factors such as local culture, researcher identity, hierarchy, power relations, and gender matching between the researcher and the participants (Mishra, 2018; Punch, 2012; Subedi, 2023; Subedi & Gaulee, 2023). Likewise, the researcher enters the field with feelings, aspirations, and assumptions concerning their embodiment in the fieldwork. The participants could also have a lot of curiosity, confusion, fear, and hesitation in providing the information to the researcher. Thus, the emotions and fear of both the researcher and the researched significantly contribute to the qualitative fieldwork (Ellingson & Sotirin, 2020) since the fieldwork is often unpredictable and depends on the site context (Pole & Hillyard, 2015).

The understanding and boundaries of traditional fieldwork concepts and the field have changed in recent years concerning qualitative fieldwork. While the conventional fieldwork approach, particularly the ethnographic fieldwork (Schensul & LeCompte, 2013), seeks data from the researcher engagement from the demarcated geographical location, the contemporary literature (Engert, 2022; Lobe et al., 2020; Marvasti & Gubrium, 2023) has conceived the broader boundaries. For example, Reyes-Foster and Carter (2023) criticize the conventional understanding and practice of fieldwork. They argue that “in traditional ethnography, there is a clear boundary for when data collection begins and ends, demarcated geographically and temporally. For us, this boundary was unclear. We never arrived, and we never really left” (Reyes-Foster & Carter, 2023, p. 175). The discussion on the boundaries is going on with the advancement of information and communication in the age of globalization. Globalization has not only changed the thinking and working style in qualitative fieldwork but has also crossed the traditional boundaries of fieldwork. As such, Delamont (2016) states that “with globalization, the boundaries between ‘home’ and ‘the field’ are evermore fragile and permeable, and the standards to which scholars are held reflect that” (p. 120). In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic opened a new avenue of qualitative fieldwork despite the virtual data collection techniques used before the coronavirus crisis. Given the variety of fieldwork strategies in use, it is essential to explore the implementation of qualitative fieldwork. The subsequent sub-section outlines strategies formulated from reviewing methodological literature.

Strategies for Doing Fieldwork

The modes of inquiry determine qualitative fieldwork, the nature of the study phenomenon, the sample of the study, and the local and cultural context of the field are also equally important. The following three major fieldwork strategies are identified in reviewing the literature.

Working at Physical Site (setting or location)

Working at the physical site or situ is the most practised fieldwork strategy, particularly dominant in the ethnographic research in sociology and anthropology. For ethnographers, the field refers to a geographical location or site where the researcher collects data from participants meeting in person (Schensul & LeCompte, 2013). Meeting in person physically through prolonged engagement with the participants in the natural setting is a widely accepted way to obtain real information and generate valid knowledge. For example, Sunstein and Chiseri-Strater (2011) emphasize that “working in the field means talking, listening, recording, observing, participating, and sometimes even living in a particular place. The field is the site for doing research, and field working is the process of doing it” (p.1). Participating with the engaged conversations, interactions, and meetings and observing “in situ” (Marvasti & Gubrium, 2023, p. 2) is the widely practised approach in other qualitative methods such as narrative inquiry, grounded theory, phenomenology, case study, and participatory action research. This site-specific fieldwork strategy is equally common in social science and education.

Working at home (home or institution)

Working at home or institutions is another popular fieldwork strategy in qualitative research. This type of fieldwork emerged after the changing boundaries, particularly in the ethnographic method (Reyes-Foster & Carter, 2023) and other qualitative research. When the researcher, particularly in ethnographic research and another qualitative approach, lives in the community or is familiar with the community members with close relationships, conduct the study at home. Doing fieldwork in the home or institution is a face-to-face data collection technique in which the researcher collects data in the physical setting where the participants are located (Schensul & LeCompte, 2013). It is a method of co-creating the data between the researcher and the participants in which the researcher agency plays an important role in elucidating the data (Mosher et al., 2017). Working at home is a fieldwork approach that allows the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of the study phenomenon by spending long time with the participants.

Working Virtual (distance)

Collecting data with the participants from a remote place where the researcher and the participants connect virtually through different communication media is a growing trend in doing fieldwork in qualitative research. This mode of fieldwork is beyond the traditional boundaries of qualitative fieldwork. Working at a distance is a virtual means of data collection and a more flexible approach to reaching unreachable people (Markham, 2013). Virtual data collection envisions the fieldwork from a physically distinct place, which is particularly useful when an in-person meeting is not possible due to various circumstances. For example, as a number of literature (Engward et al., 2022; Ham et al., 2022; Keen et al., 2022; Lobe et al., 2020) suggest, the COVID-19 pandemic opened new horizons for gathering data, particularly from audio and video interview at a distance. However, careful looking is important that “online environment researchers require a heightened sensitivity and awareness of their attitudes, knowledge, and skills before, during and after the interview to ensure that the process is safe, rigorous and meaningful for collecting comprehensive qualitative data (Engward et al., 2022, p. 1). During the understanding and boundaries of ‘field’ and ‘fieldwork’ transforming with the growing information and communication technology and the COVID-19 pandemic crisis, fieldwork exists in different forms and is based on navigating context-specific vetting.

Methods and Procedures

I draw my reflection from a larger PhD research on primary teachers’ identity in which I have blended my personal experiences and reflexivity during the fieldwork at two stages in this study. First, I collected the data for the preliminary PhD between July 2021 and December 2021; in the second stage, the final data were collected between January 2022 and July 2022. Qualitative research, particularly the in-depth interview, is influenced by the researcher’s background and understanding, so the data collection and findings are biased and value-laden. As the literature (Polkinghorne, 2010) suggests, my personal traits, such as experiences, cultural backgrounds, and beliefs, influence the data collection in the fieldwork. I have blended my personal experiences in crafting this paper. Considering the researcher as an instrument in qualitative research (Wa-Mbaleka, 2020; Yoon & Uliassi, 2022), personal experiences are a powerful data source (Barnacle, 2004; Clandinin & Connelly, 1994) in the interview method. While the reflexivity of the doctoral researcher shapes the methodological decisions (Jayantilal & Lalli, 2023), I have used my reflexivity as a data source, mainly from my reflexive field diary based on the fieldnotes. Hence, I used my lived experiences from the field and the reflexive journal in this study to demystify the complexity and dynamics of qualitative fieldwork. As multiple reflexivity exists in qualitative research, this paper is crafted fundamentally on the ‘methodological reflexivity’ (Whitaker & Atkinson, 2021).

I have used deductive and inductive coding for data analysis as Saldana (2021) suggests. I generated a few themes (e.g., accessing the field) from the concerned fieldwork literature. However, the inductive coding was dominant based on my fieldnotes and reflexive field diary (Dodgson, 2019; Orange, 2016). After reading the fieldnotes jottings and the field diary multiple times, I marked keywords and coded them, which were generated through a contextual comparison and interpretation of the keywords (Choi et al., 2021; Riessman, 2008). During the fieldwork, informed consent was taken from the participants to ensure ethical considerations.

Results and Discussion

The following themes explore the context-specific challenges and the complexities of qualitative fieldwork in obtaining the desired information from the field.

Accessing and Entering the Field

Accessing the field begins after the research committee approves the proposal and the ethical clearance letter is obtained from the ethical committee or the Institutional Review Board. My PhD fieldwork began after the proposal was accepted from the Graduate School of Education (GSE). Since the ethical committee is not set up at GSE, I obtained the GSE recommendation letter and went to meet the headteacher as a gatekeeper of the sample schools. One of the major tasks of the researcher is to prepare a detailed fieldwork plan and manage the equipment and tools (Sunstein & Chiseri-Strater, 2011), which could vary depending on the nature of the study, local fieldwork context, and the research problem. It is equally important for the researcher to pay careful attention to the fact that the pre-fieldwork plan may not work in the actual field (Mahato et al., 2022) since the reality of fieldwork could differ. While interviewing primary teachers, I planned the tentative fieldwork schedule and a few tools, such as a diary, pen, voice recorder, backpack, water bottle, camera, pen drive, and first aid materials. I was careful to be ‘economical and less expensive during the fieldwork’ (Sunstein & Chiseri-Strater, 2011), so I initially used my cell phone for audio recording, voice fieldnotes taking, and photos. However, while interviewing, I realized cell phones were inappropriate for recording since the teacher felt uncomfortable with them and not convenient to handle. Realizing the odds of using the cell phone for audio record, I later purchased and used the professional voice recorder, which proved useful.

As the literature (Ghimire, 2021; Hennink et al., 2020; Kawulich, 2010) suggests, the role of the gatekeeper is determinant to reach the participant; it was the first step of accessing the field. As “it is important to set out with a positive attitude

to get access” (Delamont, 2016, p. 72), I was optimistic about getting access to the field. I easily accessed the field since either the headteacher was my friend or the former M.Ed. students where I directly visited the school. After explaining my PhD research and the procedure, they provided formal written consent to collect data from their teacher. Qualitative researchers could have encountered unexpected situations and nudged during the fieldwork (Rana et al., 2019). For example, I also experienced another nudge from the (proxy)gatekeeper (i.e., the husband of my participant) while I was interviewing a female teacher (Subedi & Gaulee, 2023) during the critical time of the COVID-19 pandemic. I approached my participants for the interview in their homes since meeting them in the school was not always possible since the schools shut down for a long time due to the COVID-19 pandemic crisis. So, in my case, home also became the field site (Reyes-Foster & Carter, 2023; Schensul & LeCompte, 2013) as the literature suggests, and I managed the problem of meeting the participant as a researcher agency (Mosher et al., 2017). I was able to interview the female teacher after satisfying her husband about the procedure of my PhD research. In addition, sometimes accessing the field, particularly by getting approval from the government authority and non-government organizations, could be problematic, as Rana et al. (2019) reported during their fieldwork. As Mishra (2018) reports, another hurdle could be the compensation payment to the participants if they are habitual in receiving the monetary incentives while participating in the developmental research projects of International/Non-governmental organizations. Thus, qualitative researchers should always be cautious of unintended fieldwork hurdles and have alternative plans for possible future obstacles.

The researcher’s first impression of the participants is important in creating a conducive environment at the beginning of the fieldwork. Likewise, the participant’s perceptions of the researcher are critical to the warming relationship during the data collection. I tried to be present with the primary teachers (my participants) with a simple dress code and local language. For example, if the researchers present themselves as elite, it makes participants suspicious. Regarding the first impression, Delamont (2016) emphasizes that “all clothing, hairstyles, facial hair or stubble, make-up, jewelry, body piercing and tattoos convey visual messages, just as perfumes and colognes, stale tobacco smells and body odors do” (p. 78). Besides, I reviewed my Facebook profiles to see if there were any odds that the gatekeeper and participants could have a bad impression of me. At the beginning of my fieldwork, I faced the challenges of participants’ understanding research as they were unfamiliar with qualitative research. My participants were habitual in understanding data collection by filling out the survey form, which I elaborated on in the subsequent section (i.e., building trust).

Doing Ethical Research

While qualitative research demands the researcher's prolonged field engagement with the participants, ethical research is the hallmark of qualitative fieldwork. Given that qualitative research is relational, I tried to build and maintain a warm relationship with the participants. While ethical consideration in qualitative research refers to the process of "determining what is good or bad, right or wrong" (Hammersley & Traianou, 2012, p. 17), I was always careful in conducting my fieldwork from the beginning. In the initial stages of my fieldwork, I thought that the 'ethical considerations' were a stand-alone thing; however, during the progression of fieldwork, I found my earlier assumption was wrong. I realized that ethical concerns are relational and based on 'mutual trust and reciprocity' (Caeymaex et al., 2023) between the researcher and the participants. For instance, Hammersley and Traianou (2012) are cautious about the relational nature of qualitative research that "asymmetrical dependence rather than mutual independence, and the concept of need, rather than right or even obligation, comes to prominence" (p. 29). Realizing the relational nature of my study, I was sensitive to the ethical criticality of building rapport, interviewing with the teachers, and analyzing and interpreting the data. In addition, I was aware of maintaining my well-being and emotional balance since "loneliness, frustration, despair, unease, uncertainty, disappointment, anger, self-pity, failure and inadequacy" (Punch, 2012, p. 89) of the researcher could create obstacles for ethical research. I argue that doing ethical research is not just considering the research ethics at the beginning of fieldwork; it is an ongoing process that proceeds to data analysis and report writing. Thus, doing respectful fieldwork based on strong relational ethics was my prime concern during the PhD fieldwork.

Research ethics in the Nepali context from Eastern Philosophy (i.e., Hindu Philosophy) is discussed less despite there being moral and ethical rules and guidelines in Nepali society. For instance, Lamichhane and Luitel (2023) present the broader ethical approach in the Nepali research context as empathy, inclusiveness, and healing, which, in fact, is the relational approach that values participants in the center of the inquiry process. Notably, decolonizing the qualitative fieldwork is the urged need; this Eastern notion of research ethics inspired my fieldwork. In addition, during my PhD fieldwork, I was guided by the ethical guidelines suggested by Flick (2014), which include informed consent, avoiding harm to participants in data collection, doing justice to participants in analyzing the data, and maintaining confidentiality in writing. First, my fieldwork began with obtaining the participants' informed consent. However, I learned that being hurried to obtain the signed written consent is not an appropriate task initially. I experienced that the participants feared to form the consent form as other researchers experienced elsewhere (Caeymaex

et al., 2023; Ghimire, 2021; Riessman, 2005; Yuill, 2018), that's why I started the interview with oral consent. Instead, building rapport and gaining their confidence through informal conversations and meetings could lead to obtaining signed consent during and after the data collection. Second, as the fieldwork is a negotiated task, I assured the participants not to make any harm from the information they provided. However, it was not a one-shot and straightforward task that the participants could trust immediately; instead, it took a long during engagement with them. The participants trusted me as the prolonged engagement progressed, and the conversations were open and free. Third, I tried to persuade my participants that I would not do any injustice in data analysis by modifying their provided information. In order to ensure justice during analysis, I adopted the member-checking strategy by sharing the preliminary draft of data transcription and analysis with the participants. I confirmed any discrepancy between what they said and what was written. The teachers indicated minor discrepancies in my analysis, which I corrected. Finally, I strongly maintained the confidentiality and anonymity of my participating teachers in the written report. For this, I used the pseudonyms of teachers and their schools, carefully looked at the written text of the research context, and modified the possible texts that helped to identify participants. From my fieldwork, I learned that careful looking and consideration are fundamental from the initial phase of fieldwork to its concluding stage to ensure ethical considerations in qualitative research.

Building Trust and Managing Power Relations

The qualitative research data quality depends on the trust building between the researcher and the participant, which shapes data collection and quality. The fieldwork dynamics, such as power relations created by the unmatched identity between the researcher and the participants, significantly influence and add complexity during the qualitative fieldwork. The qualitative fieldwork cannot be isolated from the influences of power relations and hierarchy created such power relations. For instance, Subedi and Gaulee (2023) argue that “unequal power relations, even unintentional, are created by the hierarchy significantly influencing the qualitative interview, which needs to be considered seriously during the field data collection” (p. 2600). For example, during my fieldwork, I realized participants' hesitation due to the unmatched identity between us at the initial stages of data collection. In their eyes, I may be considered a knowledgeable man since I was a teacher educator for over two decades and a PhD scholar, but my participants were the primary teachers who are considered at the lowest rank of the teacher management system. Estimating such a possible halo effect (i.e., cognitive bias) on my identity, I never emphasized and presented myself as a university teacher and a PhD researcher. Instead, I presented as a former public school primary teacher

for five years, aiming to become attached to them. Despite my efforts to present myself as their colleague and insider with the teachers, they again hesitated in the initial interviews. In addition, qualitative research always demands the ‘researcher’s neutrality’ (Subedi & Gaulee, 2023) during the data collection, but the unequal power relations due to various factors such as position, academic qualification, and identity as a researcher challenge such a natural role. While the interpretive approach considers field data co-construction between the researcher and the participants, their unmatched identity creates an obstacle in co-constricting the data.

Notably, in most qualitative research, unequal power relations between the researcher and the participant are challenging in building trust. Generally, if there is an unequal hierarchical position, the participants consider themselves inferior and less knowledgeable (Subedi & Gaulee, 2023), negatively contributing to developing the sense of ‘we’ (Rai, 2020). Losing the sense of ‘we’ promotes hesitation and fear in the participants, which does not open the sharing of their stories. For example, during my fieldwork, I experienced my unequal status as a PhD scholar and university teacher to the primary teachers. I noted it in my fieldnotes as:

After obtaining the consent, identifying the possible participants for my study, and discussing them with the headteacher, I met Ananda, a primary teacher from the same school. I offered him a cup of tea in the school canteen. I started the informal conversation by having tea. I introduced myself as a PhD researcher and university teacher and described the purpose of meeting him. In addition, I explained in detail the nature of the data collection procedure. As I closely observed his body language, his facial expression seemed unhappy and suspicious. Realizing his discomfort, I asked him if he had any queries. Ananda remained silent and just looked at me. I shifted conversations about his school anniversary held a week ago, but he spoke little about that. I thanked him for talking and left the school. (Fieldnotes, July 3, 2021)

The unequal hierarchical position between the university teacher and the school teacher unintentionally creates power relations (Subedi, 2023) because of their different positionality. Confronting such a situation of unmatched identity between the researcher and the participants, I highlighted my earlier status and experiences as a primary teacher during conversations with other participants. Several informal meetings with the participants helped me to gain their trust.

Participants’ understanding of providing the information means feeling the survey form was another challenge for me to build trust. After introducing myself during the meeting with Pramod, my initial conversations illustrated his understanding of research, which was almost like that of other participants.

Khim: I expect the information on your teaching journey for my study. Would you share your experience?

Pramod: Okay. I have no problem. Please give me your questionnaire, I will fill that and return it to you after some days. I have filled out the so many questionnaires of many M.Ed. students for their thesis.

Khim: That was great, but my study is a different one. I do not have any questionnaire to share with you. Filling out a questionnaire is basically survey research. As I am doing qualitative research, I am analyzing the stories you would share. I am eager to listen to your stories of lived experiences. I have some queries regarding your teaching journey. Listening to your stories may take a long time, so we need to meet frequently at your convenience.

Pramod: (his smiley face turned suspicious) Long time? How long? I have never participated in this kind of research. (looking at me with a doubtful face, he remained silent for a while).

Khim: It will take our long engagement; however, I will not bother you. We will talk at your convenient time. (I described the nature of the qualitative research procedure in detail and assured him to hide his identity in the report.)

Pramod: Yes, okay then. (Finally, he was convinced, and we reached an agreement for the data collection)

These conversations suggest two significant concerns of rapport building with the participants. First, building trust is not a straightforward and one-shot activity for which a participant could not be immediately ready without being convinced of the research procedure. Second, participants' understanding and perceptions toward the research and data collection procedure could be challenging for the fieldwork. While the participants' agency shapes the fieldwork (Mosher et al., 2017), changing their understanding as providing data means responding to the survey questionnaire is a critical issue of qualitative fieldwork. For example, in my fieldwork, it is not only the case of Pramod; instead, the remaining participants were habitual in filling out the survey form. I have had several informal conversations and meetings to convince the participants to confirm their involvement in my study. While the researcher's 'insider-outsider background' (Rai, 2020) plays an essential role in building trust with the participants, I tried to present myself as a former primary teacher. As my participants were the primary teachers, my earlier background supported me to create as an insider during the fieldwork. Thus, the trust building of the researcher with the participant is a hallmark in the qualitative fieldwork for obtaining in-depth information during the data collection.

Matching the Gender

In qualitative research, especially in-depth interviews, gender plays a significant role as a powerful element. Matching the gender facilitates the sharing of participants' stories. During my fieldwork, I experienced the complexity of my unmatched gender, with female teachers significantly contributing to openly sharing their stories. I also felt inconvenienced during the initial rapport-building stage after entering the field. While the role of gender in qualitative fieldwork is much discussed in the Western setting, it is minimally addressed in the non-Western context. Considering the literature in Nepal is rare in the role of gender matching during fieldwork, a few studies (Mishra, 2018; Subedi, 2023; Subedi & Gaulee, 2023) discussed the role of complex gender dynamics during the in-depth interview. While interviewing the female teacher, I realized that the extra layer of gendered complexity was negatively influenced. For instance, Subedi and Gaulee (2023) argue about the gender difference in the qualitative interview that "it is necessary to do a comprehensive analysis of the complex dynamics of gender matching, the cultural background of the interviewee, and possible power relations between the researcher and participants." (p. 2589). Similar to my fieldwork experienced unmatched gender, Mishra (2018) shares her experiences of matching gender while interviewing women. She further states that "my sex and my gender both helped me become close to women I interviewed. Biologically, we were females. We shared the same biological processes of menstruation. Most of us also shared motherhood. Socially, we were women" (Mishra, 2018, p. 34). Concerning the gender unmatching during the interview, Subedi and Gaulee (2023) write:

The interviewer (i.e., Subedi) encountered this gender interference for the first time; he thought it was probably due to the lack of adequate rapport-building with the participants. As the same problem occurred during the second interview, the researcher considered this a phenomenon of interest. It appeared that male and female interviewees' gender dynamics were intermediating the elicitation of stories and hindering the smooth sharing of experiences (p. 2596).

While gender unmatching significantly influences the qualitative interview, it adds extra layers of complexity when interviewing female participants with a male researcher. For example, during the interview with the female teacher, I initially thought it was due to a lack of building trust and reciprocity with them. However, as I repeatedly experienced the challenge of full and frank disclosure of female teachers during interviews, I learned it was due to the complexity of unmatched gender.

Recording the Fieldwork and Journaling

Qualitative fieldwork intends to engage actively in the natural field setting by participating, observing, and systematically recording the details of the fieldwork through ‘journaling’ or ‘writing the field diary’ or ‘jottings.’ This immersive field engagement facilitates a comprehensive understanding of the studied phenomena concurrently undertaken within the context of the field alongside the study participants (Emerson et al., 2011; Wolfinger, 2002). For example, Emerson et al. (2011) elaborates that field jotting is not an evaluative summary or generalizations; instead, it includes observed scenes and actions, events, and detailed emotional expressions obtained during the fieldwork while being with the participants. Notably, I used the audio recording to capture the field jotting immediately within the limited time when writing notes was not possible. Considering the suggestions from several literature (Emerson et al., 2011; Pacheco-Vega, 2019; Wolfinger, 2002), I started writing the field jottings and fieldnotes and converting them into a reflexive field diary/field journal in the same evening after returning home from the field. While writing the reflexive diary, I tried to be neutral about the events, phenomena, and field context I observed. While fieldnotes serve as the key data source in understanding the complex dynamics of fieldwork, they helped me reach the depth of the phenomenon, which the participant did not share during the interview. At the same time, fieldnotes provided powerful data for analysis moving beyond the participant’s sharing, from which I realized the importance of ‘comprehensive fieldnotes taking’ (Schensul & LeCompte, 2013; Wolfinger, 2002). In the midst of the fieldwork, I realized the importance of better organization of fieldnotes for data analysis and report writing. In writing the fieldnotes and field diaries, I became careful not to dump my emotions, biases, perspectives, and thoughts; instead, I tried to be self-critical and reflexive. Considering the recording and journaling fieldwork as a useful data source for a deeper understanding of the study problem, it is equally important for effective organization and precise field note writing to obtain quality data.

Conclusion

As a contribution to the qualitative fieldwork complexities, this study is based on my reflective analysis of the fieldwork conducted during my PhD, where I interviewed primary school teachers to investigate their identities. Initially, I unpacked the challenges associated with entering and beginning qualitative fieldwork. Then, I explored how the context-specific complexities influence the data collection process in qualitative fieldwork.

Drawing on the PhD fieldwork experiences with the public-school teachers, this study shows that qualitative fieldwork is a dynamic activity with multiple complexities. I argue that qualitative fieldwork is not a one-shot activity but context-specific prolonged engagement with the participants. It requires a researcher's careful and flexible strategies with 'open eyes and ears' (Mishra, 2018) to tackle fieldwork-related challenges and complexities. This study does not intend to convey the impression that doing qualitative fieldwork is a complex task and has hurdles. Instead, it intends to make researchers look and plan carefully for efficient fieldwork. Based on this realm, the findings of this study identified five significant challenges and complexities associated with qualitative fieldwork. First, the stereotype mindset of a previously determined and rigid fieldwork plan is a significant challenge since the fieldwork is flexible, context-specific, and 'unpredictable' (Mahato et al., 2022). Understanding the fieldwork diversity and adopting the appropriate strategies to enter the field with a good rapport building with the gatekeeper and participant is critical. Second, qualitative research is a relational and negotiated task that depends on the reciprocity between the researcher and the participants. Maintaining only anonymity and confidentiality does not ensure ethics; research ethics should be maintained while obtaining informed consent, data collection and analysis, and report writing, which is challenging. Third, the unequal power relation between the researcher and the participant, often evident in most of the fieldwork, jeopardizes obtaining rich information and is a complex phenomenon that needs to be minimized. Such an unmatched identity due to the hierarchical system could negatively contribute to meaningful fieldwork engagement. Another, participants' understanding of research as responding to the survey/questionnaire is a critical challenge for qualitative fieldwork. Fourth, while gender matching between the researcher and participants is a critical concern of qualitative fieldwork (Subedi & Gaulee, 2023), unmatched gender creates an extra layer of complexity in obtaining information. Thus, it requires careful consideration of the gender dynamics and the cultural sensitivity of the field. Finally, keeping detailed and micro records of field jotting, writing fieldnotes, and reflexive dairy are the critical concerns of the researcher during the qualitative fieldwork that are often overlooked. While writing fieldnotes without generalization and being evaluative is challenging to qualitative researchers, their careful considerations are required in valuing the importance of organized fieldnotes as a powerful data source. Beyond writing the field jottings, it requires to collect the concerning photos, videos, and artifacts from the field as important data sources.

This study is implacable for novice researchers to understand the dynamics and complexities of fieldwork as a negotiated and context-specific concern of natural data in situ. In addition, this study suggests the researchers adopt the appropriate

mode and flexible fieldwork strategies based on the comprehensive needs assessment of the field.

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Factors Associated with Psychosocial Stimulation Development of Preschool Children in Rupandehi District of Nepal

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Abstract

Creating fun learning games, telling stories, and sharing warmth in social interactions are important for helping kids grow well; it is like planting seeds for a bright future workforce for the nation. This study aimed to assess factors associated with psychosocial stimulation development in 401 preschool children (3-5 years) in the Rupandehi district of Nepal. A cross-sectional survey was conducted using a multistage random sampling technique. Socioeconomic and demographic data, as well as psychosocial stimulation levels, were collected through validated instruments, interviews, and direct observation. IBM SPSS version 26 was used for data analysis, with a significance level of $p < 0.05$. Among the participants, 50.4% were economically marginalized, and only 1.2% caregivers offered high levels of psychosocial stimulation to their preschoolers. Positive associations were found between the number of children, family type, caste/ethnicity, parental education, and wealth status in the unadjusted analysis. In multivariate analysis, the psychosocial stimulation received by preschool children was positively associated with wealth status, caste, mother's education, family structure and father's education. Wealth status, caste, family structure, and parental education emerged as key factors influencing the psychosocial stimulation development of preschool children. Implementing strategies to promote psychosocial stimulation within families from economically marginalized backgrounds, disadvantaged castes (including Dalit, non-Dalit Tarai caste, and Janajati groups), with illiterate parents, and those living in nuclear family structures could potentially make a substantial contribution towards enhancing psychosocial stimulation among preschool children.

Keywords: Associated factors, primary caregivers, psychosocial development

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Introduction

Effective care at early childhood serves as the foundation for social, emotional and cognitive development, profoundly impact the children's well-being and pave the way for future education and prosperity (Britto et al., 2017; Sharma, 2023; Sharma & Budhathoki, 2023). Investing in the early stages of childhood represents an economically efficient and crucial approach to fostering sustainable social and economic progress on a global scale (Urke et al., 2018). Caregivers' psychosocial stimulation, encompassing affection, motivation, storytelling, and academic engagement, significantly influences children's language abilities, emotional health, and overall personality growth (Nahar et al., 2012; Widick et al., 1978). Additionally, the quality of parental care during a child's formative years, characterized by a nurturing, attentive, and stimulating environment, significantly influences the comprehensive development of young children (Knauer et al., 2019; Pudasaini et al., 2023). Likewise, providing support to parents, caregivers, and families in delivering nurturing care and ensuring protection is vital for empowering young children to fully achieve their developmental capabilities (Britto et al., 2017; Finch et al., 2016).

Erikson's theory posits that human personality unfolds in a predetermined sequence, encompassing eight stages of psychosocial development spanning from infancy to adulthood (Kesavelu et al., 2021). During the preschool stage, characterized by initiative versus guilt, children begin to exhibit characteristics related to asserting control over their environment through interactions with caregivers, family members, peers, and play activities (Batra, 2013). During this stage, children eagerly seek regular interaction with their peers and caregivers, with play being their primary avenue for nurturing their interpersonal abilities through taking initiative (Urke et al., 2018). This stage is characterized by a potential flow of energy and action, although family members or parents may sometimes perceive it as disruptive (Nahar et al., 2012). During this stage, children exhibit a strong inclination to question and seek knowledge as a natural part of their intellectual growth, and if parents or primary caregivers respond to their inquiries by threatening or diverting them rather than addressing their curiosity, it can lead to the development of feelings of guilt (Kesavelu et al., 2021). Initiative, cultivated when parents enable children to explore within set boundaries and endorse their choices, nurtures self-confidence and purpose, whereas difficulties arising from the suppression of initiatives by parents or caregivers can result in feelings of inadequacy (Maree, 2021). When preschool-aged children are provided opportunities to independently plan and initiate activities such as games and interactions with others, they develop a sense of security, which in turn reinforces their leadership and decision-making abilities without fear or hesitation

(Batra, 2013) Conversely, a sense of guilt can develop if their initiatory actions are stifled through control, criticism, or punishment aimed at restricting their creative expression (McLeod, 2018).

Providing mentally and physically engaging activities and experiences during a child's early years creates optimal opportunities for learning, knowledge acquisition, and exploration (Soheilipour et al., 2019). Numerous studies conducted on humans have demonstrated that early and appropriate psychosocial stimulation can result in significant enhancements in the development of both physical and mental processes (Jeong et al., 2016; Nahar et al., 2012; Scaglioni et al., 2018; Sharma, 2023). Likewise, crucial elements that influence the physical development and cognitive advancement of preschool children encompass their family, residential environment, economic circumstances, psychosocial stimulation, socio-cultural factors, actual deprivation, community surroundings, and peer associations (Almeida et al., 2021; Duggan & Dennis, 2014; Khalid, 2015; Thomas et al., 2017). Inadequate psychosocial stimulation can result in developmental delays, impacting a child's capacity to excel at school as well as their future employment prospects and earning potential (Baitun Nahar et al., 2012; Engle et al., 2011). Effective psychosocial stimulation is recognized as a key factor in enhancing the quality of life for preschool children (Riyadi et al., 2019; United Nations Children's Fund [UNICEF], 2018). The earlier children are introduced to psychosocial influences, the more positive their developmental outcomes tend to be (Warsito et al., 2012). The preschool years provide an optimal opportunity to establish a stimulating environment that promotes comprehensive development and helps alleviate the impacts of missed opportunities (Soheilipour et al., 2019).

Existing Nepali literature lacks adequate discussion on the importance of proper parenting and development of psychosocial stimulation (Sharma, 2023; Sharma et al., 2023) for the all-round development of preschool children, which is crucial for their school readiness. Therefore, this study focuses on the investigation of "factors associated with psychosocial stimulation development of preschool children" in the context of Rupandehi district of Western Nepal. The insights provided by the study could greatly assist parents in establishing an encouraging home environment.

Methods and Procedures

Study Design and Setting

This research employed cross-sectional descriptive survey design and involved primary caregivers of preschool children as participants. Data collection occurred between February 4th and April 12th, 2021, in Rupandehi district of

Nepal. According to the latest census conducted in 2021, the district's population is 1,118,975, characterized by diversity in terms of ethnicity, culture, and socio-economic backgrounds. In the academic year 2020, there were 14,358 children enrolled in government-owned Early Childhood Development [ECD] centers, as reported by the education division of the local government unit (Sharma et al., 2022; Sharma, 2022).

Sampling and Sample Size

The sample size for this study was determined using Cochran's formula (Cochran, 1977), which calculates the required sample size based on a specified confidence level and precision. Since the prevalence of the attribute in the population was unknown, the researcher assumed maximum variability and set the prevalence as 50%. With a desired precision of 5% and a confidence level of 95%, the unadjusted sample size (n_0) was calculated to be 384.16.

Here,

n_0 = unadjusted sample size,

Proportion of attributes in the population (p) = 50% = 0.5

Hence

$q = 1 - p = 1 - 0.5 = 0.5$

z = confidence level at 95% = 1.96

Precision (e) = 5% = 0.05

Therefore, $n = \frac{z^2 pq}{e^2}$

or, $n = 1.96^2 * 0.5 * \frac{0.5}{0.05^2} = 384.16$

Again, the population for this study was known and finite (14358). Therefore, finite population correction formula (Israel, 2013) was used to calculate the adjusted sample size as follows:

$$n = \frac{n_0}{1 + n_0/N}$$

$$n = \frac{384.16}{1 + 384.16/14358}$$

$$n = 374.17$$

Therefore, 375 were used as the adjusted sample size. Considering a 7% non-response rate based on previous in-person interviews that found a 7% increase in

non-response when assessing psychosocial stimulation development (Gooch et al., 2019), the final sample size was increased to 401.

The sample selection involved multiple stages. In stage one, three local units were chosen randomly from three distinct strata, representing a sub-metropolitan city, a municipality, and a rural municipality. In stage two, records of total schools/ECD centers were collected from each selected local government unit. In stage three, a simple random sampling (Lottery method) was employed to select each of the five ECD centers of the local government unit. In the last stage, the population proportionate sampling (PPS) technique was employed to determine the number of participants from each area, resulting in a final sample size of 401 primary caregivers of preschool children. If the primary caregiver was unable to provide relevant information, a close family member was involved. Only those caregivers, who were present at the school/ECD center along with their pre-school children, were included in the study. Non-responsive participants who declined to provide the requested data were excluded from the study, and the schools involved in pre-testing the tools were also excluded from the final analysis (Sharma, 2023).

Data Collection Tools

The dependent variable of this study was psychosocial stimulation development and the independent variables were socio-demographic and socio-economic including factors. Data were obtained via structured interviews conducted according to a set schedule and through direct observation to assess the information from the primary caregivers. In the first section, a total of nine predictors were considered, including the child's gender, number of siblings, age of children, family structure, religion, caste, father's education, mother's education, and wealth status. The wealth status tool was adapted from NDHS-2016 and measured based on household possessions, assigning a score of '1' if the item was present and '0' if not (Ministry of Health, 2017). Additionally, a housing index was created by evaluating various factors related to the condition of the house. These scores were calculated and categorized into four levels (richest, rich, poor, and poorest) aspects (Sharma et al. 2022).

In the second section, a structured interview tool was utilized to assess the knowledge and practices of primary caregivers regarding psychosocial stimulation for their preschool children, developed based on Erikson's psychosocial development theory (Widick et al., 1978). The instrument consisted of 37 bipolar-type questions, covering various aspects of stimulations such as cognitive, emotional, verbal receptiveness, prevention of restriction and discouragement, child motivation,

physical and environmental arrangements, providing of suitable play materials, and chances for daily inspiration (Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, 2016; Ranjitkar et al., 2019 p.3; Sharma et al., 2023; Totsika & Sylva, 2004). Feedback from supervisors and subject experts was sought to ensure the suitability and clarity of the items. After pre-testing, 28 questions were used in the final implementation, measured on a binary scale with one mark allocated for a positive answers and zero for negative responses. Total number and percentage of positive replies were calculated, and the data was categorized into low, medium, and high levels of psychosocial stimulation based on relevant literatures (Sharma et al., 2023; Totsika & Sylva, 2004; Warsito et al., 2012).

Validation of Tools

The data collection tools were developed to align with the research objectives and questions, and a pre-test was conducted to ensure content and face validity. The tools were revised by the researcher, two experts, and a statistician to enhance their reliability and validity. During the pre-testing phase, a sample of 40 participants from three government-funded school/ECD centers in different areas was selected. The pre-testing helped identify and address any issues related to understandability, time consumption, uniformity, adequacy, and appropriateness of the tools. Ambiguous, misleading, and misinterpreted questions were modified based on the pre-testing findings (Leavy, 2018).

To improve reliability, Cronbach's alpha test was calculated for the psychosocial stimulation tool, yielding a value of 0.800, which was considered acceptable (Creswell, 2012). Before data collection, the data collection assistants underwent intensive training on the study's objectives and data collection techniques. Efforts were made to minimize systematic biases, and enumerators were educated on potential sources bias during data collection. Enumerators were guided through techniques like probing questions, logic patterns, and other relevant skills, who always worked under the supervision of the principal researcher. Interviews were conducted in a confidential environment, ensuring a safe space for respondents to share information without distractions.

Data Analysis

The collected data underwent a series of steps for analysis. Initially, the data were entered into an Excel sheet, and subsequently imported into IBM SPSS version 26.0 and reliable statistical techniques including Independent Sample T-test, One Way ANOVA, Post hoc analysis, and multiple regressions were used to analyze the data. During the data analysis, percentages, standard deviations, means, standard errors, and p-values were determined. The majority of the data were available in

continuous series; therefore a parametric analysis was performed. Categorical variables were summarized using counts (n) and percentages (%), while continuous variables were described using means and standard deviations (SD). Statistical tests, such as one-way ANOVA and T-tests, were conducted to examine differences and relationships between variables. A significance level of $p < 0.05$ was employed to determine statistical significance.

To facilitate analysis, the data were coded and categorized based on the characteristics of the variables. During the data analysis process, frequency adjustment was applied, which resulted in the consolidation of certain relevant categories. In the unadjusted analysis, extended forms of families were merged into the joint family category due to their shared characteristic of multiple generations residing together. Similarly, Christianity and Islam were combined into the 'Other' religion category, as they were present in smaller proportions compared to Hinduism and Buddhism. Concerning caste/ethnicity, disadvantageous and relatively advantageous Janajati groups were merged into a single category due to their similar characteristics, considering the limited number of relatively advantageous Janajati individuals. Additionally, Dalits were included in the religious minority category as they were accorded equal status within society. Lastly, to capture the overall nurturing aspect for preschool children, secondary level education and higher education for both mothers and fathers were combined as secondary and above education. For the adjusted analysis, categorical data were transformed into dummy variables using the following coding scheme: nuclear family=0, joint family=1, illiterate mothers=0, literate mother=1, illiterate father=0, literate father=1, Janajati, Dalits, and non-Dalit Tarai caste=0, advantageous caste=1 (Sharma, 2023).

To ensure the validity of the analysis, residual analysis was performed to evaluate the normality and multicollinearity of the data. Ten outliers were identified and subsequently excluded from the dependent variable to achieve a normal distribution (Sharma, 2023). Finally, a regression analysis was conducted to predict the psychosocial stimulation score of preschool children. Gender, age, number of children, religion, family structure, caste, mother's education, father's education, and wealth status were considered as predictor variables in the analysis.

The regression analysis involved the construction of five models using the stepwise selection method. The ANOVA results indicated that the entire model demonstrated a statistically significant overall fit to the observed data. The F-values exhibited a gradual decrease from the first model (109.22) to the fifth model (32.93), with all values being highly significant ($p < 0.01$), providing substantial support for the superiority of these models. Furthermore, the adjusted R-squared values showed an increase from the first to the last model, indicating improved explanatory power,

with values of 21.7%, 25.3%, 26.9%, 28.5%, and 29.0%, respectively. Concurrently, the standard error of the estimate displayed a progressive decrease from the first to the last model, suggesting a more accurate fit, with respective values of 3.80, 3.71, 3.67, 3.64, and 3.62. These findings collectively signify the robustness and goodness of fit of the subsequent models.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was obtained from the Nepal Health Research Council's Board of Ethical Review (NHRC: No. 2078-56/2021) after receiving approval issued by the Office of the Dean, Faculty of Education, Tribhuvan University. All previous researchers were acknowledged and their works cited in the study.

Results

Demographic Characteristics

As shown in Table 1, among the 401 respondent children, 50.6% were male. Additionally, 45.6% of the children were at the age of five. The majority of parents (71.6%) had two or fewer children. More than half of the respondents (55%) lived in a joint family. Furthermore, over one-third of them (34.9%) belonged to the advantageous caste/ethnicity. The majority of the respondents (94.5%) identified as Hindu. Regarding education, it was observed that illiteracy rates among preschoolers' fathers and mothers were 14.7% and 23.7%, respectively. Furthermore, approximately one-fourth of the respondents were classified into the socioeconomic categories of the poorest, poor, rich, or richest (Table 1).

Table 1

Characteristics and Distributions of Demographic Variables

Variables	Category	N	%
Sex of children	Male	203	50.6
	Female	198	49.4
Age of children	Three years	39	09.7
	Four years	179	44.6
	Five years	183	45.6
Number of children	Two or less	287	71.6
	More than two	114	28.4
Family structure	Nuclear	190	47.4
	Joint	211	52.6

Religion	Hindu	379	94.5
	Buddhist	09	02.2
	Others	13	03.2
Castes	Dalit*	53	13.2
	Janajati	112	27.9
	Non-Dalit Terai caste	96	23.9
	Advantageous caste	140	34.9
Fathers' education	Illiterate	59	14.7
	Basic level	199	49.6
	Secondary and above	143	35.7
Mothers' education	Illiterate	95	23.7
	Basic level	181	45.1
	Secondary and above	125	31.2
Economic status	Poorest	101	25.2
	Poor	100	24.9
	Rich	101	25.2
	Richest	99	24.7
Psychosocial stimulation level	Low (Less than 52%)	119	29.7
	Medium (Between 53%-82%)	277	69.1
	High (More than or equal to 83%)	05	1.2
Total		401	100

** In Nepal, the Dalit caste is positioned at the bottom of the social ladder, representing the lowest social standing and untouchability. Meanwhile, the Janajati and non-Dalit Terai castes are considered to be positioned above Dalits but below the advantaged caste in terms of social ranking (Wikipedia, 2022).*

Determinants Factors of Psychosocial Stimulation

Table 2 presents the results of the analysis of the mean psychosocial stimulation scores, and it indicates that these scores significantly varied based on socioeconomic and demographic factors. The study identified significant differences in the mean psychosocial score with respect to the number of children ($p= 0.0001$), family structure ($p= 0.011$), caste ($p= 0.0001$), father's education ($p= 0.0001$), mother's education ($p= 0.0001$), and wealth status ($p= 0.0001$).

Table 2*Psychosocial Stimulation with Demographic Variables*

Variables	Category	Number (%)	Mean	SD	95% CI	P-value
Gender of children	Male	198(50.6)	19.92	4.29	-0.76/-0.95	.827
	Female	193 (49.4)	19.82	4.32	-0.76/-0.95	
Age of children	Three years	38(9.7)	20.47	4.14	19.11-21.83	.611
	Four years	172(44.0)	19.91	4.42	19.24-20.57	
	Five years	181(46.3)	19.71	4.22	19.09-20.33	
Number of children	Two or less	278(71.1)	20.47	4.18	1.13-2.97	.0001***
	More than two	113(28.9)	18.41	4.26	1.12-2.98	
Types of family	Nuclear	186(47.6)	19.29	4.27	-1.96/-0.25	.011*
	Joint	205(52.4)	20.40	4.27	-1.96/-0.25	
Religion	Hindu	370 (94.6)	19.84	4.36	19.39-20.28	.751
	Buddhist	09 (2.3)	20.88	2.02	19.33-22.44	
	Others	12 (3.1)	20.16	3.85	17.71-22.61	
Castes	Dalit	52(13.3)	18.88	3.89	17.80-19.96	.0001***
	Janajati	111(28.4)	19.20	3.82	18.48-19.92	
	Non-Dalit Tarai caste	94(24.0)	18.42	4.75	17.45-19.40	
	Advantageous caste	134(34.3)	21.83	3.80	21.18-22.48	
Fathers' education	Illiterate	58(14.8)	17.39	4.05	16.3-18.46	.0001***
	Basic level	196(50.1)	19.32	3.99	18.75-19.88	
	Secondary and above	137(35.0)	21.72	4.10	21.02-22.41	
Mothers' education	Illiterate	95(24.3)	17.43	4.31	16.55-18.30	.0001***
	Basic level	179(45.8)	19.52	3.88	18.95-20.09	
	Secondary and above	117(29.9)	22.40	3.53	21.75-23.04	
Wealth status	Poorest	99(25.3)	17.01	4.22	16.16-17.85	.0001***
	Poor	98(25.1)	19.27	3.96	18.48-20.07	
	Rich	99(25.3)	21.24	3.84	20.47-22.00	
	Richest	95(24.3)	22.06	3.29	21.39-22.73	
Total		391				

*Note: Significant at * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.0001$, # p -value calculated for T-test and ONE WAY ANOVA*

Determinant Factors of Psychosocial Stimulation through Stepwise Regression Analysis

The outcomes derived from the stepwise regression analysis indicated that wealth status, advantageous caste/ethnicity, mother's literacy, joint family, and father's literacy had a significant and positive impact on the psychosocial stimulation score of preschoolers from their caregivers (Table 3).

Table 3

Stepwise Regression Analysis and Determinant Factors of Psychosocial Stimulation

Predictors	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Wealth Status	0.468** (0.232)	0.486** (0.227)	0.423** (0.249)	0.416** (0.246)	0.210** (0.246)
Advantageous castes		0.196** (0.383)	0.193** (0.379)	0.181** (0.377)	0.180** (0.375)
Literate Mother			0.146** (0.480)	0.164** (0.478)	0.164** (0.476)
Joint family				0.133** (0.373)	0.134** (0.371)
Literate Father					0.087* (0.385)
Constant	14.495** (0.550)	13.299** (0.600)	12.923** (0.607)	12.338** (0.630)	12.126** (0.636)
Adjusted R ²	21.7%	25.3%	26.9%	28.5%	29.0%
Std. Error	3.80	3.71	3.67	3.64	3.62
F (P-value)	109.22 (P<0.01)	67.16 (P<0.01)	48.82 (P<0.01)	39.79 (P<0.01)	32.93 (P<0.01)

Dependent variable: Psychosocial stimulation score

Note: The value in parentheses represents the standard error of the estimate.

‡Based on Maximum Likelihood estimation, Significance: ** at 1% and * at 5%

According to these findings, wealth status alone in model 1 accounted for 21.7% of the variance in a child's psychosocial stimulation score ($\beta=0.468$ and adjusted $R^2=0.217$). When advantageous caste added in model 2, the contribution was increased by 25.3%. The inclusion of mother's literacy in model 3 accounted for an additional 26.9% of the variance, and the inclusion of family type in model 4 increased the contribution to 28.5%. Finally, in model 5, which included wealth

status, caste/ethnicity, mother's literacy, family type, and father's literacy, a total of 29.0% of the variance in psychosocial stimulation score was explained.

In the final multivariable regression model, a one-unit increase in wealth status was associated with a 0.210 unit increase in the psychosocial stimulation score ($\beta=0.210$; $p<0.0001$). Similarly, a one-unit increase in caste/ethnicity was associated with a 0.180 unit increase in the psychosocial stimulation score ($\beta=0.180$; $p<0.0001$). Moreover, changing mother's education categories resulted in a 0.164 unit change in the psychosocial stimulation score ($\beta=0.164$; $p<0.001$). Additionally, transitioning from a nuclear family to a joint family was associated with a 0.134 unit increase in the psychosocial stimulation score ($\beta=0.134$; $p=0.002$). Similarly, for every unit increase in father's education, the psychosocial stimulation score increased by 0.087 units ($\beta=0.087$; $p=0.041$).

Discussion

Out of total of 401 preschool children, more than half of them (50.1%) were found in poorest and poor economic background and very less (1.2%) received high level of psychosocial stimulation from their primary caregivers. The economic status, caste/ethnicity, family type and parental education were identified as strong factors influencing the psychosocial development of preschool children.

The level of psychosocial stimulation among preschool children was notably affected by their family's financial circumstances, with those from the lowest economic backgrounds exhibiting lower levels of psychosocial stimulation compared to their counterparts from the highest economic strata. This observation aligns with previous research indicating that psychosocial stimulation consistently varies based on economic status in developing countries (Engle et al., 2011; Jeong et al., 2017). Furthermore, a study conducted in Bangladesh discovered that programs combining unconditional cash transfers with psychosocial stimulation yielded positive effects on children's neurodevelopment (Jamal et al., 2022). Similarly, research in the Dominican Republic revealed that psychosocial factors can serve as protective factors for children, but poverty remains a significant barrier to them reaching their full potential of psychosocial development (Sánchez-Vincitore & Castro, 2022). Finch (2016) also noted that higher family wealth is associated with providing high-quality home stimulation for children at 24 months of age. Moreover, it has been suggested that the parents' economic status has an impact on the home environment for their children (S K, 2022). These findings collectively underscore the substantial influence of one's economic situation on the extent of psychosocial stimulation available to children.

A significant association was observed between caste/ethnicity and overall psychosocial stimulation ratings, with children from privileged castes demonstrating higher levels of psychosocial stimulation development compared to children from other castes. However, findings from a similar study conducted in Indonesia yielded mixed results, as there was no significant correlation between ethnicity and the overall psychosocial stimulation scores for children aged 6 to 36 months. Nonetheless, the study did find statistically significant associations between the ethnicity of parents and engagement in storytelling activities (Februhartanty et al., 2007). These findings collectively suggest that children from privileged castes tend to receive greater levels of psychosocial stimulation than their counterparts from less privileged castes, where psychosocial stimulation appears to be less prevalent (Sharma et al., 2023).

This study uncovered a notable connection between family types and psychosocial stimulation, with joint family structures demonstrating a relatively positive influence on the presence of strong psychosocial stimulation for their children. This finding aligns closely with the results of a study conducted by Lingam et al. (2014), who conducted qualitative research in India and Pakistan and found that joint family setups play a crucial role in affording children proper psychosocial development opportunities. This suggests that preschool children tend to have more opportunities for psychosocial stimulation development within joint family settings.

Parental education exerts a substantial influence on psychosocial stimulation, with children of parents with higher educational levels receiving more psychosocial stimulation compared to those with illiterate parents. This observation aligns with a similar study conducted across 38 low and middle-income countries, involving 87,286 children aged 3 and 4 years, which found associations between mothers' and fathers' education levels and psychosocial stimulation (Jeong et al., 2016). Similarly, various factors, including parental education, maternal care in terms of love and affection, as well as reward and punishment practices, the frequency of a child's interactions and play with the father, family outings, and the home living environment, collectively contribute to children's developmental and psychosocial well-being (Riyadi et al., 2019).

Similarly, a multiple indicator cluster survey in the Dominican Republic underscored the significance of psychosocial factors in protecting children from adverse outcomes, with poverty identified as a major hindrance to children reaching their full potential and increasing their risk for chronic health issues throughout their lives (Sánchez-Vincitore & Castro, 2022). In a related vein, Jeong et al. (2017) conducted a study across 42 low and middle-income countries involving 98,464 children aged 3 and 4 years, revealing that educated fathers and mothers can

impart crucial parenting skills related to psychosocial stimulation to their children. Furthermore, Finch (2016) discovered that higher maternal education is associated with providing high-quality home stimulation among a sample population of 24-month-old children. Collectively, these findings underscore the pivotal role of parental education in maintaining the level of psychosocial stimulation for their children.

This study's main strengths include the attainment of the required sample size from a population with varied ethnic, cultural, and socio-economic backgrounds, as well as the presence of a comparatively high fertility rate within the district. The classification of psychosocial stimulation was based on a comprehensive literature review. Furthermore, this study addresses a critical knowledge gap in the field of child psychosocial development in Nepal and similar developing countries.

However, there are several limitations to this study that should be taken into account. The cross-sectional nature of the study means that all data were collected on the day of the survey, limiting the ability to capture longitudinal trends. The study's focus on government-funded ECD-centered settings may restrict the generalizability of its findings to all preschool children. Additionally, the study did not examine the efforts of ECD centers or teachers in implementing psychosocial stimulation practices, which could have influenced the results. The study also did not assess the IQ of mothers or primary caregivers and did not account for cultural influences that may impact child care and stimulation. Finally, the tools used to measure psychosocial stimulation were tailored for the local setting of the study area, and their validity may not be supported by evidence in all contexts.

Conclusion

The study's findings indicated that a majority of preschool children belonged to the poorest and poor economic backgrounds, with only a small fraction receiving a high level of psychosocial stimulation from their primary caregivers. Economic status, caste, family type, and parental education were identified as strong influencing factors in the psychosocial development of preschool children. These findings underscore the need for community mobilization and caregiver awareness programs aimed at enhancing psychosocial development, with particular emphasis on those from lower economic backgrounds, disadvantaged castes (including Dalit, non-Dalit Tarai caste, and Janajati groups), illiterate and single-parent households. Furthermore, it is recommended that further research be conducted, accompanied by a sustained commitment to increase resource allocation, to effectively address the root causes of inadequate psychosocial stimulation in these communities.

The findings of this study bear significant implications for evidence-based interventions and policy formulation aimed at enhancing psychosocial stimulation development outcomes among preschool children in Nepal and the countries of similar socio-demographic contexts. Specifically, the study underscores the importance of targeted interventions for preschool children hailing from economically marginalized backgrounds, including those from Dalit and non-Dalit Tarai caste, and those with illiterate parents and residing in nuclear families.

Policymakers should prioritize the allocation of resources toward the development and implementation of programs fostering healthy psychosocial stimulation development within early childhood development (ECD) centers, parents/primary caregivers counseling and healthcare establishments. Further, policymakers are encouraged to design interventions that respect and incorporate traditional psychosocial stimulation practices while simultaneously endorsing wholesome alternatives by collaborating closely with local communities. This approach should consider the diversity of cultural practices and childcare preferences prevalent in the local context of Nepal.

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Author Contribution

The first author was responsible for creating the instruments, collecting data, conducting the analyses, and drafting the initial manuscript. The second and the third authors contributed to the initial concept and draft, and both authors subsequently reviewed and provided feedback on subsequent drafts. Ultimately, all authors approved the final version of the manuscript.

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Exploring Teaching and Learning Physics in Engineering Institutions of Kathmandu District

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Abstract

Being a physics educator for the last two decades, the first author of this paper observed some disturbing scenarios in the educational landscape of diploma in engineering in physics theory portion. Students' academic achievements in the physics final examination conducted by Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training (CTEVT) indicated that many failed to fulfill the minimum requirements to pass the final exam or gain good grades. In addition, most students could not apply the physics principles in real-world contexts. The purpose of this study was to explore teaching and learning practices in physics theory classrooms of Kathmandu district-based diploma in engineering schools affiliated to CTEVT. The study employed a qualitative research design and was underpinned by the social constructivist learning theory. Ethnography as a research method was employed in which participant observation and unstructured interviews were used as the research tools. A purposeful sampling was carried out to conduct the research in which nine students from two engineering institutions were taken as the research participants. Data analysis was carried out by coding the raw data primarily employing N-vivo coding thus creating several categories and finally developing three major themes. The findings indicated that the classroom dialogue didn't support the social constructivist epistemology. Thus, the findings lead to the conclusion that traditional teacher-centric practices were prevalent at those engineering institutions that might be responsible for the poor academic achievements of students.

Keywords: Diploma in engineering, CTEVT, ethnography, social constructivist epistemology, teacher centric, inquiry-based learning

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Introduction

Teaching is the process of imparting knowledge from teacher to student. It is defined as blending several elements into the procedure by which a teacher determines and applies the teaching methodology (Munna & Kalam, 2021). On the other hand, learning is a key consideration that a teacher must consider when training children. Learning can be seen as a permanent change since it is brought about in students by a teacher through strategies such as strengthening certain abilities, changing attitudes, or understanding specific scientific laws that function within a learning environment (Sequeria, 2012). To be considered an active learner, a student must anticipate being treated as an adult learner who can influence the learning environment in some way, such as by asking questions and getting clarification on their doubts.

Physics is essential for understanding the intricacy of modern technology and is necessary for a country's technological development. This field of science has greatly influenced many technologies that are shaping current life and has contributed to the understanding of several phenomena that are encountered every day (Erinosho, 2013). The Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training (CTEVT) curriculum 2021 mandates physics teaching and learning to impart knowledge of various physical concepts that may be applied in each subject domain in technical schools including engineering, health sciences, agricultural science, and forestry. For instance, civil engineering students explore the elastic behavior of structures like buildings, bridges, towers, hydropower dams, and other structures using the laws of elasticity of physics. Likewise, electrical engineering students design a transformer, generator, and dynamo using the principles of Faraday's laws of electromagnetic induction. The ideas of optics and optical devices are used by ophthalmology students to address the issues of short- and long-sightedness, anomalies in combination with vision disorders, relating to human eyes (Paudyal et al., 2021). Thus, it may be claimed that physics and society are intertwined. In the modern world, it is impossible to separate oneself from physics.

From the anthropological perspective, the culture of a human group or society is made up of knowledge, language, customs, and materials that are passed down from one generation to the next (Saldana, 2011). A culture is a shared knowledge and practices of a bounded group of people and is concerned with the people's way of living. The culture of teaching and learning inside physics theory classrooms comprises the elaboration of scientific principles thus employing hypothetico-deductive relationships between various physical quantities and numerical problems concerning different principles/ concepts. During the first author's involvement in teaching physics in an engineering school, he dealt with the chapters/ topics based on

the metaphor, ‘curriculum as a content or subject matter’ (Schubert, 1982, p. 5). In doing so, he employed lecture-based teaching to explain and derive the formula for projectile motion, the principle of conservation of linear momentum, total internal reflection of light, nuclear fission, and so forth. In this sense, science education has prioritized imparting secure and accepted knowledge while excluding contradictory information, opposing viewpoints, conflicts, and ethical considerations (Long, 2012).

During the first author’s several years of teaching in an engineering school and other higher secondary schools, he noticed that physics lessons were dominated by traditional chalk-and-talk instructions (Angel et al., 2002) and a culture of transmission-based teaching approaches (Acharya, 2016) and exam-centric teaching and learning practices were prevalent inside physics classrooms in many institutions across Nepal. Many of his students claimed physics was a difficult subject as they were seen struggling with numerous issues across the curriculum that were often categorized as lacking clear examples and requiring a considerable degree of mathematical manipulation. In addition, students’ performance policies encouraged teachers to employ unconventional pedagogical techniques to enhance students’ academic achievement thus creating a competitive, hectic, and tense environment (Mackatieni, 2017) in the classroom culture of physics learning.

The academic result published by CTEVT in January 2022 disclosed the following scenarios. We here present the academic result of an engineering institution. In the electrical and electronics stream, 9 out of 10 failed the final physics exam held in 2021. Likewise, in civil engineering stream, 13 out of 40 failed in the exam. In the electrical engineering stream, 12 out of 18 students failed to accomplish the pass marks. In another engineering school, 22 out of 47 students failed to achieve the pass marks in the final exam of physics conducted in December 2021 (CTEVT results, 2022).

Based on above published results, it could be seen that students were not able to perform well in physics final examinations that made us think seriously to explore and investigate teaching and learning inside physics classrooms of engineering educational institutions affiliated to CTEVT.

The purpose of the study was to explore teaching and learning practices inside physics theory classrooms of engineering institutions of Kathmandu district. This study was guided by the following overarching research question:

1. How do teaching and learning occur inside physics classrooms of engineering institutions?

Literature Review

In this section, we have reviewed some of the recent research in the field of physics education which helped us to allocate the research gap between those studies and this research study.

Iwuanyanwu (2022) conducted research in a university undergraduate physics classroom. The purpose of this study was to investigate the factors that influence students' self-efficacy to solve mathematical physics related problems. The finding was that didactic instructional approaches along with other variables influenced students self-efficacy. Research conducted by Uden et al. (2022) on active online learning in physics showed that students' perspectives changed during the post-implementation phase of the active online learning programme. Kanyesigye et al. (2022) conducted a research on impact of problem-based learning on students performance in physics classrooms as well as conceptual understanding and attitude together with teachers' effective instruction. The results showed that students who were subjected to problem-based learning gained improved learning as compared to those who were guided through traditional pedagogical practices.

Ogedbo and Ramnarain (2022) conducted a research to investigate the effects of employing interactive simulation technology as a guided inquiry strategy to improve learners conceptual knowledge in electrostatic. The finding of this study was the simulation techniques provided learning opportunities that influenced learners' development of metacognitive skills and information transfer. Similarly, Gysin and Rovelli (2021) conducted a research on learning physics lessons. The researchers employed the use of knowledge features (momentum, force, kinetic energy, etc.) and context features (movement of a cable car) during the transfer process in physics learning especially regarding the topic of energy in mechanics. The finding was that knowledge pieces in the chapter on mechanical energy could be transferred to real-life situations using different context features.

Following empirical reviews, a significant gap between these studies and our research was discovered. These studies were focused on different pedagogical approaches in physics education but were not concerned with how students in engineering institutions learn physics especially the 10+3 pattern of higher education in the engineering field. Moreover, these studies were conducted in foreign institutions and didn't reflect teaching and learning patterns in the context of Nepal. In addition, no research has been conducted on teaching and learning physics in the context of the Nepalese educational landscape. The purpose of this study was to fill that gap and to explore the teaching and learning practices in engineering institutions of Kathmandu. This will further reflect the pattern of teaching and learning in physics classrooms of other technical schools affiliated with CTEVT.

Methods and Procedures

Research Method and Design

A qualitative research method was employed to investigate a problem and gain an in-depth understanding of a central phenomenon (Creswell, 2012). In qualitative research, a central phenomenon is the fundamental notion, idea, or process that is being studied. Ethnography as a research design was employed in the study. An ethnography is a written representation of a culture. It carries quite serious and moral responsibilities for the images of others inscribed in writing and is most assuredly not neutral (Van Maanen, 1988). In addition to this, ethnography is the study of social life through observation and documentation to portray a group's culture. With ethnography as a research method, the first author of this study unpacked the culture of participants and settings first through participant observation which is the main method of ethnography (O'reilly, 2005), and then conducted interviews with the research participants.

Research Site and Participants

Two diploma-level engineering schools affiliated to CTEVT were selected for the study. Institution A comprised civil, electrical, electronics, computer, and architecture engineering courses while Institution B comprised electrical, electronics, and computer engineering courses. Both were the oldest engineering schools in Nepal. The research study was mainly focused on the first-year diploma in engineering students from electrical, electronics, and computer engineering as physics was being taught only in the first year of the engineering course. The participant observation was carried out within these streams in the two engineering schools.

Purposeful sampling technique was employed for the selection of the research participants from the two engineering schools. In Institution A, there were 20 students in that specific class whereas in Institution B, there were 30 students in the class where participant observations were carried out. Altogether, nine research participants were selected for the interview process out of which four participants P1, P2, P3, and P4 were from Institution A and participants P5, P6, P7, P8, and P9 were from Institution B. The research participants were the first-year engineering students of both the institutions.

Data Collection Approaches

Two methods of data collection were employed in this research study. The first one was participant observation which is the main method of ethnography (O'Reilly, 2005) in which the first author was involved in the participant observation

in the physics theory classes of the two engineering schools. The participant observation was based on the teaching and learning practices of ‘Optics’ in Institution A whereas ‘mechanics’ in Institution B. Multiple classes were observed during the first semester of study in those institutions. Likewise, multiple rounds of unstructured and open-ended interviews were conducted with those nine participants. The interviews were conducted both face-to-face and online platforms such as Zoom and Google Meet.

Data Analysis Approach and Strategies

The data in this research was qualitative in nature. Data analysis is a central step in qualitative research. The analysis of qualitative data ensures the outcomes of the research (Flick, 2014). First, the data from participant observation and interviews were transcribed. The data analysis process started with the exploration of data to obtain a general sense of data, memoing ideas, thinking about the organization of the data, and considering whether the researcher needs more data (Creswell, 2012). In this sense, the first author developed a multitude of codes, which is “a short word or phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data” (Saldana, 2016, p.4) from the field note excerpts and the interviews transcripts primarily employing in-vivo coding. Then several categories were developed from the coded data. Code books for participant observations and interviews were created for more in-depth analysis. Three major themes were developed from the ethnography of physics theory classrooms.

Results

The field note excerpts, the observer’s comments, and personal reflections as well as the interview transcripts were meticulously analyzed, and the findings from those investigations revealed the following elements. This section covers every element that contributes to the total.

Lecture-based Teaching

During the participant observation session of multiple classes, the first author noticed that the chief pedagogical approach in teaching and learning physics was lecture-based. In institution A, the teacher was delivering lectures on the unit ‘optics’ in which teaching and learning were guided by several chapters such as principle of reversibility of light, real and apparent depth, total internal reflection, reflection at spherical surfaces and so forth. Likewise, in institution B, the teaching and learning of physics were based on the unit mechanics in which topics such as characteristics of simple harmonic motion, time period of simple pendulum, rotations of rigid

bodies, angular momentum, law of conservation of angular momentum, etc. were covered.

The researcher talked with the participants about physics pedagogy in the theory classrooms. All of the participants mentioned that the teachers explained the topics/ theory and derived formulas and occasionally provided some examples related to the topics. When the first author of this research was a student at the intermediate level of science in 1991-1993, he felt that his teacher's instructional approaches were guided by the lecture-based instructions in which they used to derive the formula and unilaterally explain the theory, and students in those time either had to copy the teacher's write up or carefully listen to the teacher. In addition, during the first author's teaching practices of nearly two decades in an engineering institution, he was also guided by the same pedagogical approaches as that of his teachers back in the 90s and the teachers in the two engineering institutions under investigation. The chief pedagogical technique in all these three cases was lecture-based teaching.

The lecture method of instruction is undoubtedly the oldest instructional method, and it is still the most prevalent method of instruction today (Hussian et al., 2011). In this teaching approach, a teacher explains a topic, derives principles/ equations, poses some examples related to the topic, and solves some numerical problems from the recommended books that are easily available in the market. On the other hand, students are the passive receptors of knowledge (Emalia, 2017) and thus achieve already assimilated knowledge and abide by the teacher's instructions. Also, Buabeng (2015) claims that in the high schools of New Zealand inside physics classrooms, the teaching and learning was guided by traditional lecture-based instructions. Moreover, in the high schools of Nepal traditional chalk-and-talk method of instruction is prevalent in which teachers are less likely to encourage the students' discussion and students are expected to be passive receptors of teacher's transmitted content knowledge without knowing the real meaning in students' daily life activities (Acharya et al. 2019). Most importantly, teaching and learning environment in physics classroom was defined by reiterating information from earlier lessons, defining terms of physical quantities, expressing the relationship between physical quantities using mathematical equations and solving numerical problems (Worku & Alemu, 2021).

Non-interactive Teaching and Learning

During the participant observation at the two engineering schools, the first author didn't see interactions between the teacher and students as teaching and learning were confined to copying the teacher's version of write-up from the

whiteboard and following supplementary book. Apart from raising a few questions, the teachers were not in contact with the students and neither most of the students seemed to interact with the teacher. The teachers occasionally posed questions to the students but either the teachers replied by themselves, or they ignored the solutions owing to their speed of teaching. In addition, not all students actively participated in the learning process. Some of them were talking to their friends and most of them were not willing to address their teachers' concerns. While the teachers posed several closed-ended questions, most of the students remained silent and the teaching and learning was limited to one-way traffic (Ghimire, 2023). Moreover, during the participant observation, the first author noticed that both teachers were teaching quickly as if they had to cover the syllabus as quickly as possible.

Participants P3, P4 from institution A and participants P8 and P9 from institution B shared a common voice that their physics teachers taught fast. Likewise, P5 from institution B shared similar views but in indirect way saying that teacher was focused, on the completion of his course and this voice was in line with P4 from institution A.

Different views were echoed regarding the lack of focus in the learning process. P3 claimed that her classmates were busy with other activities like chatting with friends and using phones in class. Likewise, P2 and P6 claimed that students in the classes were talking to each other while the teachers were teaching. Similar voices from P1, P5, P9 were aligned with P2 and P6.

Most of the participants shared that there were few or no student-teacher and student-student interactions in the classroom. P1, P3, P5, P6 and P7 said that there were no interactions in the classroom in the form of discussions or other interactions. However, P2 claimed that there were very few interactions in the classroom. P8 argued that the teacher responded his questions by himself. Further P3 and P5 claimed that the teacher opposed while they raised concerns. P5 argued that the teacher didn't respond to his concerns but rather asked him to meet after the class or the next day. P3 was complaining throughout the interview that the teacher asked her not to raise uncontextualized questions thus trying to escape the students' concerns.

The first author felt that the teachers were not paying enough attention towards the teaching and learning process and the students' learning was limited of being deposited (Freire, 2005) the so-called knowledge to the seemingly empty minds of the learners (Taylor, 2015). Additionally, the role of teachers in the institutions under study was neglecting the fact that learning and learners are the heart of the educational process and treating the learner as a machine undergoing several cycles of programming and reprogramming (Adams, 2006).

The primary goal of science teachers would be to allow students to think and act like scientists rather than just learning or copying what others have already done (Fadaei, 2021). On the contrary, the physics teachers at both institutions were making students learn through a specified books or class notes rather than learning through social interaction and creating knowledge collaboratively (Thakur, 2014). Participant P3 views indicated towards the hegemonic ideological approach of the teacher at institution A. In classroom setting, the teacher's frantic activity- calling on students, granting privileges, and starting and stopping activities on those who are on the receiving ends of the teacher's action. Sometimes the instructor overlooks a raised hand, occasionally they will dismiss the questions, and sometimes they may deny a request for permission (Jackson, 1990). These assertions are in line with this research study.

Exam-centric Teaching and Learning

During the first author's participant observation classes at both engineering schools, he noticed several times in his observations that the orientation of teaching and learning physics was aligned towards exam-focused teaching and learning.

In addition to this, the research participants also shared their views concerning this issue. All of them claimed that the teachers emphasized exam-oriented teaching and learning activities. They further claimed that the teachers asked them to bring the collection of old question papers and prepare for the final examination based on questions asked in the previous final examinations. Also, the teachers were focused on the important topics while teaching several topics. The scenario portrayed that teaching and learning were aligned to prepare students for the final examination thus overshadowing the learning process.

During the first author's intermediate-level science learning trip, he, too, purchased a collection of old-fashioned problems, and as a result, he couldn't do much better in physics. His education was also exam-oriented.

Likewise, during his teaching career, he implemented the concept of answering a collection of past question papers, which he believed would improve both the learning process and academic accomplishment in the final examination. He made it mandatory for all students to answer each question from a collection of old question papers, limiting their learning because he was only concerned with preparing his students for the final exam so that better grades could be obtained for the credibility of his teaching, the name, and the fame of the academic institution.

The teaching and learning physics when the first author was a learner and a teacher, and the teaching and learning as observed at the two engineering institutions,

both were confined within the domain of exam-oriented education, that places a strong emphasis on the evaluation of student proficiency through exam results (Chen & Zou, 2018) whose goal is to separate the minority from the majority and send them to a higher level of education. The primary purpose of exam-oriented education is to unilaterally improve learners' capacity (Meng et al., 2021). Since students cannot advance to the next level until and unless they pass the final examination, instructors forcefully make them learn to attain the final exam and achieve at least the pass marks.

Discussion

The main purpose of this study was to explore the teaching and learning practices of Physics in diploma in engineering institutions of Kathmandu district. The findings of this research revealed that the teaching and learning practices in the two engineering institutions were aligned toward a lecture-based instructional approach, non-interactive teaching and learning, and exam-oriented teaching and learning.

The teachers at those engineering schools taught different units, optics in institution A whereas mechanics in institution B. The cardinal instructional method is lecture-based popularly known as the chalk talk (Brookfield, 2005) approach. The traditional lecture is a teaching method that is well-known for disseminating material widely, but it is less successful at fostering deep understanding and inspiring the curiosity necessary to further explore the information that has been taught (Dacre & Fox, 2000). Additionally, this method of pedagogy effectively disperses a large volume of content to a wide number of students, but it does little to promote and enhance lifelong learning, which is a crucial skill for those working in the fields that are continuously evolving (Ahmed & Roy, 2014). On the other hand, the culture of learning was such that students in institution A were listening to what the teacher explained or wrote on the whiteboard while in institution B the students copied what the teacher wrote on the whiteboard. In this way, the learning was limited to following the prescribed set of protocols such as recommended textbooks and class notes thus delimiting the creativity among the learners. The surface approach of learning (Alagib et al., 2019) popularly known as rote learning was prevalent at those institutions in which learners seemed to be motivated by either a need to finish the course or a fear of failing, which causes them to concentrate on memorization of facts from the larger context. In addition to the participant observation, the interviews with research participants also revealed that the teachers started a topic, explained the laws/theories, and derived physical equations. The teachers were focusing on 'the simple implementation of centrally produced curricula and objectives' (Brookfield, 2017, p.52). This scenario portrayed a teacher's-controlled classroom in which the teacher is the only person who has control over the learning process and is both the

source and transmitter of knowledge (Yesilyurt, 2022). Thus, teaching and learning seemed to act as a one-way traffic.

From the social constructivist viewpoint, learning and learners are considered at the heart of the educational process (Adams, 2006). The instructor's job is to act as a facilitator or guide (Taylor, 2014) thus providing students with alternatives and incentives to construct knowledge and understanding rather than acting as an authoritarian person. He/she has a prime responsibility of stimulating dialogue and discussions in group or individual thus supporting the development of understanding (Pritchard, 2009). However, the findings indicated that the instructor's job was not coherent with such a paradigm of learning.

Interactions between students and academic staff are an essential part of higher education since positive connections benefit students' educational experiences (Malm et al., 2020). In addition to this, students gain from interactions with instructors both inside and outside of the classrooms (Trolan & Parker III, 2021). However, the findings from this study suggested that at both institutions very few students were active and there was almost no interaction in the classroom.

Most of the participants reported that many students were disinclined in the learning process. In our view, the didactic teaching approach at those institutions might lead to the scenario reported by Acharya (2016) who claims that most science teachers begin the sessions with a problem the exercise book and choose one of the problems, typically the first, to serve as a model and demonstrate how to solve a specific kind of problem as science lessons are based on problems that are primarily available in practice books and recommended textbooks.

The non-interactive nature of physics classrooms in both engineering schools reveals the traditional teacher's centric pedagogical model which Serin (2018) claims that such instructional approaches are constrained by instruction that is heavily influenced by textbooks which in turn hinders students' decision-making and problem-solving skills. In addition, Acharya (2016) claims such approach does not effectively foster discussion, thinking and conversations in the classrooms.

Social constructivist learning theory emphasizes the interaction of learners with others and the dialogue with someone who is a more knowledgeable person as this paradigm of learning focuses on social interaction. In addition to this, a person can execute a given number of tasks alone but can perform a greater number of tasks in collaboration (Chaiklin, 2003). However, findings regarding the interactions in the classrooms also contradict the basic assumptions of social constructivism as the culture of interactive learning was predominated.

Exam-focused education is often despised, yet nothing has changed, instead, it has become even more intense (Chen & Zou, 2018) as the structured and predetermined responses were given emphasis from the recommended books, supplementary books and teacher's notes. Bemmoussat and Bouy (2019) claim that a highly exam-centric education system increased emphasis on testing and assessment has led to an increase in pedagogical malpractices.

Furthermore, several alternative terms and phrases such as item teaching, curriculum teaching, test oriented teaching, and teaching to test, all of which refer to classroom settings in which testing is regarded as an end in itself. Mackatieni (2017) claims that instructors utilize unscientific teaching techniques to enhance students' academic results producing a tense, hectic, and competitive culture in elementary and secondary schools that increases students' workload. The researcher further stressed that learners thoroughly go over the previous test questions in order to reproduce the content they have covered in regular classes. At those engineering institutions, the teachers were mainly focused on students preparing the content based on the final examination model questions as the data from participant observations and interviews were also coherent with Mackatieni (2017)

Teaching, learning, and assessment have traditionally been considered as three different yet interconnected aspects of education (Adams, 2006). Teachers typically place assessment second to instruction. Such a view of teaching, learning, and assessment echoes behaviorist ideals as testing is needed to make sure that mastery has been attained since learning happens sequentially and hierarchically (Thakur, 2014). As opposed to the behaviorist paradigm of learning social constructivism points assessment embedded inside the teaching and learning process (Adams, 2006). On the contrary to the social constructivist viewpoints the findings indicated that teaching and learning physics were focused more on assessment rather than learning. Students learning was best sidelined and worst ignored.

Conclusion

This study shows that the teachers' attempts to boost students' physics understanding in the classroom culture of teaching and learning physics were significantly insufficient. There was a lack of communication as well as collaboration among the involved stakeholders in the teaching and learning process. The activities were characterized largely by a lack of teachers support. The research also found that the entire teaching and learning strategy was aligned towards the exam-oriented educational model. Finally, the study indicated that the traditional teacher-centered approach to teaching and learning physics prevailed in the institutions under investigation. Based on the findings of this study, the authors

contend that the transmissive nature of our age-old pedagogical approaches may be a key factor that should be considered in relation to students' poor academic performance, as this type of pedagogy does not promote active learning, such as inquiry-based approaches in physics teaching and learning in engineering institutions.

This study intended to analyze physics teaching and learning in engineering colleges, as well as to evaluate the actual process of teaching and learning to acquire solid information about how physics was taught and learned. The findings of this study focused on physics teachers' pedagogical techniques, as well as how students regarded teaching and learning physics theory. The findings could lead to advances in physics instruction that benefit students' learning. The findings also laid the groundwork for delivering informative recommendations to all stakeholders involved in Nepal's educational landscape. The findings could also help to introduce innovative pedagogical approaches such as inquiry-based and project-based learning that could be beneficial in the context of the Nepalese educational landscape. Furthermore, this research acts as a foundation for other Nepalese science/ physics education researchers in order to dig deep inside other pedagogical approaches that could be helpful in order to foster the four Cs approach- communication, collaboration, creativity, and critical thinking.

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Uncovering the Indigenous Khas Legacy of Resilience and Transformation in Western Nepal

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Abstract

This study explores the history and cultural resilience of the *Khas Arya* community in western Nepal. The purpose of the study is to investigate the changing patterns of the ancient indigenous *Khas* ritual culture, distinct from the *Hindu Aryans* of the south, due to their legacy of resilience and transformation. The research question centres on how the *Khas Aryas* have preserved their unique identity and rituals over time despite external influences. This study employed the qualitative research method and the historical research design using published documents as the data tools. The study reveals that the *Khas* community has been residing in western Nepal for thousands of years. They have maintained their distinct language, culture, and traditions, even as they embraced Hinduism and Buddhism. The *Khas Aryas* have preserved their original rituals, including nature worship and communal dining. The study highlights that they have retained their unique identity, distinct from the Hindu Aryans of the south, due to their historical resilience and cultural adaptation. The *Khas Arya* community's enduring legacy as an indigenous people of western Nepal reflects their ability to maintain their cultural identity in the face of external influences and changing times.

Keywords: Khas Arya, Indigenous, Himalayas, Mahabharata, Cultural preservation

Introduction

After centuries of evolution and linguistic transformation, the word 'Khas' has gracefully emerged, shedding its earlier variations of 'Kakes,' 'Kakas,' or 'Kas,' to attain a uniquely special and perfect form (Kshetri, 2013). In ancient Babylonia of West Asia, the Khas were known as 'Kas.' Over time, the *Kassyap Sagar* in this



region came to be named the Caspian Sea, with the term “Caspian” believed to have evolved from the word ‘Kas.’ The Khas community, rooted in history as aborigines, once thrived in the western reaches of Nepal, and their legacy has transcended time to encompass all corners of modern-day Nepal, leaving an indelible mark on regions stretching into Sikkim, Bengal, and Bhutan. The word indigenous represents human communities that have resided in specific geographic areas, maintaining land ownership and their independent existence since the earliest days of human civilization. They continue to inhabit the same ancestral lands, preserving their identity even in the face of challenges from other races (Rai, 2007). Therefore, the Khas, who initially forged their presence in these pristine lands through settlement in the ancient period, persist in the modern era, their enduring legacy firmly rooted in the heart of western Nepal’s Karnali region for centuries. Their enduring presence firmly establishes the Khas as an indigenous people of western Nepal.

Asia continent is widely acknowledged as one of the cradles of human civilization. However, the present-day inhabitants of Asia do not directly descend from the ancient humans who initially developed in this region. At some point in history, these early inhabitants of Asia were forced to migrate to other areas (Prasrit, 2014). The primary cause of this phenomenon was the recurring glacier ages on Earth. Creatures that walked on two legs and displayed hand-like activities evolved around two million years ago, whereas the creature resembling modern humans or our human ancestors is thought to have emerged only around one Lakh years ago (Darwin, 2012). To comprehend human history fully, it is essential to delve into a span of one Lakh years. During this time, humans embarked on journeys across various regions of the Earth. While exploring both inhabited and uninhabited lands, the earliest individuals to settle and establish permanent communities were the indigenous people of those regions. Within these communities, agriculture, animal husbandry, and horticulture became the foundation of their livelihoods. In Nepal, as an example, among the initial human groups to enter and occupy the land, the Kirats from the east and the Khas from the west were the first to engage in mining activities (Chemjong, 2003). In this sense, it is proved that the Khas are one of the most ancient castes of Nepal.

While the exact date of the Khas Aryan people’s arrival in the region now known as Nepal cannot be pinpointed, there is a consensus that they were among the earliest inhabitants of the area. In this context, numerous historians argue that the Khasas settled in Nepal before one thousand BC (Burghart, 1984). When examining the origins and migration of distinct ethnic groups in a particular region, scholars often rely on evidence from established centres of human civilization worldwide, such as Mesopotamia, Greece, Babylon, and the Indus Valley. In these regions,

various ethnicities and cultures have developed civilizations at different points in history (Sundas, 2020). Among these, the Khasas stand out as a nomadic group with a historical presence in the western region of Nepal dating back to ancient times. It is important to note that the Khasas were a caste within the broader framework of the Aryan race, rather than a distinct species.

When researching the origins of the Khas Arya community and their presence surrounding the area of Himavatkhand in historical texts, it is noteworthy that the Mahabharata references their participation in the Mahabharata war. In this epic narrative, the Khasas are cited alongside other castes such as *Padar*, *Dilghavenu*, *Parad*, *Kalind*, *Tangan*, *Ekasan*, *Arha*, etc. (Joshi, 1971). In the *Mahabharata*, the Khasas are mentioned as the inhabitants of the banks of the river Shailoda, situated between the Maru and the Mandar hills. In the *Mahabharata*, it is said that Yudhishtira gave them a gold mound called *Pripilak*, which was dug out of the ground by ants, as a gift for the great sacrifice he was about to perform (Kshetri, 2013). Based on this, it seems that the people of the Khasa caste have expanded to the northern region of modern India since the *Mahabharata* period.

According to the Karna Parva of the *Mahabharata*, the cavalry of Pulinda, Balhik, Khasa etc. were killed by the Pandavas (Adhikari, 2004). During the Mahabharata period of ancient India, the Himalayas, Ganges, Saraswati, Yamuna and beyond the borders of *Kurukshetra* and the area between Sutlej, Beas, Chinav, Bholam and Indus rivers were called Bahik Pradesh and the Khasas were also mentioned as the inhabitants of that region (Gellner, 2014). In the war of Mahabharata, it is mentioned that tribes like Khasa, Kirat, Tusar, Yavana, Darva, Visar, Darad, Sak, Kamath, Andhak, Pulind, Mlenchcha fought on the side of Kauravas (Adhikari, 2011). Khas is not only a word that refers to a single caste, but it is a word that refers to a community. Even before the origin and development of the word caste in the Indian subcontinent, the people of the Khas, a vast human community extending from the Himalayan range in the north to the sea in the south, have come to be known as the Khas Arya (Pokhrel, 1998). In this context, it appears that the Khasas have historically inhabited and spread across mountainous regions spanning Nepal, India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan throughout ancient history.

Manusmriti and post-Vedic literature like *Ismiriti Grantha* (memorial texts) mention that the castes groups such as Kirat, Huna, Avir, Yavana, Pulind, Paunduk, Dravida, Shaka, Parad, Palhav, China, Darad did not adopt Hindu culture, even though the Khasas are Aryan people of the Ganga and Jamuna from the south. It is believed that the Khasas expanded in this Himawatkhand before the Aryan people who developed the Hindu civilization in the middle place of the Ganga and Jamuna rivers. In this region, the Khas were spreading from the north to the south, while

the Aryans were developing the Hindu civilization in the coastal region of the Ganges River in India, the Khas were limited to the northern, mountainous region though, they were the another groups of Aryan people (Shrestha, 2007). After that, they expanded from the lower part of the Himalayas and the mid-hill region towards the east. As the civilization gradually developed in the uninhabited northern hilly Unkantar forest area, their rituals and culture were gradually developing. Therefore, they developed as an original and independent community. As things like the caste system and caste system of Hindu society gradually affected these Khas, castes like *Brahmin*, *Thakuri*, *Chhetri*, *Gharti*, *Jogi*, *Bhat*, *Kami*, *Damai*, *Badi*, *Saraki*, *Gayne*, *Sanyasi* were developed within the same community (Sharma, 2004). In such mountains, Khas castes, some of their original rituals and culture have been preserved even to the present. The problem of this study is that due to the encroachment on the original culture of the Khas and the attempts to destroy it rather than protect it, the modern-era Khas Aryans and the Hindu Aryans of the south cannot be distinguished. The purpose of this study is to find out the changing pattern of ancient indigenous Khas ritual culture which is different from the *Hindu Aryans* of the South because of the legacy of resilience and transformation.

Literature Review

Khas people are called Khas Arya because they are of Aryan origin but not Hindu Arya who developed Vedic civilization (Bista, 1996). The Khasa Aryas had already expanded in the western and northern regions before the *Hindu Aryas* of the south and had expanded to various parts of present-day India, Nepal and South Asia (Chauhan, 1998). The *Khasas* were the Kassites of ancient Babylonia, then Khuzistan, Iran, Iraq, *Kashyap Sagar* (Caspian Sea), Balti, Kumaon, Gudwal, Kashmir, Khari, and extended to Nepal (Adhikari, 2004). Around 700 years BC, the people who were travelling up the Sindhuli route from the Videh area to the valley and west of Nepal were Khas (Acharya, 1969). The Khasas were the ancient tribes, living on the banks of the Shailoda River located between the Meru and Mandar hills. The basis that Hinduism is a caste separated from the influence of culture is proved by fighting on the Kaurava side in the Mahabharata war because most of the non-Hindu castes at that time helped the master of Kaurav Duryodhana in the Mahabharata war. The Khasas were known as brave cavalry soldiers (Joshi, 1971). Khas, Kirat and Mlechchhas also helped the Kauravas in the war of Mahabharata. The Khasas at that time were known as a warrior caste (Adhikari, 2011). This evidence properly illustrates that the Khasas were the ancient tribal people who inhabited the *Himavatkhanda* region during pre-Hindu civilization in the Gangetic plain in ancient India.

Based on the study of the above relevant pre-published materials, it seems that the Khasas were extended to different parts of the *Himawatkhand* during the latter of the nomadic era. It seems that the Khas Aryas are a culturally different community from the Hindu Aryas who came to India from the southern coastal region and developed civilization in the coastal areas of the Ganga and Jamuna Rivers. In terms of species, *Khas Arya* and *Hindu Arya* seem to have the same place of origin. *Vedic Aryans* seem to have expanded from the southern region and non-Vedic and *Khas Aryans* from the northern region to *Himavatkhand*. The non-Hindu rituals developed by the Khas of Nepal are rarely discussed in these previously published materials. There is ongoing debate about the identity, origin, and expansion of the *Khas Aryas*. However, the development of the ancient culture by these Khas Aryas in Western Nepal and the current state of its remains have not been extensively examined. These aspects remain relatively unexplored within the discourse surrounding the *Khas Aryas*. In the study, this subject has been taken as a study gap. Although the pre-published sources in this study are limited, they have been used to conclude as much as possible according to the objective.

Methods and Procedures

The study is based on a qualitative research method with a historical research design. The historical method is a structured approach that entails the methodical gathering and impartial assessment of data related to past events. Its primary purpose is to rigorously examine hypotheses concerning the influence of caste or discernible patterns within those historical occurrences. This process not only enhances our understanding of contemporary events but also enables us to anticipate and prepare for future developments with greater precision (Anderson, 1994). This study is based on secondary sources. Published documents and Internet archives were used as the tools of data collection. The study has been completed by adopting the descriptive and analytical methods of the collected materials.

Results and Discussion

The study used a wide range of materials to conclude. The findings and results are based on analyzing this data, highlighting the importance of the information collected in shaping the study's outcomes.

Historical Review of Khasas

Based on historical, archaeological and literary sources, it has been found that the Khasas had already spread to different parts of Nepal during the Indus Valley Civilization period in India (Devkota, 2007). The Indus Valley Civilization dates back to 2800 BC to 2200 BC (Adhikari, 2018). Based on the various archaeological

excavations in Nepal and the study of various sites with Stone Age tools and human settlements, it has been found that people lived in the caves and river banks of the northern region of Nepal before 1000 years BC and the remains of various tools and objects used by them have been found. It seems that such settlements must have been made by the Khas in western Nepal (Mishra, 2004). When studying the details given by such sources, it seems that the Khas Aryas came to Nepal as early as the Neolithic period.

During the ancient nomadic period, while the Khas were expanding towards the east, instead of going towards the plains of India, they spread from Central Asia through the mountains of Kashmir, Kangra, Kumau and across the Mahakali river to the land of present-day Nepal. Although the date of that time cannot be said with certainty, the Khas were found to have spread to the western highlands thousands of years ago (Acharya, 1969). Based on the research and study, it seems that the Kirats from the east and the *Khasas* from the west entered Nepal around the same time (Chemjong, 2003). Research has reached near the truth that they were indeed ancient inhabitants of Central Asia, which aligns closely with the truth. In the beginning, some branches of the Khas, who were indigenous to the western mountainous region of Nepal, expanded throughout the country over time. Those Khas were not divided into any caste, class or different community in ancient times. They developed the traditions of Shaivism and the Dhami Jhankri worship system. By the time of the Middle Ages, Gandaki Province, Karnali Province, Kumaon, Gadwal and other areas had expanded their power (Baldauf & Kaplan, 2000). Thus, based on the study and research of various sources, the Khas entered Western Nepal in the primitive period and they were the first among the castes to expand to Nepal at that time, so they can be considered the tribals of Western Nepal (Thapa, 2022). Therefore, it is claimed that the Khas, originating from Central Asia, migrated to Western Nepal in ancient times, spreading across the region and becoming the first among the castes to establish themselves as the tribals of Western Nepal with distinctive traditions and cultural practices.

The evidence supporting the notion that the Khas people are non-Vedic Aryans is bolstered by the presence of surnames rooted in words denoting hilly and mountainous terrain. Before the emergence of Vedic civilization in India, those Khas Aryans had established their unique way of life due to their expansion into various regions of northwestern India and western Nepal. Consequently, the Aryas who cultivated Hindu civilization in India did not typically categorize the Khasa Aryans as belonging to the same ethnic group (Pande, 1997). The Khas, indeed, have been the indigenous inhabitants of modern western Nepal since ancient times. They settled in the Himalayan range well before the emergence of both Himalayan Buddhism

and the Bronze Age Indus Valley civilization, which thrived from 3300 to 1300 BC (Adhikari, 2011). Around the time when people were developing a civilization of permanent settlement in Central Asia, the Khasas migrated to the southeast, crossed the Mahakali River through the Himalayas, and settled in the Karnali region of the lower part of the mountain. After a long time, a branch of the Khasas crossed the Himalayas from the Khari region of Tibet and came to Sinja and established the state system. After the establishment of the kingdom by the Khas, that area became known as Khasan Province (Joshi, 1971). During the reign of the Maurya emperors in India, the original inhabitants of the Karnali region of Nepal were the Khasas (Atkinson, 1974). The Khas have resided in the same region since the dawn of civilization and continue to inhabit it today. Given their status as the indigenous people of western Nepal, it is only natural to inquire about their cultural practices and contemporary changes due to external forces.

Legacy of Resilience the Khas Culture

The Khas Arya community comprises an ancient people with a distinct and enduring existence and identity. The most compelling evidence supporting this claim is the enduring preservation of their original language and culture to the present day. Language is one of the foundations of the distinct identity of any human community. The current Nepali language is the modified form of the ancient Khas language (Pokhrel, 1998). The Khas language was developed by the Khas, the primitive inhabitants of the Karnali region. It is because of the development of the Khas language that the mountainous region of Karnali province is called Khasan. By the end of the medieval period, the Khas language was called the Nepali language and that language became the common language of Nepal (Khanal, 2011). When studied from a religious point of view, the Khas had developed as a nature-worshipping community since ancient times. After religious faith and fear were born in them, they started worshipping natural elements like Caves, water, Bar, Peepal, Tulsi, Kush, Surya, Goth, Mud, Stone etc. (Camron, 1998). The remnants of the original culture and tradition developed by them are still being maintained.

For nearly 2,000 years, the *Khas Arya* community in western Nepal existed as a distinct tribe, living separately from other communities and caste groups during that historical period. A tribe is a human community with its original rites, culture, tradition, beliefs, religion, language and social form. It is believed that the Khasas have been living in the form of a tribe due to their original nature. But from around 11th to 12th century, Buddhism and Hinduism began to influence the Khasas. Nagaraja, the first Khasa ruler of the Karnali region of western Nepal, converted to Buddhism before establishing his kingdom at Jumla (Shrestha, 2005). In many records after the establishment of the Khasa kingdom, the mantra Om Mani Padme

Hoon is written in Tibetan script (Adhikari, 2011). By the end of the 13th century, the Khas rulers had adopted Hinduism. As Hinduism gradually expanded from the south to the north, people gradually left Buddhism. As the relationship between the Khas kings and the Malla kings of the Kathmandu valley was established, the influence of the art, architecture and craftsmanship of that place also fell on them. Before that, the Khas had their original rituals and customs.

While the Khasas embraced aspects of Hinduism and Buddhism, they diligently preserved their traditional and original rituals within their society. Such original rituals and cultures of the Khas people have been maintained even in the present. Even at the present, there is a custom of Khas to marry only within their own community. During the performance of various rituals and worships, the Khas had a practice of putting rice in a red *Avir* mixing it with curd and putting it on the forehead. Such culture is not found in any other caste and community. However, such practice is not found even in Hindu Aryan culture developed in India (Thapa, 2022). Khas Aryas do not have the practice of worshipping clay gods even at present. They mostly worship nature gods or stone gods. There is a custom of taking off the cap while eating in the Khas (Kshetri, 2013). They regard dishes prepared with ghee as sacred, emphasizing communal dining where all individuals should gather in one place. However, those belonging to Khas Brahmin families, with and without *bratbandha*, traditionally do not dine together. In this society, it is believed that father, son and grandson should not eat on the same plate. In Khas society, bathing in the afternoon is believed to be unlucky.

Inter-group marriage and remarriage of women are allowed within the Khas Arya community. The practice of *pewadhan* (women's self-property) has been traditionally maintained in the Khas since long ago. The tradition of the bridegroom filling the khukuri and flying the umbrella is also an original tradition of the Khas Aryas. In this society, it is customary to give *Dakshina* (to give money or gifts) to the daughter by pretending to be like a god. In Khas society, it is customary to respect all the relatives of the daughter, her children, her son-in-law, etc. and also give *Dakshina* (Badal, 2021). In this society, it is customary to keep the daughter-in-law in her own house if only a daughter is born, not a son. When it comes to shareholding and marriage, buying and selling goods, extorting money, and being a witness, the maternal uncle has a great responsibility. In this society, it is the maternal uncle who settles the small cases and solves the problems in the household. Since such an original tradition is found only in Khasa society, it seems that it is the *Raithane* (local) tradition of Khas society.

The Karnali region of western Nepal, which has been inhabited by the Khas Arya community since ancient times, has a tradition of walking from house to house

at night after reciting special mantras to ward off ghosts is known as *Firi Lagauni*. Such a tradition is found only in special communities of Nepal. In every settlement of the Khas community, it is customary to keep technicians *Damai*, *Kami*, *Sarki*, *Badi*, *Gayne* etc. with their settlement. As the influence of Hinduism gradually affected the *Khas Aryas* of Nepal, the system of untouchability was also stated in the khasas. Because, after the development of Varna, the caste and untouchability system in India, its influence was felt on the Khasas of Nepal (Uparaty, 2009). Before that, there was no practice of untouchability and caste-based hierarchy among the Khasas. In every auspicious work of the Khas Aryas, the presence of these castes, who are considered untouchables in the present but have been a technical community since ancient times, is considered mandatory. In the Khas Arya community, the rules of not using earthenware more than once, not eating stale food, etc. are still there.

Almost a thousand years have passed since the influence of Hinduism and Buddhism on the Khas community. Even so, they still have their original rituals. Dhami and Jhakri are the traditional original culture of the Khas, who treat and consider the Masto god as the main deity (Subadi, 1999). The worshipping of the Masto god is also an original tradition of the Khas community. Khas who worship the natural deities Bhayar Masto, Dhade Masto, and Dudhe Masto celebrate Maghe Sankranti as an ancestral memory (Shrestha, 2017). It is a special tradition to perform *Diwali* in the barn, to burn incense with cow ghee, to worship *Lato Bhoot*, *Banskhandi*, *Jhankri*, *Jaldanuva*, etc., to worship big trees, big rocks, caves, water springs, serpent gods, etc. In Khas society, the practice of sacrificing goats has been going on for a long time (Karki, 2018). In this way, being able to keep their traditions even after being in contact with other communities and religious groups for a long time has become the basis of Khas Arya's identity today.

Over thousands of years, the Khas community residing in the West Karnali region of Nepal has naturally undergone profound transformations in knowledge, craftsmanship, technology, lifestyle, social structures, values, beliefs, and ideologies, evolving from ancient times to the present day. Variations and alterations in human customs and culture arise due to factors such as time, historical epochs, societal shifts, economic conditions, geographical regions, language diversity, writing styles, and interactions with other communities. In their early nomadic existence, the Khas people gradually acquired the skills of animal husbandry and agriculture. Given their independent and unique identity, the Khas community had limited interactions with other castes and communities, which resulted in their self-reliance for skill development over time. In contemporary times, cultural assimilation has become a requisite for individuals who have migrated, driven by the demands of changing times, circumstances, and constraints (Limbu, 2005). If they had not done so, the

Khasas would have remained in the form of poets similar to Raute even in the present (Koirala, 1997). While living in ancient Babylonia, the Kassites people used to worship a god named Maruttas. The same deity is considered to be the primitive form of the Masto deity of the Khasas. It is believed that Marut, Mautta, Matt and finally Masto were formed from the word Maruttas (Karki, 2018). In Babylonia, Maruttas was worshipped as the god of water. Therefore, there is no practice of making idols of Maruttas. As it has been believed since ancient times, the Khas Arya community of Karnali region has the practice of worshipping Masto as a deity even at present.

In various places of *Himawatkhand* such as Kumaon, Garhwal, Himachal Pradesh, Kashmir, Karnali etc., the Khas have been building places related to these very gods or goddesses. The deities of the same Khasa are present in the southern lap of the Himalayas. Such goddesses are *Tripurasundari*, *Sansarimai*, *Pathibhara Devi*, *Vindhyavasini*, *Barahi*, *Kalika*, *Matrika*, *Malikarjuna*, *Mastamadoun*, *Supadeurali*, *Digrovhavani*, *Badimalika*, *Budhinanda*, *Bhurichula*, *Jalpadevi*, *Baradadevi*, *Shodakshadevi*, *Shaileswari*, *Nandadevi*, *Jwalandadevi*, *Kankasundari* etc. (Karki, 2018). When studying in this way, it is found that their rituals and cultures are still alive in the Khasas from ancient times to the present day.

In the ancient Karnali region and its surrounding areas, the Khas inhabitants of the western and northern regions have long been free from the scourge of casteism and caste-based discrimination. This is why the Vedic Aryas considered them non-Arya. Vedic Aryas considered them as low castes because they did not follow a caste system and caste-based hierarchy. They used to look down on the Khas, hate them, and not consider them to be of their level. The Khas developed their original division of labour tradition. Based on the division of labour, they were divided into three categories. In some Vedic forms of the Hindu Arya caste system, some people performed the functions of the Brahmins, the rulers and others (Levies, 1987). In the early days of Khas' expansion into the *Himwatkhand*, there existed no formal state system. Many centuries later, Vedic Aryans migrated into the present-day Kumaon, Garhwal, Hind Kush, and Karnali regions of Nepal. Despite their coexistence, the Khasa Arya and Vedic Arya struggled to maintain matrimonial ties due to divergent rituals (Sharma, 2004). However, after centuries of shared living, the Khasa Aryas gradually adopted Vedic rites, facilitating matrimonial connections with the Vedic Aryas. As a result, the local customs and traditions of the two groups became intricately intertwined over time. The *Matawali Chhetri* in western Nepal, found in various areas of Jajarkot and Jumla districts, have a different culture compared to the Hindu Chheri who migrated from elsewhere.

Vedic Aryans are believed to have entered Western Nepal in the largest number during the Mughal invasion of India (Sharma, 2022). That time was the 14th and the 15th century. After that, the relationship of those castes increased not only with the Khas but also with the Kirats. Among the people of the Mongol community, the people of the Magar lived near the Khas and the Vedic Aryans for the longest time (Chemjong, 2003). Among them, marital relations were established between Magar, Gurung, Tamang and Newar rulers and Khas rulers (Adhikari, 2011). Due to this, a Khas culture or hill culture has been fundamentally maintained in Nepal. This culture is neither Vedic Arya culture nor Khas culture, nor *Magar, Gurung, Tamang and Newari* culture. This is just a mixed culture and can be referred to as Nepali culture. In which many things such as language, festivals, customs, traditions, rituals, etc. are preserved as living remnants of the special culture.

Conclusion

The journey of the Khas Arya community through time and history reveals a remarkable story of resilience, cultural preservation, and adaptation. The word 'Khas' has evolved from ancient variations like 'Kakes,' 'Kakas,' or 'Kas' to represent an indigenous people with a unique identity. With roots stretching deep into the heart of western Nepal's Karnali region, the Khas have maintained their existence and culture for centuries, leaving a lasting impact on the broader South Asian landscape. Asia, as one of the cradles of human civilization, has witnessed the migration of early inhabitants over thousands of years. The *Khas Aryas*, among the earliest settlers in the region, trace their presence in Nepal back to ancient times, possibly preceding a thousand BC. They coexisted with other communities and even participated in events like the *Mahabharata* War, highlighting their deep historical roots. The Khas Arya community's journey from a nomadic state to embracing Hinduism and Buddhism while preserving their original rituals showcases their resilience and adaptability. Over time, they have developed a distinct language, culture, and set of traditions that remain integral to their identity. Despite influences from other communities and religions, the *Khas Aryas* continue to uphold their unique heritage, including practices like communal dining, nature worship, and a distinct social structure. The *Khas Aryas'* ability to maintain their cultural identity even in the face of external influences and changing times is a testament to their enduring legacy as an indigenous people of western Nepal. Their story serves as a valuable reminder of the rich tapestry of cultures and traditions that have shaped the history of South Asia.

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Contours of Sexuality in Roy's *The God of Small Things*

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Abstract

This study aims at analyzing the contours of sexuality, obscenity and incest in Arundhati Roy's debut novel, *The God of Small Things* to mark how the novelist deconstructs the naturalized and normalized social, ethical, and cultural values in the Indian society. The illicit relationship between the central character of the novel and a divorced woman, Ammu and the servant of her family, Velutha, the incest between Estha and Rahel, an incident where an old man forces Estha to masturbate, and the sensual affair of Baby Kochamma with Father Mulligan are some of the highly charged obscene details in the novel that invite a keen rationale for the research. The research utilizes the theoretical framework of psychoanalysis and radical feminism that deal with sexuality, feminine sexuality, and sibling incest to observe Roy's motive for emphasizing on pornographic drives. Both Freudian psychoanalysts and radical feminists deal with the sex overtly taking it as the basic human instinct. The research finding is that Roy emphasizes the graphic description of sexual acts among members of family and different castes to cherish beauty found in 'small things', to mystify the mundane, to examine the issues of unethical sex in revolutionary South-Asian societies. It is expected that people interested in researching libidinal issues in Roy in particular, and South-Asian literature in general, can take the paper as a reference.

Keywords: Incest, instinct, pornography, sexuality, taboos

Introduction

Although sex and incest have been associated with the taboo topics of discourse in the literary creations, the works of some Indian authors, namely, Sreemoyee Piu Kundu, Rosalyn D'Mello, and Arundhati Roy are adorned by sexuality for dismantling the social shackles that hinder openness and exploration.

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Arundhati Roy is compared with the great authors like Salman Rushdie, William Faulkner, and James Joyce for handling the often-restrained sensuous issues in her fictions (Lutz, 2019; Smith & Israel, 1987). Observing the contours of obscenity and incest in Roy's *The God of Small Things* has been relatively a newer trend of looking at the socio-cultural reality in India through psychoanalytic and feminist spectacles. Arundhati Roy's magnum opus, *The God of Small Things*, catapulted her to fame because it won her the honorable Booker Prize for literature in 1997 heralding a new revolutionary trend in Indian English fiction (Adhikari, 2022). Roy has very artistically sought to make a satirical commentary on India's prevailing socio-cultural-political ethos in the issues of love and sex (Smith & Israel, 1987). Roy endeavors to insinuatingly champion the notion of discriminating Dalits or the downtrodden in making physical relationships, and lastly, to make her story a great work of art with lush and sensuous prose style and commonplace diction (Nayak, 2015; Sibi, 2019). This research paper seeks to answer why Roy emphasizes obscenity, sexuality, and incest. Roy puts off the patriarchal masks, like other feminist writers, while delineating the special connotations in anatomical discourse.

The rationale of the paper lies in observing why Roy has attached pornographic details in *The God of Small Things*. The novel is set in a town, Ayemenem or Aymanam, now a part of Kerala, India. Ammu Ipe, disappointed by the marriage proposal of her parents, goes to spend a summer with a distant aunt in Calcutta (Dhami, 2021). To avoid returning to Ayemenem, she marries a man who assists in managing a tea estate in Assam whom she later discovers to be a heavy alcoholic who beats her and attempts to prostitute her to his boss so that he can keep his job (Kunhi & Kunhi, 2017). She gives birth to twins, Estha and Rahel, yet ultimately leaves her husband and returns to live with her mother in Ayemenem (Adhikari, 2022). There, the Brahmin woman, Ammu finds Velutha, a servant, and the so-called untouchable Paravan boy gifted with carpentry and mechanical work (Jennings, 2010; Sibi, 2019). Ammu comes to "love by night the man her children love by day" (*The God of Small Things*, p. 44). After the discovery of their relationship, Ammu is imprisoned into her room. A group of policemen hunt Velutha down and savagely beat him for crossing caste lines (Surendran, 2000). Haunted by their guilt and grief-ridden pasts, the twins' renewed intimacy ultimately culminates in their incest (Smith & Israel, 1987). Roy seeks to demonstrate how women have ventured to cherish with basic instincts escaping themselves from the inhumane treatment by the dogmatic authorities of their society.

Literature Review

Roy's novel, *The God of Small Things*, became a platform for criticism immediately after its publication. Many critics and reviewers have approached the

form and content, matter and manner of Roy's novel, *The God of Small Things*. Rao (1998) expressed his impression of the novel as the portrayal of the society in these words: "Roy's book is the only one I can think of among Indian novels in English, which can be comprehensively described as a protest novel. It is all about atrocities against minorities, small things, children, women and untouchables" (p. 17). Dharmi (2021) evaluated the novel as the representation of traumatic experiences of Rachel, Estha, Ammu, and Velutha, and their vulnerability.

Some critics have observed segregation of family members in terms of gender in *The God of Small Things*. Nayak (2015) marked women possessing the dominant role in the novel: "Traditional joint families are neatly structured where some woman assume dominant role with greater authority over others who are lower down and, therefore, enjoy certain power" (p. 590). However, most critics have noticed the exploitation of feminine gender in the novel. Though Ammu's sheer will-power helps to establish the Paradise Pickles factory, the credit for this is hijacked by Chacko because a female has no right of inheritance of family property (Jennings, 2010). As a daughter, Ammu does not get a good education, but her brother Chacko gets it because he is a male (Lutz, 2019). The sense of relative deprivation among the females in contrast to the males creates a sense of depravity, inferiority and inequality among the Indian womenfolk.

A group of critics is shocked to note the gender-discrimination cutting across caste and class barriers. Ammu is insulted by Inspector Mathew who calls her a harlot (Sibi, 2019; Surendran, 2000). Patriarchy and social customs punish Ammu, the upper caste woman, and Velutha, the lower caste boy- for their not acknowledging the social conventions of freedom in their lives, especially by women. Here in comes the double standards and snobbery of male-chauvinism (Kunhi & Kunhi, 2017). Chacko's sexual promiscuity is rather encouraged by Mammachi, but not Ammu's. It is again a mother, a female, who does this 'injustice' to her daughter Ammu. Ammu, Velutha, Rahel, Estha and Mammachi are the oppressed, while Pappachi, Comrade Pillai, Inspector Mathew are the oppressors.

A host of critics has judged the narrative technique used by Roy in *The God of Small Things*. Written in a style verging on magical realism, the novel features nonlinear chronology, fragmented flashbacks, and linguistic inventiveness to relate the story of the oppressed and the oppressor (Sacksick, 2010). Through a series of broken sentences, bizarre phraseology, ungrammatical constructions and conventional rhythm, she scintillatingly entertains and awakens the readers from their torpor (Sacksick, 2010; Surendran, 2000). Roy's style is immensely metaphorical. Though her narrative is tinged with riddles, it succeeds in narrating its tale splendidly. The novel, despite some criticisms, has been considered a

masterpiece. Rao (1998) also believed that it is an authentic portrayal of the struggle of the characters that make us assimilate with our own stories.

In this way, many critics have approached the text from different perspectives, but they do not make a strong judgment on the issue of incest and sexuality raised in the novel. Here lies the research gap. Therefore, this research paper intends to fill the gap. The focus of the paper is to explore why the novelist, Roy has taken an adventure to deal with the subject matter of sex and incest, so much restricted in the Indian society.

Methods and Procedures

This study applies an interpretative qualitative approach to research by using the primary resource, that is, Arundhati Roy's novel, *The God of Small Things*. Moreover, the secondary resources, such as reviews and critical works on the novel given in journals and website commentaries, are analyzed to test the working hypothesis. Its delimitation primarily lies in analyzing the contours of obscenity and incest in the novel from psychoanalytic and feminist perspectives.

Theoretical Framework

In his interpretation of Freudian theories, Jay (2022) believed that sexuality first seeks gratification orally in infancy when it begins to suck at the mother's breast. This is called the oral phase. The infant can't distinguish between his self and breast, and appreciates its mother as the object of the first external love (Freud, 1961). Freud (1961) contended that the child has narcissistic love for his own body before he loves the breast. The anal phase begins in the second year when the child's erotic interest shifts to the anus during toilet training (Freud, 1961). The third phase, phallic, begins from the fourth year and remains up to the sixth year (Freud, 1961). The libido is focused on the penis or the genital area in the stage. Freudian theory of psychology makes three categories of the human psyche: id, ego, and superego. The primitive instinct, the id, contains unrestrained sexual drives and is oriented to the pleasurable principle. Superego is oriented towards the morality principle and achieving big ambitions (Freud, 1961). Ego, oriented towards the reality principle, mediates between the instincts of the id and the super-ego. The Oedipus complex develops when the id of the oral stage is repressed (Freud, 1961). Accordingly, Freud (1961) contends that human behavior is influenced by the conscious and unconscious states of mind. The unconscious is formed when our unaccomplished instincts are stored in the mind, and get reflected in the dreams, jokes or texts (Freud, 1961). If consciousness refers to what we are aware of at present, sub-consciousness is not being fully aware of at present (Freud, 1961). Freudian critics take literary texts as the narration of dreams, or the conflict of id, ego, and superego. The textual content

is the manifest content that records the sexual instincts of human life in the latent content. Trauma takes place in human life when the libidinal urge is blocked. But perversion occurs when one is unrestrained from sexual drives.

The dynamics of sibling incest, according to Smith and Israel (1987), is caused by “the parental stimulation of the sexual climate in the home” (p. 101) and “family secrets, especially with regard to extramarital affairs” (p. 101). When family members experience trauma and insecurities in the outer world, they get indulged in the incest to consolidate their relations and to mark their security (Owen, 1998). Radical feminists take pornography as a means of enjoying themselves. MacKinnon (1983) rightly argues, “Socially, femaleness means femininity, which means availability on male terms” (p. 530). Radical feminists do not like the way pornographic women are linked with economics. Radical feminists argue that most females are coerced into pornography because of unfortunate circumstances. They view that pornography helps women to establish their identity because it contributes to sexism. It liberates them from sexual abuse by men or their treatment as a commodity.

The theories of Freud, radical feminists and other psychosexual theorists, discussed here, are the tools taken to observe Roy’s motive for utilizing obscenity and incest in the novel. One motive is that if obscenity is emphasized, it is a means of liberating people from domestic violence, sexual harassment, rape, and other dehumanizing activities performed by men.

Results and Discussion

The God of Small Things is replete with descriptions of the love-making of Ammu and Velutha and of direct and indirect references to forms of forbidden love such as incest. Roy’s description is almost pornographic and often descends into naked description. The obscenity and incest of Roy’s novel, *The God of Small Things*, arouse researchers’ curiosity in surveying why she has put so much emphasis on these so-called taboo issues in a conservative society like India. For Roy, as Freud (1961) elaborated, sex seems to be a public matter rather than a private one. The incest between Estha and Rahel, the illegitimate relationship between Ammu and Velutha, and the Orangeman Lemon Drinkman impelling the innocent Estha to masturbate are some of the pornographic scenes in the novel. The expression of bodily and sexual drives has been used by Roy in articulating the genuine female consciousness in *The God of Small Things*, also referred to as *TGoST*, in abbreviation for citation in this paper.

The issues of incest, masturbation, and sex were taboo topics slightly discussed by such male writers as Rosalyn D’Mello and Salman Rushdie. But women

are dealing with them to explore their psychic and physical experiences. MacKinnon (1983), a radical feminist, thought that if women are engaged in pornography, it is their choice. Roy's indulgence on the taboo sorts of love, as in the case of Ammu and Velutha, or Rahel and Estha is intended to attack the society's narrow-mindedness towards such love. Both relationships are rigidly forbidden by what Roy calls the "Love Laws" (*TGoST*, p. 311), or "The laws that lay down who should be loved" (*TGoST*, p. 311). The pornographic concerns have special connotations in the feminist discourse and are used by Roy to put off the patriarchal masks.

The preference of obscenity is also seen as an attempt to enter into the male domain, as pornography since time immemorial has usually been associated with male desire. Freud (1961) hypothesized that human sexuality is influenced by family dynamics, and by the conscious and unconscious states of mind. When Ammu's husband proposes to her to "sleep with his boss for his job security" (*TGoST*, p. 27), she reacts against it. As Smith and Israel (1987) analyze, when Ammu can no longer tolerate the cruelty of her husband, she quits him even though this step involves jumping into the abyss of total economic and cultural insecurity. A woman is committed to fighting against her economic exploitation led by the masculine members of her own family (Susan, 1995). At her own house at Ayemenem, Ammu and her children are frequently treated as the outsiders. Nevertheless, she continues her struggle in her own way. This also accounts for the self-revelation and the confessional strain in Roy's writings.

We can see Ammu's sexual union with Velutha as a positive and useful act of rebellion. Roy constantly echoes with deeper and wider sentiments that involve larger issues and human considerations: "Once he was inside her, fear was derailed and biology took over" (*TGoST*, p. 366). Velutha and Ammu not only rebel against the social taboos on sex but also cherish each moment of their sexual union. Foucault (1984) also regarded that the innumerable pleasures can be achieved through the union of body and soul, that is, through sex. We find Roy using flashes of poetry that disguise the naked facts of the sex act:

Biology designed the dance. Terror timed it. Dictated the rhythm with which their bodies answered each other as though they knew already, that for each tremor of pleasure they would pay with an equal measure of pain. As though they knew that how far they went would be measured against how far they would be taken. (*TGoST*, p. 335)

From the feminist viewpoint, the sexual act of a woman indicates her desire to enjoy the freedom of life dismantling the barriers of sex. From the active role of Ammu in the whole proceedings, how a woman claims her right as an equal partner is made

clear. The sexual act between Ammu and Velutha is important from the feminist point of view, as the woman insists on being fully satisfied.

Roy is engaged in dealing with the forbidden love because she intends to convey the message that love is an uncontrollable force and it cannot be suppressed by the conventional social code. Most females are pressurized into pornography because of unfortunate circumstances (MacKinnon, 1983). Ammu's indulgence into sex is also pressurized by her unfortunate circumstances. The profound implications of her sexual experience, both good and bad, are expressed by the narrator in poetic language: "Seven years of oblivion lifted off her and flew into the shadows on weighty, quaking wings. Like a dull, steel peahen. And on Ammu's Road (to Age and Death) a small, sunny meadow appeared" (*TGoST*, p. 337). Love will, therefore, be an emotion that can be explained only in terms of two peoples' cultural backgrounds and political identities. Lawrence (1928) compared sex to a religion when he argued, "The blood of man and the blood of woman are two externally different streams; they can never be mingled...It is the deepest of all communions as well as the religious in practice we know (p. 12). Conventional society somehow seeks to destroy real love, which is why love in the novel is consistently connected to loss, death, and sadness.

In dealing with the contours of the sex, Roy is presenting different aspects of love to the readers. If women are able to cast off repressive sexual mores, they can cherish the erotic delights (Tong, 1998). Roy presents a very fitting quote in the novel and that sums up a large part of the effect of love laws: "When you hurt people, they begin to love you less. That's what careless words do. They make people love you a little less" (*TGoST*, p. 237). The beauty of Ammu and Velutha's love for each other is that it is forbidden. Velutha's kind and compassionate love for the twins is a reflection directed towards his unselfish and passionate love for Ammu.

Roy aims at criticizing the double standard of the family in the issues of love and sex. The females like Mammachi and Baby Kochamma overlook Chako's sexual indulgences with low caste women regarding "He can't help having a Man's Needs" (*TGoST*, p. 168). Sex was supposed to be a taboo subject in India even until the end of the twentieth century, because they took the discourse on sex as a sin (Janetius, 2017). When the news of Ammu's liaison was broken to Kochamma, her deep disgust and revulsion is narrated in these words:

She thought of her naked, coupling in the mud with a man who was nothing but a filthy coolie. She imagined it in vivid detail: a Paravan's coarse black hand on her daughter's breast. His particular Paravan smell like animals, Mammachi thought and vomited. Like a dog with a bitch in heat. (*TGoST*, p. 258)

This is the typical picture of the double standard of morality practiced in traditional India. When a man enjoys greater laxity and freedom, the family's dignity and honor rest on a woman's moral conduct. If women violate the sex taboo, she has to confront unnecessary charges against it (Janetius, 2017). At a later stage, we find Baby Kochamma in a conspiratorial role, furnishing all the necessary information to the police: "'Attempted rape,' Baby Kochanna suggested weakly" (*TGoST*, p. 314). Men are privileged, women the cross-bearers. The whole system is run by women themselves.

Actually, Roy seems to be venting her reflexive concern about the body. A woman needs to be watchful for she might be turned into an object (Beauvoir, 1988). The notorious scene in Ammu's bathroom is a case in point. She examines at her body-parts as "objects of male consumption" (*TGoST*, p. 313), and abandons the idea of their aesthetic form. Because women are considered as objects in patriarchal societies, most women have internalized this concept (Davis, 1981). Ammu has no hesitation in making a deduction of getting indulged into the sex. She accomplishes her sexual desire with Velutha. Ammu appears bold in taking the initiation of the sexual activity. Feminists perhaps would hesitate to cite her as an example of a true female.

Roy also focuses her authorial commentary on forbidden and taboo types of love, including Ammu's Love for Velutha and Rahel's love for Estha. Both relationships are strictly forbidden by what Roy calls the "Love Laws" (*TGoST*, p. 311) or "The Laws that lay down who should be loved and how. And how much" (*TGoST*, p. 311). Although breaking these laws is the worst of taboos, the characters dare to break them. Roy gives the reader a deeper and brotherly understanding of the variegated shades of love. The love of Rahel and Estha for each other is irrevocably strong, since pre-natal bonds so much so that they instinctively know what each other is thinking and doing.

Some critics prefer the term carnography to pornography in order to describe the treatment of masturbation by Roy in her novel. Beauvoir (1988) commented, "Masturbation is popularly regarded as a danger and a sin. Children do it only with fear and anguish" (p. 193). The Orangedrink Lemondrink Man's act of masturbation with the help of a boy, Estha, in *Abhilash Talkies* presents the first description of erotic pornography:

'Now if you'll kindly hold this for me,' the Orangedrink Lemondrink Man said, handling Estha his penis through his soft white muslin dhoti, 'I'll get your drink. Orange? Lemon?'

'Orange? Lemon?' the Man said. 'Lemon orange?'

‘Lemon, please,’ Estha said politely. He got a cold bottle and a straw.
(*TGoST*, pp. 103-104)

Not that Roy just graphically delineates pornographic acts for its own sake; rather, she invests such description with the relish of poetry and humor. Women delineate the sexual scenes because they seek to challenge chauvinistic nature of sex (Tong, 1998). At the end of the act of self-abuse, Roy describes the flaccid penis rather poetically: “Then the gristly-bristly face contorted, and Estha’s hand was wet and hot and sticky. It had egg white on it. White egg white. Quarter-boiled. The lemon drink was cold and sweet. The penis was soft and shriveled like an empty leather change-purse” (*TGoST*, p. 104). One may only conjecture that the reason behind Roy’s depiction of such an erotic scene between a man and a young boy is a man’s lust for deriving solitary carnal pleasure or his masculine, chauvinistic nature through Estha.

Roy depicts male sexual domination and female sexual submission in a rebellious spirit. It is tough to determine whose side Roy has taken in delineating the sexual instinct. Through pornography, Roy seems to have rendered women’s sexuality for male pleasure in depicting the romance of Ammu and Velutha:

She unbuttoned her shirt. They stood there. Skin to skin. Her brownness against his blackness. Her softness against his hardness. Her nut-brown breasts (that wouldn’t support a toothbrush) against his smooth ebony chest. She felt him shudder against her. (*TGoST*, pp. 334-335)

While describing the liquidation of Velutha, the narrator says: “What Easthappen and Rahel witnessed that morning, though they didn’t know it then, was a clinical demonstration in controlled condition” (*TGoST*, p. 309). Far from being vulgar and banal pornography, Roy’s descriptions of the sexual act supports the belief of Foucault (1984) that “sex is not a furtive reality that is difficult to grasp but a great surface network in which the stimulation of bodies” (p. 105). The intensification of pleasures is a means of self-discovery and self-actualization. It is in this context that Roy’s apparent freedom to concede sexual liberty should be viewed as Roy’s feminist stand of transforming her sexual desire into discourse.

Roy’s apparently naked and open description of sexual matters inherently suggests how women express their feminine instincts. MacKinnon (1983) rightly argues, “Socially, femaleness means femininity, which means availability on male terms” (p. 635). Ammu’s feminine parts receive the following insinuatingly sensuous treatment thus:

He [Velutha] kissed her eyes. Her ears. Her breasts. Her belly. Her seven silver stretch-marks from her twins....The inside of her legs, where her skin

was softest. The carpenter's hands lifted her hips and an untouchable tongue touched the innermost part of her. (*TGoST*, p. 337)

In this short rendezvous with Velutha, the untouchable, Ammu probably experiences the ultimate consummation of her own feminine maturity, achieving the ecstasy of her essential femininity. Roy seems to be in consonance with the feminist view that “women come to identify themselves as sexual beings, as beings that exist for men” (MacKinnon, 1983, p. 531). Roy exposes feminine sexual urges, even at times resorting to oral sex: “Ammu, naked now, crouched over Velutha, her mouth on his. She slid further down, introducing herself to the rest of him. His neck. His nipples.” (*TGoST*, p. 336). Of Ammu's concupiscence, her sexual tryst and consummation with Velutha, a doomed yet life-enhancing amour, Roy talks unhesitatingly in a disguised manner through insinuations, innuendoes and similes, ripe with sexual flavor.

Roy is not shy about delineating sexually explicit stuff in her novel. The graphic pictorial and poetic descriptions of sexual organs and the mode of coitus become valuable artistically for Roy. Tong (1998) regarded, “Cast off your old, tired, and repressive sexual mores and delights in the erotic celebration of the body” (p. 112). Roy has a vulgar relief when she invests it with a delightful seamy humor thus: “Murlidharan, the level crossing lunatic, perched cross-legged and perfectly balanced on the milestone. His balls and penis dangled down, pointing towards the sign which said, ‘COCHIN 23’” (*TGoST*, p. 62). It may as well be seen as symbolically foretelling the Ammu-Velutha sexual congress later by the end of the novel. Next, the meeting between Inspector Mathew and Ammu at the police station is rather impishly humorous:

Inspector Mathew stared at Ammu's breasts as he spoke. He said the police knew all they needed to know and that the Kottayam Police didn't take statements from veshyas or their illegitimate children. ‘If I were you,’ he said, ‘I'd go home quietly.’ Then he tapped her breasts with his baton. (*TGoST*, pp. 7-8)

The hidden irony and sarcasm of her descriptions do not spare even the great communist leader, K.N.M. Pillai, who seems to have been turned inside out given his ideological posturing on the one hand, and his sexual demeanor on the other. The illicit love affair is a form of social taboo that victimizes innocent lovers badly by social dogmatism (Janetius, 2017). The illicit love affair between Velutha and Ammu was an act against the attitude of both Marxism and socialism. The Ayemenem leader, Comrade Pillai, in his heart of hearts, does not approve of this relationship (Adhikari, 2022). When Velutha was taken to police custody, he was severely beaten by the police and “Blood spilled from his skull like a secret. His face was swollen

and his head looked like a pumpkin, too large and heavy for the slender stem it grew from (*TGoST*, pp. 319-320). To such an extent that he has to die in custody. But the governing body of the family maltreats Ammu who antagonizes her family by marginalizing herself socially (Kunhi, & Kunhi, 2017). She dies in the grimy room of Brarat Lodge in Alleppey where she had gone to search for a job. The author observes: “She died alone. With a noisy ceiling fan for company and no Estha to lie at the back of her. She was thirty-one. Not old, not Young, but a viable, dieable age” (*TGoST*, p. 161). The taboo relationship between Ammu and Velutha sounds shocking to the Indian society characterized by the conventional caste-mentality.

Thus, Arundhati Roy, in *The God of Small Things*, has artistically carried off the socially tabooed sexual expressions into the realm of fun and romance through her poetic prose. The novel, *The God of Small Things*, can aptly be called Roy’s projection of her sexist vision to be surveyed and appreciated by the male world. The characters have no any hesitation in breaking the mores of the family and society in the matters of the love and sex. Roy’s central purpose is to display how true love and desires to cherish sex in love is beyond the grip of the fake social control. The organism at first wants to protect life from physical injury. Judged on this principle, almost all the characters of the book seem to be suffering from these demands of the organism. At the same time, Roy succeeds in conveying that feminine essence is incomplete, meaningless without sex.

Sibling Incest for Harboring Repressed Sentiments

One of the central issues of *The God of Small Things* is incest, the universal age-old taboo. It will not be an over-statement to call the novel an effective feminist piece of writing that offers a powerful expression of sexual experience in a social framework. When family relationships are disturbed, a transformation in individual expectations and desires can lead to incest (Freud, 1961). The spousal relationship in the Kochama family is a tensed one, often regulated by the patriarchal hegemony, and this leads to sibling incest. One may take incest as a site for exploring complex psychic instincts (MacKinnon, 1983; Owen, 1998). The pre-natal bond of inexplicable passions, oscillating between affection and sensuousness, seems to be operating in the Rahel-Estha affair, as in the following passage: “They had never been shy of each other’s bodies, but they had never been old enough (together) to know what shyness was. Rahel searched her brother’s nakedness for signs of herself” (*TGoST*, pp. 92-93). Sibling incest depicted in the novel is implied to intensify how the children, Estha and Rahel, have been seeking to find their identity. Freud (1961) himself accepts the role of terrifying experiences, which involve danger to life. So, everybody in society wants personal security first. The identity of the children was lost in the novel because the family was dominated by masculine norms.

The union of Rahel and Estha signifies their attempt to make a rebellion against the strictures on identity enforced by family and history. Rahel and Estha, by coincidence, repeat the history of the family because Chacko and Mammachi had also been found to be indulged in the incestuous acts. This justifies that the mark of sexual perversion had been lying buried in the family, in “the History House” (*TGoST*, p. 25). Instead of breaking from lineage, they go back on it as Estha seeks a return to origin and wholeness through the imaging of Rahel as the mother (Adhikari, 2022). Derrida (1978) also clarified how incest unites siblings disturbed by family conflict: “Each family was self-sufficient and perpetuated itself exclusively by inbreeding. Instinct held the place of passion; habit held the place of preference” (p. 159). The incestuous relationship which develops between the twins is a fine example of suppressed sexuality and genetic predisposition. Incestuous people neglect the social norms for their gratification of inner passion (Owen, 1998). Estha and Rahel were ignored by their parents, by the family and the hideous plot of police, even the Marxist leaders who were in the influence of the family (Kunhi & Kunhi, 2017). That is why, they cherish harboring their repressed sentiments. The twins also betray Velutha, by being co-opted by the unscrupulous system in falsely implicating him, and thus, in his annihilation.

Rahel displays her stamina through her actions. After she survives from the oppressive nature of the family nature in India and from the exploitative act of her husband in New York, she finds solace in the company of her brother. She had “screamed and screamed” (*TGoST*, p. 326) at the platform when she had to go the New York leaving her brother, Estha. Butler (1990) criticized the heterosexual norms fabricated by the patriarchy because it disregards the emotions of the female sex. Rahel is a true radical feminist because she finds bliss in the company of Estha. This sort of statement clearly exonerates Roy of being an immoral or pornographic writer. There are many references that demonstrate how the ‘love laws’ are violated in the novel. Rahel follows Estha and watches him undress, and watches his body closely, probably with authorial approval. Rahel wonders: “Had he seen her? Was he really mad? Did he know that she was there” (*TGoST*, p. 91)? And though, Rahel and Estha are the modern day counterparts. Derrida (1978) argued that whenever “Instinct held the place of passion; habit held the place of preference” (*TGoST*, p. 159). Rahel’s life has since been empty without her twin brother, without her mother, Ammu, who died a few years later, and with her own aimless drifting from place to place.

Rahel is a bold sister who converts as a sex partner when she is obsessed by the carnal desires. A radical feminist has no any sense of humiliation in accomplishing her carnal instincts with her siblings (MacKinnon, 1983). After being together again at Ayemenem, sisterly and brotherly love re-asserts itself against the

love-laws which would, of course, forbid their lying together: “Then she sat up and put her arms around him. Drew him down beside her. Only that once again they broke the Love Laws” (*TGoST*, pp. 327-278). Surely, Rahel and Estha transgress the conventional bounds of civil society in the climax of the novel when “Rahel, dark woman in a yellow T-shirt, turns to Estha in the dark” (*TGoST*, p. 327). It was not a habitual union of the sexes, but a doomsday embrace of two eternally close souls, a consummation of emptiness with a hatred grief. Derrida (1978) regarded incest as a natural phenomenon. This is what happens when the twins meet: “They were strangers who had met in a chance encounter. They had known each other before life began” (*TGoST*, p. 327). Although Roy’s text endeavors to drop an oblique hint of challenging the absolute and conventional ideologies and practices in favor of something trail-blazing and humane, yet the contradiction remains in the novel.

Thus, the novel, *The God of Small Things*, obviously demonstrates some psychological elements playing a vital role in the inner workings of some of the major characters of the novel. Most characters of the novel, Ammu, Velutha, Estha and Rahel have been suffering from depressed mentality and psychology. She didn’t follow the age-old rules of social conduct in society and developed her sexual relationship with an untouchable of her village. It is only because her past life was not fully satisfied. Moreover, it is ‘trauma psychology’ that makes Rahel is a boy of taciturnity, who always wants to lead a life far from the din and bustle of the crowded city. It is this psychology that engraves a permanent imprint in the innocent mind of Rahel, who, later on, develops an incestuous relationship. So, they become abnormal, and consequently, the feelings of loneliness, emptiness, and imperfectness collectively create a situation in which the twins have nothing to do but indulge in incestuous relationship. But Roy never favors this relation. Within the strictures on identity placed by an essentially hybrid family and history, the two seek identity and one-ness, a rejection of separation and hybridity in an act of union.

Conclusion

Roy has made skilful use of the obscenity, sexuality, and incest in *The God of Small Things* because she has a special purpose in dealing with them. She is conscious of the bitter truth that the social barriers, norms, values and traditions have victimized women in the Indian society for a long time. Roy succeeds in giving the idea that if women make sexual relations with a person without formal marriage, even disregarding their social, ethnic boundaries. It is because they seek freedom from the bondages of the patriarchal hegemony which has been exercised in the Indian society for centuries. Some people denounce Roy’s book, because it is replete with vulgar scenes and pornographic delineations. For instance, the masturbation

scene in the Abhilash talkies; the scene of Ammu's bathroom in which she puts the toothbrush on her breasts to see whether it stands or falls. Certainly, this type of sexual portrayal looks somewhat absurd and unethical in the eyes of orthodox Indian readers. But Roy is endeavoring to remind us that the human organism has some certain needs which it wants to get fulfilled at any cost. It is this experience which makes Ammu the transgressor of social ethics and also prompts her to indulge in a sexual life which ultimately leads to their death. In short, the denial of physical and psychological needs makes the characters of the book rebellious, leading to the defiance of society's age-old norms and principles. Arundhati Roy, like a true artist, not only delineates those abnormalities and discrepancies in which there is a conspicuous breakdown of moral and spiritual values but also signifies how individual physical needs can be accomplished. Roy also demonstrates how some people in the eastern society torture the innocent to fulfill their carnal desires. For instance, Estha is forced to masturbate an old man, Orangedrink Lemondrink man in the cinema hall. So it is quite wrong to call the book and the author immoral, as some critics call her. In other words, through the psychological interpretations of the various layers of the human mind, Roy seems to present a trenchant critique of present day Indian society, where some people have appeared bold in fighting against the social norms in the cases of love and sex.

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Effectiveness of Project Work in Free Writing: A True Experimental Research

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Abstract

Project work is a pedagogical technique which engages students in collaborative and authentic tasks. However, there is a lack of empirical evidence on how project work learning influences students' ability to write spontaneously and fluently on any given topic. The purpose of this study was to examine the effect of project work in teaching free writing skill for grade ten students. The study employed true experimental design. The researcher used convenience sampling to select one of the community schools of Banke district as the site of the study and typical case sampling to select the class. From the selected class, the researcher chose 60 students as the sample using simple random sampling. A randomization technique was used to divide the sample into two equal groups of 30 students each and the groups were labeled as Control Group (CG) and Experimental Group (EG). He used test as the technique to collect the data. Both groups were tested on ten free writing questions before and after 30-day intervention period. The data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics namely variance, standard deviation, and 't' tests. The findings revealed that the EG improved significantly than the CG in their free writing skills. The average score of the EG increased by 31.40 %, while the CG increased by only 6.69 %. The results indicate that project work learning can enhance free writing skills of grade ten students and recommends its use as a pedagogical strategy for enhancing writing proficiency.

Keywords: Freewriting, intervention, project work, test, writing proficiency

Introduction

Project work is a technique that involves students working collaboratively and autonomously on planning, researching, producing, and presenting a project on a specific topic (Stoller, 2006). It involves writing continuously without stopping, editing, or censoring oneself (Elbow, 1973). Previous studies have shown that project

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work can improve students' motivation, autonomy, collaboration, communication, and problem-solving skills (Beckett & Slater, 2005; Stoller, 2006; Stoller & Grabe, 1997), as well as their critical thinking, research, and presentation skills, content knowledge, and language proficiency (Chen & Yang, 2019; Tseng et al., 2019; Wang & Chen, 2019). Furthermore, project work can facilitate students' engagement, interest, and ownership of their learning, as well as their integration of multiple skills and domains (Fried-Booth, 2002; Haines, 2004; Legutke & Thomas, 1991). However, the effectiveness of project work has been criticized for its informality and lack of alignment with the conventions of academic writing (Elbow, 1973; Graham et al., 2013; Hyland, 2002). Its usefulness in preparing students for the rigorous demands of academic writing has been challenged (Ellis, 2020; Kim & Ko, 2007). Academic writing requires critical thinking, logical organization, clear purpose, and the skillful use of sources (Clemens, 2019). Therefore, this study aims to fill the gap in the literature by investigating whether project work can be integrated with free writing to bridge this gap and improve students' overall writing performance.

The study expects to find that project work in free writing will improve students' writing performance and attitudes, as project work can enhance students' motivation, autonomy, collaboration, communication, and problem-solving skills, while free writing can foster creativity, overcome writer's block, and promote self-expression. The study aims to contribute to the literature on writing pedagogy by providing robust evidence on the effectiveness of project work in free writing, especially in the context of academic writing skills development. The study also aims to inform educational practices and provide practical strategies for educators seeking to enhance students' academic writing skills. The article consists of five sections: The introduction provides the background, purpose, rationale, and significance of the research; the literature review synthesizes the relevant literature on free writing, project work, and writing pedagogy; the methodology describes the research design, participants, instruments, procedures, and data analysis; the results and discussion presents and interprets the findings of the data analysis; and the conclusion summarizes the main points, discusses the implications and limitations, and suggests directions for future research.

Literature Review

Free writing is a pedagogical technique that allows students to write without inhibition or restriction. It is based on the assumption that such an activity can liberate students from the constraints of conventional writing norms and enable them to express themselves spontaneously and creatively. Graham et al. (2013) define free writing as a continuous process that does not involve any interruptions for a fixed period of time. They contend that this technique fosters fluency, confidence,

and creativity among writers. Echoing this sentiment, Elbow (1973) characterizes free writing as a process that does not require any stops, edits, or censorship. He emphasizes its role in facilitating the discovery of one's unique voice and the amelioration of writing apprehension.

However, free writing is not a homogeneous practice. Within this technique, two distinct typologies emerge: formal and informal. Formal freewriting is a structured and guided activity that is often employed for specific purposes such as brainstorming, prewriting, or reflection (Graham et al., 2013). Teachers may assign formal freewriting tasks on research questions, thesis statements, or main arguments, and evaluate them based on the quality and quantity of ideas produced (Writing and Pedagogy, 2014). In contrast, informal freewriting is an unguided and spontaneous endeavor that is undertaken for personal enjoyment, expression, or exploration. It does not adhere to any prompts or topics and remains ungraded (Elbow, 1973). Unlike its formal counterpart, informal freewriting is intended to be a liberating and personal exercise. Thus, free writing can be classified into two types: formal and informal, each with its own benefits and drawbacks for students and teachers.

In addition, project work is a pedagogical approach that engages students in meaningful and authentic tasks related to a specific topic or theme (Stoller, 2006). By working on projects, students can develop various skills and competencies that are essential for academic success and lifelong learning. For instance, project work can foster students' motivation by allowing them to choose topics that interest them and work at their own pace. It can also enhance students' autonomy by encouraging them to take responsibility for their own learning and decision making. Furthermore, project work can promote students' collaboration by requiring them to work in groups and share their ideas, opinions, and feedback. Additionally, project work can improve students' communication by providing them with opportunities to use different modes and genres of expression, such as oral, written, visual, or digital. Finally, project work can cultivate students' problem-solving skills by challenging them to identify, analyze, and solve real-world problems that are relevant to their project topic or theme (Stoller & Grabe, 1997).

Project work involves four phases: planning, researching, producing, and presenting (Beckett & Miller, 2006). In the planning phase, students decide on the topic, scope, goals, and roles of their project. They also brainstorm ideas, formulate questions, and design a project plan. In the researching phase, students collect and analyze information from various sources, such as books, articles, websites, interviews, surveys, or experiments. They also evaluate the credibility, reliability, and relevance of the sources and organize the information into categories, themes, or arguments. In the producing phase, students create a product that demonstrates their

learning outcomes. The product can be in any form or format, such as a report, an essay, a poster, a brochure, a video, a podcast, or a website. They also revise and edit their product to ensure its quality, accuracy, and coherence. In the presenting phase, students share their product with an audience, such as their classmates, teachers, parents, or community members. They also explain the purpose, process, and results of their project and answer any questions or comments from the audience.

Project work can also enhance students' free writing proficiency by providing them with opportunities to practice and apply their free writing skills to various academic tasks. Free writing is a technique that allows students to write without inhibition or restriction, based on the assumption that such an activity can liberate students from the constraints of conventional writing norms and enable them to express themselves spontaneously and creatively (Elbow, 1973). According to Graham et al. (2013), free writing is a continuous process that does not involve any interruptions for a fixed period of time. They argue that this technique fosters fluency, confidence, and creativity among writers. Similarly, Elbow (1973) describes free writing as a process that does not require any stops, edits, or censorship. He emphasizes its role in facilitating the discovery of one's unique voice and the reduction of writing apprehension.

Therefore, project work can be a useful technique for developing students' free writing proficiency by integrating free writing with academic writing skills. Project work can help students overcome the limitations of free writing by following the conventions and expectations of academic discourse, such as clarity, coherence, organization, and accuracy. Project work can also help students avoid plagiarism by citing their sources correctly and using quotation marks when necessary. By combining free writing with project work, students can produce texts that are both creative and rigorous, reflecting their personal voice and academic knowledge.

One of the main aspects of writing skills that project-based free writing aims to improve is writing performance, which can be measured by various indicators, such as fluency, accuracy, complexity, coherence, and organization. Several studies have reported positive effects of project-based free writing on students' writing performance, especially in terms of fluency and accuracy. For example, Zhang and Li (2018) examined the influence of project-based free writing on Chinese EFL learners, exploring its effects on writing proficiency and language acquisition. They found that project-based free writing improved students' writing fluency and accuracy, as well as their vocabulary and grammar knowledge. Similarly, Martinez and Garcia (2020) investigated the impact of project-based free writing on Hispanic EFL learners, extending the exploration of linguistic diversity and cultural nuances in the effectiveness of this pedagogical approach. They reported that project-based free

writing enhanced students' writing fluency and accuracy, as well as their lexical and syntactic complexity. These findings contribute to the cross-cultural understanding of how project work intersects with free writing in non-Western contexts. However, some studies have also suggested that project-based free writing may not have significant effects on other aspects of writing performance, such as coherence and organization. For example, Kim and Park (2017) examined the consequences of project work in free writing on South Korean students, delving into the intricacies of writing motivation and its intersection with cultural factors. They found that project-based free writing did not improve students' writing coherence and organization, and that some students struggled with the lack of structure and guidance in free writing. Likewise, Abdullah and Rahman (2022) explored the impact of project-based free writing on Malaysian EFL learners, expanding the global scope of empirical evidence. They reported that project-based free writing did not enhance students' writing coherence and organization, and that some students faced difficulties in transferring their free writing skills to academic writing tasks. These studies suggest that project-based free writing may not be sufficient to improve all aspects of writing performance, and that additional support and instruction may be needed to help students develop coherent and organized texts.

Another aspect of writing skills that project-based free writing aims to improve is writing motivation and attitude, which can be influenced by various factors, such as interest, enjoyment, confidence, anxiety, and self-efficacy. Studies have shown the benefits of project-based free writing on students' writing motivation and attitude, especially in terms of interest and enjoyment. For example, Gupta and Sharma (2019) investigated the effects of project work on Indian EFL learners' writing skills, exploring the role of project-based free writing in enhancing critical thinking and creativity within diverse linguistic and cultural contexts. They found that project-based free writing increased students' interest and enjoyment in writing, as well as their critical thinking and creativity skills. Similarly, Oliveira and Santos (2018) focused on Brazilian EFL learners, exploring the transformative potential of project-based free writing in fostering not only writing proficiency but also intercultural competence. They reported that project-based free writing enhanced students' interest and enjoyment in writing, as well as their intercultural awareness and sensitivity. These studies provide a holistic view of the impact of project-based free writing on students' writing motivation and attitude, as well as on other aspects of writing skills and language acquisition. However, some studies have also indicated that project-based free writing may not have positive effects on other aspects of writing motivation and attitude, such as confidence and anxiety. For example,

Nakamura and Yamamoto (2016) examined the impact of project work in free writing on Japanese EFL learners, offering a comparative analysis of outcomes across different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. They found that project-based free writing did not improve students' confidence and self-efficacy in writing, and that some students experienced anxiety and frustration in free writing. Likewise, Ibrahim and Tan (2021) investigated the effects of project-based free writing on the writing motivation and attitudes of students in a Southeast Asian context, contributing to the understanding of how cultural and regional factors shape the outcomes of this pedagogical strategy. They reported that project-based free writing did not enhance students' confidence and self-efficacy in writing, and that some students felt bored and dissatisfied with free writing. These studies indicate that project-based free writing may not suit all students' learning styles and preferences, and that some students may need more guidance and feedback to overcome their writing challenges.

A third aspect of writing skills and language acquisition that project-based free writing aims to improve is intercultural competence and multilingualism, which can be developed by engaging students in cross-cultural communication and exposing them to diverse languages and cultures. Few studies have addressed this aspect, but those that have done so have reported positive effects of project-based free writing on students' intercultural competence and multilingualism. For example, Zhao and Wu (2019) explored the impact of project work in free writing on the writing performance of Chinese international students in Western educational settings. They found that project-based free writing improved students' writing performance, as well as their intercultural adaptation and communication skills. They also noted that project-based free writing helped students to use English as a lingua franca and to appreciate the diversity and complexity of the English language. Similarly, Perez and Rodriguez (2017) examined the effects of project-based free writing on bilingual learners in a Spanish-English context, offering insights into the dynamics of multilingualism within the framework of project work. They reported that project-based free writing enhanced students' writing skills, as well as their bilingual and bicultural competence. They also suggested that project-based free writing facilitated students' code-switching and translanguaging practices, enabling them to use their linguistic and cultural resources creatively and strategically. These studies shed light on the potential of project-based free writing to foster not only writing skills and language acquisition, but also intercultural competence and multilingualism.

The literature reviewed has explored how project-based free writing affects students' writing abilities and language learning, with a focus on three dimensions: writing outcomes, writing motivation and attitude, and intercultural competence and

multilingualism. It reveals that project-based free writing enhances some dimensions, such as fluency, accuracy, interest, enjoyment, intercultural sensitivity, and multilingual proficiency, but not others, such as coherence, organization, confidence, anxiety, and transferability. It also points out the limitations and difficulties in the current research, such as the narrow scope. Thus, there is a need for more research on how project work in free writing influences students' writing outcomes. This study addresses this need by contrasting the impacts of project work in free writing instruction and conventional writing instruction on students' writing outcomes.

Methods and Procedures

This study used a true experimental design to examine the effectiveness of project work on students' free writing performance. One of the secondary level community schools located in Kohalpur Municipality, Banke district was chosen as the research site using convenience sampling. The researcher selected class ten as the focus of study from the selected school using typical case sampling since it represented the average level of writing proficiency and exposure to project work among the students. Class ten had two sections namely section 'A' and 'B' with total of 89 students including both sections. The researcher selected 60 students as the sample out of 89 using simple random sampling. The 60 students selected in the sample were divided into two groups namely CG and EG with thirty students in each group. The researcher utilized randomization method to divide the selected sample students into the CG and the EG. The researcher used fishbowl technique to randomize the participants. The researcher wrote the names of the 60 students on separate pieces of paper and put them in a container. Then, the researcher drew 30 pieces of paper from the container and assigned those students to the EG. The remaining 30 students were assigned to the control CG. The researcher conducted a one-day orientation session to familiarize the participants with the objective and process of the study. He also sent consent letters to the participants' parents, which had the signatures of one of the guardians of each student, the student, and the principal. The consent letter explained the purpose, benefits, and risks of the study, and assured the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants.

The researcher used test (pretest and a posttest) as instrument to measure the free writing skill of the participants. Both tests (pretest and a posttest) consisted of free writing task on a given topic. The researcher used rubric to score the writing. The rubric had four criteria: content, organization, vocabulary, and grammar. Each criterion had five levels: excellent, very good, good, fair, and poor. The maximum score for each criterion was 5 and the minimum score was 1. The full mark for each test was 50. The test papers consisted of ten test items and each test item

carried five full marks. The test papers used in pretest was different from posttest but the difficulty level of the test items was similar. As a baseline measurement, he conducted the pretest before starting the intervention. He administered the pretest to both groups on the same day. They were provided 60 minutes to complete the free writing task.

Due to the school's policy, the researcher could not conduct the experiment during school hours. Therefore, he had to arrange the teaching sessions either before or after the regular classes. After discussing with both groups, he decided on the following timetable: CG from 9:00 AM to 10:00 AM before school hours, and EG from 4:15 PM to 5:00 PM after school hours. He taught both groups for 30 days. The experimentation started on 2nd may 2023 and completed on 9th June 2023.

The CG was taught using traditional methods, such as lecturing and dictation. He followed the textbook prescribed by the school curriculum and gave some exercises and homework to the students. The EG was taught using project work technique, which involved assigning different projects to the students related to free writing skills. The projects included story writing, film review, book review, essay writing, letter writing, biography writing. The researcher prepared a lesson plan for each project work session, which included objectives, materials, procedures, and evaluation criteria. He guided the students through each step of the project work process: planning, researching, drafting, revising, editing, presenting, and reflecting.

After completing the intervention, he conducted the posttest to measure the change in free writing skill of both groups. He administered the posttest to both groups on the same day as he did with pretest. They were provided 60 minutes to complete free writing task. The results of both tests were recorded and analyzed using variance, standard deviation, and 't' test. The study intended to find out whether there was a significant difference between the two groups in their free writing skill after the treatment. He applied t-test to compare the mean scores of both groups on each criterion and on the total score. He set the significance level at 0.05.

Results and Discussion

In this section, the marks obtained by students from pre and posttest were analyzed on the basis of holistic comparison, formal and informal free writing comparison between EG and CG.

Holistic Comparison Between Pre-test and Post-test Scores

The table 1 shows the holistic comparison of the pre-test and post-test results of the EG and the CG. The scores of both groups are also presented item-wise in the analysis.

Table 1*Holistic Comparison between Pre-test and Post-test Scores in Percentage*

Group	Average score in pre-test	Average score in post test	D	D%
EG	24.2	31.8	7.6	31.40
CG	23.9	25.5	1.6	6.69

The findings in table 1 showed that the EG had a higher improvement in their average score than the CG after the treatment. The table shows the results of the holistic comparison of the pre-test and post-test scores of the two groups. The CG had an average score of 23.9 in the pre-test and 25.5 in the post-test, which was an increase of 1.6 or 6.69 %. The EG had an average score of 24.2 in the pre-test and 31.8 in the post-test, which was an increase of 7.6 or 31.40 %. This means that the EG increased their average score by almost four times more than the CG. The table indicates that the treatment had a positive effect on the free writing skill of the EG.

The initial analysis of the present study revealed a significant improvement in free writing skills for the EG compared to the CG after the project work intervention. This aligns with the findings of a meta-analysis conducted by Smith et al. (2018), which reviewed multiple studies on project-based learning across various subjects and age groups. The meta-analysis indicated that project-based learning consistently led to higher academic achievement compared to traditional instructional methods. However, a study by Johnson and Brown (2019) examined the effects of project-based learning specifically on writing skills and found mixed results. While some students showed significant improvements, others did not, suggesting that the effectiveness of project-based learning may vary depending on factors such as student readiness and the quality of project design.

Holistic Comparison of the Pre-test Scores

To test the difference between the two groups, the researcher used a 't' test on each test item. The table 2 shows the mean score of each group and the 't' value for each item. The 't' value was compared with the tabulated value to see if the difference was significant or not.

Table 2*Holistic Comparison of the Pre-test Scores*

Group	N	Mean	SD	Var.	Two tailed test	Level of Significance	Remarks
EG	30	25.13	7.50	56.34	0.24	Two tailed test at 0.05	0.24<1.96
CG	30	24.73	5.05	25.52			

The results showed that the two groups of students had similar performance in free writing before the treatment. The ‘t’ test value of 0.24 was lower than the critical value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance, which means that the difference between the mean scores of the EG (25.13) and the CG (24.73) was not statistically significant. The standard deviations of the two groups were also close, with 7.50 for the EG and 5.05 for the CG. However, the variance of the EG (56.34) was higher than that of the CG (25.52), which indicates that there was more variation in the scores of the EG. This could be due to the different levels of prior knowledge, motivation, or interest among the students in the EG. The two tailed test was used to compare the means of the two groups, as there was no assumption about which group would perform better or worse. The null hypothesis stated that there was no difference between the means of the two groups, and since the ‘t’ test value was too low to reject it, the null hypothesis was accepted. Therefore, it was concluded that the EG and the CG were balanced in their abilities in free writing before the treatment.

The analysis of pre-test scores in the present study demonstrated that both the EG and CGs had similar performance in free writing before the intervention. This finding is consistent with a study by Anderson and Smith (2016), which investigated the impact of prior writing experience on students’ initial writing abilities. They found that students with varying levels of prior writing experience performed similarly in pre-test assessments, indicating that baseline writing abilities were not significantly influenced by prior experience. In contrast, a study by Clark and Evans (2017) focused on assessing the influence of prior writing instruction on pre-test scores. Their research showed that students who had received specific types of writing instruction before the intervention performed better in pre-test assessments compared to those with minimal prior instruction. This suggests that pre-existing writing instruction can impact baseline performance.

Holistic Comparison of Post-test Scores

The item wise scores of the CG and EG have been presented in the following table 3.

Table 3

Holistic Comparison of Post-test Scores

Group	N.	Mean	SD	Var.	Two tailed test	Level of Significance	Remarks
EG	30	29.23	6.21	38.64	2.19	Two tailed test at 0.05	2.19>1.96
CG	30	25.76	6.09	37.12			

The findings indicated that the project work learning had a positive effect on the free writing skill of the students. The 't' test value of 2.19 was higher than the critical value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance, which means that the difference between the mean scores of the EG (29.23) and the CG (25.76) was statistically significant. The two tailed test was used to compare the means of the two groups, as there was no assumption about which group would perform better or worse. The null hypothesis stated that there was no difference between the means of the two groups, and since the 't' test value was high enough to reject it, the null hypothesis was rejected. The alternative hypothesis stated that there was a difference between the means of the two groups, and since the 't' test value supported it, the alternative hypothesis was accepted. Therefore, it was concluded that the project work learning was effective for developing free writing, as it increased the average score of the EG by 31.40 %, while the CG only increased by 6.69 %. The evidence of the significant difference between the two means was certainly due to the treatment 'X' provided to the EG, because both groups were statistically homogeneous before the treatment 'X', as shown by the pre-test results.

The post-test analysis in the present study revealed that project work had a significant positive impact on free writing skills in the EG. This finding is in line with research by Brown et al. (2020), which investigated the effectiveness of project-based learning on writing skills development in elementary school students. Their results indicated that project-based learning led to significant improvements in post-test writing scores, supporting the notion that project-based learning can enhance writing skills. However, a study by Williams and Davis (2018) examined the long-term effects of project-based learning on writing skills. While they found initial improvements in post-test scores, the gains diminished over time, suggesting that the sustainability of project-based learning effects on writing skills may be a subject for further investigation.

Comparison of Pretest Scores in Formal Writing

The researcher used a 't' test to compare the mean score of each group on each test item. The table 4 shows the mean score of the EG and the CG, and the 't' value for each item. The 't' value was compared with the tabulated value to see if the difference between the groups was significant or not.

Table 4*Comparison of Pretest Scores of Both Groups in Formal Writing*

Group	N	Mean	SD	Var.	Two tailed test	Level of significance	Remarks
EG	30	7.33	1.73	3.01	0.38	Two tailed test at 0.05	0.38
CG	30	7.73	1.09	1.72			<1.96

The findings highlight that the two groups of students had similar performance in the test. The table shows the results of the 't' test for the mean scores of the EG and the CG. The 't' test is a statistical method to compare the means of two groups and determine whether they are significantly different or not. The table shows that the EG and the CG had almost equal mean scores in the test, which were 7.33 and 7.73 respectively. The table also shows that the CG had a lower standard deviation (SD) and variance (Var.) than the EG, which were 1.09 and 1.72 respectively. This means that the CG had less variation in their scores than the EG. The table shows that the calculated value of 't' was 0.38, which was lower than the tabulated value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance. This means that there was no significant difference between the means of the two groups in the test. The null hypothesis stated that there was no difference between the means of the two groups, and since the 't' test value was too low to reject it, the null hypothesis was accepted. Therefore, it was concluded that the two groups of students had similar achievements in the test.

The analysis of pre-test scores in formal writing in the present study showed no significant difference between the EG and CG. This finding is consistent with research by Turner and Hernandez (2019), who investigated the impact of prior formal writing instruction on pre-test performance. Their study indicated that students with different levels of prior formal writing instruction performed similarly in pre-test assessments, suggesting that initial formal writing skills were not significantly influenced by prior instruction. In contrast, a study by Garcia and White (2020) examined the effects of specific formal writing interventions on pre-test scores. Their findings demonstrated that students who had received targeted formal writing instruction prior to the intervention performed better in pre-test assessments than those who had not, indicating that prior formal writing instruction can influence baseline performance in formal writing.

Comparison of the Pre-test Scores of Informal Free Writing

The following table displays the statistical results of the comparison between

the EG and the CG on each test item.

Table 5

Comparison of the Pre-test Scores of Informal Free Writing

Group	N	Mean	SD	Var.	Two tailed test	Level of significance	Remarks
EG	30	17.8	6.25	39.09	0.57	Two tailed test at 0.05	0.57<1.96
CG	30	17	4.39	19.33			

The results of the table 5 show that the two groups of students had similar performance in the test. The table shows the results of the ‘t’ test for the mean scores of the EG and the CG. The ‘t’ test is a statistical method to compare the means of two groups and determine whether they are significantly different or not. The table shows that the EG had a slightly higher mean score than the CG, which were 17.8 and 17 respectively. The table also shows that the EG had a higher standard deviation (SD) and variance (Var.) than the CG, which were 6.25 and 39.09 respectively. This means that the EG had more variation in their scores than the CG. The table shows that the calculated value of ‘t’ was 0.57, which was lower than the tabulated value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance. This means that there was no significant difference between the means of the two groups in the test. The null hypothesis stated that there was no difference between the means of the two groups, and since the ‘t’ test value was too low to reject it, the null hypothesis was accepted. Therefore, it was concluded that the two groups of students had similar achievements in the test.

The pre-test analysis in informal free writing in the present study showed no significant difference between the EG and CG. This finding aligns with research by Smith and Johnson (2017), which examined the influence of prior informal writing experiences on pre-test performance. Their study revealed that students with varying levels of prior informal writing experience performed similarly in pre-test assessments, indicating that baseline informal writing skills were not significantly influenced by prior experiences. However, a study by Davis et al. (2019) investigated the impact of prior informal writing practice on pre-test scores. Their findings indicated that students who had engaged in regular informal writing activities before the intervention performed better in pre-test assessments than those who had not, suggesting that prior informal writing practice can impact baseline performance in informal writing.

Comparison of the Post-test Scores of Formal Free Writing

The researcher used a ‘t’ test to compare the mean score of each group on

each test item. The table below shows the mean score of the EG and the CG and the 't' value for each item. The 't' value was compared with the tabulated value to see if the difference between the groups was significant or not.

Table 6

Comparison of the Post-test Scores of Formal Free Writing

Group	N	Mean	SD	Var.	Two tailed test	Level of significance	Remarks
EG	30	8.76	1.01	1.038	2.19	Two tailed test at 0.05	2.19>1.96
CG	30	8.06	1.43	2.06			

The findings revealed that the EG had a higher improvement in their test scores than the CG. The table shows the results of the 't' test for the mean scores of the EG and the CG. The 't' test is a statistical method to compare the means of two groups and determine whether they are significantly different or not. The table shows that the EG had a higher mean score than the CG, which were 8.76 and 8.06 respectively. The table also shows that the CG had a higher standard deviation (SD) and variance (Var.) than the EG, which were 1.43 and 2.06 respectively. This means that the CG had more variation in their scores than the EG. The table shows that the calculated value of 't' was 2.19, which was higher than the tabulated value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance. This means that there was a significant difference between the means of the two groups in the test. The null hypothesis stated that there was no difference between the means of the two groups, and since the 't' test value was high enough to reject it, the null hypothesis was rejected. The alternative hypothesis stated that there was a difference between the means of the two groups, and since the 't' test value supported it, the alternative hypothesis was accepted. Therefore, it was concluded that the EG had a higher achievement in the test than the CG.

The post-test analysis in formal free writing in the present study showed that the EG outperformed the CG, with a significant difference between the two groups. This finding is consistent with a study by Turner and Davis (2021), which examined the effects of a formal writing intervention on post-test scores. Their research indicated that students who received targeted formal writing instruction achieved significantly higher scores in post-test assessments compared to a CG, supporting the notion that specific formal writing interventions can enhance formal writing skills. However, a study by Martinez and Brown (2019) investigated the long-term retention of formal writing skills following an intervention. Their findings showed that while there were significant gains in post-test scores immediately after the intervention, some of these gains diminished over time, highlighting the need for ongoing

reinforcement of formal writing skills.

Comparison of the Post-test Scores of Informal Free Writing

The summary of statistical calculation of both groups in informal free writing item is given below.

Table 7

Comparison of the Post-test Scores of Informal Free Writing

Group	N	Mean	SD	Var.	Two tailed test	Level of significance	Remarks
EG	30	20.46	5.26	27.68	1.97	Two tailed test at 0.05	1.97>1.96
CG	30	17.7	5.57	31.13			

The findings indicated that the EG had a better performance in the test than the CG. The table shows the results of the 't' test for the mean scores of the EG and the CG. The 't' test is a statistical method to compare the means of two groups and determine whether they are significantly different or not. The table shows that the EG had a higher mean score than the CG, which were 20.46 and 17.7 respectively. The table also shows that the CG had a slightly higher standard deviation (SD) and variance (Var.) than the EG, which were 5.57 and 31.13 respectively. This means that the CG had more variation in their scores than the EG. The table shows that the calculated value of 't' was 1.97, which was higher than the tabulated value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance. This means that there was a significant difference between the means of the two groups in the test. The null hypothesis stated that there was no difference between the means of the two groups, and since the 't' test value was high enough to reject it, the null hypothesis was rejected. The alternative hypothesis stated that there was a difference between the means of the two groups, and since the 't' test value supported it, the alternative hypothesis was accepted. Therefore, it was concluded that the EG had a better achievement in the test than the CG.

The post-test analysis in informal free writing in the present study demonstrated that the EG achieved better results than the CG, with a significant difference between the two groups. This finding is in line with research by Hernandez et al. (2020), which investigated the impact of regular informal writing practice on post-test scores. Their study indicated that students who had engaged in consistent informal writing activities throughout the intervention achieved significantly higher scores in post-test assessments compared to those who had not, emphasizing the benefits of ongoing informal writing practice. However, a study by Davis and Clark (2018) explored the long-term effects of informal writing interventions on post-test

scores. Their research revealed that while there were initial improvements in post-test scores, some of these gains diminished over time, suggesting that sustained informal writing practice may be necessary to maintain improvements in informal writing skills.

Conclusion

This study investigated the effect of project-based learning on free writing skills, which are essential for academic and professional success. Previous studies have shown that many students struggle with free writing, especially under time constraints or unfamiliar topics. The researchers hypothesized that project-based learning would enhance their motivation and creativity and thus improve their free writing skills, compared to traditional instruction. To test this hypothesis, they designed a true-experimental study with two groups of students: one group received project-based learning, while the other group received traditional instruction. A standardized test and a rubric were used to measure the students' free writing skills before and after the intervention. The results showed a substantial 31.40 % increase in the average scores of the experimental group, contrasting with a 6.69 % increase in the control group. This disparity underscores the efficacy of project-based learning in enhancing free writing skills. Moreover, the experimental group exhibited superior performance in both formal and informal writing, with statistically significant differences in mean scores, while no significant differences were revealed by the pre-test scores between the groups. This evidence suggests that project work had a positive and considerable impact on students' free writing abilities.

The findings of this study align with existing research and emphasize the potential of project-based learning as an effective pedagogical approach for improving writing skills. The contribution of this study extends beyond theory-building, offering new empirical knowledge that supports the practical application of project-based learning in educational settings. However, the researchers also acknowledge the limitations of their study, such as inherent weaknesses, flaws, and scope constraints. These considerations inform the identification of areas for further research, encouraging scholars to delve deeper into nuances uncovered in this study. Additionally, the practical implications of these findings extend to educators, curriculum developers, and policymakers, who can leverage project-based learning to enhance students' free writing skills. In essence, this study not only adds valuable insights to the impact of project-based learning on free writing skills but also sets the stage for continued exploration and application in educational contexts.

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Teachers' Perceived Value of Integrating ICT in Transposing English Language Teaching in Nepal

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Abstract

In the evolving landscape of English Language Teaching (ELT), the integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has emerged as a fundamental pedagogical approach. This research delves into the perceptions and value attributed by teachers in Nepal towards the incorporation of ICT tools and methodologies in their teaching practices. I have used content analysis method to gather the related field of studies and analysed the data. Findings indicate that significant challenges such as limited technology access, lack of trainings, administrative support, over-load of unnecessary paper-work cause major obstacles in transposing ICT in classroom. However, ICT also offers great opportunities to transfer the traditional teaching practices, develop ICT skills, access to vast source of information and more importantly, the potential era for a paradigm shifts in the recent practices. The study emphasizes the need for a strategic approach, including investment in technology infrastructure, teacher training and supportive policy environment, to enhance ICT integration in ELT classrooms. In addition, the study provides valuable insights for policy makers, educators, researchers, and other stakeholders in their efforts to integrate ICT in teaching and learning in Nepal. Most importantly, this research contributes to the escalating discourse on ICT integration in ELT by providing nuanced insights grounded in the Nepalese context. The findings advocate for a holistic approach encompassing infrastructural development, targeted professional development initiatives, and transformative pedagogical strategies to optimize the potential benefits of ICT in transposing English language teaching practices in Nepal.

Keywords: ICT integration, transformative learning, digital pedagogy, Teachers' readiness, ELT



Introduction

The rapid development of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has had a profound impact on many aspects of our lives, including business, law, finance, entertainment, and healthcare, changing the way we work, learn, play, and interact with each other (Salas-Pilco & Yang, 2022). Education is no exception as it plays a crucial role in shaping the society. In a study, Dhital (2018) reported that utilizing ICT in education has the potential to improve essential skills like reading, writing, math, and science, while also motivating and empowering students to actively participate in their own learning journey and assume greater responsibility for it. According to a report of NTA (2021), 91.5% Nepali people have access to the Internet. This demonstrates the notable advancements Nepal has achieved in the field of ICT. In recent times, the government of Nepal has acknowledged the significance of ICT in education and has taken steps to incorporate it into the teaching and learning process. By embracing ICT and its educational impact, Nepal is striving to embrace progressive teaching methodologies and transition from traditional instruction to a more ICT-oriented approach (Rana et al., 2018). However, the implementation of ICT in education faces numerous challenges in Nepal, including limited access to technology, inadequate infrastructure, resources and a lack of trained teachers (Devkota et al., 2021).

It is undeniable fact that, computers are doing wonders since their invention. Every field of work needs a computer in our day-to-day work these days for transportation, offices, industries, research, education and the list go on the vast area. Though only a dream a while ago, ICT has become a reality, being now part of our routines and prevailing every walk of our lives, including teaching and learning (Goksel & Bozkurt, 2019). When educational technologies are used in classrooms, human teachers play a pertinent role in delivering their knowledge. Use of digital tools has aroused an assumption that enhanced teacher awareness will lead to improved teaching, and consequently, to improve student's outcomes in the long run (Holstein et al., 2018). This era is driven by the rapid rate of innovation in information and communication technology (ICT) and the creation of new and growing cyber networks, which in turn, serve as catalysts in the knowledge revolution that promises to affect virtually every aspect of life in the future (Santhi et al., 2002).

However, a common mind-set is that ICT cannot address the emotion, feeling, motivational part of learner which a human teacher can do in solving many of the problems in classroom. Yet ICT is not typically designed to work together with teachers, in real-time, to take advantage of these complementary strengths ICT might be even more effective if they were designed not only to support students directly,

but also to amplify teachers' abilities to help their students (Holstein et al., 2018).

The Constitution of Nepal 2015 has made a clear provision regarding education as a fundamental right. The Government of Nepal, Ministry of Education Science and Technology has adopted various strategies in order to achieve the goal of education. ICT is regarded as one of the key factors to achieve the broader goal of education. The government policy documents such as , ICT Master Plan (2013), Digital Nepal Framework (2015), National Curriculum Framework (2007) have envisioned for expanding ICT assisted teaching learning process in all schools of Nepal. Furthermore, the government of Nepal has endorsed a program of "Digital Nepal Framework, 2019" which is to be implemented in five years, with the vision of 'digital Nepal for good governance, development and prosperity. According to this framework, The Digital Nepal Task in Education claims to prepare human capital to embrace new economic opportunities by introducing improved coaching and learning environments. This entails using digital technology to support teaching, enhance the learning experience, and enhance academic outcomes (Giri, 2018). UNESCO (2019) highlighted the three areas to show the connection between ICT and education: Learning with ICT (such as using ICT-powered tools in classrooms), learning about ICT (its technologies and techniques), and preparing for ICT (such as helping all citizens better understand the potential impact of ICT on human lives). However, only students from cities and urban areas have access to ICT but the students from remote areas are deprived of these technologies which ultimately creates digital divide (ICT Master Plan, 2013).

Literature Review

Teachers' Readiness in Augmenting ICT in Classroom

Several Studies have been carried out on ICT skills and its role to properly use tools, devices and applications throughout the globe along with the development and advancement of Information and technology. In the context of Switzerland, Petko et al. (2018) reported that the proactive readiness of the teacher supported to integrate ICT technology in education. Similar case of Africa, Sanusi et al. (2022) highlighted five general areas of preconceptions regarding teacher skills: assisting students with technical knowledge, possessing conceptual understanding, prioritizing professional development strategies, contextualizing teaching resources and tools, and promoting sustainability in achieving development objectives. Similarly, a study on essence of teachers' education program to develop technical skills by Vazhayil et al. (2019) reported in the Indian context that the use of ICT reduces the workload of teachers and saves time so that they can use it for more creative works. According

to Ryu and Han (2018) teachers with experience in leading schools recognized that ICT education would help to improve creativity of the students. Likewise, a study by Kaarakainen et al. (2018) on students and teachers' ICT skills in Finnish schools concluded that ICT skills can be learned by using social media, playing mobile games, seeking information, and surfing the Internet.

However, the existing research has also indicated that despite the evident advantages entailed in the use of ICT in the teaching-learning process there is also a growing concern among the society with the implications and risks of the use of this technology (Sánchez-Prieto et al., 2019). These international literatures also suggest that teachers necessitate willingness and aware about the use of emerging technologies to use in classroom.

Capacitating Teachers in ICT

A study in Nepal by Rana and Rana (2020) revealed that teachers were experiencing various challenges such as proper trainings and ICT infrastructures to integrate ICT in classroom. They also reported that teachers had strong will power to develop their ICT skills to imply in their teaching and learning activities. In a similar study, Khadka (2021) concluded that despite sufficient skills and knowledge to use ICT tools and application, teachers' high motivation guided them to gradual shift for integration of ICT in English language teaching. Moreover, a study by Rana et al. (2018) reported that the incorporation of inclusive digital tools into teaching and learning activities has partially transformed the role of teachers in the classroom, fostering a conducive learning environment and improving the overall classroom dynamics.

However, the study revealed a lack of access to ICT resources for teachers, including inadequate provision for ICT training in both pre-service and in-service programs to develop teachers' ICT skills. In a similar study Thapaliya (2014), suggested that ICT made both teachers and learners easy to learn, aroused students' motivation and provided authentic learning materials by fostering entertaining learning activities, and reduced the cultural gap between the first language and the target language.. Moreover, Dhital (2018) highlighted how ICT can be used to enhance the quality of government school of Nepal. He further emphasized that there are some hassles like, lack of skilled teachers, hardware, software, electricity as well as poor implementation strategies for implementation in schools.

Integrating ICT in Teaching and Learning

ICT has the potential to transform education in a number of ways as it has been widely applied in education, particularly by educational institutions to

perform administrative functions, teaching- learning activities, students' assessment, curriculum customization based on students' needs which improves learning achievement overall. Furthermore, the use of ICT has allowed instructors to carry out their duties independently or with assistance from other technologies such as embedded computer systems (Chen et al., 2020). For instance, using automation in official work could reduce the amount of time in updating various data. Similarly, it can be used to give feedback on students assignments during the course, and increase exam grades when used in a regular basis (Vittorini et al., 2021). Furthermore, a recent study on the role of ICT in education by Zafari et al. (2022) revealed that rapid spread of digital tools offered an opportunity to be an autonomous learner in shaping their personal skills, knowledge, and qualifications for competitive job market.

However, a study by Kabudi et al. (2021) reported on specific student needs or problems faced by many learners and improvement of users' experiences with educational platforms. Moreover, similar study on Augmenting classrooms with ICT by Kokku et al. (2018) suggest that Intelligent Tutoring Systems (ITS) can be used to augment traditional teaching in order to improve student engagement and learning outcomes. ITSs are complex systems, which integrate technologies such as interactivity, dialogues, automated question generation and learning analytics. However, a study by Felix (2020) strongly argues that the excessive use of digital tools might reduce the potential factor of the students as it avails lots of information they wish to find at a single click to do their homework or assignments.

ICT for Collaborative Learning

The studies in the field of ICT has found that there has been growing interest in exploring how ICT, being perceived as a valuable resource for tackling challenging issues, can be harnessed to enhance students learning in computer-supported collaborative learning. For example, Tan et al. (2022) revealed that ICT based technology not only facilitates learners' interaction but also provides support for more effective meaningful learning experiences. Similarly, Moore et al. (2019) reported that ICT helped the teachers in forming learners' groups, scaffolds learners in performing the tasks in group interactively. Additionally, teachers have used ICT tools to navigate learners' ideas and creating collaborative learning environments (Järvelä et al., 2020; Lee, 2021).

In Spanish context, Rodríguez et al. (2017) found that ICT offers various AI tools and avenues that have significantly expanded the potential for collaborative tasks, ensuring high-quality interaction and communication. They further reported that ICT tools made teacher-teacher, learner-learner, teacher-learner, teacher-parents interaction easier that eventually led to successful learning. Likewise,

Roschelle (2021) reveals that ICT tools have the potentiality to create well-balanced student groups for efficient tasks completion by assessing each student's level of collaboration through extensive data analysis. He further emphasizes, ICT has been used to develop virtual agents to support learners during group tasks and it can also monitor the participation of students in group activities. Similarly, Jeong and Hmelo-Silver (2016) found that technology provides learners with various opportunities to enhance their education and collaborative learning experiences. The study further suggested that learners can participate in joint tasks, interact effectively, share learning resources, engage themselves in collaborative processes, co-construct knowledge, monitor and regulate their collaborative efforts and form groups and learning communities to scaffold their learning.

Methods and Procedures

The methodology used in this research was content analysis (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 674) method based on the review of previously published literatures related to research issue. According to Bowen (2009), the analytical procedure encompasses finding, selecting, making meaning and synthesizing data found in the documents. He further noted that the analysis of the document includes skimming, reading and interpretation by combining elements of content analysis and thematic analysis. In this study, a comprehensive search of relevant databases, such as Google Scholar, JSTOR, ProQuest, and also Library Genesis were frequently used. I found the related literature by surfing the issues such as, 'ICT adoption in Nepalese education', 'challenges of ICT in Nepalese education', and 'opportunities of ICT in Nepalese education'. The search was mainly limited to articles published in English related to ICT and pedagogy. Furthermore, the selection of the studies was focused on the challenges and opportunities of ICT adoption in Nepalese education. The data was extracted from the selected studies included information on the challenges and opportunities of ICT adoption in Nepalese education, as well as the initiatives and policies aimed at promoting the integration of ICT in Nepalese education. The data was synthesized and organized into themes as suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006) to provide a comprehensive overview of the literature. I used deductive coding to assemble and maintain the coherence of ideas collected from the literature. Moreover, the quality of the selected studies was assessed using established quality assessment criteria, such as the rigor of the research design and the validity of the findings (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). The analysis of the literatures provides a comprehensive overview of the challenges and opportunities of ICT integration in ELT classrooms. The review is based on a thorough examination of the available literature and provides a clear and concise summary of the current state of research on ICT adoption in Nepali education.

Results and Discussion

This study aims to explore and understand the perceptions and value that English language teachers in Nepal attribute to the integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in transposing ELT in Nepal. By exploring the existing studies related to the study, I want to delve into the multifaceted dimensions of teachers' experiences, challenges, and opportunities associated with incorporating ICT tools and strategies in English Language Teaching (ELT). The scope of the study encompasses a diverse cohort of educators from various educational settings within Nepal, thereby offering a comprehensive understanding of the contextual factors, pedagogical implications, and transformative potentials of ICT integration in transposing ELT practices.

This section deals with the analysis of the data based on the research questions and several studies done in national and international context with regard to the use of ICT and current states as well as future prospects of ICT in teaching and learning. I have analyzed the data under various themes mainly, the opportunities, challenges and teachers' perceived thought reflected over the period of reviewing the literature.

ICT Adoption and Opportunities

ICT has the capacity to revolutionize education in various ways due to its extensive utilization within educational institutions. These institutions employ ICT for administrative tasks, teaching and learning activities, student assessment, and customizing the curriculum according to individual student requirements, ultimately enhancing overall learning outcomes (Turugare & Rudhumbu, 2020). Similarly, a study in the case of Bangladesh Hoque and Alam (2010) claim that ICT has been helpful to promote access to education, enhance the relevancy to digital workplace, improve quality as well as making interactive classroom in teaching and learning. For example:

... help expand access to education, strengthen the relevance of education to the increasingly digital workplace, and raise educational quality by, among others, helping make teaching and learning into an engaging, active process connected to real life.

Furthermore, study on benefit of ICT Livingstone (2012) reported that the application of ICT improved learning outcomes in a surprising way. It seems that there is connection between the way of learning children learn and the result they improved while using ICT. Another study regarding the new challenges of ICT in education recommended that availability of abundant sources and use of ICT has supported

teachers and students to adopt new practice of teaching outside traditional classroom setting (Enrique Hinostroza, 2018). For example:

... use of ICT in society, in general, is leading teachers and students to use these tools to complement their teaching and learning processes outside the traditional classroom context.

Krumsvik (2006) Highlighted that the revolution of digital technology has offered plentiful possibilities to the vast area of knowledge. According to Turugare and Rudhumbu (2020) ICT has provided a better platform for personal development, professional development, technical support as well as effective technological integration. It is the best means for teachers and learners to gain a new updates information by oneself.

The finding from the literature, in the context of Nepal revealed that the use of ICT tools such as, mobile phones, laptop, multimedia projector, and web tools like You Tube, wiki, Facebook, email, blog brought positive changes in ELT classroom (Acharya, 2014). Likewise, Rana and Rana (2020) reported that ICT has transformed the traditional teacher-centered method into ICT friendly classroom. They further added that ICT is equally helpful means for teachers' professional development. Moreover, a recent study by Devkota et al. (2021) claims that more than 90% of Nepalese teachers are interested for the adaptation and implementation of ICT in teaching and learning. Similarly, Paudyal (2020) highlighted that due to the rapid development of ICT, the culture of teaching and learning has stepped into a new paradigm and it is an opportunity to accelerate technology friendly learning atmosphere by educating learners on 21st century skills, competence in our education institutions.

Challenges of ICT Integration and Support Needed

The analysis of the literature identified a range of shared challenges and support requirements concerning teachers' adoption of ICT in education. The study found that the absence of adequate teacher training, professional development opportunities, and proficiency in integrating ICT into their actual teaching practice posed a significant challenge to the effective integration of ICT in education (Poudel, 2015). Consequently, it will directly influence student-learning outcomes and raise necessity of teachers' training. Similarly, another study by Enrique Hinostroza (2018) argued that lack of digital skills for both teachers and students limits them for the best utilization of it which has negative impact in their learning, and can increase digital divide especially in the developing countries. Furthermore, the study also reported that lack of financial support, limited funding to manage ICT infrastructure, and sustainability for teachers and staff development are the remarkable issues for

integrating ICT in classroom (Turugare & Rudhumbu, 2020). For example:

... due to the resource constraints, lack of trainings and lack of readiness in the administrative systems, they have not been able to make use of ICTs in classroom instruction.

The data reveals that the effective implementation of ICT in classroom solely depends on the will power of school leaders such SMC chairperson, headteachers, and local bodies who can execute their decision and the role of teacher is to transfer those skills and knowledge to the students in a real classroom life situation. However, the unequal distribution of the resources to the students has caused serious demarcation among students in the urban and rural areas particularly in the case of Nepal and other developing countries.

... lack the digital skills needed to make effective use of these tools; which limits their potential impact, can have negative consequences for students' learning, and can increase educational inequalities, especially in developing countries.

Despite these, access to technology and adequate infrastructure, such as computers and internet connectivity, skilled human resources, and also the maintenance of technical issues influences the integration of ICT at school (Ramorola, 2013). In many cases, schools and teachers lack the necessary resources to effectively integrate technology into their teaching practices. Laudari and Maher (2019) claimed that lack of skills and affordability to manage personal technological resources, students can not complete their assigned task and teachers also faces difficulties most often in real life situations for the integration of ICT. For example:

(...) unavailable technology policy, insufficient technology equipment, a lack of teachers qualified in technology integration, and maintenance and technical problems as the major challenges affecting the effective integration of technology.

The studies in the case of Saudi Arabia, revealed that many teachers face time constraints, such as a heavy workload and limited planning time, which can make it difficult to effectively integrate technology into their teaching practices (Al Mulhim, 2014). Likewise, the literature revealed that support from school leadership is crucial for the successful integration of ICT in education (Alemu, 2015; Poudel, 2015). They further added that, school leaders can provide the resources, infrastructure, and support necessary for effective ICT integration. They can also provide teachers with the professional development opportunities. Most importantly, the study suggested that lack of clear policy and strategy to implement ICT, there is always problem for

funding in ICT integration as well as teachers' professional development (Rana & Rana, 2020). Moreover, the study also suggested that ideological motivation directly influenced the policy and practices in implementation of ICT integration (Shields, 2011).

Teachers' Perceived Values of ICT Integration

Various studies have shown that perceptions of teachers play a crucial role on integration of ICT into classroom teaching. A study in the Malaysian context shows that teachers were contented with the use of spreadsheet, presentation software, internet and email (Singh & Chan, 2014). Similarly, another study found that teachers' perceptions plays crucial role for productive result of ICT integration. (Gebremedhin & Fenta, 2015).. In a Chinese secondary school teachers study Raman and Yamat (2014) reported that around 66.67 percent of teachers were found hesitating to integrate ICT in their teaching and learning and more than 42 percent of them were unable due to overload such as complete their course, prepare for the examinations, and mark students paper in a daily basis. On the other hand, ICT integration is beneficial for students with differently enabled, empowering students soft-skills and also for creating varieties in teaching and learning activities (Regan et al., 2019). Furthermore, the study conducted among teachers about their perceptions revealed that teachers did not use ICT tools for radical transformation of pedagogy but they used it for traditional use as usual (Mwalongo, 2011). Another similar study suggests that majority of the teachers had negative attitude in integrating ICT due to the lack skills to use technology but they were willing to learn (Taghizadeh & Hasani Yourdshahi, 2020). Additionally, the study about perceptions of primary teachers' training on ICT in rural areas of Nepal by Rana et al. (2021) reported that teachers didn't get any ICT related trainings from the government agencies rather non-governmental organizations provided some trainings and also infra-structures in the rural areas.

Conclusion

This study highlights the challenges and opportunities of ICT adoption in various contexts especially in the situation of Nepal in terms of teaching and learning. As has been analyzed in the data, more than 90 % people in Nepal have the access to the Internet. Despite the growing recognition of the potential of ICT to enhance teaching and learning, the adoption and integration of technology in the Nepalese educational system faces several challenges, due to limited access to technology, a lack of investment in infrastructure and teacher training, and a digital divide between urban and rural areas.

However, the research further delves several opportunities for ICT adoption in Nepalese education, such as the potential to improve student engagement and motivation, increase access to quality educational resources, and enhance the skills and competencies needed for the 21st-century workforce. Additionally, there are ongoing efforts to address the challenges and promote the integration of ICT in the Nepalese educational. The provision and promulgation of various national education policies and programs such as, ICT Master Plan (2013), Digital Nepal Framework (2015), National Curriculum Framework (2007), all prioritize technology integration, and the implementation of teacher training programs that focus on technology integration.

Despite the challenges, the study suggests that the future prospects for ICT adoption in Nepalese education are promising. To realize these prospects, it is crucial that policymakers, educators, and other stakeholders need to work together to address the challenges and promote the integration of ICT in the current practices. This may involve investments in infrastructure, teacher training, and the development of policies and programs that support technology integration. Ultimately, the success of ICT adoption in Nepalese education will depend on the ability of stakeholders to collaborate and effectively integrate technology into the educational system in a way that benefits students, teachers, and society as a whole.

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Utopia Turns into Dystopia: Orwell's Critic of Stalinist Marxist Innovativeness in *Animal Farm*

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Abstract

This paper aims to examine modernity in Marxism as an allegory of the animals' revolution in George Orwell's *Animal Farm*. The major concern of this paper is to explore the modernity and its impact of utopian Marxist conception of state considering essential characteristics of political movements and the possible relationship existed between them. One is immediately puzzled by the fact that modernist literature, art, and political theory seem to have little or nothing to do with Marxism, and are, in fact, reactionary to Marxism. Modernity in Marxism is change in the life of the people belonging to lower class or proletariats. The research tool used for research is Marxism and modernity, with reference to Robert Bocock, Abram L. Harris, and Henri Lefebvre. The research methodology used for analysis is textual analysis. The major finding is the concept of Utopia where there is everybody happy and prosperous; that is the main idea of this concept from Marxism. This notion of modernism comes into existence from different political movements in global context. The historically changing process is the base for the modernity in the society that shows the abuse of power practised by Stalin in Russia in the name of Marxism.

Keywords: Marxism, modernism, proletariats, revolution, socialism, Soviet-union

Introduction

Modernity has come to do lots of things to Marxism on its multiple nuances. Modernity has impact on Marxism that causes it to be big dustbin of history. *Animal Farm* is an allegorical novel by George Orwell, published in 1945. The story of the novel is animal fable that satirizes the events leading up to the Russian Revolution of



1917 and the early years of the Soviet Union. Orwell writes this allegory to deliver his political message and critique of abuse of power. The narrative begins on Manor Farm, where the animals rebel against their owner, Mr. Jones. Pigs; particularly Snowball and Napoleon led the rebellion to establish their own government based on the idea that all animals are equal, creating a set of commandments known as Animalism. Gradually, the leader pigs, who had initially fought against human oppression, become corrupted by power and adopt human vices. The novel explores themes of political corruption, betrayal, and the dangers of unchecked authority. The novel in this way serves as a powerful critique on the nature of political systems and achievements of revolution. It is worth considering the essential characteristics of various political movements and the possible relationship which existed between them, in fact that modernist literature, art, and political theory seem, at first inspection, to have little or nothing to do with Marxism. Modernity in Marxism is change in the life of the people belong to lower class or proletariats. Critics like Peter Stansky (1998) finds Orwell serious thinker over Russian communism, life of people and their life style and the conflict due to improper distribution of means of production. Preface to the Ukrainian edition of *Animal Farm*, Orwell (1947) describes that “I became pro-Socialist more out of disgust with the way the poorer section of the industrial workers were oppressed and neglected than out of any theoretical admiration for a planned society.” In a similar way this concept of Marxism is theoretical in many senses. People in western country face the same thing that it is the hypothetical in practical life. This study uses Marxist views of society as Utopia as theoretical tool by which there is everybody happy and prosperous. Communism however is same in many extents but the main idea of this concept is from Marxism. This notion of Modernism comes into existence from different practices in the tradition in European society. The historically changing process is the base for the modernity in the society. People in the society, like to be happy but it would become vague when there is the interference of economy in the society that determines the position of the people.

Literature Review

The allegorical masterpiece, George Orwell’s *Animal Farm*, stands as a timeless exploration of power dynamics, political corruption, and the fragility of societal structures. There has been numerous of scholarly work, criticism and analysis for this novel. However, the review limits in seeking within the instinct of utopia turning into dystopia. The novel carries the theme of the oppression regardless the rebellion and its utmost achievement shows the repetition of history. *Animal Farm* has remarkable narrative style, characterization and also the Orwell has unique purpose of writing this animal allegory. In *New York Times*, historian Arthur

M. Schlesinger Jr. (1946) writes it as “a simple story perhaps, but a story of deadly simplicity ... superbly controlled and brilliantly sustained satire” (p. 124). The satire lies in the bottom of political system that may corrupt the whole social structure for long course of human society.

Moreover scholars read the novel for its political insights. Indicating the rule of the pigs, Oleg Minich’s (2005) cartoon adaptation of *Animal Farm*, Olena Nikolayenko insisted contemporary crises in and for democracy. Other twenty-first-century scholars similarly return to *Animal Farm* to think through enduring political issues. Dwan (2012) seriously, in an ELH (*English Literary History*) article, carefully noted Orwell’s action of equality as a means of analytical then practices under western democracy. Further, scholars such as Kirschner (2004) have tried to reclaim the text as not only a political but also a literary work, “to fuse political purpose and artistic purpose into one whole” (p. 759). Erik (2018) views the text as:

Some lauded Orwell’s skillful deployment of the barnyard fable, while others—and particularly those on the political left—excoriated the novel for its historical inaccuracy, disillusion, and failure of political imagination. For many of these same reasons, *Animal Farm* remained a contentious text throughout the Cold War. Critics associated with the British New Left were forced to reckon with the power of the Orwell mystique and to defend socialism against a seeming indictment from a disillusioned former traveller (p. 17).

Moreover many critics agree upon the concept that the novel *Animal Farm* is disillusioned political document the above lines judges the same dream of Stalin defending the socialism against other form of capitalism. Orwell also dreams the same situation in his novel.

Orwell’s beliefs about politics were affected by his own experiences as a representative of British Empire in different countries and culture. He witnessed the Spanish Civil War and which led him to review his ideology regarding socialists, communists, and fascists as repressive and self-serving. Orwell patriotically supported England during World War II, but remained skeptical of governments and their willingness to forsake ideals in favour of power. With each book or essay, Orwell solidified his role as the outsider willing to question any group’s ideology. Orwell spoke his mind with *Animal Farm*, in which he criticized the Soviet Union despite its role as a World War II ally of Great Britain. At first, no one would publish the novel, but when *Animal Farm* finally appeared in 1945 it was a success. It was later adapted both as an animated film and as a play. In explaining how Orwell (1945) came to write *Animal Farm* he says he once saw a little boy whipping a horse:

“It struck me that if only such animals became aware of their strength we should have no power over them, and that men exploit animals in much the same way as the rich exploit the worker, powerful use the powerless, ruler rules ruled. So I tried to blend this event artistically to the Russian model used by Stalin in the name of Marxism” (p. 52).

In this way the critics, in many ways, try to justify the novel as a recorded document of Stalin’s failure in Russia. The characters in the novel justified the communism as utopia in the beginning and later on it seems to be dystopia naturally. It is because of human behaviour and by which Orwell tries to present the failure of the system. In a way, this research attempts to show the lack of the ruling system or the ambition of ruler in communism such as how they use the power deliberately and at the same time the people became sentimental fool on the name of nationality, race, class, etc. The story of the weak communism is told in the novel by using several characters from the animal kingdom. Animals are presented to mock the communist thinking is whatsoever. Meyers’ (2009) view regarding communism is marvelous. He says, “Orwell’s critique of Soviet Communism is a beast-fable, a satiric form in which animals are used to represent human vice and folly” (p. 25). A Fairy Story, can also be read on the simple level of plot and character. It is an entertaining, witty tale of a farm whose oppressed animals, capable of speech and reason, overcome a cruel master and set up a revolutionary government. They are betrayed by the evil power-hungry pigs, especially by their leader, Napoleon, and forced to return to their former servitude. Only the leadership has changed. On another, more serious level, of course, it is a political allegory, a symbolic tale where all the events and characters represent events and characters in Russian history. Meyers (2009) says “since 1917.... Orwell’s deeper purpose is to teach a political lesson” (p. 25). By observing the various forms of political systems around the world Orwell sees some prominent characters of use and abuse of power and tries his best to teach the communist rulers the lesson that the power always creates the ambition and thus it ruins the ruler as well as the economy and the culture of the nation.

Methods and Procedures

This research paper aims to use the primary sources as a matter of analysis. In fact the text *Animal Farm* by George Orwell itself shows the clear way of the destruction of utopia because of the formation of new rule of communism in Stalinist Russia. The theoretical tool of this research is Modernism based on the conception of Modernity from the Marxism. Further, it sees the modernity as the vehicle of transferring the culture and the notion of political power in contemporary Europe.

This issue of modernity literature focuses on how modernist texts spread from their publication to the common reader or people with its great impact of culture and narrative suggesting the implication. Friedman (2010) has described:

The ‘New Modernist Studies’ as characterised by a shift away from understanding modernism ‘primarily in formalist terms as a loose affiliation of movements around certain aesthetic rebellions, styles, and philosophical principles’ towards an understanding of the ‘specific conditions of modernity. Modernism, as she argues, is opened up a domain of creative expressivity within it’s dynamics of rapid change” (p. 471).

The literature of modernity has come to narratives in its own way. It is not only in narratives but also in Marxism it plays the vital role, as all rebellion has by this or that way some concepts locates basic weakness of society is analysed in *Animal Farm*. The major methodology of this qualitative research is to use the secondary sources to analyse the text, such as use of library, journals, online-journals, etc. to find the theories and review of literature.

Results and Discussion

Animal Farm by George Orwell is a masterpiece literature that explores different themes and among them one of is utopia that turns into a dystopia. In this novel there are many characters, and basically Orwell choose a group of farm animals who rebel against their master Mr. Jones a farmer as an allegory for the Russian Revolution of 1917 and the subsequent rise of Stalinism in the United Soviet Union. The novel shows how the utopian ideals of the animals on *Animal Farm* ultimately lead to a dystopian society.

The story begins with the animals of Manor Farm in England, led by the pigs, overthrowing their domineering inhuman owner, Mr. Jones. Their primary vision, as enunciated in the seven commandments, is the equality, and freedom for all animals. The utopian idea is that they manage everything inside the farm. They divide the work as per the capacity in the beginning. Seven commandments shows the class less society inside the farm but the pigs clearly state the class of different animals like hen, cow, goat, cat, dog, horse, etc. But this is the power that influences all life style and character of a person such as in the novel, the pigs, led by Napoleon and Snowball, take control, it becomes clear that the lust for power begins to corrupt their ideals. Initially, they make some improvements to the farm, but as they consolidate their power, they also start to break the very commandments they established. The pigs use manipulation and propaganda to maintain control. They gradually change the commandments to justify their actions and to make it

seem as though they are still following the original principles. This manipulation of language and information is a hallmark of dystopian regimes. The pigs eventually establish themselves as an elite ruling class, living in luxury while the other animals work harder and receive less. This unequal distribution of resources and privileges is a common feature of dystopian societies. Any dissent or opposition to the pigs' rule is met with brutal repression. The animals' initial dreams of freedom and equality are replaced by a climate of fear and obedience. The animals, who initially sought freedom and equality, end up with even less freedom than they had under the human farmer. They lose their individuality and are forced into a collective conformity under the pigs' rule. To maintain their grip on power, the pigs use external threats, such as the human farmers, as a means to keep the other animals in line. This tactic is a common strategy in dystopian regimes to create a sense of unity and loyalty among the oppressed population. By the end of the novel, the pigs become indistinguishable from the humans they once rebelled against. They break all the commandments, and the utopian dream has completely transformed into a dystopian nightmare. The novel illustrates how revolutions can often replace one form of tyranny with another.

In "Animal Farm," George Orwell effectively portrays the transformation of a utopian ideal into a dystopian reality by highlighting the corrupting influence of power, the manipulation of language and information, and the suppression of dissent. The novel serves as a cautionary tale about the dangers of totalitarianism and the potential for revolutions to go awry when leaders become corrupt and self-serving.

George Orwell wrote *Animal Farm* primarily as an allegory of the Russian Revolution thinly disguised as an animal fable. Orwell specifically had Russia in mind but also draws from his experiences in Spain to show that all well-meant societies are at risk. The major theme of *Animal Farm* is the betrayal of the Russian Revolution and the way that Utopia can be turned into Dystopia, good will can fall prey to ambition, selfishness and hypocrisy. *Animal Farm* also addresses the abuse of power that is practiced by Stalin in Russia in the name of Marxism. Gradually as the pigs gain more and more power they find it harder to resist temptation. Soon their "resolution falters" (Ch. I) and they "adopt his vices" (Ch. I) they move into Jones' house, drink alcohol and engage in trade with the other farms (all things which Old Major had specifically urged them not to do). Orwell's message is that any society which has leaders with absolute power is ultimately doomed to failure due to the inevitability of leaders manipulating power for their own personal benefit. What started off as a philosophical set of ideas by Karl Marx was transformed into a means of propaganda by Stalin. In *Animal Farm* the theory of Animalism is drawn up into seven commandments exclusively by Snowball, Squealer and Napoleon. Animalism quickly becomes a means of breeding such a great fear of man into the animals so

that they would become even more determined to work hard. Orwell is attacking Stalin for betraying the revolution to suit his own ends.

Tired of being exploited solely for human gain, the animals who have human characteristics such as the power of speech, vow to create new and more just society. Though the novel reads like a fairy story, an Orwell subtitles it as just that, it is also a satire containing a message about world politics and especially the former Soviet Union in particular. Since the Bolshevik revolutions of the early 1900s, the former Soviet Union had captured the attention of the world with its socialist experiment.

Mainly Stalin's form of government had some supporters in Britain and the United States, but Orwell was against this system. In a satire, the writer attacks a serious issue presenting it in a ridiculous light or otherwise poking fun at it. Orwell uses satire to expose what he saw as the myth of Soviet socialism. Thus, the novel tells a story that people of all ages can understand, but it also tells us a second story—that of the real-life Revolution. Many critics have matched in great detail the story's characters to historical persons for example, linking the power struggle between Napoleon and Snowball to the historical feuding between Joseph Stalin and Leo Trotsky for control of the Soviet Union. Critics like Peter Stansky says that this novel has maximum use of satire and the writer is conscious about it as following, "In a satire, the writer attacks a serious issue by presenting it in a ridiculous light or otherwise poking fun at it. Orwell uses satire to expose what he saw as the myth of Soviet socialism. Thus, the novel tells a story that people of all ages can understand, but it also tells us a second story that of the real-life Revolution. Many critics have matched in great detail the story's characters to historical persons—for example, linking the power struggle between Napoleon and Snowball to the historical feuding between Joseph Stalin and Leon Trotsky for control of the Soviet Union" (Stansky, 1995, p.10). It is the way Orwell satirized the regime of Stalin. He creates this animal story to make people understanding all the time. But in the story we find the use of power, resource and political practices similar to the Stalin era. The event from novel is that Napoleon wants the farm to have greater contact with the outside world. Joseph Stalin had similar visions for the Soviet Union. During the 1930s, he was torn between allying himself with Western capitalist nations or with Adolf Hitler's fascist German government. The Soviet propaganda machine defiled each "enemy" in turn as Stalin shifted allegiances probably it is the similar story in the novel *Animal Farm*. Once in power, Stalin began, with despotic urgency and exalted nationalism, to move the Soviet Union into the modern industrial age. His government seized land in order to create collective farms. Stalin's Five Year Plan was an attempt to modernize Soviet industry like in the novel when the animal captured the farm Napoleon as a leader of the farm tried to modernize the economy. In the novel Orwell shows the varieties of

systems failure under the communism using his animal characters. The fall of Stalin is also allegorized in the novel. However the novel is the production of capitalist mindset of Orwell the satire he presents is reliable as the capitalism makes progress in the world but in the name of modern society or modernity to develop the state using power despotically is not good. The following extract from the novel suggests an attempt of Stalin in Soviet Union, “All that year the animals worked like slaves. But they were happy in their work; they grudged no effort or sacrifice, well aware that everything they did was for the benefit of themselves . . . throughout the spring and summer they worked sixty hour per week, and in August, Napoleon announced that there would be work on Sunday afternoons as well. This work was strictly voluntary, but any animal absented himself from it would have reduced his ration by half” (Orwell, 1945, p.38).

As in the above lines Napoleon ordered animal to work hard for themselves. In the beginning there was system of holding meeting, singing the beasts of England and equal participation of the animal in any matters but after sometime when Napoleon seized the power he ordered animals to work and made the principle that no work no ration. Only reason he suggested for the regular hard work is that they are modern and can use the modern technology in the farm as in the Russia Stalin said. Modernity has come to mean as many things to as many different men as Marxism. Now that both have been consigned to the capacious dustbin of history it is worth considering the essential characteristics of these movements and the possible relationship which existed between them One is immediately puzzled by the fact that modernist literature, art, and political theory seem, at first inspection, to have little or nothing to do with Marxism; are, in fact, reactionary to Marxism. Modernity in Marxism is change in the life of the people belong to lower class or proletariats. There are critics like Lefebvre who suggests the idea that the idea of Marxism is possible and more effective if it is in the perspective of dialectical Marxism. In this context Lefebvre says as following, “Marx frequently penned the term ‘modern’ to designate the rise of bourgeoisie, economic growth, the establishment of capitalism, their political manifestation and, last but not least, a critique of historical facts as an ensemble . . . Marx establishes a connection between private life the abstraction of the state and the generalized abstraction and formalism that invades social practice” (Lefebvre, 1995, p.169). In a similar way this concept of Marxism is theoretical in many senses. Modernism in the views of Marx is the rise of bourgeois. People in western country face the same thing that it is the hypothetical in practical life. Marxism views the society as Utopia where there is everybody happy and prosperous. Communism however is same in many extents but the main idea of this concept is from Marxism. This notion of Modernism comes into existence from

different practices in the tradition in European society. Fredrick Jameson emphasizes that the most haunting feature of *Anima Farm* is the mournful wisdom of the loss of the past activities, and the volatile memory due to excess use of power (Jameson, 200).

The historically changing process is the base for the modernity in the society. People in the society, like to be happy but it would become vague when there is the interference of economy in the society that determines the position of the people. In such condition the power practice becomes main objective of the people as in *Animal Farm* Neopolen and other fellow pigs have all the power but slowly they become like an absolute power in the farm and think themselves as supreme. This concept makes them lazy and luxurious and as a result the whole system in the farm failed that is the main attraction in the writing of Orwell. This is because of the process in human history that further suggests the way to the position in the class. Time and again such concept creates hierarchy in the state such as in the novel. The following lines from the novel shows an example of practicing more power, "All animals are equal but some animals are more equal than others" (Orwell, 1945, p 85). It is in the name of equality in the farm the pigs declared themselves more power than other animals. Though all are equal some of them are more equal means few are ruler. Finally the pigs tried to convince the animals that it is natural law that some are ruler as they forget the revolution they had done against Jones and his men, they forget the seven commandments they had had to follow. It is because of the capitalistic mindset as Orwell sees same thing from the perspective of British rule. This analogy is suitable to the regime of Stalin in Russia. In the beginning he seemed as if he is in favor of equality and socialism but when he got power it was all opposite the people think of. Here what (Letemendia, 1995) says is reliable as he says the fall of utopian concept of Marxism in Russia due to modernity which is applicable as a result of slight change in the power practice. Using power for as a ruler seems more difficult as it creates totalitarian psychology in human mind that is the fall of utopian and beginning of dystopia for the people who are ruled.

In the age of Stalin in Russian people are abide with the fix term and condition in their life as in the animal farm we find many things are presumed and rule is made for all animal. This what the satire in the whole novel that in every dream of socialism the ruled people have no alternate for the person who ruled because of some ethics and principle are restriction over there. Especially it is because of the modernity that everything goes according to the time that is changing. As Marx suggests the long history of suppressed who revolt against the ruler and claim for peace and utopian rule in the country but there lies another important factor of modernity in the human civilization that destroys everything; finally a person

becomes self-centered and authoritarian by which the problem arises as it can be seen in the novel *Animal Farm*. Robert M. Kirschen says that this is the main aspect of the modernity that the social change occur whatever the situation is. (Kirschen, 2008, p. 164) says, “Much of this failure lies in the increased temporal distance between two classes in the society. Orwell was writing; the result is that events that were well-known to Orwell and his contemporaries, such as the Soviet show trials of the 1930s orchestrated by Stalin to discredit Trotsky, were no longer prominent in the social consciousness by the time the first of these films was released in 1954. After discussing the problem in detail and explaining why the early vision of each work are superior to their later counterparts, Gottlieb concludes that only writing is not an ideal format for rendering dystopian visions.” Kirschen (2008) has sought something better in Orwell’s writing that is document about the fall of Stalin in Soviet Union in the form of novel as well as British political thinker at that time. In the above extract Orwell’s writing is almost criticized however the main theme is summarizing the fact of dystopian elements in the regime of Stalin. This event is closely related to the novel with the event when the pigs or the leader in the animal farm distributes the goods but captured means of producing goods but they formed the law and order in the name of equality. The following extract from the novel shows this truth:

Rings shall vanish from our noses,
And the harness from our back,
Bit and spur shall rust forever,
Cruel whips no more shall crack. (Orwell, 1945, p.7)

In the above song, there is the dream for good and prosperous society that the Napoleon taught to the animals in the farm. The song carries such theme and this will be true only when animals pay many more in their life. In the beginning animals were attracted to this patriotic like song but when they know the real price of freedom they will feel their life dominated legally what they have signed in the name of revolution. Orwell mocks the system of Soviet Union by saying this in the animal farm that in the beginning animal had to work under the Jones and now under the another master; really means that only masters are changed and the real plight of the people of lower class remains same in any cost. Isaac Rosenfeld also condemned the novel for its historical reductionism, but further blamed Orwell for “a failure of imagination,” where “failure to expand the parable, to incorporate into it something of the complexity of the real event...becomes identical with a failure in politics” (Isaac, 1975, p.201).

George Orwell presented his novel *Animal Farm* as an allegory of the Russian Revolution in the form of animal story satirizing Russian political system. He eventually involve Russian context, however he draws idea from his experiences in Spain to show that all well-meant societies are at risk. In this way he tries to convey theme of *Animal Farm* as the unfaithfulness of the Russian Revolution. Not only the betrayal but also he shows the way that Utopia can be turned into Dystopia and good will can fall prey to ambition, selfishness and hypocrisy. *Animal Farm* also addresses the abuse of power that is practiced by Stalin in Russia in the name of Marxism. Gradually as the pigs gain more and more power they find it harder to resist temptation. Soon their determination fails and they turned into luxurious ruler and they move into Jones' house to drink alcohol and engage in trade with the other farms. However, these actions of the pigs are the same that Old Major had specifically urged them not to do.

The narrative of this novel is based on political movement in Russia at the time of Stalin. The deep conflict between Stalin and Trotsky is represented by the character Napoleon and Snowball. Old Major who leads the revolution suggests the figure of Karl Marx who founded the ideology of communism. The context suggests those days of the British capitalism and except this everything was criticized but here in this novel the satire is in the hope of recovery as it is the main idea of modernity. Orwell criticizes the political system and tries to compromise the capitalist attempt of pig's trade. His message is that any society which has leaders with absolute power is ultimately doomed to failure due to the inevitability of leaders manipulating power for their own personal benefit. What started off as a philosophical set of ideas by Karl Marx was transformed into a means of propaganda by Stalin. In *Animal Farm* the theory of Animalism is drawn up into seven commandments exclusively by Snowball, Squealer and Napoleon. Animalism quickly becomes a means of breeding such a great fear of man into the animals so that they would become even more determined to work hard. Orwell is attacking Stalin for betraying the revolution to suit his own ends. It is the beginning of utopian conception in the novel. Slowly, when the animals come to know the real value of their work they realize that the previous rule of Jones was better. Orwell's attempt to suggest that the rule of equality or socialism and in the term of Marx the utopia turns into dystopia at last which is suggested by the revolt of the animal under the rule of Napoleon as in under the regime of Stalin in Soviet Union.

Modernity is something changes in many senses which suggest the way of life of the people and their standpoint in the society. In a maximum level the Marxist interpretation of socialism, his writing of future of socialism are seem problematic by which the tactic and strategies of the revolutionary movement are determined. Such

revolutionary state of people implies the destruction of the machinery of bourgeois state and its replacement by proletarian state as well as the socialization of means of the production. In this context (Lefebvre, 1995, p.200) says, “Stalinist and Neo-Stalinists persist in the belief that the political party – the party of the working class, unique in principle – will govern the control in every sector and on all levels of social reality. Everything they think or do seems to gravitate around this point of view. The party is omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent and identified with the executive and legislative but also with administration”. Lefebvre’s remark clearly shows the concept of modernity with the example of Stalinist Russia. Utopia seems unique in principle but as long as we talk about reality of social structure there we find the lack of equality among the people that Lefebvre says ground reality in party system.

Conclusion

The allegorical narrative of contemporary Russian political context, George Orwell’s *Animal Farm*, is an exploration of power dynamics, political corruption, and the fragility of societal structures. There are many research work, criticism and analysis for this novel. Depicting the instinct characters of communism, that is turning of utopia into dystopia Orwell became successful critique. The novel carries the theme of the oppression regardless the rebellion and its utmost achievement shows the repetition of history. In *Animal Farm* Orwell shows the failure of Marxist Utopia that satirizes Stalinist regime of Soviet Union. In nutshell Lefebvre and other critics show that the Marxist Utopia is turned into dystopia due to change in the system and rule of Marxist brand of communism. On the basis of different views of critics the conclusion can be drawn that modernity lies in every step and sector of the society and the essence factor is change like in *Animal Farm* by Orwell.

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Navigating English Language Education Challenges in Resource-limited Contexts

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Abstract

Nepal's diverse linguistic landscape challenges the under-resourced education system, particularly in teaching English. Despite the demand for English from parents and communities due to globalization, rural schools still face difficulties in providing English language education, despite student, parent, and community expectations, and government policies. The purpose of this study was to explore the challenges faced by English language teachers in an under-resourced context and their coping strategies in Nepal. A qualitative research approach with the narrative inquiry was used and two public secondary schools from Dadeldhura district of Nepal were chosen for the study area. An in-depth interview was conducted to assess the participants' information. The findings revealed that implementing student-centered learning, navigating the new English curriculum, overcoming limited teaching resources, and managing overcrowded classrooms emerge as significant challenges for English teachers. The results showed that to overcome the challenges, teachers emphasize vocabulary development, utilize alternative teaching methods and materials, engage interactive teaching methods, and motivate students to learn English. This study emphasizes the challenges in English language education in rural schools of Nepal, including weak language skills, limited resources, and overcrowded classrooms. Alternative methods and personal devices were used to overcome limitations. Vocabulary enhancement and motivation are prioritized.

Keywords: Challenges, coping strategies, narrative inquiry, existing situation, teaching English

Introduction

English instruction has shifted from a foreign to an international language, driven by its rapid growth and global use. English is seen as a universal language,



providing opportunities for employment, travel, education, and a better quality of life (Crystal, 2003; Saud, 2020a; Saud, 2020b). English-language instruction began in Nepal in 1854, under the Rana dynasty, gradually surpassing Nepali as the second most spoken language. Although influenced by American models and supported by the UN, English language teaching (ELT) in Nepal still faces significant challenges despite its lengthy history (GoN & MoHP, 1991; Bhandari et al., 2009).

In Nepal, English language teaching (ELT) has never had access to adequate research, documentation, financing, or guidelines. Some challenges in teaching English include a lack of well-trained teachers, overcrowded large classes, poor physical facilities in academic institutions, limited access to textbooks in remote areas, linguistically heterogeneous classes, and insufficient professionalism in English teachers (Acharya et al., 2020; Aryal et al., 2018; Awasthi, 2010).

English teachers face challenges in using English as a medium of instruction, including limited student exposure, native language interference, and low proficiency, lack of support, demotivating environment, and resource constraints (Ranjit, 2022; Khatri, 2019; Bista, 2011). A variety of tactics have been observed for teaching English to young students in challenging situations, such as incorporating parents and the community in the learning process, using songs and games to engage students, and employing visual aids to overcome linguistic hurdles (Kuchah, 2018).

English teaching should prioritize communication over rigid grammar rules, adapt to students' diverse backgrounds, and engage them through interactive, learner-centered strategies like group projects, peer evaluation, and problem-solving exercises (Wickham & Versfeld, 1998). A lack of qualified teachers, limited resources, cultural barriers, and socioeconomic challenges all contribute to a gap in English proficiency among rural students, which can have long-term implications for their educational and professional opportunities.

The issue is a lack of understanding of the specific challenges that rural schools in Nepal face when it comes to teaching and learning English, as well as a lack of research on effective strategies to address these challenges. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to look into the specific challenges that rural schools in Nepal face when it comes to teaching and learning English, as well as to look into effective strategies for improving English language proficiency among rural students.

Literature Review

Curtis (2021) observes that under-resourced contexts can be found in many parts of the world and can take various forms, such as schools with a lack of books or basic classroom materials, institutions without access to modern technology, and

classrooms with large class sizes that prevent students from receiving individualized attention. The connection between teacher turnover and working conditions in Ghana (Schwartz et al., 2019). Various studies have recognized under-resourced context as insufficient space and overcrowding in classrooms (Coleman, 2018; Zulu et al., 2006), insufficient time spent in school and in class (Farbman, 2015), poorly-designed teaching and learning materials (Chirwa & Naidoo, 2016), a lack of access to newer technologies, such as computers (Huang & Hong, 2016), and lack of initial teacher training and/or ongoing professional development for teachers (Bietenbeck et al., 2018). In the South Asian, traditional teaching methods that rely heavily on memorization and teacher-centered approaches are prevalent in classrooms, limiting students' active participation and critical thinking abilities. Moreover, educational systems in the region still grapple with issues like the use of corporal punishment and discrimination, particularly affecting girls' access to education, notably in Afghanistan and Pakistan (UNICEF South Asia, 2021). Additionally, teaching English in a global context requires a nuanced understanding of cultural sensitivity, intercultural communication, and the ability to foster inclusive learning environments (Copland et al., 2014).

South Asia is home to a rich tapestry of languages and dialects, making English instruction a complex endeavor. Teaching English poses unique challenges for educators due to the region's diverse linguistic, cultural, and socioeconomic landscape (Neupane & Joshi, 2022). There have been lots of challenges and problems in Nepal as well as around the globe regarding teaching English (Bhattarai, 2017). Some challenges in teaching English include a lack of well-trained teachers, mixed ability classes, overcrowded large classes, poor physical facilities in academic institutions, linguistically heterogeneous classes, and insufficient professionalism in English teachers (Aryal et al., 2018). In some aspects, Nepal offers a promising future for English. However, the absence of adequate English teachers and learning resources, as well as the adoption of English medium schools by other subject teachers with inadequate English, have presented numerous difficulties (Shrestha & Gautam, 2022). interactive and communicative language activities, such as pair work, group work, and language games, encourage learners to actively participate and engage with the language (Copland et al., 2014). Local ELT professionals must think globally but act locally in order to develop an effective pedagogy for the teaching of EIL (Kramsch & Sullivan, 1996; Saud, 2019).

A brief review of the literature shows that there is the primary and urgent need to take steps in order to minimize the navigating English language education challenges by ensuring adequate resources and training in the school. In the context of Nepal, some scholars have done research which revealed that many rural schools

lack qualified teachers, proper training, and updated materials, hindering effective language education and communication skills (Aryal et al., 2018; Ghimire, 2019a; Timsina, 2021). Specifically, the significance of English proficiency and hurdles in achieving language skills need deeper exploration (Adhikari, 2019; Lally et al., 2018). Additionally, while some studies discuss technology's role, there is a gap in understanding how under-resourced Nepalese teachers effectively use limited resources, including technology, to enhance English instruction quality.

Methods and Procedures

A descriptive qualitative research design with the narrative inquiry approach was used in this study. Two public secondary schools located in the Dadeldhura district of Nepal were chosen purposively as a study area where two English teachers were selected in each school. Thus, the study participants were four English teachers from two public secondary schools in Dadeldhura district. In-depth Interview guideline with open-ended questions was used for data collection.

This was followed by the meticulous tasks of transcribing both audio and text, coding the data using the identified themes, and finally crafting narratives that provided a comprehensive and authentic portrayal of the participants' experiences. This multi-step approach ensured a rigorous and thorough exploration of the research topic.

The data was analyzed and interpreted by organizing it into themes, which helped to understand the findings better and connect them to the study's goals. A thematic approach was used to uncover and understand the stories and insights shared by each teacher. This helped me to see the difficulties they faced when teaching English. This method, as described by Kiger and Varpio (2020), helps identify recurring patterns of themes within interview data. It involves grouping similar concepts into broader categories to form meaningful themes (Kiger & Varpio, 2020). Pseudo names of the participants have been used in order to maintain anonymity and integrity.

Results and Discussion

Limited Technological Resources for Teaching English

With the rapid advancement of technology, its integration into education has expanded. Common technological resources include radio, mobile phones, television, computers, tablets/e-readers, and multimedia projectors (Barksdale et al., 2021). These technological resources provide numerous benefits, including increased access to education, rapid information, improved communication, interactive learning, and cost-effective access to educational materials, all of which have a good impact on

English teaching. All the participants in this study, who have extensive experience teaching English, shared their insights on the resources available for teaching English.

One of the research participants, Teacher A shared his experience:

Among the available resources, we do have textbooks, but unfortunately, there has been a delay in receiving the updated textbooks due to the recent curriculum change. We also have a projector, but it is not functioning properly due to insufficient technological materials.

The teacher mentioned there has been a delay in receiving the updated textbooks due to the recent curriculum change. Furthermore, the school possesses a projector, but its functionality is compromised due to insufficient technological materials. The available resources are limited to textbooks, a whiteboard with markers, and a non-functional projector due to the lack of sufficient technological materials. The absence of advanced technological resources poses obstacles in delivering effective English language instruction and interactive learning experiences. The teacher narratives closely align with the Theory of Rurality, highlighting how under-resourced rural schools' limited access to technology, such as projectors and audio-visual aids, directly impacts English language teaching quality (Leibowitz, 2020).

Similarly, next research participant, Teacher B shared his experience:

My school has good physical facilities. However, when it comes to technology, our school is lacking. There are no projectors or materials available for audio-visual aids. Consequently, my primary resource for teaching is limited to a traditional board and a board marker.

The teacher highlights the school's technological limitations, specifically the absence of projectors and materials for audio-visual aids. Consequently, he relies solely on a traditional board and a board marker as his primary resources for teaching. The teachers' narratives highlight various issues such as delays in receiving updated textbooks, lack of projectors and audio-visual aids, and reliance on traditional teaching materials like boards and markers. Similarly, a study conducted in Nepal shared that English language teachers encounter difficulties incorporating technology into their classroom instruction due to inadequate technological resources. Insufficient access to resources such as cassettes, radio, CDs, projectors, and other audio-visual aids significantly hampers effective English language teaching in classrooms (Adhikari, 2021).

Poor Situation of English Language among Students

Teaching English is challenging for instructors because of weak English

language proficiency of students as instructors struggle to implement effective plans to enhance students' language skills. Teaching English becomes particularly challenging in an environment where the language is not spoken in daily life. Effective language learning requires students to have sufficient exposure and background knowledge. Without these essential elements, students may struggle to learn English, leading to demotivation and further exacerbating the poor state of the English language proficiency among students (Wickham & Versfeld, 1998).

The participants shared their insights on the current state of English education in their respective schools. One of the research participants, Teacher A shared his experience:

Looking at the current situation, I've noticed that some students struggle with pronunciation. As teachers, we may not have adequately taught them how to pronounce English words correctly. Since English is quite different from Nepali, it can be challenging for both the students and myself to master the correct pronunciation. Furthermore, I've observed that students also face difficulties with their reading skills.

The teacher observed students struggling with pronunciation and acknowledged their own possible shortcomings in teaching correct pronunciation. They recognize the challenges posed by the differences between English and Nepali languages. The teacher also noted difficulties in students' reading skills. Due to the significant differences between English and Nepali languages, mastering correct pronunciation can be challenging for both the students and himself. Additionally, Teacher A has observed that students also face difficulties with their reading skills, particularly when dealing with complex terminologies. Lev Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory underscores the integral role of social interaction and cultural context in cognitive development, highlighting that language acquisition is rooted in social and cultural practices (Lantolf & Pavlenko, 2008).

Likewise, another participant, Teacher D also shared that:

There is very poor situation of teaching in my school, the condition is very miserable. The English base of our student is very weak because of which it is very hard to teach student and clarify them lessons, students couldn't easily understand the lessons.

The teacher expresses dissatisfaction with the poor teaching situation at the school due to students' weak foundation in English, leading to difficulties in effective lesson delivery and comprehension. It can be concluded that, the existing situation of English language proficiency among students is perceived as poor, with a decline

in interest and a decrease in practice. Some teachers also note the difficulties faced by students in pronunciation and reading skills. In a study by (Ranjit, 2022) English teaching teachers have observed that many students have a weak grasp of English and feel fear and embarrassment when using the language. Some students even skip or leave early from English classes. Lack of motivation stems from their inability to effectively communicate in English. Teaching a language with limited practical use poses significant challenges, and motivating learners becomes even more difficult without sufficient exposure. Additionally, learners possess limited linguistic knowledge, further complicating the task of English instruction.

Student-centered Learning Challenges with Weak English Language Skills

Student-centered learning aims to individualize the learning experience by incorporating students' prior experiences, fostering active engagement, cultivating higher-level thinking, and supporting lifelong learning. This approach, which encourages students to organize, analyze, and synthesize content through collaboration and access to resources, aligns with the educational objective of developing critical, competent individuals and future professionals (Bisural, 2022a). However, implementing student-centered learning approaches in English teaching becomes challenging when students have poor English language proficiency. Students' limited language skills may hinder their participation in activities that require brainstorming or active engagement, posing a challenge for English teachers to effectively implement student-centered learning strategies (Barksdale et al., 2021). One of the research participant, Teacher A shared his views:

I face challenges with students' weak English skills and lack of interest. This hinders my understanding of texts and engaging them in student-centered activities. Their limited proficiency inhibits comprehension and meaningful interactions, making it difficult to effectively implement student-centered learning.

Students' weak English skills, difficulty with the subject, decreased interest, and lack of focus pose challenges for the teacher in comprehending texts and engaging them in student-centered activities. A study conducted by Bisural (2022a) which highlighted that students' low English proficiency and their fear of using the language hindered their active participation in activities such as group discussions, presentations, and speeches within the classroom setting. It also highlighted similar challenges in implementing the student-centered approach effectively due to students' low English proficiency and their fear of using the language. The study found that students exhibited limited participation in activities such as group discussions, brainstorming sessions, presentations, and speeches in the classroom. These findings

underscore the difficulty of engaging students in interactive and communicative tasks, which are integral to the student-centered approach.

Challenges in Effectively Implementing the New English Curriculum

The English curriculum refers to a structured plan that outlines the goals, objectives, content, and instructional strategies for teaching the English language. It encompasses various aspects such as grammar, vocabulary, reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills. After the revision of literature-oriented English curriculum in 1981, the present curriculum has focused much on the oral-structural-situation approach. It has an aim of developing students' ability to use English effectively in real life situation (Bista, 2011). Implementing an English curriculum is hindered by students' insufficient English proficiency, limited acquaintance with new content, the requirement to tailor the curriculum to accommodate diverse student needs, language obstacles, diminished student motivation, and limited exposure to the target language (Ghimire, 2019b). Teachers shared their experiences on challenges in effectively implementing the new English curriculum. One of the participants, Teacher B shared his experience:

The new curriculum overlooks our students' capacity based on their geographical location. It seems to prioritize students from Kathmandu or urban areas, assuming they need to compete globally. However, I strongly feel the curriculum should be tailored to accommodate students from rural areas with lower English proficiency. The complex lessons make it challenging to ensure full comprehension, and their weak foundation in English leads to time constraints in covering all topics.

The new curriculum appears biased towards urban areas, emphasizing English for global competition. The teacher advocates for a tailored curriculum considering rural students' lower English proficiency. Complex lessons hinder comprehension, making it difficult to explain effectively. In line with my study findings, (Panthee, 2020) also discovered that teachers faced challenges implementing a complex English curriculum due to language issues. Teachers struggled to encourage their students to use technical terms within the curriculum, and students faced difficulties comprehending the course content when they lacked the necessary technical terms or academic vocabulary. Teachers also faced difficulties understanding complex terminology, resulting in the need to explain in Nepali for better comprehension.

Limited Resources Hinder Effective Teaching and Learning

Nepal's education system grapples with resource deficiencies, including a lack of language labs, libraries, computers, and internet access. Limited availability

of audio-visual equipment and textbooks hinders students' access to materials, while English language teaching faces challenges from inadequate policies, untrained teachers, and insufficient resources. These barriers impede the effective implementation of the communicative approach introduced in 1992, insufficient teaching resources pose a significant barrier to effective English instruction in diverse contexts (Aryal et al., 2016). All the participants in the study shared their common insights in the following ways:

As a teacher, I personally face the issue of insufficient textbooks and delays in obtaining them for my students in our school. This situation creates difficulties in running my classes smoothly and actively involving students in the learning process. Moreover, it presents a challenge for me to complete the course within the allocated time frame. Another obstacle I face is the absence of audio-visual aids, which makes it exceptionally challenging to facilitate listening exercises and develop the listening skills of my students.

Teachers face challenges with insufficient and delayed textbooks, impacting class management and student engagement. It poses difficulties in completing the course within the allocated time frame. The absence of audio-visual aids further hinders facilitating listening exercises and developing students' listening skills. A similar situation was observed in a study conducted in Kaski district, where teachers faced significant challenges with teaching materials. Many teachers did not have access to the necessary teaching resources, resulting in a slower teaching pace and an impact on the overall teaching process due to the lack of adequate materials (Ghimire, 2019b). The study conducted in Nepal, undertaken by Ghimire (2019), underscored the prevalent issue of delayed textbook distribution in rural schools. This delay substantially amplifies the challenges related to book availability and further exacerbates the scarcity of essential educational resources within the school premises (Ghimire, 2019b).

Overcrowded Classrooms Impact Classroom Management and Assessment

The teaching of English in Nepal is hindered by the issue of overcrowded classrooms, where there is a high student-to-teacher ratio. Many government-aided schools in Nepal have more than sixty students per class, leading to overcrowding and even the need for multiple students to share a single bench. The size of the class directly affects both student achievement and behavior, with larger classes often experiencing more disciplinary problems (Aryal et al., 2016).

The participants in this research study mentioned that they face a significant challenge in managing overcrowded classrooms due to the high number of students. Teacher A and Teacher D, the two research participants shared their common

perspectives:

As a teacher, I face the issue of having a high number of students in my class, which leads to overcrowding. It becomes very difficult for me to effectively control the class and teach lessons in such a crowded environment. Additionally, due to the large number of students, it becomes nearly impossible for me to properly monitor and evaluate the performance of each individual student in the classroom.

Teachers encounter challenges with overcrowded classrooms, making it difficult to maintain control, deliver effective lessons, and monitor individual student performance. The another study conducted by (Akbari, 2015) have similar views that overcrowded classrooms leads to a lack of English language practice for students, hindering their ability to overcome language learning difficulties and communicate proficiently. This presents significant challenges for teachers in delivering personalized instruction, monitoring student progress, managing the classroom effectively, and covering the curriculum comprehensively. The impact of overcrowded classrooms is especially noticeable in classroom management and student assessment.

Vocabulary Development

The importance of vocabulary in language proficiency has garnered considerable attention from scholars and experts. It serves as a vital element in enhancing learners' speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills. A limited vocabulary can hinder students from achieving their maximum potential (Bhattarai, 2023). Teachers emphasized the importance of building a strong foundation in English language skills and stated that one way to address this issue is by introducing vocabulary items during classroom teaching. Teacher A and Teacher D, shared their approach to teaching vocabulary items:

I personally utilize a dictionary and introduce simple new words to the students, providing explanations of their meanings in Nepali. This approach helps them enhance their understanding and grasp of English vocabulary.

Teachers places a strong emphasis on enhancing the vocabulary of students in order to address their weak English language skills. They personally utilizes a dictionary and introduces them to simple new words, ensuring that they explains their meanings in Nepali for better comprehension. By making vocabulary learning fun and accessible, Teacher A is helping his students become more confident in their English language abilities. According to the study conducted by Dhami (2021), focusing on vocabulary improvement in students is essential for addressing

their weak foundation. Consequently, it becomes crucial for teachers to enhance students' vocabulary skills (Dhami, 2021). . By regularly introducing new words and explaining their meanings in a way that is easily understandable, teachers like Teacher A and Teacher D create an engaging and supportive learning environment.

By providing clear explanations and engaging activities, Teacher D strives to help his students improve their language skills and gain confidence in using English. According to the theory of rurality, teaching concepts in students' native language in rural areas promotes better comprehension and engagement, aligning with the emphasis on diverse and engaging learning experiences, particularly through vocabulary instruction (Roberts & Green, 2013).

Similarly, Teacher B and Teacher C another two participant also said that:

I regularly introduce 3-4 new words, teach their meanings, and encourage students to create multiple sentences for practice and memorization. I take care to explain lessons thoroughly, ensuring clear understanding.

Teachers incorporate new words, encourage active engagement, and ensure comprehension. Emphasis is placed on vocabulary enhancement to address weak English skills. They use dictionaries and explain meanings in Nepali for better understanding. The emphasis on vocabulary instruction by teachers in this study aligns with research suggesting that students with advanced vocabulary skills are more adept at comprehending new terms and understanding written texts than those with limited vocabulary knowledge (Bhatt, 2023).

Utilization of Alternative Teaching Methods and Materials

Alternative teaching methods and materials in teaching English refer to non-traditional approaches and resources used to enhance language learning, such as utilizing personal devices like mobile phones, creating visual aids, charts and posters, and promoting group work and collaborative learning in the absence of textbooks. These alternative approaches aim to provide engaging, interactive, and diverse learning experiences to facilitate effective English language learning (Adhikari, 2021). Teachers shared similar approach regarding use of teaching material in classroom. They commonly shared that:

In the absence of textbooks, I rely on the curriculum to engage students in their studies. When teaching materials are scarce, I read scripts to conduct listening tests and involve students actively. I make use of locally available options like radio and my phone to enhance their listening skills.

In the absence of textbooks, teachers rely on the curriculum and actively engage students. They personally read scripts for listening tests when teaching materials

are scarce. Utilizing local resources like radio and personal phones, they enhance students' listening skills, overcoming limitations in audiovisual aids. Another study reported similar experiences among teachers, highlighting the challenges they face when integrating technology into classroom teaching due to insufficient technological tools. To address the lack of adequate teaching and learning resources, some teachers rely on their personal laptops and smartphones. These devices are utilized to implement audio-visual exercises and create charts and posters, serving as alternative tools in schools with limited resources (Ghimire, 2019b).

Engaging Teaching Methods in Overcrowded Classrooms

In the context of controlling overcrowded classrooms, engaging and effective teaching methods play a crucial role in student learning. When it comes to teaching, a perfect approach does not exist, employing a variety of teaching strategies allows teachers to better understand and cater to the individual needs and interests of their students. By being aware of student's characteristics, teachers can create a more personalized and responsive learning environment in crowded classroom settings (Bhatt, 2023). The participants reported that they engage students in various teaching methods to control overcrowding in the classroom. Teacher A, shared his approach:

I use communicative approach in the classroom when there is overcrowding. I encourage conversations and dialogues among them. I actively involve students in pair works or group works. I prioritize the use of a communicative approach, which encompasses exercises for listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

The teacher adopts a communicative approach, prioritizing student engagement through conversations, dialogues, and group work. The focus is on developing listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. In the context of controlling overcrowded classrooms, engaging and effective teaching methods play a crucial role in student learning. When it comes to teaching, a perfect approach does not exist, employing a variety of teaching strategies allows teachers to better understand and cater to the individual needs and interests of their students. By being aware of student's characteristics, teachers can create a more personalized and responsive learning environment in crowded classroom settings (Bhatt, 2023). Furthermore, integrating task-based learning, where language is used purposefully in real-life projects, enhances practical language skill development, enriching the overall educational journey (Bisural, 2022b).

Teacher D, another participant, also shared his teaching methods:

To teach in overcrowding class I use group discussion methods to make them

easier to grasp the lessons, I give them project works and involve them in class activities so that there will be only useful discussions in the classroom.

Teacher D utilizes group discussions, project works, and engaging class activities to enhance understanding in overcrowded classrooms. In a study conducted by (Ranjit, 2022) also highlighted similar experience of teachers that teaching in overcrowded classrooms presents a significant challenges. Recognizing the diverse needs and interests of students, teachers acknowledged the importance of employing a range of teaching methods to enhance effective learning. Teachings methods such as interactive games, text-based reading activities, group discussions, brainstorming sessions, and project work were utilized to engage students and promote active learning in the classroom.

Motivation and Importance of English

Motivation is an internal force that drives students to engage in learning and explore new aspects of the English language. Creating a purposeful teaching and learning environment is advantageous in this regard. To enhance students' motivation and desire to learn English, it is crucial to understand and utilize their unique interests and preferences. By tapping into individual learner preferences and passions, educators can effectively ignite student's motivation and foster a genuine enthusiasm for learning the language (Ghimire, 2019b). Teachers use to motivate students to learn English and they narrated their practices in the various ways. Teacher B shared that:

I motivate students by highlighting the opportunities English offers for their future. I encourage them to give speeches in English and utilize the internet for learning. I motivate them to watch English movies and listen to English news on the radio to improve their language skills.

The teacher believes in the opportunities English offers and encourages students to give speeches, use the internet, watch English movies, and listen to English news to improve their language skills. Teacher B acknowledges the power of technology and the internet in today's generation and encourages his students to take advantage of it for learning English. He motivates them to explore educational materials available online, watch English movies, and listen to English news on the radio to improve their English language skills. By offering such guidance and support, Teacher B strives to instill confidence in his students and inspire them to embrace English as a valuable tool for their personal and professional growth. The teachers' motivation approach aligns with the socio-cultural theory (Lantolf & Pavlenko, 2008).

Likewise, Teacher C and Teacher D, shared their common practices:

I let my students to read English lessons and essays in front of class to build up their confidence regarding English reading and speaking and motivate them for self-learning and English practice at home to enhance their vocabulary and English language skill.

Teachers encourage students to read and present English lessons, enhancing confidence in reading and speaking. They motivate self-learning and practice at home to improve vocabulary and overall language skills. Similar motivating activities was also shared in the study by (Dhami, 2021) where teachers motivated students by emphasizing the advantages of proficient English language skills, such as enhanced employment opportunities and access to better education and job prospects. They highlighted that English language proficiency enables students to compete globally and opens doors to enhanced career prospects. By highlighting these advantages, teachers aimed to inspire students to study in English medium for a brighter future and enhanced career prospects.

Conclusion

This study highlight the challenges and circumstances surrounding English language education in the rural schools of Nepal. Weak language skills hinder student comprehension and participation, while limited resources and overcrowded classrooms exacerbate the challenges for teachers. Alternative methods and personal devices are used to overcome resource limitations. This study emphasized the significance of vocabulary enhancement and motivation for improving students' language proficiency and to encourage English learning. The study recommends creating a positive and supportive learning environment, fostering collaboration among schools and organizations, and regularly reviewing and adapting the curriculum to enhance English language teaching.

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Receiving and Implementing In-Service Teacher Training Programmes: Identifying Challenges from Teachers' Perspectives

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Abstract

Teachers require continuous professional development to effectively navigate shifts, enhance professional proficiency, and derive job satisfaction. To achieve this, they require sufficient in-service training. In-service teacher training is assumed significant as it equips teachers to confront evolving challenges within the educational landscape. It plays a pivotal role in augmenting their knowledge base, refining subject expertise, assimilating innovative teaching strategies, fostering competencies, and cultivating skills to harness modern technologies which are integral in the field of teaching and learning. However, the delivery and effective implementation of in-service teacher training programmes in the context of Nepal is challenging. This study aims to explore the perceptions of teachers on the significance of in-service teacher training programmes and challenges they face in receiving and implementing them in the classroom in the context of Nepal. Five high school teachers from five schools from Kailali district were selected purposively as the research participants. Data were collected through in-depth and semi-structured interviews. The findings highlight that even though teachers feel that in-service teacher training programmes are significant for effective teaching and learning, an insufficient of experts, inadequate resources, waning motivation, deficient policies, time management challenges, political influences, and financial constraints constitute major hurdles in executing teacher training initiatives. The study further reveals that due to these challenges, teachers struggle to effectively implement the acquired knowledge and methodologies from the training within the constraints of limited time and expansive classroom settings.

Keywords: Teacher training, in-service teacher training, challenges, implementation, teacher education



Introduction

Teacher training is an integral part of teacher education which aims at developing and updating teachers to cope with the challenges they encounter during their career, as Steadman (2008) states that teacher training updates teachers with current trends and other relevant teaching issues and solutions. Teacher training includes training for pre-service and in-service teachers. Pre-service teacher training is a part of formal education for teachers -whereas in-service teacher education is concerned with extra efforts made on teachers to refresh and update them as per the demand of time and situation; it can be both formal and informal. Similarly, teacher education is important for equipping teachers the necessary teaching skills for their students' learning (Supriatna, 2015) and improving teachers' qualifications (Simon, 2013). Despite the fact that teacher-training programmes have a good impact on teachers' instructional strategies, there has not been enough high-quality teacher training provided in this area due to the lack of skilled teacher trainers in Myanmar (Weil, 2013). Similar to the observation of Weil, teacher training programmes do not seem to be effective and sufficient in context of Nepal as well. Thakur et al. (2021) reveals that majority of in-service teacher are trained, however the effectiveness of such programmes is challenged. Though supply side of in-service teacher training seems to be sufficient, utility and satisfaction level of teachers seem to be questionable (Osamwonyi, 2016). Little or no attention is found to be paid to consider the teachers' perspectives on effectiveness of such formal and informal training programmes (Tuncel & Cobanoglu, 2018). Thus, it seems to be important for concerned authorities (who are responsible for developing and implementing teacher training programmes) to understand the challenges and problems of teacher training programmes from in-service teachers' perspectives.

Regarding teacher training in context of Nepal, Government of Nepal is trying to deliver training programmes to in-service teachers through National Center for Educational Development (NCED) and Secondary Education Development Center (SEDC). Similarly, Nepal English Language Teachers' Association (NELTA), and other associations and institutions are also contributing on teacher training. However, implementation level of such training programmes seems to be weak (Thakur et al., 2021). The training programmes are even not easily accessible to many teachers. The criteria for delivering the training programme are not specified. Importantly, needs reflection, views, challenges and difficulties of teachers related training programmes are not adequately researched, not addressed and not recorded by any mechanism. These problems are causing negative impact on professional development of the teachers and performance of the students as well.

This study aims to explore the perceptions of teachers on the significance of in-service teacher training programmes and challenges they face in receiving and implementing them in the classroom in the context of Nepal. To incorporate the aim, the study deals with two fundamental research questions:

1. How do the teachers perceive the significance of in-service teacher training?
2. What challenges do the teachers face in receiving and implementing in-service teacher training in the classroom?

Literature Review

The need for in-service teacher training for teachers cannot be underestimated. It is a necessity in enhancing work performance and motivation of teachers in the field. Absence of in-service training of teachers will retard professional growth of teachers. Teacher training include activities like seminars, workshops, conferences, classes, Exhibitions etc. that are designed to develop and improve employees in an organization from the initial employment stage to retirement. It updates the knowledge, expertise, skills and competence of teacher in the teaching profession. According to National Policy on Education (2014) and National Education Policy (2019), no level of education can rise above the quality of its teachers; to meet the growing needs of education in a global economy it becomes imperative to provide sound in-service education for teachers.

Even though the teachers have got trainings, as Gautam (2016) opines, they are unable to execute the knowledge on students' achievement. He further mentions that the teacher training in Nepal has had no impact in the student's achievement and training did not lead to the better performance in the students' results. There might be several factors that might explain the performance of the students but teacher training is also one of the factors that should influence the performance of the students in exams. Again, in this context, Gautam (2016) in his article finds out that application of training skills in classroom practice is another issue in the existing teacher training programs. One of the reasons could be that "the existing modes of teacher training are lecture dominated and classroom centered" (p. 46). Another problem in teacher education is that teachers are really reluctant to take training seriously. In a study, Mathema and Bista (2006) mention that teachers (including head teachers) of remote rural schools have a tendency to avoid teaching. They look for training opportunities to escape work. Teacher training has enhanced teacher absenteeism rather than school effectiveness.

Besides, the above- mentioned issues and challenges, teacher training programmes are influenced by physical infrastructures, less logistics and less

sufficient and weak policies. To regard such issues Awasthi (2003), in his article finds out several issues related to teacher training in Nepal as such, lack of adequate fund, lack of research, lack of coordination between pre-service and in-service teacher training programmes, lack of policy to train teacher at higher level, lack of material access to electronic resources and infrequent refresher training for teacher trainers. Similarly, willingness of the trained teachers to work in different school to share their knowledge with others is also a challenge in its effectiveness. Sinha (2009) explicates that in-service training is usually centrally determined and supply- driven. For a few days a year, a small number of privileged teachers were pulled-off from their classrooms to remote training centers to be lectured to about what to do in areas that were not necessarily their main concerns and in settings that were often distant from their day-to-day concrete experiences. They were then sent back to an unchanged school where they met the indifference or outright hostility of envious colleagues, without opportunities to reinforce their newly acquired skills in the classroom.

Teacher training and professional development is a continuous process. The concepts, methods, and modes of teacher training and education should be updated according to the time and space. As Fisher (2003) has rightly pointed out the skill appropriate for generation ago might no longer prepare students for the world beyond school. Students are being tasked to be more creative and thoughtful in their daily activities. According to UNESCO (1985), continuing education can be regarded as the entire body of educational processes whatever the content level and method, whether formal or otherwise, whether they prolong or replace initial education in schools, colleges and universities as well as in apprenticeship, whereby persons regarded as adults by the society to which they belong develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge, improve their technical or professional qualifications or turn them in a new direction about changes in their attitudes or behavior in the two fold perspective of full personal development and participation on balance and independent social, economic and cultural development.

In-service teacher training has to play a great role not only on teacher development but also in educational performance and changing teachers' behaviour into the positive one. Proper in-service teachers' training (INSET) does improve the teaching and learning process which in turn improves students' performance. To implement INSET effectively certain strategies such as, needs assessment, good selection of participants, good timing of introducing INSET programs, relevant topic and content to be selected, adequate funding, competent facilitators, INSET to be run according to the environment of the beneficiaries, involving as many participants as possible, rotating trainees in the attendance schedule and good record keeping are needed. Notwithstanding, the INSET encounters some obstacles, such

as restricted funding, teacher selection, time constraints, course material selection, environmental factors, and low levels of dedication (Serapion, 2018). Analyzing the impact of teacher training on the performance of teachers in the classroom, declares that through teacher's training behavior and performance of teachers can be changed positively, (Samupwa, 2008). Sim (2011) asserts that fundamental purpose of in-service teacher training programs is to create an environment that enables the effective practice of teaching within a classroom. In their study, Essel et al. (2009) investigate the beneficial effects of in-service teacher training, revealing that these programs equip teachers with skills, knowledge, abilities, and confidence. Conversely, Steadman (2008) draws attention to both the positive outcomes and challenges associated with implementing teacher training systems in challenging geographical, political, and administrative contexts. To establish an optimal teaching and learning environment, essential elements include adequate funding, a conducive teaching environment, teaching resources, an effective training model, and teachers possessing academic expertise – that is, well-trained, confident, and experienced teachers.

Even though in-service teacher training is essential in world context, implementing in-service teacher training programmes successfully and effectively is a challenging job. For example, in context of Nepal, various factors contribute to the failure of teacher training programmes. Yadav (2018) reveals some pertinent issues in EFL teacher development in Nepal based on its social, cultural and economic realities and he mainly focused on teacher training and conference and argue for rethinking in TD to make it more effective. It is believed that the teachers, who participate in professional development strategies such as training and conference, can develop in their professional career. However, Yadav (2018) further argues that just participating in such activities might not ensure teacher development. Thus, it seems to be essential to explore the reasons why teacher development fails to make difference in students' learning.

Similarly, as Baskan and Ayda (2018) explicate, there are some problems related to policy, practice and process of teacher recruitment. Such problems involve selection of teachers without any criteria or control; the existence of temporary teacher candidates who obtain the right to become permanent teachers; appointing teachers for political gains; the teacher education as profit-oriented business; faculty members at teacher training institutions being inadequate in developing themselves; and in-service trainings not being planned, and being organized solely for the aim of promotion. These problems are explicitly and implicitly linked with the effective implementation of teacher training programmes.

There has been significant contribution made by the researchers in the field of in-service and pre-service teacher training and professional development. In his research, Sah (2021) examines the current educational policies, training models, and programs, with a particular emphasis on the manner and the degree to which such policies and practices respond. The analysis shows that, in spite of legal requirements, pre-service university courses and in-service teacher training curricula and programs don't appear to adequately educate teachers to address social justice issues in their diverse classrooms (Sah, 2021). Furthermore, he reveals that modern primary teacher education programs prefer to concentrate on broad pedagogical abilities, English language competency, teaching strategies, and the creation of instructional materials.

Similarly, Dhakal (2016), in his study looks at the applicability and the degree to which teachers' insights from the workshops and trainings provided by the Nepal English Language Teachers' Association (NELTA) aid in easing the challenges EFL teachers. This study demonstrates that although training programs help teachers advance professionally, they struggle to apply the skills and information they gain in actual classroom settings. However, Shrestha (2008) addresses the situation and offers suggestions for action that could improve teacher education. He argues that financial rewards alone are insufficient to inspire instructors to work harder and raise pupils' academic attainment levels, Politicization of education deters teachers from doing professional work, centralized school management distances the school community from the institution by failing to engage the stakeholders, without increasing accountability, rewarding teachers wouldn't help them perform better. Shrestha (2008) further argues that all initiatives to raise the quality of instruction encounter severe criticism from the teachers while teacher trade unionism is on the rise and if the process of training does not provide apparent instructional requirements for school-based management, the teacher training program will become a ritual. It is urgently necessary to perform thorough investigations to determine the state of secondary teacher preparation now in order to create a foundation for future policy and plan development.

Regarding formal in-service and pre-service teacher training, Gautam (2016) states that lack of motivation among teachers to learn, lack of supervising, monitoring and follow up (NCED, 1998), politicization in education (Shrestha, 2004), no interest on attending training and applying those things on real classroom, poor physical facilities, lack of motivation, low salary and lack of preparation are causes of poor performance of trained teacher. Furthermore, Gautam (2016) revealed that teachers who are committed toward work should be trained, should evaluate the trained teacher's classroom after training, training should focus on real problems

of teacher that occur on real classroom, training should be focus on diverse group of learners, focus on holistic development. It is crucial to establish the interface between theory and practice and teacher should be provided with regular learning environment. However, Suzuki (2008) argues that if cascade is actually unsuccessful through case study research on in-service training for multi-grade teaching undertaken in Nepal for twenty months. As most underdeveloped nations can only afford cascade. This research revealed that the students were undoubtedly stimulated by the multi-grade teaching training. Although some participants were familiar with the training curriculum, they still learned new information, and others were able to recollect information they already knew as a result of the training.

The literature on effective implementation of in-service teacher training program and teachers' perspective on it shows that in-service training has significant contribution to various areas such as the education policy, maintenance of the educational needs of teachers and students, and the mutual relationship between the school and its environment. For effective and sustainable outcome in-service training should be planned systematically and the needs of the participants should be carefully analyzed and purposes should be determined according to these needs. Nevertheless, along with the in-service teaching training programs, new teaching-learning concepts should be introduced to make such programs more effective. The literature reviewed in this section shows that in-service teacher training can have very positive impact on their educational performance, professional qualification, to develop and enrich their knowledge and obviously students' performance. However, only participating in training might not insure teacher development. This review section also reveals that there are numerous studies that have been carried out on teacher training to find the positive impact and negative impact of in-service teacher training. However, in the context of Nepal very few researchers have addressed this issue. So, this paper basically attempts to explore the perceptions of teachers on the significance of in-service teacher training programmes and challenges they face in receiving and implementing them in the classroom in the context of Nepal

Methods and Procedures

This study employs a qualitative research design, utilizing in-depth interviews as the primary method for data collection from participants. In addition, a set of open-ended questions was formulated and administered to gather supplementary information. The research site comprises five community schools located in the Kailali district. The research population consists of five teachers from each of the selected schools. All participants were personally approached, and interviews lasting 25 minutes each were conducted to procure data for the study. The interviews were conducted in both Nepali and English, with the language chosen based on the

participants' comfort level, predominantly favoring Nepali. The collected data were meticulously recorded, transcribed into written form, and subsequently translated into English. The qualitative analysis approach was employed to present and analyze the data. To maintain the ethical consideration, the schools are named as school A, school B, school C, school D, and school E. Similarly, the participants chosen from each school are coded as T1, T2, T3, T4 and T5.

Results and Discussion

The findings of the research are discussed on the basis two broad research questions: How the teachers perceive the significance of in-service teacher training and what challenges the teachers face in receiving and implementing in-service teacher training in the classroom. To answer these questions ten interview questions were asked to the participants. This section discusses the major findings, obtained from the interview with the research participants. The findings are discussed under three sub-themes derived from the research questions: perceptions of teachers on the significance of In-Service Teacher Training; challenges faced by the teachers in receiving in-service teacher training; and challenges faced by the teachers in implementing in-service teacher training in the classroom.

Perceptions of Teachers on The Significance of In-Service Teacher Training

In reference to the significance of training, participants emphasized the indispensable nature of training initiatives. They asserted that training plays a pivotal role in facilitating the delivery of high-quality education and contributes significantly to the continuous professional growth of teachers. Acknowledging the dynamic nature of the educational landscape, participants emphasized the imperative for ongoing training to address pertinent and contemporary challenges. Such training sessions are deemed essential for the resolution of pressing issues and the enhancement of classroom effectiveness.

Training is necessary. It will help to provide quality education and further help in the professional development of teacher. (T1)

Training in one's professional career is must. Live and burning issues are to be addressed by such trainings. So, to solve those issues and to make effective classroom it is necessary. (T2)

Teachers should be trained frequently on the basis of their needs for which need analysis should be done in the beginning. It helps in developing teacher's professional development. (T3)

For effective teaching and learning activities, training is necessary. It helps in profession development of teacher as well as it is beneficial for students and helps teacher to update with new knowledge and strategies. (T4)

Regarding the significance of training, the participant from school A (T1) exposed the imperative nature of training, emphasizing its crucial role in furnishing a foundation for the delivery of high-quality education and contributing to the ongoing professional advancement of teachers. Similarly, the respondent associated with school C (T3) emphasized the indispensability of training within one's professional trajectory, asserting that addressing contemporary and pressing issues requires the acquisition of relevant skills through training. This individual asserted that such training is pivotal for problem-solving and the cultivation of an effective classroom environment.

In addition, the respondent from school D (T4) expounded on the necessity for recurrent teacher training, contending that a systematic needs analysis at the outset is vital. This strategic approach, according to the respondent, facilitates the tailored development of teachers by aligning training initiatives with their specific requirements.

Furthermore, the respondents from school B (T2) and E (T5) concurred on the essential role of training in fostering effective teaching and learning activities. They explicated that training not only contributes to the professional development of teachers but also yields benefits for students, enabling teachers to remain abreast of new knowledge and instructional strategies. These perspectives collectively affirm the consensus among the respondents regarding the integral role of training in enhancing educational practices and the continuous development of teachers.

The consensus among respondents was that regular and tailored training is crucial within the context of one's professional career. This sentiment was emphasized by the assertion that live and pressing issues necessitate proactive engagement through targeted training interventions. A systematic approach, involving a needs analysis at the outset, was deemed essential for determining the specific areas in which teachers require training, thereby fostering their professional development.

Moreover, participants emphasized the multifaceted benefits of training for both teachers and students in the context of effective teaching and learning activities. Beyond serving as a catalyst for the professional development of teachers, training was deemed advantageous for students, contributing to an enriched learning environment. Furthermore, training was identified as a means for teachers to remain abreast of emerging knowledge and instructional strategies, thereby ensuring their pedagogical practices remain contemporary and effective.

With respect to the advantageous outcomes of professional development initiatives in the context of their professional roles, all participants (denoted as T1, T2, T3, T4, T5) uniformly exposed the following sentiments:

Teacher training is helpful for every teacher and student. The knowledge learned in the training always helps to develop the skills, helps me to make and manage the classroom effectively, give me ideas to apply new techniques and strategies in my class and develop confidence and leadership. Similarly, training help the to know how to impart quality education and effective teaching.

This narrative from the participants denotes that teacher training emerges as an invaluable resource for both teachers and students, facilitating the acquisition of knowledge that invariably contributes to skill development. The acquired knowledge not only assists in efficaciously orchestrating classroom dynamics but also serves as a catalyst for the application of innovative pedagogical techniques and strategies. Participants attested that such training endeavors engender a heightened sense of confidence and foster leadership attributes.

Moreover, the overarching consensus among teachers highlights the manifold benefits derived from training initiatives. These benefits encompass the derivation of novel ideas for the implementation of cutting-edge techniques and strategies within their instructional settings. Furthermore, the pedagogical efficacy of teachers is enhanced through improved classroom management and adept time utilization, concurrently affording them novel perspectives on lesson planning.

The collective perceptions of the participants also highlight the instrumental role played by these training programs in facilitating meticulous lesson planning. Noteworthy contributions include the cultivation of leadership skills and the augmentation of confidence levels among teachers. This sentiment aligns with Tuncel's (2018) assertion, positing that teacher training serves as a pivotal mechanism for teachers to navigate challenges inherent in the teaching profession, thereby fortifying their prowess in effective teaching and classroom management. Consequently, it is plausible to contend that professional development initiatives are instrumental not only in instilling professional values but also in nurturing attitudes conducive to optimal teaching practices.

Challenges Faced by the Teachers in Receiving In-Service Teacher Training

Before examining the challenges, the teachers face in receiving trainings, it is significant to explore the status of teachers in terms of the training programmes they have attained. In the interview concerning the training sessions they have

participated in, a predominant number of respondents conveyed that their attendance was predominantly confined to Teacher Professional Development (TPD) training. A minority exposed engagement in refreshment training and connecting classroom training. Singularly, one respondent exposed a diverse spectrum of attendance, encompassing professional development, language development, and classroom management workshops. It is noteworthy to highlight that respondent emanating from four distinct schools (A, B, C, D,) consistently mirrored analogous responses in terms of the nature and scope of training attended. They responded as:

I have attended only TPD training. Sometimes connecting classroom is also provided but no other types of trainings are arranged for us. (T1)

Conversely, a respondent from School (E) (T5) presents a slightly different perspective, stating:

I have attended several trainings on professional development, language development, classroom management, etc. There are varieties that I attend like workshops, seminars, and conferences. (T5)

These statements explicitly convey that the majority of teachers have not had the opportunity to attend diverse forms of in-service training during their teaching tenure; only a few have had the chance to partake in various training programs. The absence of appropriate in-service teacher training has significant implications for the professional development of teachers, directly impacting the learning outcomes and success of students. This is attributed to the understanding that the quality of education is contingent upon the caliber and diversity of training received by teachers. Training becomes imperative for updating their knowledge and honing their skills in curriculum, psychology, and pedagogy of learners (Tuncel, 2018). Consequently, to foster improved learning outcomes and facilitate the professional development of teachers, it is imperative for the government to consistently provide training opportunities to teachers.

However, in terms of the frequency of training attendance, participants A, B, C, and D provided responses indicating a lack of regular training opportunities. Participant (T1) expressed, “Not yet. I didn’t get regular training. Maybe due to government policy. We hardly get a chance to attend training once a year.” However, Participant (T5) reported receiving regular training, approximately three times a year.

The prevailing sentiment among the majority of teachers is a dearth of consistent training. They rarely have the opportunity to attend training sessions, with most indicating an infrequency of once a year. The attributed reasons for this scarcity include geographical challenges, government policies, the unstable state

of the education sector, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and administrative unwillingness. Despite the acknowledged importance of in-service teacher training for professional development, teachers find themselves unable to participate, even though they express a desire to engage in such training activities. The impediments, as identified, encompass geographical constraints, governmental regulations, the precarious state of the education sector, the ongoing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, and administrative reluctance.

However, the respondent from School B (T2) articulates concerns encompassing various facets of the educational landscape, including student assessment, teaching and learning activities. The individual asserts that a pervasive lack of interest is evident within the school community, extending from the teaching staff to the principal. Notably, the respondent highlights the principal's apparent indifference toward both training initiatives and the professional development of teachers.

There are problems in everything from student assessment, teaching and learning activities. No one in the school shows interest toward it. Even the principle does not give priority either on training nor on professional development of teacher. (T2)

The narrative implies a systemic issue where a collective disinterest prevails, not only among teachers but also at the administrative level. The respondent's assertion that "nobody at the school appears to be interested in it" emphasizes the pervasive nature of this indifference. Furthermore, the acknowledgment that the school authority accords no importance to teacher professional development implies a critical lapse in institutional priorities. The specific mention of issues with student evaluation, teaching practices, and classroom activities highlights the comprehensive scope of the challenges faced by School "B." This commentary reflects a nuanced understanding of the interconnectedness of various elements within the educational framework and signals a need for a holistic intervention to address the identified issues.

The response from the teacher at school C (T3) from several challenges faced by the teachers in obtaining the training. Firstly, the geographical location poses a significant problem, implying potential logistical and infrastructural obstacles that may impede the teaching process. Secondly, the reference to the administration's carelessness suggests a lack of attention or responsiveness to the specific challenges posed by the geographical setting, further exacerbating the difficulties faced by teachers.

There is problem due to the geographical area. Carelessness of administration towards it also creating problem. The other one is mixing political thing inside education. (T3)

Additionally, the teacher points out the intrusion of political considerations into the realm of education. This implies that political influences might be disrupting the educational environment, potentially compromising the autonomy and effectiveness of teaching practices. Such interference could have adverse effects on the overall educational experience for both teachers and students.

In the similar context, a participant from school D (T4) expounded that a principal predicament encountered by teachers pertains to the negligence exhibited by the administrative body.

The main problem for teacher is carelessness of administration. There are problems in student assessment and lack of resources to prepare effective materials. (T4)

The concomitant issues encompass deficiencies in student assessment methodologies and a dearth of resources essential for the formulation of efficacious instructional materials. This assertion illuminates that the salient impediments faced by teachers encompass administrative lapses, inadequate provisions for the facilitation of effective pedagogy, and deficiencies in the evaluation mechanisms applied to students.

However, participant from school E espouse distinct perspectives compared to other participants. The representative from school E (T5) exposed the following viewpoint:

I do not encounter any impediments with respect to training, but I am actively seeking training programs that specifically address the intricacies of planning virtual classes, particularly in terms of assessment and addressing the unique characteristics of the new generation of students. (T5)

This respondent does not express any reservations about the training itself; rather, she exhibits a keen interest in participating in training sessions that can enhance her ability to orchestrate virtual classes. The amalgamated responses indicate that a majority of teachers grapple with issues stemming from insufficient confidence, challenges in the production and utilization of instructional materials, difficulties in student assessment, and the broader aspects of delivering quality education. Furthermore, factors such as geographical constraints, administrative negligence, the infusion of political considerations into educational matters, and the mobilization of students in pedagogic activities also contribute to the prevalent challenges. Notably,

the teacher from school E (T5) stands out by disclosing no perceived problems; instead, she actively seeks training to improve her proficiency in conducting virtual classes effectively.

In alignment with these findings, Steadman (2008) elucidates that challenging geographical, political, and administrative circumstances often hinder the consistent provision of training. However, it is emphasized that training plays a pivotal role in enhancing a teacher's classroom efficacy, directly impacting learners' achievements and success. The consensus among the respondents emphasizes that teachers must stay abreast of contemporary methodologies and strategies to keep students abreast of new knowledge. Consequently, the overarching recommendation is that teachers should receive regular training. Despite the prevailing lack of willingness to conduct training sessions in the current context, the imperative remains for teachers to undergo regular training to foster improved educational outcomes.

Concerning additional challenges, the participants from all schools uniformly exposed similar concerns, with their responses converging around the following issues, amalgamated from the insights of five participants:

The main problem we are facing in modern class is not having sufficient knowledge about IT. Due to lack of sufficient training teachers are unable to use new strategy in the classroom which affects the confidence of the teacher in the classroom. In our context having many students in the one class is also a big problem. Without updating teacher's proficiency level through training, one can't produce appropriate materials and can't reach the students need. It affects on student's mobilization, students learning, student's assessment and teaching learning activity.

A primary obstacle encountered in contemporary classrooms pertains to an insufficient grasp of Information Technology (IT). The dearth of comprehensive training inhibits teachers from employing novel pedagogical strategies, consequently eroding their confidence within the instructional setting. The presence of a substantial number of students in a single class compounds this challenge. Failure to enhance teacher proficiency through systematic training impedes the generation of pertinent educational materials and hampers the fulfillment of student needs. This deficiency reverberates across various facets of the educational process, encompassing student mobilization, learning outcomes, assessments, and the overall efficacy of teaching and learning activities.

Furthermore, the teachers confront an array of challenges attributable to their inadequate training, including an inability to integrate IT effectively into the classroom, unfamiliarity with contemporary methods and techniques, an inability to

achieve optimal academic results, a lack of confidence in managing large class sizes, and challenges related to the production and utilization of educational materials. The repercussions extend to student mobilization in pedagogical activities and the teachers' incapacity to continually update themselves in alignment with evolving student requirements. These challenges manifest across diverse dimensions, ranging from student assessments and teaching methodologies to the overarching quality of education.

While a subset of teachers expressed a purported absence of challenges related to training, some acknowledged the need for targeted training initiatives that would facilitate adept planning of virtual classes, particularly in terms of assessment strategies and effectively engaging with the distinct characteristics of the new generation of students.

Challenges Faced by the Teachers in Implementing In-Service Teacher Training in the Classroom

Although teacher training significantly contributes to the improvement of teaching and learning activities in the classroom, as well as the professional development of teachers, its successful implementation faces numerous challenges. When discussing the impediments encountered in the execution of teacher training programs, a respondent from school A (T1) exposed the following perspective:

It is due to negligence of administration and teacher. No one gives priority to such kind of activities. No one come to see here whether the teacher who is trained is applying those skills in the classroom or not when we ask for the training the school shows financial problem of the school. All these things are creating problem in implementation. (T1)

The hindrances primarily stem from the collective negligence of both the administration and teachers. There is a notable absence of prioritization for such developmental activities, and there is minimal oversight to ascertain whether teachers, post-training, effectively apply acquired skills within the classroom setting. When approached for training, the school often cites financial constraints as a deterrent, further exacerbating the challenges associated with implementation. This insight highlights the existence of implementation-level challenges attributable to insufficient supervision, negligence on the part of both administrators and teachers, and the financial constraints faced by the school.

Similarly, a respondent from school B (T2) expounded that the inherent challenges lie in the lack of emphasis placed on such training endeavors, compounded by the absence of expert personnel in pertinent areas.

Normally, no one gives priority towards such training. if we want to conduct such kind of training. we don't have people who are expert in those areas. We learn many things from training but while implementing we got problem due to lack of materials that are needed. The school cannot afford all the things and most importantly no curiosity of the concerned authorities causes problem while implementing. (T2)

The challenges persist at the implementation level due to a deficiency in oversight, the neglectful attitudes of administrators and teachers, and the precarious financial circumstances of the educational institution. Despite the acquisition of knowledge during training sessions, difficulties in implementation arise from inadequate access to necessary materials, financial constraints limiting the school's capacity to procure essential resources, and a noticeable lack of interest and curiosity among pertinent authorities. The elucidation provided by the respondent from school B (T2) highlights that challenges in implementation are exacerbated by the absence of experts, insufficient resources, financial constraints, and less interest on the part of relevant authorities.

Respondents from school C (T3) highlight financial constraints as the primary obstacle, emphasizing the indispensable role of adequate funding in procuring essential materials for effective teaching and learning activities. Additionally, the interests of both the administration and teachers, coupled with shortages in materials and expertise, are identified as factors contributing to challenges in implementation.

The main problem is financial problem. Without money we can't arrange all the required materials for effecting teaching and learning activities. The others can be interest of administration and teacher. Insufficient materials and expertise also create problem while implementing. (T3)

Through this narrative of the participant, it can be inferred that the common themes emerging from these responses highlight the multifaceted nature of challenges in implementing teacher training programs. Issues such as negligence, financial constraints, lack of expertise, and insufficient materials collectively impede the effective integration of acquired skills and knowledge into classroom practices. Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive approach that considers the diverse factors influencing the successful implementation of teacher training initiatives.

Moreover, a respondent from school D (T4) identified multiple factors hampering the implementation of training programs.

The interest of concerned people and the trainee causes problem in implementation of training. The school does not want to send teachers for training (do not want to hamper the regular class) and trainee himself or herself may not be enthusiastic. If both of them cannot manage time, the training can't be effective. Similarly, after training no one come to observe the classes. Financial problem and lack of experts also create problem. (T4)

The respondent pinpointed the reluctance of both the school administration and teachers to prioritize training, citing concerns about disrupting regular classes. Additionally, issues related to the enthusiasm of trainees, time management, lack of post-training observation, financial constraints, and a shortage of expert personnel were identified as compounding challenges in the effective execution of teacher training.

The participant from School E (T5) exposed a noteworthy challenge, delineating that the amalgamation of teachers possessing distinct subject-matter expertise into a unified training program, characterized by explicit objectives, poses a formidable obstacle.

One of the challenges would be to include all the teachers with different subject expertise into one training with specific objectives and all physical and economic resources' also cause problem in implementation. (T5)

Furthermore, the respondent emphasized the impediments arising from constraints in both physical and economic resources, signifying that the simultaneous considerations of financial limitations and the imperative to encompass a diverse array of subject-specialized instructors engender difficulties in the effective execution of educational initiatives.

The participants responded that the primary impediment to organizing seminars and workshops within schools was a financial constraint. Additional challenges cited included a dearth of subject matter experts, inadequate resources, a lack of collective willpower, challenges in time management, and the recurring financial constraints hindering the school's capacity to arrange training sessions for teachers. Notably, one respondent highlighted the issue of including teachers with diverse subject specialties in a singular training program.

In discussions pertaining to administrative attitudes, a representative from School A (T1) remarked that the administration sporadically encourages training activities, primarily driven by concerns over potential issues arising in the absence of teachers, leading them to prioritize routine classes over training initiatives.

Administration encourages sometimes only because they are worried about the problem that occur in the absence of teacher. So, they don't focus on training. Teachers are taken as trained in themselves. (T1)

Normally, administration does not show interest in providing training. The reason behind this is not to disturb the regular classes. Mostly teacher who teaches major subject like maths, science and the people related to authorities get more chances to attend the training. (T3)

Similarly, the respondent from School C echoed this sentiment, noting a general disinterest in providing training due to a desire to maintain the regular class schedule. Furthermore, respondents from Schools B (T2) and D (T3) shared similar perspectives, emphasizing that although occasional encouragement for training exists, preference is often given to individuals with closer ties to the administration. They observed a prioritization of regular classes over training, resulting in a lack of opportunities for teachers to acquaint themselves with novel strategies and techniques. In this context participant T2 and T4 responded:

Sometimes administration encourages but gives priority to the people who are nearer to them. They focus on regular class rather than on training and didn't get chance to update with new strategy and techniques. They think like people who are from education background do not need training and they are perfect in themselves.

Yes, as they believe that training helps to bring all round development of the teacher and improve in teaching and learning process but give priority to class. Teachers are taken as trained on themselves.

Similarly, a respondent from School E (T5) acknowledged the benefits of training in fostering holistic teacher development and enhancing the teaching-learning process. Nonetheless, the prevailing inclination was to accord precedence to classroom responsibilities. Many teachers expressed that while occasional encouragement for training exists, it is not a consistent practice. This inconsistency in support hampers their ability to stay abreast of contemporary teaching methodologies. The teachers argued that the administration's reluctance stems from a short-sighted focus on immediate student welfare, neglecting the long-term benefits that arise from updating teachers with contemporary knowledge and teaching skills. Another rationale identified was the perception that teachers, having acquired qualifications from various universities, are already considered trained professionals.

Despite recognizing the pivotal role of administration in enhancing teachers' professional competencies and fostering student learning, teachers lamented that

government authorities and individuals connected to English Language Teaching (ELT) and local education are more frequently invited to training sessions. Some respondents asserted that training opportunities predominantly favor novice and permanent teachers, particularly those specializing in mathematics and science. This selective approach to in-service teacher training was perceived as detrimental to the overall quality of teaching and learning activities within schools. However, a silver lining emerged as some teachers acknowledged receiving material incentives after participating in teacher training programs.

The implementation of teacher training faces significant challenges, primarily stemming from a lack of encouragement, administrative interest, and teacher motivation, coupled with inadequate awareness of the training's importance. Teachers commonly cite various obstacles such as insufficient funds, political influences, the halo effect, limited materials, methods, and techniques, as well as the absence of expert personnel, the curiosity of concerned individuals, insufficient resources, absence of policies, and time constraints as major hindrances to effective teacher training in schools. Some teachers also attribute challenges to a lack of collaboration, negligence, and insufficient inspection in the classroom. As Poudel (2014) delves into the difficulty of finding proficient teacher trainers capable of facilitating the transfer of new knowledge into classroom practices, participants from various schools unanimously recognize the necessity of training for quality education and teacher professional development. They assert that addressing live and pertinent issues through training is essential for creating effective classrooms.

Moreover, the participants stress the need for frequent and needs-based training, advocating for an initial needs analysis. They argue that regular training enhances teaching effectiveness, benefits students, and allows teachers to stay updated with new knowledge and strategies. The consensus among participants is that in-service training is indispensable for a teacher's professional growth and effective classroom management. However, the participants also highlight poor physical facilities, lack of motivation, the pursuit of part-time jobs due to low salaries, and insufficient preparation time as factors contributing to the subpar performance of teachers (Tuncel, 2018). The perceptions of teachers also focus on the importance of motivating teachers through adequate compensation to prevent them from seeking additional employment, which can negatively impact their preparation time and, consequently, student learning outcomes. Additionally, while in-service training is crucial for enhancing teachers' skills, knowledge, and performance, this study focuses on uncovering the prevalent challenges in implementing teacher training in the Nepalese context. It sheds light on the difficulties teachers face due to the absence of comprehensive training programs in their professional development.

Conclusion

The findings of the paper provide insights into the perceptions of teachers regarding the significance of in-service teacher training and the challenges they encounter in both receiving and implementing such training in the classroom. The participants unanimously emphasize the pivotal role of training in facilitating the delivery of high-quality education and contributing to continuous professional growth. The dynamic nature of the educational landscape necessitates ongoing training to address contemporary challenges, resolve pressing issues, and enhance classroom effectiveness.

Perceptions on the significance of in-service teacher training are rooted in the acknowledgment of its indispensable nature. Teachers assert that training is necessary for providing quality education and furthering their professional development. The need for recurrent, needs-based training is emphasized, with a call for initial needs analysis to tailor training initiatives to specific requirements. The benefits of training extend beyond professional development to include improvements in teaching and learning activities, benefiting both teachers and students. The consensus among participants emphasizes the integral role of training in enhancing educational practices and fostering continuous development.

However, challenges in receiving in-service teacher training are evident. Participants report a predominant attendance in Teacher Professional Development (TPD) training, with limited exposure to diverse forms of training. The infrequency of training opportunities is attributed to geographical challenges, government policies, the unstable state of the education sector, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and administrative unwillingness. Financial constraints, lack of interest, and negligence at both administrative and teacher levels are identified as barriers to regular training attendance.

The challenges in implementing in-service teacher training in the classroom are multifaceted. Participants cite negligence, financial constraints, lack of expertise, and insufficient materials as impediments. There is a recurring theme of a lack of interest and prioritization by both administrators and teachers, leading to infrequent encouragement for training. The reluctance to disrupt regular classes and an inclination to prioritize immediate student welfare are identified as reasons for the sporadic support for training initiatives. Additionally, challenges in implementing training programs include difficulties in time management, reluctance to observe post-training classroom practices, and a scarcity of subject matter experts. Finally, carrying out the research and finding out the challenging factors and causes for the issues seems to be very essential for the further development of the teachers and

teaching in general. However, such small-scale research output may not represent the entire issues in the field of TPD and its implementation. It is supposed to be significant for the teachers, teacher teachers, trainers, local, provincial and federal government, policy makers and related stakeholders of education.

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Perceptions on English as a Medium of Instruction in Community School in Nepal

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Abstract

English as a medium of instruction (EMI) is a model of teaching in which non-English subjects are taught through the medium of English. It has become popular more than a decade and it has increased its tendency rapidly within Nepal and in global context. This study aims at exploring the perceptions of policy maker, head teachers, teachers, students and parents on the use of English as the medium of instruction particularly focusing on its effectiveness in the community schools in Nepal. Having seen the broader picture, I have conducted the qualitative interpretative research adopting narrative inquiry design to explore the ground reality of EMI implementation and its effectiveness. For this, I have selected altogether eight participants from policy to practice level who have observed and experienced the EMI. The entire research study is connected to the theory of neo-liberalism. This interpretive data reveals that the EMI has created a lot of tension to both the teachers and the students. The research findings suggest that the EMI is adopted without any planning and analyzing the teachers' readiness. The intervention of EMI at community schools has been a great challenge not only from the perspectives of instructional difficulties but also found much more challenges in terms of language to all the students and teachers.

Keywords: Medium of instruction, English language teaching, neoliberalism, community-based school

Introduction

English medium instruction (EMI) is defined as providing instruction in English to the students where English is not the commonly spoken language. Poudel (2021) mentions that EMI is a model of teaching in which non-English subjects are taught through the medium of English. The medium of instruction has become a hot



issue among the educational sectors or academic institutions throughout the world but most specifically it is being a kind of interest in those countries where English is taught for specific purpose. Marsh (2006, as cited in Ryhan, 2016, p.4) mentions that a language number of educational institutions especially from 1995 to 2005 showed a great interest in implementing English as a medium of instruction throughout the world. Consequently, in the latest days, almost all the courses in the schools are being taught in English language and many have adopted it as compulsory subject as well.

EMI in education is a phenomenon speeding rapidly around the world. At present both local and international schools implement English as a medium of instruction. Dearden (2015) writes “There is a fast moving worldwide shift from English being taught as a foreign language (EFL) to English as the medium of instruction for academic subjects such as science, mathematics, geography and medicine. EMI is increasingly being used in universities, secondary schools, and even primary schools” (p.1)

EMI is considered as a more sensitive issue because some believe that it is a threat to home culture (Po-yung & Hang-yue, 2014), some other scholars think that it is necessary to keep up with the competitiveness of the world (Coleman, 2006; Wilkinson, 2013). Because of the global spread of English, several countries are starting English medium of instruction. There is a concrete example from some countries as Venezuela, Israel and Senegal. They were found struggling to the EMI expansion for their wish to preserve and protect home culture, language and education system (British Council, 2014). Hence, from these viewpoints it can be considered that the medium of instruction in the foreign language has become an issue as a threat to home culture and language.

Setting Context and Background of the Study

Nepal is one of the linguistically diverse countries in South Asia accommodating more than 123 languages (CBS, 2022). Nepal is a multi-lingual and multi-cultural country where people of different ethnic groups speak different languages as they have their own language. The number of English speaking people is quite less in Nepal. However, it has gained important position in the education system since English language is adopted as a core subject from basic to university level either as a main subject or an optional subject. Nepal has accepted two models of schools education system, institutional and community. In private schools, the medium of instruction is completely English whereas in public schools, Nepali is used as a medium of instruction. Different research studies have shown that the learning achievement of private schools is better than the community-

based schools. According to Phyak (2016), private English-medium schools in Nepal have consistently surpassed the ones in terms of academic achievement in different national-level tests and examinations such as SEE and NEB. Hence, many community-based schools have also started to apply their medium of instruction in English thinking that the private schools have charm due to the medium of instruction only. Educational manual (2015) has made the provision that the medium of instruction can be used either Nepali or English, however, the basic level education can be given in mother tongue. The Constitution of Nepal (2015), the fundamental rights- the article-31, has guaranteed the right for language communities to operate mother tongue based schools. This provision has also created a dilemma among the concerned authorities and stakeholders regarding whether to opt for EMI, Nepali medium instruction, or both English and Nepali languages.

The trend to shift to EMI has become a fashion and growing in many community schools especially in urban areas after the implementation of federal system and also they are expanding it to rural areas too. In the recent years, there is a trend in public schools education in Nepal that have been adopting EMI as a new linguistic market (Saud, 2020). Sah (2021) asserts that one of the most important and crucial tools worldwide has been teaching the English language. That's why it has been the globally accepted language, and Nepal can't be an exception regarding the use of the globally most prestigious and powerful language. Today, many public schools in urban areas of Nepal have adopted EMI. The worldwide spread of EMI in the educational sector has tremendously penetrated the school education system in Nepal (Sah & Li, 2018). Similarly, Sah and Li (2018) assert that most students, parents and teachers view EMI as a crucial linguistic capital that enhances advanced English proficiency, academic progress, economic and social prosperity, and access to higher education. Paudel (2021) states that many private schools have persuaded many well-to-do families because these private institutions have assured quality education through EMI.

However, many educationists, and language practitioners have given some serious concern with the medium instruction in foreign language. They emphasize that when the students are taught a language as medium of instruction which is not used in a particular speech community, their learning is considered as weaker (Khan, 2014). Mostly the students focus their learning on memorizing the given information without getting meaning from the context that cannot foster their creativity in learning. Consequently, their learning becomes imperfect and poorly exposed (Baral, 2015). However, keeping such concern in isolation, many parents are found that if their kids are not taught in English medium schools they may not have their bright future because English has become a part associated with success with life (Phyak,

2015).

For this main reason, regarding the classroom situation, some fundamental questions need to be elucidate such as the complex procedure of EMI. The influence of EMI over the academic success and the language proficiency, and EMI practices along with its challenges in real classroom settings can be observed. Not only classroom applications of EMI but also the complete procedure of assessment on the success of an EMI program is worth discussion. Therefore, this study attempts to explore the existing reality of adopting EMI in community schools exploring the perceptions of the different stakeholders from policy to practice level in Nepal. This present interpretive research study attempted to answer the below mentioned research questions as ‘How do the different stakeholders of education take the EMI in classroom practices in community school in Nepal?’

Theoretical Framework

This study is guided by the theory of neoliberalism. Neoliberalism, which is constantly associated with globalization, is even considered as one element of globalization (Chang, 2015). Within the language education arena, neoliberal discourses often surface as ideologies and processes that promote language. Holborow (2012) explains “In less than a generation, neoliberal principles have spread across every continent and become so integral to public and private life that thinking outside its parameters is almost unthinkable (p. 14)”. The neoliberalism theory prescribes its relevance of envisioning the acculturation of global trends and marketization of English in Nepal via medium of language.

The adoption of EMI in Nepal is a result of constant stress from private schools to stablish their instructional practices like English medium of instruction. There are basically two reasons associated with thins theory why the EMI is adopted in community schools in Nepal. First, there is a widespread narrative in Nepal and elsewhere that credentials from English-medium education not only develop English literacy skills but also open doors for jobs in international markets. Second, there is an increasing trend among Nepali students to go abroad for further study (Linn, et al., 2021). Therefore, neoliberalism has become a hidden agenda for the development of EMI since ‘English is prioritized as the language of education stepping from the neoliberal ideology of English education as international practice.

Methods and Procedures

This study used a narrative inquiry approach to explore the perception of the different professionals associated with EMI adopted in community-based school. More specifically, this study focused on exploring the perception of different people

about the use of EMI and its effectiveness by capturing their stories (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009) within some community-based schools. Through this research design, I have tried my best to craft the lived experiences of the participants with narrative inquiries begin with storytelling (Clandinin & Huber, 2014) form since their stories make grate contribution for finding the ground reality of the EMI and its implication.

Research Site and Participants of the Study

In qualitative research, in-depth study of fewer participants supports understanding the culture of participants and brings more vivid description. According to Creswell (2013), the small size is useful for analyzing the data properly. Hence, I selected eight participants for the present study, the researcher purposively selected from five different schools of Kathmandu where the EMI was adopted. They were purposively selected because in one hand it could focus on the same interest and in other hand it was convenient place for me to elicit the required information. I have selected a policy maker, one head teacher, three teaching faculties, two students and one parent as research participants. All the participants were from five different schools of Kathmandu valley. I tried my best to explore the ground reality of EMI in community-based schools especially being focused on its effectiveness getting the perception of all the stakeholders. For maintaining ethical consideration, I have given pseudo names as Krishna (the head-teacher), Rabi (the policy maker), Hari Kala (science teacher), Durga (mathematics teacher), Binod (EPH teacher), Radha, (a parent), Ritu and Bibas (students) for the participants of this research. For the inclusiveness of the respondents, out of eight, four male and four female participants were there.

Data Collection and Analysis Procedure

The information was elicited from the participants using interview technique. I used a set of semi-structured and unstructured interview questions for all the participants. Firstly, I took consent from the participants and they were convinced in the matter of their privacy. After building a good rapport between participants and the researcher, I took my interview with the participants along with the support of a recording audio on a mobile set.

I, first, took interview with the teachers and students through the support of a recording device using semi structured and unstructured interview questions respectively and I went to the school head teacher for collecting his opinion about the adaptation of EMI in his school. Similarly, I took interview with the parents for knowing her opinion to send her children at English medium school. Likewise, I visited one of the participants, the curriculum designer of EMI. In addition, follow-up questions were asked to explore the problem in depth (Turner, 2010).

After the interview schedule was over, I transcribed the data elicited from all the participants. After transcribing the data, I again examined the responses of the semi structured questionnaires distributed to the students. The first step of data analysis involved examining the semi-structured interviews for the themes and secondly the unstructured questionnaires for the themes as participants' perceptions the students. I coded recorded interview data and analyzed inductively driving from the themes. After transcribing translations, codes and categories were developed and finally synthesized into the themes (Clarke & Braun, 2021). Pseudo names were used while analyzing the data for maintaining the confidentiality of the participants.

Results and Discussion

Based up on the data analysis process the following four themes were generated as presented below for this research study.

EMI for Opportunity and Prosperity

The first and the foremost reason behind choosing the EMI is none other than the parents' willingness to admit their children to institutional English medium schools. Consequently, the community schools have faced a huge challenge of decreasing the number of students in their schools in recent years which has obviously encouraged them to adopt EMI to admit more students and retain them at their schools. The concerned authorities and stakeholders take this paradigm shift in medium of instruction as the dire need of the time. Radha, one of the parents under this study, reported as there was strong suggestion from parents to start English medium class at school. She further added;

Last time school called a parents-teacher meeting. Then many parents suggested all the teachers and the head teacher to teach in English. He listened our voices. Now, my one son and one daughter are studying in this school. Both study in grade eight. Other neighbours who were sending their children to boarding school have been sending to government school now. We want our son/daughter speak in English and become big person in future. Now those who speak English can get good job. (3 June 2023)

The mentioned view resonates that the reason of selecting the English as a medium of instruction in the school was the pressure that head teachers and school management committee received from parents. The school might lose the students if they fail to do so. In align with this view, Shah (2021) states that parents believe that English promotes prestige in the community and EMI promotes their children to facilitate the learning of content better in English. It indicates that the parents thought that if their children got English language like in private school, they would

get better opportunity of employment in future. It was all due to the trends of English language that the children get at private schools.

Another participants, Krishan, the head teacher of the school, under this study reported with my question: ‘what motivated you to shift to EMI’, and he shared that there was strong pressure from the parents and guardians to adopt EMI and further he argued;

Looking high demand and scope of English, everyone wants to enroll their wards in private schools since they have adopted English as mandatory means of classroom delivery. Parents admit their kids in private schools if we do not shift to English medium. They say that their neighbour’s children are studying in private school in better way and there is nothing than English language. One thing we cannot deny that obviously there is more opportunity for getting jobs with English skills but language is not everything. But parents’ voice is quite opposite to us. (5 June 2023)

The data reveals that the school adopted English medium instruction without any proper plan and investigation whether they had adequate resources or not just to compete with private schools and better number of students’ enrollment. While analyzing the information of my participants’ this view has close connection with Phyak (2016) who mentions that public schools are shifting to EMI to compete with private schools.

After analyzing the information given by my participants, it is found that the community schools are using English medium for the social, financial and or better future of individual. They have just implemented it to please the parents and for the better enrollment of students thinking the English craze in the education is for better jobs and career of their students.

Regarding the use of English by the speaker, Pennycook (1994) noted that one’s status in social, educational, and professional contexts is seen to be determined by their command of the English language. However, the state, in the pursuit of social justice in education, introduced it, which, without proper planning and resources, is nothing more than a religious ritual.

Similarly, Rahmah (2005) also writes:

The preservation of English remains essential for the attainment of a prosperous future-a future of human dignity, if not public respect, a future of material prosperity, and a future of the security, human rights, and recognition that all human beings aspire to So, irrespective of what the state provides,

parents are willing to part with scarce cash to buy their children such a future (114).

With all these views it can be discussed that the English language has been embraced by many as a source of dignity and opportunity. It has been seen as a symbol of hope, advancement and modernity, and is seen as a reflection of one's sense of dignity and self-identity in society. From the data it can be understood that the English medium of instruction in private school has given a kind of pressure to the community school to shift towards English as parents have high demand. Parents have a kind of perception that if their children are given education in English, they will have good social status, better career. A wider socioeconomic context on schooling to English medium creates what Savage (2003) calls "a new kind of class paradigm, recognising the mutual constitution of markets, classes and individuals" (p.535). Hence, this has led many parents and schools to encourage their children or students respectively to acquire English without proper planning.

EMI Creates Two Tyres of Medium

Intervention of any new program to an organization in the initial stage is simply known as introductory phase. While introducing the English medium instruction at school, many schools are found using English medium curriculum and its textbooks to the students. Pennycook (1989) and Phillipson (1993) argue that language teaching is an integral part of life, and that all methods and materials are imbued with the ideologies of the creators. EMI has become popular fashion within Nepal and the globe. With my question, 'in what context the EMI was adopted in your school', Krishna, the head teacher, reported;

At the beginning we started EMI at our school from grade 1-3 in 2069 BS. First, School Management Committee passed a decision to use EMI then we decided to use it. We brought textbooks in English from Janak Shiksha Samagri Kendra. Another year, it went to grade 4-5. Now, we have been using it up to grade-8. We have both Nepali and English medium at our school in grade 6-8. (June 5, 2023)

The data reveals that the schools has adopted the two types of medium of instructions in the same school as English and Nepali. It seems that the school has divided the students into two system of education delivery for having the same education in the name of language. Those who prefer English medium curriculum have provided English and vice versa. While analyzing his views it is quite contradiction with Educational manual (2015) that has made the provision that the medium of instruction can be used either Nepali or English, however, the basic level education can be given in mother tongue. The Constitution of Nepal (2015), the fundamental

rights- the article-31, has guaranteed the right for language communities to operate mother tongue based schools. After analyzing the views and the policies, it seems that the school's intervention of EMI seems opposite to the act. School's rules has underprivileged the rights of the students to get their education is mother tongue.

Radha, a parent, reported, "We want our students speaking English like boarding school's students. Boarding school are taking more charge from the parents. I am financially not good to pay that much amount so I sent my children in this school. But I have to pay some extra fee for English medium teaching class here too. (3 June 2023)

This excerpt shows that the school has introduced English medium instruction but parents asked to pay for the education provided in the English medium. It reveals that the parents who have good economic status have admitted their children in English medium and those who cannot afford in Nepali medium in the same class/school. In contention to this Poudel (2019) argued that in the context of Nepal, English is the most influential language among upper and middle classes. To oppose with the participants, the Constitution of Nepal (2015) has given a right to have free and compulsory basic education (Grades 1 - 8) and free secondary education (Grades 9 - 12) to all children. It has created the strata in society as EMI educated are taken as superior and Non-EMI educated are as inferior.

Rabi, the curriculum designer added, "Medium of instruction has no problem itself. We have designed our curriculum in both languages; Nepali and English. But it is unethical to take extra fee in the name of English class." (7 June 2023)

The aforementioned expressions reveals that the school can make their choice as education act has given privileges to adopted English or Nepali medium instruction at school. However, taking extra fee from the parents with the English medium education is unethical practice within academia. In this regard, EMI without a genuine English education provided the poor and working class children with an illusion of access.

Analyzing the results from the participants and the scholars' viewpoints it can be discussed that the English medium instruction has invited a dangerous practice of two tires of education system in the same school. There is contradiction with the intervention and the policies of medium and charging fees as provisions have not given such privileges. Taking extra fee with the parents after introducing the EMI at school is awful action. The school is taking extra fee with the parents who are capable to pay in the name of EMI but the students from poor economic family are studying Nepali medium. The medium of instruction has become a tendency that has divided the society. EMI has become globalization in the local market (Sah & Li,

2018), English in EMI is ‘Market English rather than a second or foreign language, constructing EMI as a Discourse in Nepal. Neo-liberalism have had a significant impact on the contemporary society and have had a range of consequences on individuals as a market fashion tendency with the influence of having better career and jobs in the market.

Effectiveness of EMI in Learning

The utilization of English language in Nepalese community schools has had a significant impact on their enrollment figures since the implementation of the EMI in the city of Kantipur (Kantipur, 2019). Tran et al. (2021) stated that students’ knowledge of technical terms was believed to be improved most through EMI by both lecturers and students. The school is taking it as a great achievement in their school. Most community-based schools have been comparing their students with private schools’ students. In this connection Hari Kala, the science teacher shared:

Our some students have come from private schools after we introduced EMI in our school. Now, some of them can communicate in simple English.” Similarly, the head teacher added, “After the introduction of EMI in our school many students have come and enrolled from private schools. It is a great achievement for us since our parents are quite happy to our initiation. Isn’t it a matter of good news to all of us? (4 June 2023)

When I inquired of about the learning achievement of the students, the head teacher did not give very clear response on it. However, Durga, the mathematics teacher added “The students have been learning English language, some of them speak little English but learning achievement is the same.” (4 June 2023)

The above mentioned expressions show us that the school has succeeded to enroll few students those who were previously going to private English medium schools. Some students have learned to speak in English means all the learners are not able to use English. In align to this Chang (2010) mentions that English instruction helped them improve their English proficiency. However, in contrary to this, Sah and Karki (2020) suggests that pupils that switch to EMI are not adequately equipped. They don’t know enough English and don’t live in an English-speaking environment.

Analyzing the above participants’ viewpoints and scholars’ standpoints it can be discussed that those community schools which have introduced the EMI have increased the students’ enrolment. However, there is no significant difference in students’ learning achievement. The head teacher believed that shifting to EMI was the much success story to him for being able to compete with private schools and

wining the heart of parents. However, he is not aware about the learning achievement of their students and linguistic ability. This demonstrates the importance of mother tongue education in fostering a positive relationship between the student and the school, as it can provide a sense of comfort and relief to the child from the psychological distress of poor performance in the classroom, as they are able to express their thoughts in their native language with ease. Furthermore, the increase in the students' population is not sufficient to achieve this. The center of all these factors shaping the EMI policy in Nepal's remains neoliberal logic. This custom is fully connected with globalized society that parents of children in community schools want their children so far as the parents of children with private English medium schools as a fashion.

Teachers and Students Face Challenges with EMI

Most of the teachers in community schools are using Grammar Translation method. Giri (2011) mentions that the proficiency of English language teachers is always questioned in community schools. Pennycook (1989) and Phillipson (1993) add, "Language teaching is an integral part of life, and that all teaching methods and materials are imbued with the ideologies of their originators. Durga, the mathematics teacher put her opinion:

It is really quite difficult for all the teachers because we have to learn English ourselves first before we go to class. Before we used to teach in Nepali. Now the course books are in English. It is difficult for me to teach in English because I don't have habit of speaking in English. (4 June 2023)

The science teacher, Hari Kala added "This English medium instruction for teaching science has become a hectic job for me. Firstly, I have no good English myself. The course is given in English and school administration forced us to teach in English. But I explain the textbook in Nepali for students' convenience." (4 June 2023)

The above expressions reveals that due to lack of English proficiency of the teachers, it is the biggest challenge to community-based schools to implement the EMI properly. It shows that the teachers are to be well trained to teach in English and use various pedagogical ideas in classroom practices. If the English teachers teach any subject in English medium who do not have appropriate proficiency to explain concepts in an understandable way obviously brings an unpleasant situation among the learners.

Likewise the next teacher, Binod teaching Health for 9 years further shared, "Firstly, I go to the classroom being fully prepared but my students do not understand. Many things I have to tell them in Nepali to make clear. In fact, I have

no proper ideas about teaching social using English language.” (6 June 2023)

The above data presented by the respondents reveal that the English language itself has become a great burden to the teachers as they have no competency in English language. The teachers themselves have no good English language and unable to use it properly. Giri (2011) believes that the largest issue community schools face in implementing EMI policy is teachers’ lack of English language competency. Almost all the teachers had problems of teaching course book in English because they had difficulties of understanding English themselves. In regard to this, Sah and Li (2018) say that implementing EMI without proper preparation result in negative outcomes: students neither achieve content knowledge nor English language skills. It vividly portraits that lack of proficiency of English language has become another great challenges to the teachers themselves. We can imagine that if a teacher does not have good English proficiency, how he/she can use English instruction for classroom delivery. They explain the text into Nepali as well. The outcome was that the students did not acquire the necessary knowledge of content or English language proficiency. Sah (2015) mentions that the MOE is facing a significant challenge of EMI in order to guarantee that all teachers possess a high level of proficiency in English language. Teachers are found not getting much exposure of training on English medium instruction’s for classroom delivery which has become another great stressful job to most of the teachers in community schools where the EMI is adopted.

Reetu, a student studying in grade IX shared her opinion, “I feel much difficult to perceive the language used by the teachers in the classroom. Teachers do not teach using materials and activities in the classroom” The next student, Bibas studying in grade VIII said, “I don’t understand the way of teaching by the teachers. They only read the text themselves. They use dictation only in the class”. (6 June 2023)

This above data presents that the students are having an unfavorable situation due to poor performance and not having commanding over of English language of teachers. Sah and Li (2018) contend that the school has adopted their own EMI practice, combining English and Nepali as the medium of instruction due to the inadequate competence of their teachers and pupils. In a setting where Nepali medium instruction is widely considered to be weak and has not been successful in producing satisfactory outcomes, the utilization of a foreign language as a language of instruction can further exacerbate the disparities in the educational experience of both students and teachers (Baral, 2015).

From the above themes as the evidences or the findings of the study, it is found that the participants, expressed their ground reality and we can imagine that

it is challenging for non-English courses to be taught using English as a medium (EMI) by teachers who lack the necessary English language proficiency. Especially the school management committee and the school administrators agreed that the EMI can promote learners to be able like the private English medium school's students. In most of the cases, the language was reported as a major challenge taken both by the teachers and the students. They are facing many challenges like they do not have good English language, nobody has received the adequate training of EMI for classroom practice, no idea for the better methodology or classroom teaching techniques etc. The students are being victimized in the name of EMI. Similarly, students express their hidden reality after the EMI practice in their school. They have many problems of understanding the language, teachers teaching skills or textbook. This suggests that the decision to introduce EMI was made by policy makers, the school administration, and the teachers themselves, without any prior preparation on the part of the latter. They just thought that English course book allures the students towards community based schools. It is, in one hand, teachers themselves are not able to teach English course books. On the other hand, students cannot perform well. Therefore, Sah and Karki (2020) state that neoliberalism has become a hidden agenda for the development of EMI since 'English is prioritized as the language of education stemming from the neoliberal ideology of commodification of English education as international, global and quality.

Conclusion

The craze of learning English language is booming in Nepal. In one hand, the parents are sending their children to the private English medium schools for their bright future. On the contrary, the community based schools are reached in such condition that they are not able to run schools until or unless they are not adopting English medium instruction to enroll the students in their schools. Linguistic imperialism is a reality in many contexts worldwide. EMI can be taken it as one phenomenon that has hegemonic role in language throughout the developing countries like Nepal. The adaptation of EMI is a salient feature of globalization, a modern contemporary economic ideology. Neoliberalism has had a direct and indirect influence on the dissemination and utilization of English as the primary language of communication in the context of business, commerce, and various industries. This present study has taken a preliminary glance of EMI as the fast emerging phenomenon in Nepali community based schools and in the globalizing world. In this study, I have tried to gain insight of EMI and its learning difficulties among the teachers and students. It is necessary to review the marketing of Educational Media Initiatives (EMI) in Nepal in order to gain insight into the implementation of these language-integrated education policies at the local level.

The policy makers, school management committee and school administration decided to adopt EMI in the community schools in Nepal without any deep study on their teachers' capacity or their ground reality. In long run, there is another big threat to the education system in Nepal that if EMI is strictly implemented in this way, mother tongue and culture will be lost very soon. Many community-based schools in Nepal have introduced EMI however, they need to adopt EMI only after wider discussion with all the stakeholders. Without proper preparation and prerequisites especially the preparedness of teaching in English implementation of EMI remain ineffective in the classroom context. Therefore, in fact much more investigations and research study required in order to dig out more hidden reality to ensure the best possible outcomes in the future.

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Student Evaluation of Teaching: A Tool for the Assessment of Teaching Learning Practices in Higher Education Institutions

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Abstract

Student Evaluation of Teaching (SET) is a way to evaluate the teaching effectiveness of teachers, and teaching-learning practices based on students' feedback. It is an evaluation of the teachers by students. SET is considered a tool to assess teaching effectiveness mostly in higher education institutions. Globally, universities use SET, especially in taking the decision of tenure and promotion of professors. This article attempts to gather students' responses regarding the teaching performance of their teachers from one of the campuses in Kailali district, Nepal. A survey research design was adopted to collect students' responses. A random sampling method was employed to select undergraduate students from the selected campus. Students were asked to fill out a questionnaire consisting of the statements managed on a 5-point Likert scale. IBM SPSS Statistics 20 was used to manage and visualize the data, and the descriptive parameters were calculated for analysis. The results show that the teaching performance of the teachers was quite good in two categories, viz., management and motivation aspects, whereas the teaching performance in the instruction aspect was only satisfactory. This study shows that teachers need to improve their instructional strategies for the betterment of teaching and learning. The study will motivate other scholars and institutions to initiate the practice of SET for the enhancement of teaching and learning in their respective institutions.

Keywords: Teachers ranking, authentic learning, meaningful teaching, management

Introduction

Students and teachers are at the centre of any education system. They are the key components for the success of any education system. Of course, there are many other factors responsible for establishing effective teaching and learning, but

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the role of students and teachers is very important. For the enhancement of teaching and learning practice, evaluation and assessment are very mandatory. We are all quite familiar with the assessment of students done by teachers, which is common in every school throughout the globe. Students are assessed to certify their grade and qualification, to evaluate their learning achievement, and to improve their learning qualification (Poudel, 2016). However, the practice of teachers' evaluation is not as common as the evaluation of students.

In evaluating the students in the classroom, we used to have certain standards or rubrics. Likewise, to evaluate teachers, there is a need of a certain standard or framework on the basis of which they can be evaluated. Teacher competency can be evaluated in different areas like verbal and communication skills, knowledge of subject matter, classroom management skills, collaboration skills, and so on (Looney, 2011). For maintaining the quality of education, the evaluation and assessment of teachers are very important. Especially in a higher education context, SET is a way to evaluate teachers teaching performance based on the students' ratings. In this type of evaluation, students used to provide questionnaires on a Likert scale to rate their respective teachers (Constantinou & Wijnen-Meijer, 2022).

The practice of SET is not so common in Nepalese higher education institutions. We have observed that teachers' evaluation in higher education institutes used to be done just for the official purpose rather than to provide feedback to the teacher for further improvement. Students are not given the opportunity to provide their feedback, comments, and suggestions to their respective teachers regarding their teaching performance. However, in the global scenario of higher education, SET is a very common practice where teachers' teaching performance used to be evaluated by their students. The practice of teacher's evaluation by university-level students is widespread in the USA and in other developed countries (Byrne, 1992). In foreign universities, student ratings of instruction are taken as one of the major components in the faculty evaluation process. In SET, students used to rate the faculty on a numerical scale (Whitely & Doyle, 1976).

Like the evaluation of students, teachers' evaluation is also an integral component of meaningful teaching and learning. In renowned universities, the common source of input for teachers' evaluation is students' feedback. A rating or score given by students to a teacher can be a necessary source for evaluating the teacher's effectiveness (Husain & Khan, 2016). The feedback received by students may help teachers analyze their own teaching practices. On the basis of students' feedback, teachers can modify their teaching methods. Students' feedback represents the prime tool that is useful in the process of a teacher's evaluation. If the students are allowed to give their feedback in a stress-free environment with appropriate

instruction, feedback can be very effective. Again, if the feedback was collected at regular intervals of time, teaching and learning would be enhanced (Lata et al., 2008).

For effective teaching and learning practices, feedback from the students is a very important requirement. The feedback from the students allows teachers to refine their pedagogical practices. There are various methods to collect students' feedback regarding the teacher's teaching performance. Among the various methods, questionnaires are the dominant method (Huxham et al. 2018). Feedback from students helps teachers plan various teaching activities. Feedback from the students is an important resource for assessing the quality of teaching and learning as well as for improving the quality of teaching and learning. Although student feedback is useful and informative, many teachers and institutions do not take it seriously (Richardson, 2005).

This study tries to explore the teaching effectiveness on campus A of Kailali district, Nepal. Student ratings were used to evaluate the teaching performance of the teachers. This study shows the current status of the teaching and learning practices on the selected campus A, along with some recommendations for further improvement. This study deals with a basic research question: What is the current status of the teaching performance of teachers on Campus A on the basis of students' ratings?

Literature Review

Theoretical Consideration

This study is based on the Student Evaluation of Teaching (SET) approach. This approach is a mechanism to receive feedback from the students regarding the teaching performance of their teachers or faculty. Primarily, SET accepts closed-ended questions managed on a Likert scale (Madichie, 2011). To evaluate faculty performance and their competence, SET is popular worldwide (Tsou, 2020). Apart from just evaluating teaching effectiveness, it is sometimes used for decision-making about hiring, firing, promotion, merit pay, and teaching awards. SET will also help to change faculty's pedagogical practices as per students' demands and needs (Uttl, 2023). The most common use of SET is for the improvement of courses, teaching, and personnel decisions (Oermann et al., 2018). As SET is a kind of feedback provided by students to faculty, it also helps teachers make self-assessments of their teaching practices.

Apart from the positive sides of SET, there is debate about its validity. It must be necessary that students rate the faculty without any bias. So, it is also necessary to do the pilot testing of SET tools to confirm the reliability and validity of SET

(Oermann et al., 2018). To get more reliable responses from students, it is necessary to motivate them and convince them that their ratings will play an important role in enhancing the quality of teaching and learning.

Empirical Review

There have been a significant number of research studies in the area of SET's effectiveness. Arubayi (1987) conducted a study to assess the reliability and validity of student ratings. Several variables, like the gender of raters, class size, mood of students, and rank of the instructor, affect the students rating. He mentioned that student ratings can be used for the purpose of improving instruction. Chen and Hoshower (2003) discussed that student rating of instruction is common practice to evaluate teacher effectiveness in most universities and colleges. They mention that SETs are commonly used to provide feedback to teachers for the purpose of improving their pedagogy. SETs are also used for promotion and other administrative decisions.

Regarding teacher evaluation, Aliasgharpour et al. (2010) conducted a study to compare teachers and students perspectives to analyze teacher evaluation by students. Their sample consists of 95 teachers and 379 students. Two separate questionnaires were used to collect the viewpoints of teachers and students. They concluded that evaluation by students is important for the teacher's performance.

Likewise, Miller and Seldin (2014) conducted a comparative study to assess modern evaluation methodologies in the United States. They compared the data from 2000 and 2010. They discovered that the practice of students rating the professors increased significantly in 2010, and the SET is used in more than 90 percent of the colleges examined. Moreover, SET is taken as a primary source of classroom instructional information. According to their findings, nearly all deans agreed that classroom instruction was an inseparable component of evaluating university professors.

As far as the feedback from students concerns, LaFee (2014) mentioned that as students spend more time with teachers, they are in a better position to judge the teachers. Students actually know what works well for them and what does not, and as students are the heart of the education system, feedback has to be taken from the students for the betterment of learning. Also, Chan et al. (2014) found that many universities in Hong Kong mainly rely on SET to evaluate the teaching effectiveness of teachers, and teachers pay rise and tenure are decided on the basis of performance in SET. Their findings suggest that students, teachers, and stakeholders all need to understand the purpose and use of SET. Likewise, Husain and Khan (2016) conducted a study to explore ways to improve the quality of teaching based

on students' feedback in a medical college. They found that students' feedback is an effective tool for the teacher's evaluation.

Stroebe (2020) recommended that SETs are not sufficient indicators of teaching effectiveness, so it should not be utilized by university heads to evaluate teachers' efficiency. Instead of utilizing SET, administrators can ask the teachers to create teaching portfolios in which they describe the courses, textbooks, and assessment procedures in depth. Aside from that, SET information should be given to teachers so that they do not feel pressure to achieve a high SET score. SETs attempt to provide information to the institution regarding how students take the teaching, allowing them to improve the institution. If teachers are evaluated on the basis of SET, teachers will try to get a high SET score, which may result in students dominating over teachers. Similarly, Sanchez et al. (2020) conducted a study to find a relationship between SET and academic achievement in higher education. They found a small to medium correlation between SET and students achievement. They claimed that the use of SET to evaluate teachers' effectiveness for the purpose of administrative decisions remains controversial.

Moreover, the study by Kreitzer and Sweet-Cushman (2021) recommended contextualizing students' evaluation of teachers as a student's perception rather than measuring teachers' actual teaching. They also suggested being aware of the validity of SET, and the administration should try to enhance the response rate from the students. They recommended that to evaluate teachers' performance, administrators should not solely rely on students ratings. Until a reliable, feasible, and authentic method for evaluating teachers is established, more caution should be taken when using the SET report for teachers' evaluation.

The literature discussed above implies that SET plays an important role in understanding the general overview of teaching and learning practices in any institution. It also gives a way out for the betterment of teaching and learning practices in the institution. However, in the context of Nepal, the practice of SET is very rare. This study attempts to provide a SET report for one of the campuses in Kailali district along with recommendations.

Methods and Procedures

This study followed a quantitative survey research design. Undergraduate-level students from a selected campus were taken as the population of the study. A random sampling method was employed to choose students. 279 students were selected from a total of 1000 students studying at the undergraduate level by taking reference to Krejcie and Morgan (1970). To ensure the participation of all students, it was attempted to cover students from all streams. To collect the students' feedback,

they were asked to fill out a questionnaire. A questionnaire consists of a total of sixteen statements, which were grouped into three categories: the management aspect, the instruction aspect, and the motivation aspect. The questionnaire was designed on a 5-point Likert scale. The Likert scale chosen for this study was 5-strongly agree, 4-agree, 3-neutral, 2-disagree, and 1-strongly disagree.

It was tried to collect the overall effectiveness of teachers and the effectiveness of the teaching process. Mainly, it was intended to collect students' responses about various abilities of teachers, like content knowledge, content delivery, pedagogical practice, communication skills, and assessment techniques. After collecting all the responses from students, the data were uploaded to the IBM SPSS Statistics 20 version. For the analysis, we used descriptive statistics, and for the visuals and graphics, we plotted bar diagrams.

Results

In this section, the major findings of the research are presented.

Management Aspect

This part discusses the managerial aspect of the teachers on the basis of student feedback. The management aspect basically covers a teacher's management ability, like completing a course in the prescribed time, organizing the classroom, being prepared by teachers before entering the classroom, etc. All the statements about the management aspect are shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1

Students Evaluation on the Managerial Ability of Teachers

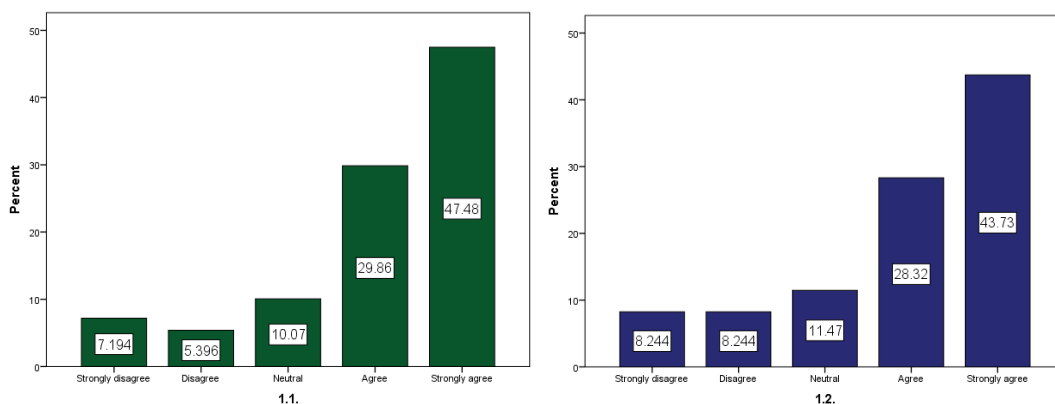
Statements	Number of responses	Mean	Std. Deviation
1.1. The teacher completes the entire syllabus in time	278	4.05	1.201
1.2. The teacher is well organized, systematic and have good command on the subject matter.	279	3.91	1.273
1.3. The teacher communicates clearly, keeps the classroom disciplined and creates an environment for learning.	274	3.85	1.289

1.4. The teacher is punctual, well prepared and particular about his routine.	278	3.87	1.260
1.5. The teacher uses classroom efficiently and utilizes dedicated hours in a productive manner	272	3.95	1.151

Table 1 shows students responses to the statements about the management aspect of the teachers. The mean score for statement (1.1.) is 4.05, which falls within the level of agreement. This shows teachers used to complete the syllabus in the prescribed time. The responses for the statements (1.2.), (1.3.), (1.4.), and (1.5.) are almost similar to the responses in (1.1.). From the means scores of the respective statements, it seems the teacher's management ability is good because the mean score for all statements is close to 4. So, the teachers of Campus A are well organized, systematic, efficient, punctual, and have a good command over the subject matter.

Figure 1

Visual Representation of Student's Responses for Statements (1.1.) and (1.2.)



From Figure 1 (1.1.), it is seen that 47.48% of students strongly agree and 29.86% agree with this statement. This implies that the majority of the students responded that teachers used to complete the entire syllabus on time.

Figure 1 (1.2.) shows that 43.73% of students strongly agree and 28.32% of students agree with the statement. This shows that the majority of the students agreed that their teachers are systematic in their teaching and have good command over the subject matter.

Figure 2

Visual Representation of Student's Responses for Statements (1.3.) and (1.4.)

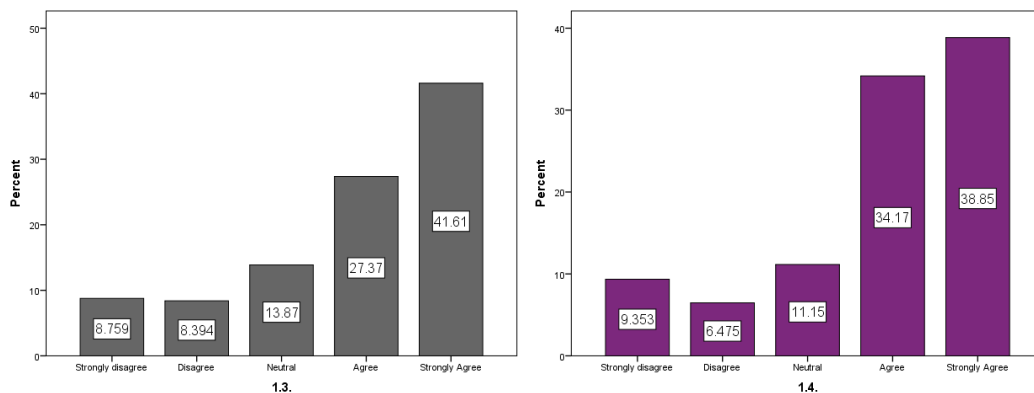


Figure 2 (1.3.) shows that 41.61% of students strongly agree and 27.37% of students agree with the statement (1.3.). This implies the teacher's communication skills and maintenance of discipline in the classroom are very good.

Likewise, in response statement (1.4.), 38.85% strongly agree and 34.17% agree. This indicates that teachers are punctual and well prepared in the classroom. For both statements (1.3.) and (1.4.), the majority of the students show their agreement.

Figure 3

Visual Representation of Student's Responses for Statement (1.5.)

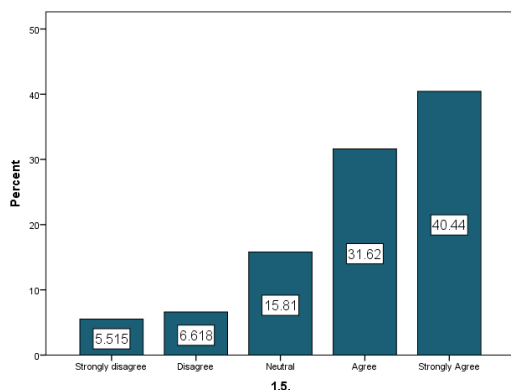


Figure 3 (1.5.) shows that 40.44% strongly agree and 31.62% agree with the statement (1.5.). This suggests that the majority of the students' support is that their teacher used the classroom efficiently and utilized dedicated hours in an effective

manner.

In summary, for the management category, the majority of the students show their agreement with the statement. This indicates the teacher's management skills are good. A small percentage of students disagreed with the statements, so some strategies have to be implemented to make teaching and learning more effective.

Instruction Aspect

In this category, teachers' pedagogical skills are mostly assessed on the basis of student responses. This category consists of six statements that try to capture various pedagogical techniques employed by the teachers in the classroom from the perspectives of students.

Table 2

Students Evaluation on the Instruction Aspect of Teachers

Statements	Number of responses	Mean	Std. Deviation
2.1. The teacher gives lecture, allows students to make presentation, engages them in discussion and group work and synthesized the concepts to clarify subject matter and makes the use of different activities to teach.	276	3.56	1.212
2.2. The teacher gives the tests and assignments as fixed in the work plan and corrects the assignments in time and returns to me with grade to help me understand my position in the class.	278	3.29	1.329
2.3. The teacher uses work plan, teaching aids, hands out, gives suitable references, makes presentations and conducts seminars/tutorials etc.	276	3.32	1.285
2.4. The teacher gives quizzes, group and individual works, writing tasks, tests and assignments to evaluate my performance.	271	3.28	1.288

2.5. The teacher explains the material clearly in ways that are easy to understand offers alternative explanations or additional examples and clears up confusion.	275	3.80	1.333
2.6. The evaluation process by teacher is reasonable, fair and credible.	271	3.60	1.209

Table 2 shows that the mean scores for all statements range from 3.28 to 3.80. This falls into the category of average. As few responses have scores greater than 3.50, we can say the responses are more than average. This category shows a satisfactory level of students' responses.

Figure 4

Visual Representation of Student's Responses for Statements (2.1.) and (2.2.)

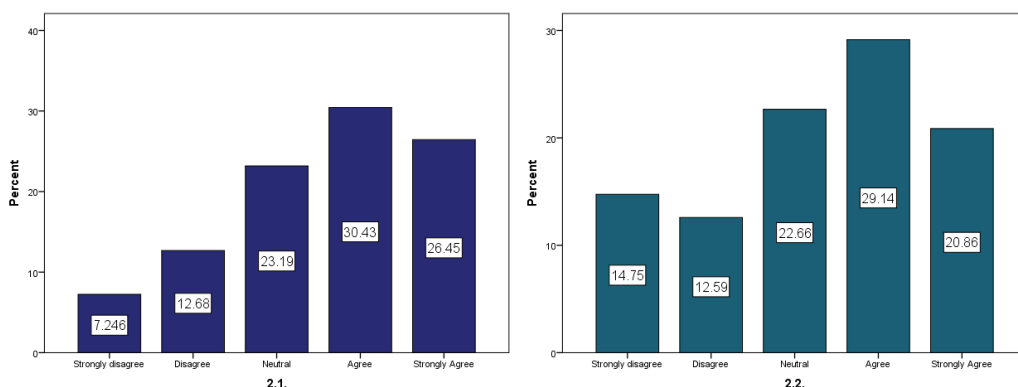


Figure 4 (2.1.) shows that 26.45% strongly agree and 30.43% agree with the statement (2.1.). This shows how teachers used to engage students in various teaching and learning activities. Teachers used to ask students to make presentations, engage them in group work, and try to clarify the concepts.

Likewise Figure 4 (2.2.) shows that 20.86% of students strongly agree and 29.14% of students agree with the statement (2.2.). This represents how teachers used to take the test and assignment at the time, as mentioned in the work plan. The responses to statement (2.2.) fall at a satisfactory level but are not good.

Figure 5

Visual Representation of Student's Responses for Statement (2.3.) and (2.4.)

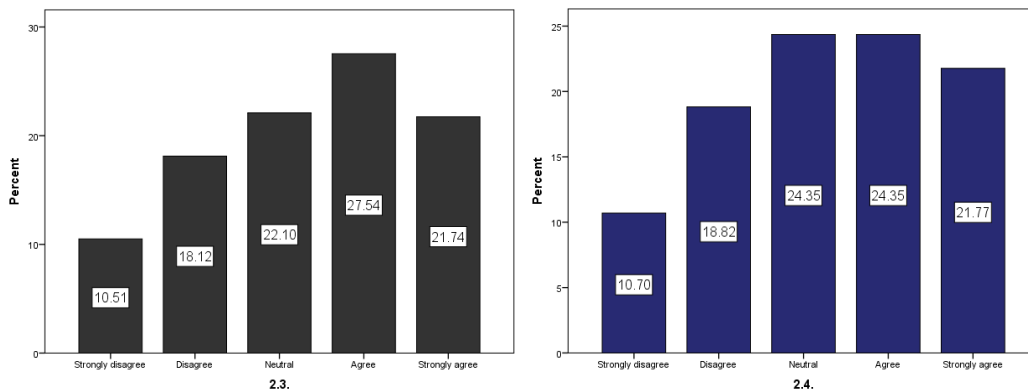


Figure 5 shows the students responses to statements (2.3.) and (2.4.). From Figure 5 (2.3.), it is seen that 21.74% of students strongly agree, 27.54% agree, and 22.10% of students remain neutral with the statement (2.3.). The responses are not very streamlined in this case, so it is difficult to judge. However, the majority of students expressed their agreement with the statement. We can take it as satisfactory, but as the disagreement percentage is high, teachers need to be aware of that. As a mixed type of response came, it can be predicted that there are some issues regarding the work plan, teaching aids, and handouts prepared by teachers. It shows that teachers should be updated with work plans and other teaching materials.

The responses to the statement (2.4.) are shown in Figure 5. Like statement (2.3.), in this case also responses are mixed in nature. The responses are distributed across all the categories. In the statement (2.4.), 21.77% of students strongly agree and 24.35% agree with the statement. If we combine strongly agree and agree responses together, nearly 50% of the responses are in agreement. This also shows a satisfactory level of response from the students.

Figure 6

Visual Representation of Student's Responses for Statement (2.5.) and (2.6.)

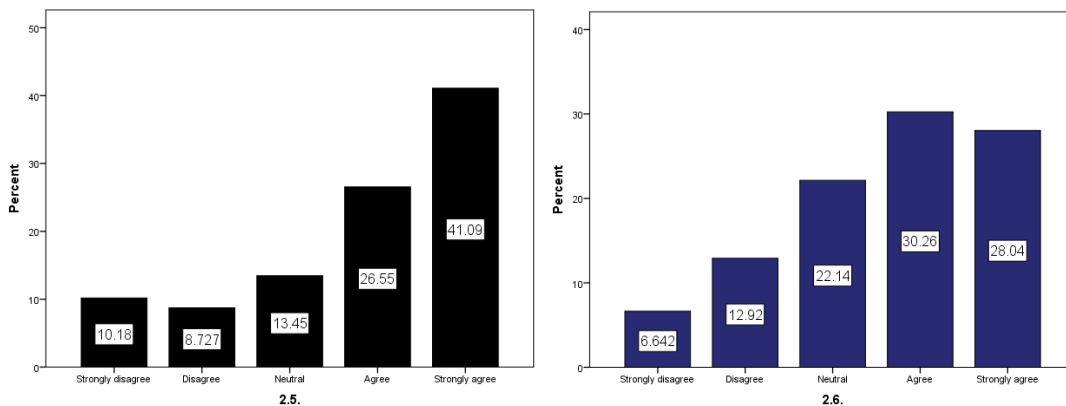


Figure 6 (2.5.) shows the student's responses to the statement (2.5.). According to this statement, 41.09% of students strongly agree, and 26.55% agree. This is a very good sign. This indicates that the majority of the students agree that the teacher explains the materials clearly and in an understandable manner and tries to clear up their confusion.

Figure 6 (2.6.) shows the student's responses to the statement (2.6.). For this statement, 28.04% strongly agree, and 30.26% of students agree. This shows that the evaluation done by teachers was reasonable, fair, and credible. However, as few students disagree with the statements, some efforts are needed for a more realistic evaluation process.

Motivation Aspect

This aspect tries to cover teachers' motivation levels towards teaching and their students. This aspect tries to evaluate the teacher's motivational ability.

Table 3

Students Evaluation on the Motivation Aspect of Teachers

Statements	Number of responses	Mean	Std. Deviation
3.1. The teacher challenges my abilities as a student, impels me to set aside additional study time for preparation.	278	3.59	1.139

3.2. The teacher encourages me to ask questions, to participate in discussions and other class activities.	279	3.57	1.224
3.3. The teacher encourages me and provides constructive criticism without looking down on me.	278	3.55	1.241
3.4. The teacher gives me the time outside the class time, responds to my questions and helps me in academic matters.	278	3.65	1.253
3.5. The teacher is approachable and ready to support the students.	274	4.03	1.273

Table 3 reflects the teacher's motivational aspect toward their profession on the basis of the students' responses. The mean rating for this category is more than 3.50. This falls above a satisfactory level. This shows teachers' ability to motivate their students is more than average.

Figure 7

Visual Representation of Student's Responses for Statement (3.1.) and (3.2.)

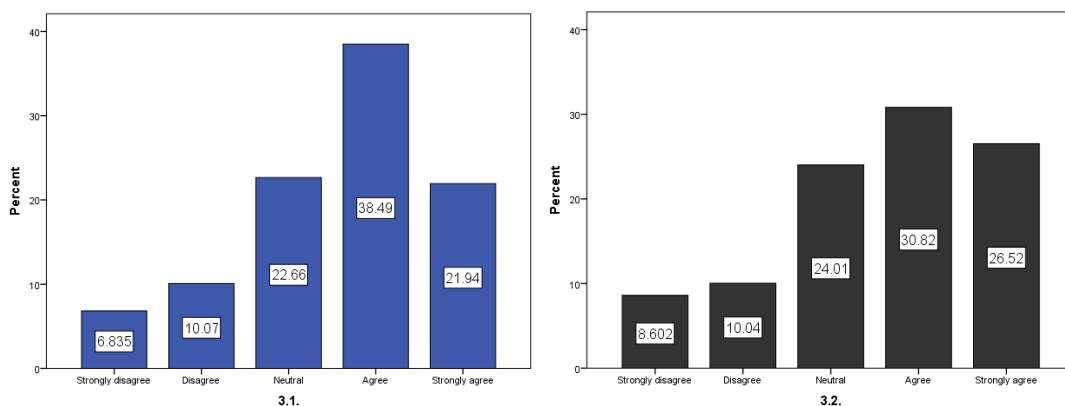


Figure 7 (3.1.) shows students responses to the statement (3.1.). From the figure, it is seen that 21.94% strongly agree and 38.49% agree with the statement (3.1.). This shows that the majority of students accept that their teachers try to challenge their abilities. A teacher tries to motivate students so that they can think outside the box and start to become critical.

Likewise, Figure 7 (3.2.) shows students responses to the statement (3.2.). For this statement, 26.52% strongly agree and 30.82% agree with the statement. This also shows that the majority of the students are convinced that the teacher is approachable and ready to support them. This shows that the majority of teachers used to show their readiness to support their students.

Figure 8

Visual Representation of Student's Responses for Statement (3.3.) and (3.4.)

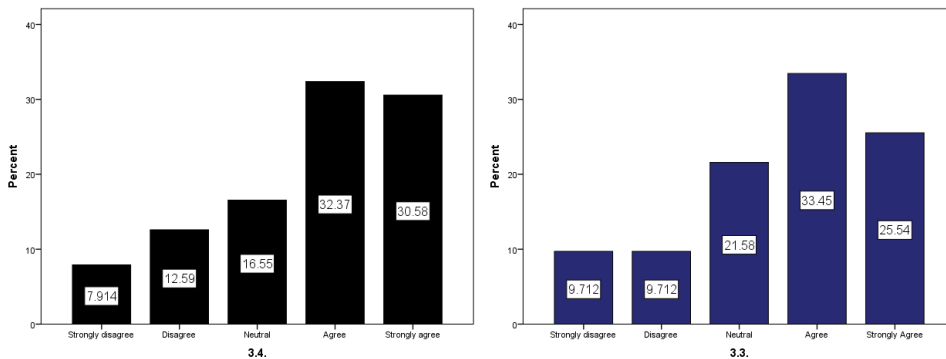


Figure 8 (3.3.) shows the student's responses to the statement (3.3.). To this statement, 25.54% strongly agree and 33.45% agree. This also shows that the majority of students believe that teachers encourage their students and use constructivist criticism.

Figure 8 (3.4) shows the student's responses to the statement (3.4.). According to this statement, 30.58% strongly agree and 32.37% agree. It is seen from the figure that the majority of students agreed that their teacher used to give extra time for the needed support. This also shows teachers' willingness to support their students for effective learning.

Figure 9

Visual Representation of Student's Responses for Statement (3.5.)

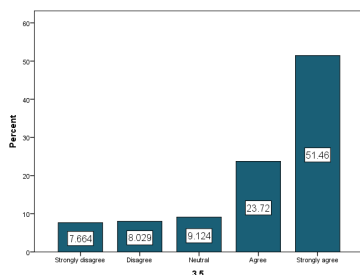


Figure 9 (3.5) is the graphical representation for the statement (3.5.). This shows that 51.46% of students strongly agree and 23.72% of students agree with the statement. This shows a large number of teachers are easily approachable for their students, and teachers are ready to support their students.

Discussion

SET is an important approach to collecting students' views regarding their teacher's performance. It is a highly popular practice in US universities and in other renowned universities around the world (Chen & Hoshower, 2003). In this study, we found that on Campus A, the teaching performance of teachers is satisfactory. The mean scores for the management and motivation aspects are close to 4.00, so we can say that the teacher's management and motivation abilities are good. However, the instruction aspect has a mean score of around 3.50, which is less than the previous two categories. This indicates some efforts have to be made to enhance instruction abilities. As per student responses, we found that teachers are lacking in maintaining work plans, managing tests and assignments, and providing learning materials. Teachers need to work on these areas for the improvement of teaching and learning.

In this study, we are making decisions just on the basis of student responses. However, SET has considerable controversy and criticism from the perspective of reliability and validity (Chan et al., 2014). This indicates that instead of solely depending on SET information, we also need to cross-check the data from other means. Several variables affect ratings by students during the teacher's evaluation, so we need to be cautious about the SETs information. In this study too, students were highly motivated to fill questionnaire without bias. For Campus A, this study provides teachers effectiveness to some extent. As per Chan et al. (2014), we also should not have to completely rely on the SETs ratings of this study. In some of the statements, a significant percentage of students marked neutral. Why students rate 3 (neutral/average) to statements? This is a little bit of confusion.

We need to take SET scores as a means to improve teaching and learning activities. It can be good to implement the practice of SET in higher education institutions in Nepal. From SET information, at least we may be able to compile students' opinions, their views, their likes, their dislikes, and their interests. The SETs score can be utilized by teachers, university chairpersons, curriculum developers, and other stakeholders. The frequent collection of students' feedback can be helpful in designing curriculum and assessment policies.

Conclusion

In this work, we have presented SET findings from one of the campuses of

the Kailali district. Looking at the overall responses to the survey, we conclude that the teaching effectiveness on campus A is satisfactory. The mean ratings given by students to the teaching performance are above 3.50 up to 4.00, which indicates the teaching-learning practice is good on campus. However, in the statement regarding the instruction aspect, the ratings by students were a little low in comparison to the rest of the other statements. This study suggests that faculties on campus A need to put some extra effort into the instruction aspect. More specifically, we would like to recommend that teachers be more serious and punctual in providing work plans, handouts, PowerPoint presentations, and other study materials to their students for more effective learning among students. In this study, we brought up only general practices of teaching and learning based on students' ratings. This type of study can be extended by analyzing individual teachers' performance, and some comparative studies can also be performed.

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Professional Development Programmes: Practices and Impacts

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Abstract

Professional programmes like trainings, workshops, symposiums, conclaves, conferences, and similar development opportunities play a significant role in enhancing faculty professional skills and ultimately nurturing quality ecology within an institution. This study attempted to analyze the practice of such programmes during the last five years at J S Campus Lahan, Siraha, how they have been practically prioritized by the faculty members and this institution, and what impacts are being observed so far. It applied the mixed research design and the sample of study included faculty members, RMC coordinator, and Heads of the institution. The data from them were collected through interview and questionnaire, and also from the RMC/administrative records about the programme practice and the graduate products. The analysis was developed discussing the nature of the programmes, their occurrences, participation of the faculty, and the impacts on the faculty performance and the institution as well. The results showed that such programme practice was good but its products revealed the worst, an action to be considered soon. Finally, some initiatives are recommended for healing such a bizarre research scenario with this leading institution of Madhesh Province.

Keywords: JS Campus, professional programmes, nurturing quality, faculty members

Introduction

Professional development activities expose teachers to current research, trends, and best practices in education. They can learn about the latest educational theories, subject-specific contents, and pedagogical approaches. This knowledge helps them stay up-to-date and ensures they are using evidence-based practices in their teaching. Hoque et al. (2011) argues, ‘Professional development (PD) means



continually process of learning to enrich and enhance oneself at any institution. In this sense, teachers' professional development means increasing teaching technique, broadening subject knowledge, creating responsibility and commitment with gathering latest information." Darling and Richardson (2009) also supports that such a development in teachers' learning would help improve education system in general. Through self-reflection and discussions with colleagues, teachers can critically analyze their practices, identify areas for improvement, and develop action plans for professional growth. Such activities provide opportunities for teachers to collaborate with other educators. Sharing experiences, ideas, and challenges with colleagues from different schools or districts can be highly beneficial. Collaborative environments foster the exchange of knowledge, innovative practices, and mutual support, creating a professional network that teachers can tap into throughout their careers. Bhandari (2021, p. 79) states "Professional activities are inevitable to prepare abler and competent teachers making their teaching career better and efficient".

The faculty members/teachers of the post-era are supposed not only to teach, but also to engage learners, change themselves with the changes, absorb new discoveries from different opportunities and sources of knowledge. It is now the policy of an Institution to regulate incentives as well as opportunities for its faculty members to invest on their abilities to help create and sustain a learning focused culture. Universities ought to carry out the restructuring of their faculty workload policies to put emphasis on learning which is regarded as the valued outcome of the Institution. Professional programmes such as trainings, workshops, symposiums, conclaves, conferences, and similar development opportunities play a significant role in enhancing faculty members' professional skills and advancing their careers for their appropriate performances in their respective fields. Teachers' professional development opportunities mainly focuses on teachers' learning; learning how to learn, and transforming their knowledge into classroom practices (Avalos, 2011) and taking place in both informal and formal contexts (Ball & Cohen, 1999). Joshi et al. (2018, p. 54) states "Informal learning constitutes self-practice, reflecting on one's own performance, interacting with colleagues, seeking answers to emerging issues, and reading to keep one-self up-to-date. Formal learning involves pursuing higher education, undertaking teacher training courses, attending workshops, seminars and conferences". Such sessions/programmes/interactions provide teachers/professionals with the opportunity to learn new teaching/learning strategies, instructional techniques, and the latest educational methodologies. They can acquire practical skills and knowledge that they can apply directly in their classrooms to improve students' learning outcomes.

By investing in the professional development programmes that teachers/faculty members demonstrate a commitment to continuous learning, which positively impacts their motivation and overall effectiveness as educators (Saleem et al. 2021). Participating in professional training and workshops may lead to formal certifications, qualifications, or credentials that recognize teachers' expertise in specific areas. These credentials can enhance their professional profile, open doors to new career opportunities, and facilitate advancement within the educational system. Such opportunities expose teachers to innovative teaching methodologies and emerging technologies. They learn about the latest tools, resources, and instructional techniques that can engage students and enhance learning outcomes. By staying abreast of advancements in education, teachers can adapt their teaching practices to meet the evolving needs of their students. Joshi et al. (2018, p. 59) further discusses "Teachers' professional associations also contribute partly to teachers' PD activities. For instance; in the context of EFL teachers, the Nepal English Language Teachers' Association (NELTA) is an important organisation to support EFL teachers' PD." In Nepalese context, NELTA really has been a common platform for English professionals to empower themselves to tailor their teaching-learning activities to address specific student needs and improve overall learning outcomes.

Similarly, Panthee (2019) states that professional development programmes foster a culture of lifelong learning among teachers. By engaging in continuous professional growth, educators model the importance of learning to their students. They become lifelong learners themselves, seeking out new knowledge, trends, and research in education. This mindset of continuous learning enhances their professional competence and adaptability in an ever-changing educational landscape. They can acquire the knowledge and abilities necessary to take on leadership roles within their schools or districts, such as mentorship, curriculum development, or instructional coaching. Training on educational software, digital resources, and online teaching platforms equips teachers to deliver more engaging and interactive lessons.

Very importantly, at present, teacher well-being is crucial for sustained effectiveness in the classroom. Some professional development sessions focus on stress management, mindfulness, and strategies to prevent burnout, promoting a healthy work-life balance. Similarly, professional development activities also keep teachers informed about changes in educational policies, curriculum standards, and the latest educational trends. Understanding these developments helps teachers align their teaching practices with broader educational goals and priorities.

Majed et al. (2017, p. 122) states that training programmes for teachers/faculty do not end after qualifying, rather continue and are lifelong processes, as

they offer them the chance to develop and update their knowledge, whether on a particular subject, or an area. Notably, good teachers always seek activities that help them in their professional development. Moreover, training is important for a faculty's curriculum vitae that he or she can show an interest in maintaining subject knowledge and extending skills. Continuous professional development through trainings introduces new methodologies and instructional technologies. Nasreen and Mirza (2012, p. 229) view that institutions of higher education must develop a sustained long term faculty development strategy to enable their valuable human resources to work effectively and accomplish the organizational goals that are necessary to survive in the rapidly changing environment of higher education. Along with such programmes, higher institutions often organize career fairs where students can interact with potential employers, explore job opportunities, and learn about industry requirements. Additionally, career counseling and job placement services are provided to support students in their career development.

In general, teachers' Professional Development strategies/programmes can be classified into four different themes: self-initiated, peer-supported, study (research)-focused, and profession-related (Giri, 2015).



Based on Richards and Farrell (2005) as stated in Joshi et al. (2018, pp. 55-56), the self-initiated or self-directed PD strategies are those set of self-developmental efforts in which a teacher adopts responsibility for setting goals to manage and control his/her own learning, the peer supported approach is a learning methodology where group-oriented activities with shared goals and responsibilities are performed, the study (research)-focused developmental strategies aim to systematically carry out research that translates into learning practices, and profession-related strategies are generally institutional in-service or job-embedded learning approaches such as workshops, seminars, conferences, and so on, which are meant for continuing professional growth of an individual teacher as well as an institution. Joshi et al. (2018) found:

Despite some positive efforts of the government of Nepal to increase the number of teachers receiving PD trainings, the effectiveness of these trainings in classroom teaching was found to be low (Ministry of Education, 2013). As a continuation of the SSRP, the second phase of the SSRP (SSRP, 2016–2023)

has been recently launched to further strengthen quality school education through improved school-based teachers' PD (Ministry of Education, 2016). Therefore, a long-term implementation of SSRPs is believed to have some positive impacts on the school education system in Nepal through improved teachers' PD programmes. (p. 59)

Many higher institutions in Nepal have collaborations with industries and organizations, allowing students to participate in internships or industrial training programmes. These experiences provide students with hands-on exposure to real-world work environments and help them develop practical skills. Nepalese higher institutions encourage students and faculty members to engage in research activities and publish their findings. This practice helps them develop critical thinking, analytical skills, and a deeper understanding of their field of study. Pokhrel and Behera (2016) claimed teachers' professional development has been realized as a powerful approach to implement child friendly activity-based education in the 21st century.

Thus, professional training, workshops, and similar development opportunities offer numerous benefits to teachers. They enhance their skills, expand their knowledge, foster reflection and collaboration, support personal growth, enable career advancement, promote innovation, improve classroom management, enhance assessment practices, cultivate lifelong learning, and develop leadership abilities. Investing in teachers' professional development is crucial for ensuring high-quality education and positive student outcomes. Organizing training in the form of seminars, workshops, conclaves, lectures, peer observations, and conferences in higher education is necessary to expose faculty members to the modern trends and enhance managerial and administrative skills.

Literature Review

Hoque et al. (2011) describe the teachers' professional development activities in Bangladesh and explores the hypotheses about the relationship between teachers' traditional professional development activities and school improvement and found significant impacts of some of teachers' professional development activities on school improvement. Nasreen and Mirza (2012) carried out the study on current practices of faculty training and development in the old and new public sector universities of Punjab, Pakistan analyzing the current practices of faculty development (FD) and training in old and new universities of Punjab. The results showed that training programmes were more instrumental in improving teachers' skills and attitudes in old universities as compared with that in new universities. Shah (2015) completed his study on Nepalese EFL teachers' professional development:

present practices, realities and looking forward and found that some external or non-governmental organizations, such as British Council Nepal, American Embassy, and Rural Education and Environment Development Centre, etc. contribute to EFL teachers' professional development programmes. Majed et al. (2017) investigates the prospects of promoting training programmes for faculty members in Saudi universities by presenting a comparison of qualitative data between the efforts of two major American universities, trying to display how these universities endeavor to meet the current teaching and learning needs, and found that the two American universities are coming up with skills training programmes that are deemed to be appropriate, including: conferences and workshops, faculty member orientations, consulting, instructional support, online training, discussion forums, family-led discussions, junior faculty training, and summer training. Joshi et al. (2018) found that the participants' experience PD strategies based on their personal experiences and knowledge. The findings of this study also indicated that Nepalese EFL teachers have positive experience towards different PD strategies. Profession-related PD activities such as workshops, seminars and conferences have been very popular approach to PD. Similar findings have been reported while surveying secondary school EFL teachers in other region of Nepal (Bharati & Chalise, 2017). The work also found that there is no mandatory provision of PD for higher secondary/college level EFL teachers in Nepal. The teachers, therefore, seem to be largely unaware of the potential use of many of the PD activities. In Nepal, a small survey found that a majority of EFL teacher seem to lack institutional support for their PD (Shah, 2015). Moreover, Bhandari (2021) revealed that the English language teachers were found attending conferences, trainings and workshop seminars, engaging in action research and academic writing for their professional development. However, poor internet access, lack of regular professional trainings and collaborative culture among them were the major challenges in teachers' professional development.

Even though 21st century professional skill training programmes are very critical for faculty members, most institutions of higher learning have not prioritized programmes that would make faculty members fit well in the changed learning environments. In reality, generally many academic staff members are yet to get actively involved and participated in professional development programmes as a result of some challenges. This situation which is also found in this Institution calls for redress considering as a critical issue to be addressed well for its betterment dynamically. Thus, ignoring professional programmemes is the problem with almost all higher institutions of the Madhesh Province creating a gap which this study intends to cover.

The study thus attempted to analyze the practices of professional development programmes during last five years of J S Murarka Multiple Campus Lahan, Siraha, Nepal (a community based Institution) focusing on how they have been practically prioritized by the faculty members and the Institution and what impacts are being observed so far for nurturing its quality.

Methods and Procedures

The study was based on the mixed research design and the participants were all the faculty members of JS Campus, its administrative heads, and RMC Coordinator selected using purposive non-random sampling procedure. The semi-structure interview and the questionnaire were used for collecting the data from the participants. Similarly, the secondary sources including the campus records maintained in the RMC and the administration section were also used. The researcher also consulted the faculty members individually for gathering information about their programme participation, presentation and publication. The collected data were analyzed using different tables along with their thematic analysis.

Results and Discussion

The study was carried out with due focus on the information about the Institution policy developed by its Research Management Cell for professional programmes, the faculty members' working experiences, their active participations in such activities, their research based publications, their study based research, the administrative body attitudes towards the programme mechanism, and ultimately how this scenario has affected the graduation rate during the last five years in the institution.

Table1

Number of Faculty Working at Present and their Experiences

SN	Faculty number	Service type	Experience year					Last degree
			1-5	5-10	11-15	16-20	20-	
1.	1	Permanent						PhD
2.	6	Permanent						Master
3.	2	Permanent						PhD
4.	2	Permanent						Master
5.	7	Permanent						Master
6.	1	Permanent						Master
7.	1	Contract						Master
8.	3	Contract						Master

9.	1	Contract						Master
10.	1	Part time						Master
11.	8	Part time						Master

Tracer Study Report (2021) claims that J S Murarka Multiple Campus Lahan as stated earlier is a pioneer educational Institution dedicated to uplifting the quality of education in this area. This Institution has been led by 33 academic leaders of having different year experiences, i.e., from 1-5 to even more than 20 years. The data show that 7 faculty members have been serving here for more than 20 years, 4 having 18-20 years, 8 with 11-15, 5 for more than five years and 8 are only of less than five years. This indicates obviously that the Institution has good experienced team members for leading teaching-learning activities. Similarly, regarding the academic qualifications of the faculty, the data shows 3 faculty members are holding PhD degree and the rest of others, i.e., 30 faculty members are with the Master degree from different universities. Since the Institution is of 36 years old, two faculty members got retired from their service, 19 academicians are with permanent service type, 5 are of the contract nature and 9 are recruited as part time faculty members.

Table 2

Professional Development Programmes during Last Five Years

SN	Name	Title	Date	Expected participants	Faculty participated
1.	Symposium	Discussion on Article Writing	11/02/075	All faculty	16
2.	Seminar	Pure, Applied and Social Sciences	16/04/075	All faculty	11
3.	Workshop	Research Writing and its Importance	06/05/075	All faculty	22
4.	Training	Proposal and Thesis Writing	18/08/075	All faculty	21
5.	Workshop	Advanced Research Methodology	01/12/075	All faculty	17
6.	Training	Thesis writing	31/01/076	20 faculty	7
7.	Programme	Article & Proposal Writing	11/06/076	All faculty	10
8.	Seminar	Applied Linguistics: Current Trends in Nepal	1 1 & 12/09/076	All faculty	12

9.	Workshop	Comprehending Research Article	01/07/077	All faculty	18
10.	Workshop	Sharing Experiences for Experiencing Research Writing Articles	25/09/077	All faculty	13
11.	Workshop	Professional Development of Teaching and Non-teaching Staff	24-25/6/2078	All faculty	15
12.	Seminar	Basic Science Lab Safety Attitudes and Practices	15-17/3/2079	15 faculty	7
13.	Workshop	Research Manuscript Drafting and Publishing	13-14/3/2079	All faculty	13
14.	Symposium	Research Findings Dissemination	21/08/079	All faculty	17

Source: Research Management Cell, J S Murarka Multiple Campus Lahan, Siraha

The Institution has established Research Management Cell for empowering the research culture for the faculty and the students as well and has been organizing different types of research activities/programmes with/without the financial supports of the University Grants Commission, Nepal. Such programmes are trainings, symposiums, workshops, seminars, conclaves and conferences. The data presented in the table 2 shows that RMC has been managing such programmes every year addressing the needs of the time and the courses. As the table shows, in the year 2075, there were 5 research programmes; symposium, seminar, training and two workshops, and in the year 2076, the Institution conducted only 3 activities; 1 training, 1 programme and 1 seminar. However, in the year 2077, it was very less and due to the sudden outbreak of the COVID-19, there were only two programmes; Comprehending Research Article and Sharing Experiences for Experiencing Research Writing Articles. Similarly, in the year (2078), there was only one workshop on the title Professional Development of the Faculty and the Non-teaching staff which was carried out in the blended mode. Finally in the last academic year, i.e., 2079, the RMC organized 3 programmes; 1 seminar, 1 workshop and 1 symposium.

Regarding the faculty participation in the programmes organized during the last five years, the data shows a big difference between the expected faculty participation and their actual participation. Out of the thirty-three faculty members

working till now, even less than 50% faculty members attended the programmes for almost all of them (programmes). Most of the programmes were organized to better the existing condition of the faculty especially for their improvement in the field of research and teaching. As interviewed to the administrative body, the Institution has its own provision to allocate about Rs. 10,00,000/- Rs. 12,00,000/ (Ten to twelve lakhs only) budget for the RMC for organizing research based activities. The amount seems sufficient as 2-4 programmes are generally organized per year and in addition the UGC also supports financially for one seminar/workshop. The participation customary indicates that there still lacks the concept of research culture among the faculty so far, and on the other hand, the Institution also needs to focus on more practical and maximum participatory programmes. So, the Institution has realized the need of the professional productive programmes for the faculty and therefore has good policy about them but with poor practice due to which the entire academic regularities here are observed very out-dated.

Table 3

Faculty Research Articles Published in Journal(s)

SN	Research faculty	Articles	Journal
1.	Binod Kumar Yadav	6	Peer-reviewed
2.	Ram Nath Yadav	4	Peer-reviewed
3.	Jitendra K. Chaudhary	2	Peer-reviewed
4.	Bijaya Laxmi Chy	2	Peer-reviewed
5.	Dilip K. Chaudhary	2	Peer-reviewed
6.	Praveen K. Singh	3	Peer-reviewed
7.	Ram Prabodh Yadav	3	Peer-reviewed
8.	Sachindra K. Singh	2	Peer-reviewed
9.	Bhola BK	3	Peer-reviewed
10.	Mod Narayan Jha	1	Peer-reviewed
11.	NarendraK Chaudhary	1	Peer-reviewed

Based on the journals the RMC has published so far, as well as other publications, and also the conversation with the faculty who involved in writing the research articles, it is obvious that all together only 11 faculty members have got their articles published in the peer-reviewed journals. Among them, one has six publication contributions, one more has four, four have four, three with three and two are of one-one only. Thus, along with the programme presentation, the professionals of this Institution are found to have very low article contributions that also indicate

the professional programmes are less effective and less productive as a whole. The practice of such programmes has good connection with the professional productivity and ultimately for the Institutional products.

Table 4

Faculty Paper Presentation and Participation at Int'l/national programmes

SN	Research faculty	Presentation		Participation	
		National	International	National	International
1.	Binod Kumar Yadav	6	9	22	26
2.	Ram Nath Yadav	2	-	5	5
3.	Jitendra K. Chaudhary	1	2	5	7
4.	Bijaya Laxmi Chy	1	1	4	4
5.	Dilip K. Chaudhary	2	1	5	10
6.	Praveen K. Singh	2	2	3	8
7.	Ram Prabodh Yadav	1	1	8	5
8.	Sachindra K. Singh	2	2	5	4
9.	Bhola BK	1	0	7	2
10.	Mod Narayan Jha	1	0	8	1
11.	NarendraK Chaudhary	1	0	5	2

Similarly, Table 4 shows that these 11 faculty members are having very low experiences except one regarding the paper presentations in national/international programmes. Paper presentation is a pure research based job that needs good practices by the presenters and this certainly strengthens the professionals' performance. Besides, they are also observed that they even are not interested in participating the programmes. The data again shows that they have long teaching experiences but have not practical records of attending such activities. This also indicates that they are working with out-dated practices. Present scenario of any good academic practice demands deliberate involvement of the professionals in research programmes with the aim of mitigating the changes. This is what the institution is lacking.

Table 5

SN	Questions	Attitudes/responses	
		CC	ACC
1.	Are such programmes needed here?	Yes	Yes
2.	Why do you think so?	For quality	For updating all
3.	How do you manage them?	With RMC	With RMC & UGC
4.	How much do you allocate budget for it?	As per RMC	Based on RMC need
5.	Do you promote faculty to attend them?	Yes	Yes, but based on nature
6.	Are they facilitated with proper allowance?	Some extend	Based on RMC policy
7.	Do you think research is most needed now?	Yes, needed	Needed dynamically
8.	Do research experiences get valued here?	Some extent	Yes but getting valued
9.	Do you support faculty for further study?	Yes	Yes
10.	Do you find such activities help learning?	Some extent	Not much more

Table 5 shows that the administrative body over all seems very positive towards the professional programmes because they have also realized their needs at present for the Institutional quality maintenance. As talked to them, the budget for organizing such programmes is allocated as the need and policy of the research operational guidelines of RMC of this Institution. Similarly, they also promote the faculty for participating the programmes for which they are provided the basic allowance as rules and regulations of RMC. Moreover, they also put due focus on the research activities of the faculty and recommend for their academic promotion to some extent in the CMC meetings. There is the provision in the Institution Statute that one faculty can be granted the study leave for MPhil/PhD study with his/her salary as well. All these clearly hint that research activities are being considered well in this Institution since its accreditation. However, the campus chief and the assistant campus chief are not yet satisfied with the outcomes of such activities since they still do find the changes in students' learning due to the changing trends of research programmes in this Institution.

Table 6*Study-based Research Faculty*

SN	Research Faculty	Post	PhD/MPhil	Award year	University
1.	Anil Kumar Jha	Prof.	PhD	2004	LMU, India
2.	Binod Kumar Yadav	Lecturer	PhD	2022	TU, Nepal
3.	Ram Nath Yadav	Lecturer	PhD	2016	LMU, India
4.	Ram Prabodh Yadav	Lecturer	PhD	Incomplete	TU, Nepal
5.	Sachindra K. Singh	Lecturer	PhD	Incomplete	WBU, India
6.	Jitendra K. Chaudhary	Lecturer	MPhil	Incomplete	PU, Nepal
7.	Suman Kumar Sah	Lecturer	MPhil	Incomplete	PU, Nepal

In this Institution, based on the table, there are 3 faculty members holding the PhD degree which indicates these three have been involved in the study research supports for their professional development. However, it is observed that some of them are not contributing as much as the institution expects. Similarly, two of the seven faculty members are in the pursuit of the PhD degree; one from Tribhuvan University, Nepal and another from West Bengal University, India. Finally, two more faculty members are improving their research practices by pursuing the M Phil degree from PU, Nepal. Very remarkably, even the study based research practices are not seen in the Institution till now as very few faculty members are having some kind of growing interest in the professional development.

Table 7*Graduates' Status of Last Five Years of the Institution*

SN	FY	Appeared in Exam	Graduated	Employed	Unemployed	Further study
1.	2017	851	113	27	86	2
2.	2018	990	184	25	159	9
3.	2019	825	140	9	131	15
4.	2020	871	215	36	179	28
5.	2021	1347	88	80	8	5

Source: Annual Reports: 2020; 2021; 2022

The personal and professional development of the graduates has been highly influenced by the higher education they got. After being graduated, some of them got jobs in different sectors. They have also developed their financial position by their profession. They have developed personally, professionally, economically and socially by the higher education they got from this institution (TSR, 2018, p. 20).

The table above shows that there is a vast gap between the students appeared in their exams and the graduates graduated in the years respectively. The four years, i.e. 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2021 had the graduated rates of even less than 20% in this Institution, and it was even less than 10% in the last year (2021) in which out of 1347 appeared students, only 88 students were found to have their graduation. However, in the year 2020, there were 871 students appeared in the exam and 215 graduated that shows approximately 25%. Similarly, the graduates graduated from this Institution were found unemployed far more than employed except the year 2021, and the status of their further study, it was also very poor.

Conclusion

Professional development programmes aim at updating teachers' academic excellence and enabling them perform their experiences addressing the requirements of the students and their Institutions. Regarding J S Murarka Multiple Campus Lahan, the study shows that there is good policy for the mechanism of professional programmes as its Research Management Cell has been provided the full authority for such activities organization. However, the great challenges are observed on the part of the faculty members as they have less interest in participating such activities on the one hand and on the other they are also found to have involved very rarely in research publications which are remarkably noticed for their updating knowledge in learning-teaching. From the administrative body, it is claimed clearly that the Institution has realized the values of research as its budget is allocated based on the RMC operational guidelines every year and also the UGC has been supporting for it. Moreover, the research involved faculty members are also recommended for their academic promotion to the CMC meetings (that has not yet been applied here, as the researcher also being one of its faculty members of this Institution). Over all the practice of research programmes has not been practical here due to the Madhesh Province ecology of research also prevailing with almost all the faculty members of this Institution. Finally the data regarding the product rate of the enrolled students shows also very poor as the pass rate of the last five years is about 25% and the maximum graduates graduated from here are found unemployed yet, which hints the poor impacts of research activities on the part of teaching-learning.

The faculty members should be stimulated to initiate and participate in trainings / seminars/round tables/conclave/conference, etc. based on self-development and encouraged/forced for research publications, and only the research experienced ones are to be recommended for their promotion and extra facilities. RMC should be provided with the good assistance and advice on all the faculty development practices.

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Diversity Management: Critical Pedagogy in Nepalese Education

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Abstract

This article delves into the realm of critical pedagogy, a dynamic educational approach designed to cultivate critical thinking skills among students. It explores the relevance of critical pedagogy emphasizing critical thinking and social justice, aligns seamlessly with managing diversity in classrooms, fostering inclusive environments and empowering students to engage with diverse perspectives. It critically underscores the vital role played by critical pedagogy in effectively managing diversity within educational settings. Drawing from extensive literature and the author's insights, it offers a valuable tool to address the complexities of contemporary classrooms. The article significantly contributes to the ongoing discourse on educational approaches by highlighting the transformative impact of critical pedagogy, advocating for its integration into school curricula, and emphasizing the collaborative roles of both teachers and students. Through this comprehensive exploration, the article positions critical pedagogy as an indispensable framework for fostering inclusive and equitable educational environments in the face of diverse challenges.

Keywords: diversity, transformative, consciousness, critical thinking

Introduction

Critical pedagogy represents a transformative and progressive approach to teaching and learning that has garnered significant attention for its potential to address issues of social justice, equity, and diversity in educational settings. This pedagogical framework challenges traditional teaching methods that often perpetuate existing power structures and inequalities, advocating instead for a more inclusive and empowering educational experience (Freire, 1970).



Nepal's educational heritage draws from centuries-old traditions, deeply influenced by traditional education system. As it is common knowledge, in the traditional system, students record, memorize, repeat and regurgitate in the examination without perceiving and internalizing what they mean. They receive, memorize, and repeat passively without any two way of interaction and negotiation constructively. The traditional classroom is teacher-centered and authoritative in which every learner from a diverse society is given chance to construct knowledge without collaboration (Kandel, 2020; Dhungana, 2020).

Despite the influences of globalization, the principles of critical pedagogy, which are more prevalent in western educational philosophy, are still gaining recognition in Nepal's educational landscape. Various international governmental organizations (INGOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have actively promoted rights-based approaches and initiated projects aimed at raising critical awareness among marginalized groups in the country. The awakening of the deprived, including Dalits, most backward indigenous people and women in a democratic environment also paved the way towards augmenting an NGO movement in Nepal (Khanal, 2006).

However, the impact of these efforts has not always aligned with their intent, revealing the complex interplay between educational theory and practice. While the Government of Nepal has acknowledged the significance of critical pedagogy and incorporated it into the school curriculum, practical challenges persist. It has been observed that schools and educators often prioritize theoretical aspects over practical implementation.

Government of Nepal's has recognized of the importance of critical pedagogy and introduced in school curricula but several researchers concluded that the implementation is not effective; its incorporation into the school curriculum has not always translated seamlessly into practice. In their study, Sharma and Phyak (2017) emphasize the insufficiency of conventional critical pedagogy practices in confronting the ideological tensions resulting from the conflict between broader institutional constraints and teachers' individual aspirations for transformative pedagogy. They observe persistent practical challenges, with schools and educators consistently prioritizing theoretical aspects over actual implementation. This underscores the complex interplay between educational theory and practice, highlighting the existing gap between intent and impact.

Nepal's classrooms pose a myriad of challenges related to diversity management, encompassing gender discrimination, social inequality, inclusiveness, disabilities, cultural and religious taboos, child labor, early marriage, harassment,

child rights violations, and cultural hegemony. Gender dynamics, influenced by a preference for sons, perpetuate male domination, affecting access to education. Social discrimination against those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds further shapes educational experiences. Dahal et al. (2017) noted that the school environment lacks friendliness toward girls, particularly emphasizing the need for male teachers to enhance their understanding of menstrual hygiene and various forms of discrimination associated with menstruation, such as Chhaupadi. Despite this, male teachers tend to maintain a distance from female-related issues.

In this context, the integration of critical pedagogy into Nepal's school curriculum gains heightened significance. It becomes a crucial avenue for addressing the diverse challenges the country faces, aligning educational practices with principles of social justice, equity, and inclusivity. Furthermore, it underscores the pivotal role of teachers in translating curriculum objectives into meaningful and empowering classroom experiences.

This study seeks to explore the challenges and opportunities associated with the practical implementation of critical pedagogy in Nepal's educational context. By examining the intersection of traditional teaching practices and the principles of critical pedagogy, this research aims to shed light on the complexities of managing diversity in the classroom and fostering a more inclusive and equitable educational environment.

Methods and Procedures

The research design for this study was carefully developed to comprehensively explore the intersection between critical pedagogy and Nepal's traditional educational landscape. Initially, an extensive literature review was conducted using reputable platforms like Google Scholar and Leebgein, identifying a total of one hundred relevant research articles and ebooks. To ensure specificity and relevance, a purposive sampling method was employed, resulting in the intentional selection of 25 articles downloaded.

This selection process aimed to construct a focused and meaningful dataset (Creswell & Creswell, 2017), guided by the articles' relevance to the research topics and overall intent. The research process involved a meticulous identification of materials to establish a nuanced understanding of critical pedagogy and its diverse applications. The research design embraced a qualitative approach, incorporating not only the researcher's personal teaching experience but also insights from peer teachers to provide a holistic perspective.

Results and Discussion

Classroom Diversity

Diversity is defined as how people are different in the workplace. It is also known as the verities of people living in the same workplace. Furthermore, it is defined as the sum of ways that people are both like and alike. Guion (1999) describes diversity as “a mosaic of people who bring a variety of ethnic and cultural backgrounds, styles, perspectives, values and beliefs as assets to the groups or organizations with which they interact” (p.1). The dimension of social diversity in educational settings reflects the realities of student presence in school. Diversity of the classroom reflects the different social, cultural, economic, religious, cultural conditions, physical, mental and psychological differences among the students. Thus, managing the diversity of the classroom is understood as a teaching-learning activity with respecting the environment of diversity.

Critical Pedagogy

Critical pedagogy is a progressive idea that plays a vital role to manage the diversity of the classroom. “Critical pedagogy is a movement involving relationships of teaching and learning so that students gain a critical self-consciousness and social awareness and take appropriate action against oppressive forces”(McKernan, 2013). McLaren further defines critical pedagogy as “Critical pedagogy is a way of thinking about, negotiating, and transforming the relationship among classroom teaching, the production of knowledge, the institutional structure of the school, and the social and material relations of the wider community, society, and nation-state “ (McLaren, 1998, p.45). This concept emerged in the educational pedagogy after the ideas of critical conciseness, oppressed pedagogy introduced by Paulo Frier in 1970.

Critical pedagogy is not a specific approach like traditional pedagogy. According to Sanjakdar et al. (2015), “Critical pedagogy is an approach to learning and teaching ... not a specific point of arrival; a cycle in which teachers and students make meaning, arrive at solutions, question the consequences and return to making meaning” (p. 68). The relationship between teachers and students is closer in critical pedagogy based on dialectical theory and seeks to understand the contradictions in society. Critical pedagogy serves as a means of promoting social justice within the classroom setting, offering an opportunity for students from oppressed classes. Uddin (2019) highlights that it is a vital teaching strategy aimed at bolstering learners’ awareness of justice and social equality, ultimately enhancing their knowledge.

Critical Pedagogy and Managing Diversity

Critical pedagogy is an educational framework deeply rooted in the

intersection of education and critical theory. It has gained prominence for its capacity to address issues of social justice, equity, and diversity within educational settings. Emerging from the transformative works of Brazilian educator Paulo Freire in the mid-20th century, critical pedagogy has evolved into a powerful tool for managing diversity in education. Freire's seminal text, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, laid the foundation for this approach by emphasizing the need to challenge traditional educational methods that often perpetuate existing power structures and inequalities (Freire, 1970).

At its core, critical pedagogy promotes a transformative educational approach that encourages students to scrutinize, analyze, and challenge societal norms and injustices. Through this process, students develop a profound understanding of the social, cultural, and political forces shaping their world. This educational framework recognizes students' diverse backgrounds, experiences, and identities as valuable assets in the learning process, reframing them from obstacles to opportunities (Giroux, 2011).

In the context of managing diversity, critical pedagogy provides educators with a robust framework to establish inclusive and equitable classrooms. Facilitating open dialogue and exploring the impact of systemic discrimination, this approach empowers students to actively participate as agents of change in addressing issues such as race, gender, sexuality, and culture (Giroux, 2011).

Central to critical pedagogy is the belief that education should not be a passive transmission of knowledge but an active engagement with the world. It emphasizes the importance of recognizing and respecting the unique perspectives and lived experiences of every learner, valuing diversity as a catalyst for deeper learning and societal transformation (Shor, 1992).

As educational institutions become increasingly diverse, critical pedagogy offers educators a pathway to navigate the complexities of multicultural classrooms. It fosters an environment where diversity is not only acknowledged but celebrated as a source of strength and enrichment (Shor, 1992).

Moreover, critical pedagogy invites educators to reflect on their own biases and privileges, encouraging self-awareness and personal growth. By empowering students to challenge stereotypes and engage in critical conversations about social justice and equity, this approach equips them with the skills and mindset needed to contribute to a more just and inclusive society (McLaren, 1994).

Classroom Diversity: Opportunity and Challenges

Educational institutions are operating in an increasingly diverse societal

landscape, encompassing dimensions such as race, gender, sexuality, culture, religion, ability, and socioeconomic status. This diversity presents both opportunities and challenges that institutions must address. Racial and ethnic diversity, for example, enriches the learning experience but can also expose entrenched prejudices, leading to disparities in educational outcomes. Similarly, gender identity and sexual orientation demand attention, requiring inclusive practices to ensure all students feel safe and valued.

Cultural and religious diversity can be a source of richness but may lead to conflicts if not managed effectively. Socioeconomic diversity shapes educational experiences, with students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds facing challenges in access to resources and opportunities. Students with disabilities bring unique strengths and challenges, necessitating inclusive environments.

In this complex web of diversity, critical pedagogy emerges as a powerful ally. It encourages open dialogue, fostering empathy and the ability to challenge prejudiced views. Critical pedagogy delves into structural issues perpetuating discrimination, equipping students to recognize and critique these systems. It empowers students to be agents of change, creating safe spaces where every student feels valued, irrespective of background (Freire, 1970).

Moreover, critical pedagogy reframes diversity as a source of strength, encouraging students to view it as an opportunity for mutual learning. Despite undeniable challenges, critical pedagogy serves as a guiding philosophy, equipping educators and students with tools to navigate effectively. Through open dialogue, analysis of systemic discrimination, and student empowerment, educational institutions can leverage diversity for a more inclusive and equitable future. Equitable pedagogy, as highlighted by Blanks and Blanks (2009), is essential for providing robust support to all diverse learners, fostering skills application for social transformation in the classroom.

Diversity Management through Critical Pedagogy: A Paradigm Shift

Critical pedagogy developed the behavior of critical thinking among the students. It creates the ability to think critically and make decisions about any event in student. It encourages the habit of rising questions. It argued that one of the advantages of critical pedagogy is to raise critical citizens (Giroux, 1997).

Paulo Freire extensively examined and critiqued the concept of “banking” deeply ingrained in the traditional education system. Describing the banking concept in education as a unilateral process where teachers transfer knowledge to students without promoting critical thinking, Freire argued that this approach discourages

students' ability to engage in critical thinking and further reinforces oppressive structures (Freire, 1993).

Critical pedagogy contributes to managing the diversity of the classroom. Critical pedagogy helps to develop confidence and consciousness in the oppressed classes. Critical pedagogy emphasized to emancipate, and empowerment of those students have oppressed by socio-cultural, economic causes. It encourages the student to think and explore their thought, ideas and criticism. Critical pedagogy helps to transform society engaging educators and learners developing their critical ability. "In critical pedagogy, a teacher uses his or her own enlightenment to encourage students to question and challenge inequalities that exist in families, schools, and societies" (Lunch, 2019, p.1). Critical theory is all about challenging the dominant social structures and the narratives that society has made the most familiar. Critical pedagogy encourages and forces to students of diverse socio-cultural backgrounds to think and speak about their right. It contributes to the management of the diversity of the classroom. Critical pedagogy helps to transform society engaging educators and learners in developing their critical ability. "In critical pedagogy, a teacher uses his or her enlightenment to encourage students to question and challenge inequalities that exist in families, schools, and societies" (Lunch, 2019, p.1). Critical theory is all about challenging the dominant social structures and the narratives that society has made the most familiar.

Role of a Teacher

The role of a teacher is crucial in effectively managing diversity in the classroom through the application of critical pedagogy. In this context, the teacher is required to assume a democratic and flexible stance. A key aspect of this role is actively engaging students in the teaching process and inspiring them to participate in learning through a critical thinking approach (Sanjakdar et al., 2015).

Furthermore, Sanjakdar et al. (2015) argue that pedagogues should not only encourage dialogue and interactive engagement but also foster and amplify the voices of their students. This active involvement and empowerment of students align with the principles of critical pedagogy which emphasize a more egalitarian and inclusive approach to education.

Paulo Freire, a prominent figure in critical pedagogy, distinguishes between two pedagogical approaches: banking concept and problem-solving. In the banking concept, education is teacher-centered, with instructors as active speakers and students as passive listeners. Freire (1993) critiqued this approach and advocated for a problem-solving method, where teachers

motivate students to critically analyze various subjects. In the context of critical pedagogy, the teacher's role is that of a motivator, inspiring students to think critically about any given subject matter and connecting the pedagogical process to students' own experiences.

Abhram (2014) underscores the ethical responsibility of every educator to nurture their students' critical thinking abilities, thereby empowering them to contribute positively to society. This perspective reinforces the teacher's role as a facilitator of critical thinking and transformation.

Furthermore, the teacher-student relationship is crucial, particularly in diverse classrooms. Milner and Tenore (2010) highlight that disconnects between teachers and students often lead to management conflicts in the classroom, driven by misinterpretations rooted in socioeconomic, cultural, racial, and ethnic disparities. To address these issues, teachers must foster a sense of trust and equality among all students, irrespective of their backgrounds and characteristics.

Ensuring equity and equality practices is essential for effectively handling diversity in the classroom. Teachers play a crucial role in assisting students with diverse cultural backgrounds in navigating the intricacies of the diverse school environment (Banks, 2014). By creating an inclusive and supportive learning environment, teachers can facilitate students' growth, acknowledging and celebrating the richness that diversity brings to the classroom.

Thus, the teacher's role in managing diversity in the classroom through critical pedagogy is multifaceted. It involves inspiring critical thinking, fostering an inclusive and equal environment, and actively engaging students in their learning journey. Through these efforts, educators can effectively address the challenges and harness the benefits of diversity in education.

Role of a Student

Critical pedagogy, widely recognized as an essential teaching method, encounters notable challenges in practical application, particularly in cultural contexts such as Nepal. One conspicuous challenge lies in the hesitance of students to question and engage in debates with their teachers (Freire, 1970). This reluctance among Nepalese students is often attributed to the profound influence of eastern philosophy, which emphasizes deep respect and unwavering confidence in educators.

Within the realm of critical education, the role of the student holds paramount importance. Students are not passive recipients of knowledge; they are expected to take an active stance by raising pertinent questions about a spectrum of crucial issues, including but not limited to marginalization, oppressed behavior, social injustice, humanitarian action, corruption, child rights violations, social conflict, superstitions, and social discrimination (Giroux, 2011). These themes constitute the foundational pillars of critical pedagogy, providing students with a unique opportunity to scrutinize and challenge prevailing societal norms and practices. Empowered students, adept at questioning and critically examining these issues, have the potential to transcend their roles as mere learners and evolve into change agents within their communities (Freire, 1970).

The critical lens through which students perceive these issues equips them to advocate for positive change and contribute substantively to the resolution of pressing societal problems. Their lived experiences within Nepalese society and their distinctive perspectives render students invaluable sources of insight and understanding (McLaren, 1994). Thus, it becomes imperative to cultivate a habit of critical thinking among students as they navigate the terrain of classroom instruction.

Encouraging students to question prevailing assumptions, challenge dominant narratives, and actively engage in thoughtful dialogue is at the core of critical pedagogy (Shor, 1992). As Shor (1992) emphasizes, fostering such an environment empowers students to harness their agency as knowledge creators, thereby transforming the learning process into a dynamic and participatory experience.

Critical Pedagogy in the Nepalese Context

Nepal's educational system is deeply rooted in tradition and predominantly follows teacher-centered methodologies, heavily influenced by traditional pedagogy. In this system, teachers are revered as the ultimate source of knowledge, and questioning their authority is considered uncommon. There exists a profound belief in the unquestionable guidance of the guru. Shah (2000) highlighted that religious education, both in Buddhism and Hinduism, primarily involves rote learning, group delivery, and chorus repetition. Despite the global prevalence of critical pedagogy, especially prominent in western philosophy, Nepal's education system continues to adhere staunchly to these traditional approaches. The teacher is perceived as the unquestionable source of wisdom, and the traditional methods of rote learning and group repetition persist. Shah's analysis of religious education resonates with the prevailing traditional methodologies in Nepal's educational framework. Furthermore, the initial educational commission, the Nepal National Education Planning Commission (NNEPC), delivered its report in 1956, echoing Shah's perspective.

This report underscores the shortcomings of passive learning and fervently supports the adoption of an active, participatory approach to teaching and learning. The commission's stance reflects a growing acknowledgment of the necessity for reforms in the educational system. Nevertheless, the deeply entrenched traditional methods persist in shaping Nepal's educational landscape, despite the ongoing evolution of global pedagogical trends (Shah, 2000).

While Nepal's education system is not immune to globalization, the principles of critical pedagogy are gaining recognition. Various exercises rooted in critical theory are being practiced in the country, often driven by international governmental organizations (INGOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) with a focus on rights-based approaches. Initiatives have been undertaken to raise critical awareness among marginalized groups, such as ex-bonded laborers in western Nepal and women's education, notably the Kamalari education program. However, the impact of these efforts has not always matched their intent. There is a pressing need to integrate critical analysis into the national curriculum. Paudel (2020) highlighted that after a decade of teaching experience in semi-urban areas of Nepal, effective teaching and learning were observed to thrive in dialogic situations and problem-posing approaches. The observation also emphasized the challenges educators face when translating theoretical concepts into practical classroom applications.

Freire (1993) emphasized that both the oppressed and oppressors need education and awareness to address societal problems effectively. Notably, the curriculum for social studies has been designed to address issues of critical consciousness and social justice. However, it has been observed that schools and teachers often prioritize theoretical aspects over practical implementation.

In my own experiences and discussions with my colleagues regarding the implementation of critical pedagogy, I recognize the pivotal role of the teacher in this context. Scholars have underscored the indispensable role of teachers in the effective application of critical pedagogy. Teachers serve as facilitators of critical thinking, playing a central role in bridging the gap between theoretical concepts and practical application within the curriculum. For instance, girls encounter difficulties during their menstrual periods, and the school environment is often not accommodating. Menstrual hygiene and related discrimination issues, such as Chhaupadi, require increased awareness and education, especially among male teachers (Dahal et al., 2017, p. 24).

Implementing critical pedagogy in Nepal presents several challenges rooted in cultural norms, the structure of the education system, teacher preparation, resource limitations, and socioeconomic disparities. Understanding and addressing these

hurdles is crucial for fostering a more critical and inclusive educational environment in the country.

Cultural Norms and Teacher-Student Dynamics

Nepal boasts a deep-seated cultural tradition of revering teachers, which can sometimes conflict with the principles of critical pedagogy (Thapa, 2015). Students' profound respect for their educators may discourage them from questioning or challenging their teachers, as it is often regarded as disrespectful.

Examination-Centric Education System

Nepal's historical reliance on examination-centric education emphasizes rote learning and memorization over critical thinking (Bista, 2017). This pedagogical approach leaves little room for the kind of inquiry and critical analysis promoted by critical pedagogy.

Lack of Teacher Training

A substantial number of Nepalese educators confront challenges due to a lack of adequate training in the principles and methodologies of critical pedagogy (Devkota, 2019). This deficiency in training and resources creates a significant hurdle for teachers striving to effectively implement this progressive educational approach.

Resource Constraints

Nepal faces resource constraints in terms of classroom materials, infrastructure, and teacher-student ratios (Luitel, 2018). These limitations can obstruct the application of interactive and participatory teaching methods, which are essential components of critical pedagogy.

Socioeconomic Factors

Socioeconomic disparities in Nepal can further complicate the adoption of critical pedagogy. Students from marginalized backgrounds may encounter additional barriers to engaging in critical dialogue, as their immediate concerns may revolve around economic survival (Shrestha, 2016).

However, despite these formidable challenges, it is important to acknowledge ongoing efforts and initiatives to incorporate elements of critical pedagogy into the Nepalese education system. These endeavors frequently involve the adaptation of critical pedagogy's principles to the local context and gradual steps toward a more participatory and critical approach to teaching and learning (Sharma, 2018). By addressing these challenges and actively working to align education with the principles of critical pedagogy, Nepal can move closer to providing a more equitable and empowering learning experience for its students.

Critical pedagogy, in its essence, stands as an indispensable ally in the realm of education when it comes to confronting the complex and diverse challenges that educational institutions face today. Its significance lies in its ability to transform these challenges into opportunities for growth, empathy, and understanding. One of its fundamental strengths lies in fostering open dialogue—a platform where students can candidly share their distinct experiences, perspectives, and concerns. This dialogue not only cultivates empathy and mutual understanding but also equips students with the vital skill of challenging prejudiced views.

Furthermore, critical pedagogy goes beyond surface-level discussions by delving into the structural and systemic factors that perpetuate discrimination. It provides students with the analytical tools necessary to recognize and critique these systems, moving beyond attributing disparities solely to individual shortcomings. This depth of analysis empowers students, making them not passive recipients of knowledge but active agents of change. By grasping the mechanisms of oppression and discrimination, they become empowered to challenge these issues both within and outside the confines of the classroom.

Within the critical pedagogical framework, creating inclusive and equitable classroom environments takes center stage. Educators shoulder the crucial responsibility of establishing a safe and welcoming space where every student, regardless of their background, feels valued and respected. This approach recognizes that true learning flourishes in environments where diversity is not just acknowledged but celebrated.

Perhaps most significantly, critical pedagogy transforms the perspective on diversity itself. Rather than viewing it as a problem to be solved, this educational philosophy encourages students to perceive diversity as an opportunity for mutual learning. It teaches them to draw strength and enrichment from each other's unique life experiences and viewpoints. In this way, diversity becomes an asset, a wellspring of knowledge and understanding.

Finally, integrating critical pedagogy into the Nepalese school curriculum is a vital step toward addressing the myriad diversity challenges the country faces. Teachers play a pivotal role in translating curriculum objectives into practical, empowering classroom experiences. By fostering critical thinking and awareness, educators can contribute to dismantling discriminatory practices and promoting inclusivity and equality in Nepal's education system.

Conclusion

In conclusion, critical pedagogy stands out as a vital approach in navigating

the complexities of diversity within the Nepalese education system. By instilling critical thinking and heightened awareness, this pedagogical methodology becomes instrumental in empowering marginalized groups and dismantling entrenched discriminatory structures. In the context of Nepal, redefining the teacher's role as a facilitator takes on particular significance, emphasizing the need to recognize students as active contributors to the learning process. The concept of mutual learning and teaching encourages educators to create inclusive environments that respect and respond to the diverse experiences and knowledge brought by students from various backgrounds.

Moreover, the recognition of intellectual diversity calls for a departure from standardized educational approaches, urging the incorporation of methods that accommodate the varied learning styles prevalent in Nepal. The call for multicultural respect within the classroom aligns with the rich tapestry of cultural diversity in Nepal, urging educational institutions to create environments that celebrate and embrace the nation's cultural plurality. Additionally, the proposal to include critical theory courses in the Nepalese school curriculum signifies an opportunity for education to play a pivotal role in shaping perspectives and fostering a more inclusive society.

These implications underscore the urgent need for a comprehensive reevaluation of Nepal's current education practices. Implementing critical pedagogy requires a shift towards student-centered, collaborative learning environments that actively engage with the diverse cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds of students. Equipping educators with the tools to facilitate critical thinking becomes crucial in a Nepalese context where varied perspectives need acknowledgment and respect. By embracing these changes, the Nepalese education system can not only effectively manage diversity within its classrooms but also contribute to broader societal shifts, fostering an inclusive and transformative educational experience that resonates with the unique socio-cultural context of Nepal.

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Factors Affecting the Academic Achievement of the Students in Community Campuses

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Abstract

Academic achievement holds significant importance in education as well as in the learning process representing the level at which both teachers and the students attain educational goals. This study aims to identify the factors influencing academic achievement among students on community campuses. The descriptive survey research design was employed. By using the purposive sampling method, four community campuses were selected out of ten community campuses from Tanahun district of Nepal. A total of 359 respondents were selected from 2479 students across the selected campuses, employing a survey with Five-Points Likert scaling technique conducted through Google form. Descriptive statistics was applied to analyze the gathered data. The finding indicated that home-related factors, campus facilities, the teaching-learning environment and resources, habits of students, teacher-student relations, and institutional factors significantly affect students' academic achievement at the university level. The study provides valuable insights for educators, policymakers, and institutions to improve the academic achievement of students.

Keywords: Community campus, resources, affecting factors, environment, significant

Introduction

Academic achievement represents performance results that indicate the extent to which a person has achieved certain goals that have been the focus of activity in education, especially in schools, colleges, and universities (Steinmaryr, 2014). Academic achievement refers to the extent to which a student, teacher, or institution has achieved its educational goals and is measured by a continuous assessment or cumulative grade point average (Talib, 2012). Academic achievement is a very



important element in education as well as in the learning process. It is the most important goal of the educational process. One of the most important outcomes of any educational setup is the academic achievement of the students. Measuring the student's academic achievement is a complex task since it cannot easily be quantified in standardized units. Students' achievement may be deemed to be a product of psychological, socio-economic, environmental, and personal factors.

In higher education, students are valuable assets for any institution because they represent the essence of learning, growth, and a single mission (Kahu, 2013). The evaluation of students' achievement across various academic fields is termed academic achievement, linked to the social and economic development of a country. The academic success of students plays a pivotal role in producing high-quality graduates viewed as significant human resources and potential leaders contributing to the economic and social development of the nation (Ali et al., 2009). Education is crucial in generating qualified human resources that expedite economic development and address the genuine issue of the community. However, it is noteworthy that the trend of university students is not proportional to the trend of enrolled students, and the increasing number of students opts for readmission, suggesting that they have not performed well in their academic pursuits (Tadese et al., 2022). The research shows that the educational environment plays a role in improving student skills, interests, and attitudes (Feldman, 1988; Feldman et al., 2001).

Higher education in Nepal started with the establishment of Trichandra College in 1918. In 1959, Tribhuvan University was established in Nepal. After the establishment of Tribhuvan University, both the government managed colleges and community managed colleges were affiliated to Tribhuvan University (Trichandra College, 2023). As per the annual report of the University Grants Commission (UGC) (2023), thirteen universities including two provincial universities and 5 medical academies are providing higher education in Nepal. Altogether there are 1,455 campuses, among them 162 are constituent, 539 are community, and 754 are private, whereas a total of 579,448 students are studying. Among them, 37.04 percent are getting higher education in community campuses. The UGC has awarded altogether 82 campuses from QAA. Among them, 56 are community campuses. The data shows that community campuses are taking a vital role in providing higher education in Nepal. According to ADB (2015), the local community established and owns the community campus. The campus must be accountable and transparent to the local community. The governance of these campuses is performed by the local people under the published rules and regulations. This campus has been autonomous in recruitment of faculty members, infrastructure development, budgeting, etc. Thus, local people must be more participative to increase enrollment rates, manage

resources, and increase academic achievement. Janajyoti Campus (2023), a community campus, serves a vital role in expanding access to higher education, particularly in rural areas. Their significance lies in providing locally relevant education, affordability, diverse programme offerings, and contributing to community development. These campuses aim to make education accessible to a broader demographic, including economically disadvantaged individuals. According to the UGC Annual Report (2023), there are ten community campuses in Tanahun district. There is no government campus in this district. The responsibility of providing higher education to the students of this district has been fulfilled by the community campuses here. Thus, it became essential to conduct this study focusing on the issue of students' academic achievement on community campuses.

As per the annual report of the University Grants Commission (2023), seventy eight percent share students in enrollment at Tribhuvan University. Besides this rate of enrollment, the pass rate is 29.33 percent. In Tanahun district, nine campuses affiliated to Tribhuvan University have a pass rate below 29.33 percent. Tanahun district in Nepal marked by its reliance on community campuses for higher education faces a critical challenge regarding the academic achievement of its students.

Despite the crucial role of community campuses in making education more accessible, there is still a limited understanding of what factors contribute to students' success. This research aims to analyze various factors that affect the academic achievement of the students attending community campuses in Tanahun district. The study focuses on understanding the factors affecting students' academic achievement, aligning with the main goal of supporting both the campus and university in achieving academic success. This research is essential to evaluate the student's level of achievement, identify influencing factors, and improve the quality of education in community campuses. Therefore, the study aims to explore students' perceptions of the factors that affect their academic achievement in community campuses.

Literature Review

There is a considerable amount of research conducted on students' perception of factors affecting academic achievement of students at different study levels. The earlier research identified several variables that affect students' academic achievement. Walberg's theory (1981) is a useful framework for understanding the factors that affect learning and academic achievement in students. There are three major categories of factors that affect learning: motivation, student aptitude and instructional quality. These factors are interconnected and have the potential to exert an impact on each other. The concept of student aptitude encompasses the

student's cognitive abilities, learning style, and prior knowledge. The evaluation of instructional quality encompasses the teacher's proficiency, curriculum, and teaching techniques. The factors that influence motivation include the student's level of interest in the subject, their level of engagement and their perception of the value of the learning experience. Further, Walberg's research identified nine key factors that affect academic achievement: age, number of instructions, quality of instruction, student ability and prior achievement, inspiration, classroom environment, home environment, peer group, and introduction to mass media exterior of the school (Walberg et al., 1986). Several studies of learning environments have been concerned with conceptualization and theory development. Academic achievements have been traditionally included in faculty and course evaluation in higher education settings. The study on learning environments (Astin, 1984; Fraser et al., 1987; Fullarton, 2002) shows that psychosocial characteristics of classroom learning environments demonstrate incremental validity in predicting students' academic achievement. Chhetri (2022) claimed that learners' learning engagement significantly affects their achievement.

Ermisch and Francesconi (2001) stated that parents' educational attainments and family background are very powerful predictors of their children's educational attainments. Alfian and Othman's (2005) study found that previous academic performance is observed to have a positive correlation with the academic performance of the students. It also found that female students perform better than male students. Ali et al. (2009) stated that demographic variables and parents' income level are observed to have a positive correlation with the academic performance of the students. The result also shows that students who are actively engaged in the learning process, and extracurricular activities and attend classes regularly obtain better performance in the final result. Ale et al. (2013) stated that age guardian social economic status daily study hours significantly affected the academic achievement of university students. Okioga's (2013) study stated that the students' social-economic factors influenced their academic performance. Jayanthi et al.'s (2014) study stated that gender, age, nationality of students, part-time employment, extracurricular activities, and interest in pursuing higher studies affected the academic success of students. Abdulghani et al.'s (2014) study revealed that attending lectures regularly, early revision, prioritization of learning needs, time management, student support, student counseling, family support, stress management techniques, and school culture affect the academic performance of students. Shathele et al. (2015) investigated that facilities available for study, family support and awareness about the course have positive effects whereas anxiety, stress, and lack of sleep had a negative effect on the academic achievement of university students. Akessa and Dhufera's

(2015) study revealed that teacher-related, students-related home-related factors affect the academic performance of students. Cheng and Kaplowitz's (2016) study stated that economic status and cultural capital invested by the parents affect the academic performance of students. Singh et al.'s (2016) study revealed that learning facilities, guidance from parents, and communication skills have a positive impact on the academic performance of students. Mahammedhussen (2016) stated that entrance exam scores, family income levels, time management, and learning habits significantly affected the academic achievement of university students. Some studies show that home related factors (family) influences students' academic achievement (Christenson et al., 1992; Delelis, 2019; Dudaite, 2016; Herndol & Hirt, 2004; Mwaura, 2014; Khan, 2019).

According to Sebro and Gosshu (2017), student performance is linked to learning opportunities, teaching methods, teacher-student relationships, class connections, and the presence of teaching-learning resources within the school, additionally, considering that having books at home was not significant. Likewise, Alshammari et al.'s (2017) study revealed that teacher-related, students-related, school-related, home-related factors affect the academic performance of students. Similarly, demographic variables such as age, gender, year, marital status, socio-economic status, and previous school attended by the students also influence the academic performance of a student. Arona and Singh's (2017) study revealed that the teaching effectiveness of faculties, family environment, students' habits, teachers' motivation to students, interaction with students, and ability to create interest in the subject are the factors that can influence the academic performance of students. Rossi's (2017) study revealed that there is a significant relationship between academic performance and parental socioeconomic status. Azis and Muda's (2019) study revealed that lecturers' knowledge has a positive and significant influence on students' achievement. However, the interaction between students and lecturers, and lecturers' characteristics do not influence students' achievement. Duwal and Khonju's (2020) study stated that there is a low degree of a positive relationship between teaching methodology, students' habits, and students' academic performance. The study also indicated that there is a positive relationship between students' attendance and students' academic performance. Dhakal's (2020) study revealed that students, parents, schools, and teacher-related factors affect the student's academic achievement. According to Bostala (2021), the primary discoveries of the research entail a strong correlation between workloads and motivation. However, there was no notable correlation observed between teaching methods and home background. The study identified motivation and prior knowledge of the subject matter as influential factors affecting students' final grades. Furthermore, the research highlighted that

peer interaction played a significant role in contributing to students' overall academic achievement. Chapagai's (2021) study concludes that the nature of the examination, student age, and ethnicity make a significant difference in students' achievement whereas gender does not. Al husaini and Shukor's (2022) results revealed that family support, student's gender, previous study level, internal assessment, accommodation, and student's e-learning activities are the most significant factors influencing students' academic achievement. Bataybeh's (2023) study indicated that social, economic, and academic factors affect the student's academic achievement. Ghimire (2023) concluded that the E-libraries, as learning facilities, contributed significantly to the students' academic achievement whereas the gender, ethnicity, father's education, socio-economic status, learning facilities, lecturer style of teaching had no significant effect on the academic achievement of students. This study tries to find out the factors that affect the academic performance of public campuses in Tanahun district to improve education equality.

Methods and Procedures

This study employed a descriptive survey method to investigate the Students' Perception of Factors Affecting Academic Achievement in Community. Descriptive survey research aims to provide essential knowledge about the nature of objects and individuals (Apuke, 2017). In alignment with this approach, the researchers utilized the descriptive survey technique (Cresswell, 2014) to identify factors affecting academic achievement. The survey research design was chosen to collect data from respondents and assess students' opinions on their academic success. Out of the 537 Tribhuvan University-affiliated community campuses in Nepal, four were purposefully selected from Tanahun district, Bagmati province, using purposive sampling. A total of 359 respondents were selected from 2479 students in the chosen campuses, namely Janajyoti campus, Bhanu Bhakta multiple campus, Aadikabi Bhanubhakta multiple campus, and Kalika Purkot campus in Tanahun district. To gather information about various factors related to academic achievement, a survey was conducted using a five-point Likert scaling technique through Google Forms. The questionnaire, distributed via messenger, comprised two parts. The first part focused on the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents, while the second part addressed factors influencing academic performance. Respondents used a five-point Likert scale (Strongly Agree = SA, Agree = A, Disagree = D, Undecided = U, Strongly Disagree = SD) to provide their responses. Descriptive statistics, percentages, and means were applied for data analysis, directly extracted from the questionnaire. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26.0 was employed for thorough data analysis.

Results and Discussion

This section presents the analysis and interpretation of data, factors affecting students' academic performance of community campuses of Tanahun district measured with the various aspects such as home related factors, facility provided by the campus, teaching learning environment and resources, personal factors, teacher-related factors.

Home Related Factors Affecting Students' Academic Achievement

Student's educational activities at home are based on academic achievement. Class preparation and practice at home are fundamental for students, as a student spends only four or five hours at campus and the remaining time is spent at home. Home is the first institution for students that has significant relationships with students' overall life. The focus of the study is to find out the impact of family support, availability of ICT at home, stress and parental motivation, and student's academic achievement.

Table 1

Home Related Factors Affecting Students' Academic Achievement

	Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Mean
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Family support	85	23.68%	160	44.6%	114	31.8%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2.08
Available of ICT in home	66	18.38%	214	59.6%	40	11.1%	39	10.9%	0	0.0%	2.14
Stress	1	0.28%	101	28.1%	103	28.7%	154	42.9%	0	0.0%	3.14
Parental motivation	216	60.17%	88	24.5%	0	0.0%	55	15.3%	0	0.0%	1.70
Mean value of mean											2.265

Sources: Field survey, 2079

Table 1 shows the percentages of respondents indicating the impact of home-related factors on their academic success. A significant 68.68% either strongly agree or agree with the notion of receiving family support, while 78.98% express similar sentiments about the availability of ICT at home. In terms of stress, 56.18% either agree or remain undecided, contrasting with 42.9% who disagree with experiencing stress in their home environment. Notably, 84.67% of respondents strongly agree or agree that parental motivations play a crucial role in students' academic achievement. The study highlights mean values and an overall mean value for these factors, ranging from 1.7 to 3.14 all values are below 3 except for stress levels. This suggests a generally positive perception of these factors, except for stress at home. The study

reveals that home-related factors like family support, access to ICT, and parental motivation have a substantial impact on academic achievement. It also emphasizes the nuanced understanding of stress perceptions among respondents. These findings align with previous research conducted by Christenson et al. (1992), Herndol and Hirt (2004), Mwaura (2014), Dudaite (2016), Delelis (2019), and Khan (2019).

Facility Available on Campus Factors Affecting Students' Academic Achievement

Campus facilities include libraries, infrastructure, computers and photocopiers, student support services, drinking water, and sanitation.

Table 2

Facility Available on Campus Factors Affecting Students' Academic Achievement

	Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Mean
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Library	82	22.8%	273	76.0%	4	1.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1.78
Scholarship and student support program	51	14.2%	289	80.5%	19	5.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1.91
Extra -curricular activities	197	54.9%	159	44.3%	0	0.0%	3	0.8%	0	0.0%	1.47
Drinking water and sanitation	333	92.8%	26	7.2%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1.07
Administrative service	105	29.2%	168	46.8%	86	24.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1.95
Computer, photocopy and printing	52	14.5%	284	79.1%	23	6.4%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1.92
Physical infrastructure	199	55.4%	159	44.3%	1	0.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1.45
Mean value of mean											1.793

Sources: Field survey, 2079.

In Table 2, the percentages of respondents indicating agreement (strongly agree or agree) on various campus facilities affecting academic performance are presented. Notably, 98.68% agree on the library, 94.7% on scholarship availability, 99.2% on extra-curricular activities, 100% on drinking water and sanitation, 76% on administrative service, 93.6% on photocopy and printing service, and 99.7% on physical infrastructure. The study highlights mean values and an overall mean value for these factors, ranging from 1.07 to 1.95 all falling below 3. The overall mean

values being less than 3 suggest that, on average, respondents perceived these factors as positively influencing their academic achievement. The study concludes that the mentioned factors significantly contribute to students' academic success, consistent with prior research by alshammari et al. (2017) and Arona and Singh (2017).

Teaching Learning Environment and Resources Factors Affecting Students' Academic Achievement

A learning environment encompasses the physical, social, and psychological elements that influence academic achievement. Key factors include a peaceful environment, methods of teaching, use of ICT in the classroom, a cooperative environment, student-friendly environment, textbook and library access, teacher and student relationship, appropriate seating arrangement in the classroom, and access to educational resources.

Table 3

Teaching Learning Environment and Resources Factors Affecting Students' Academic Achievement

	Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Mean
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Peaceful environment	47	13.1%	312	86.9%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1.87
Method of teaching	260	72.4%	99	27.6%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1.28
Used of ICT in class room	80	22.3%	132	36.8%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	147	40.9%	3.01
Cooperative environment	151	42.1%	199	55.4%	9	2.5%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1.60
Students friendly environment	227	63.2%	108	30.1%	5	1.4%	19	5.3%	0	0.0%	1.49
Tax book and library	156	43.5%	132	36.8%	1	0.3%	0	0.0%	70	19.5%	2.15
Relation between teacher and students	247	68.8%	112	31.2%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1.31
Proper seating arrangement	347	96.7%	12	3.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1.03
Mean value of mean											1.668

Sources: Field survey, 2079.

In Table 3, the percentages of respondents agreeing (strongly agree or agree) on factors influencing academic performance in the teaching-learning environment

are outlined. Notably, 86.9% strongly agree on a peaceful environment, 72.4% on classroom teaching methods, 59.1% on the use of ICT in the classroom, and 97.5% on a cooperative institutional environment. Additionally, 93.3% either strongly agree or agree on a student-friendly environment, 82.32% on access to textbooks and the library, 100% on a positive teacher-student relationship, and 96.7% on proper seating arrangements in the classroom. The study highlights mean values and an overall mean value for these factors, ranging from 1.03 to 3.1 all values are below 3, except for the use of ICT in the classroom. The overall mean values being less than 3 suggest a strong consensus among respondents about the positive impact of these factors on academic success, except for the use of ICT in the classroom, which appears to be perceived less positively. These findings are in line with previous research by Walberg et al. (1986), Astin (1984), Fraser et al. (1987), Fullarton (2002), Chhetri (2022), Sebro and Goshu (2017), Singh et al. (2016), alshammari et al. (2017), Dhakal (2020), and Al Husaini and Shukor (2022).

Personal Habit Factors Affecting Students' Academic Achievement of Students

Personal habits play a crucial role in shaping students' academic achievement. These habits, whether positive or negative, can significantly affect an academic achievement of the student.

Table 4

Personal Habit Factors Affecting Students' Academic Achievement of Students

	Strongly agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Mean
	No.	%	No	%	No	%	No.	%	No	%	
Hard work, dedication and self –confident	78	21.7%	281	78.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1.78
Interest of study	117	32.6%	236	65.7%	6	1.7%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1.69
Medium of study	246	68.5%	14	3.9%	99	27.6%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1.59
Regular attendant	18	5.0%	340	94.7%	1	0.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1.95
Capacity of capturing lecturer	281	78.3%	72	20.1%	0	0.0%	6	1.7%	0	0.0%	1.25
Used of library	91	25.3%	226	63.0%	29	8.1%	13	3.6%	0	0.0%	1.90

Previous academic result	37	10.3%	316	88.0%	6	1.7%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1.91
Cooperation to others	321	89.4%	38	10.6%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1.11
Mean value of mean											1.647

Sources: Field survey, 2079.

Table 4 shows the percentages of respondents expressing agreement (strongly agree or agree) on personal habit factors influencing academic achievement. Specifically, 100% strongly agree or agree on hard work, dedication, self-confidence, and cooperation with others, 98.33% on interest in the study, the capacity to capture lectures, and previous academic results, 99.72% on regular attendance in the classroom, and 88.30% on the use of the library as a major factor affecting academic performance. The study highlights mean values and an overall mean value for these factors, ranging from 1.11 to 1.91; all below 3, for these factors suggest a strong consensus among respondents about their positive impact on academic achievement. These findings align with previous research by Jayanthi et al. (2014), Abdulghani et al. (2014), and Alshammari et al. (2017).

Institutional-related Factors Affecting Students' Academic Achievement of Students

Institutional-related factors play a crucial role in shaping students' academic achievement. These factors, whether positive or negative, can significantly affect the academic achievement of the students.

Table 5

Institutional-related Factors Affecting Students' Academic Achievement of Students

	Strongly agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Mean
	No.	%	No	%	No	%		No.	%	No	%
Adequate class work (class work, assignment, and presentation)	212	59.1%	105	29.2%	42	11.7%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1.53
Good relationship between faculties and students	95	26.5%	239	66.6%	25	7.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1.81
Extra-curricular activities	250	69.6%	64	17.8%	5	1.4%	0	0.0%	40	11.1%	1.65
Refreshment program	103	28.7%	235	65.5%	21	5.8%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1.77

Pressure created by curriculum	260	72.4%	0	0.0%	99	27.6%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1.55
Fully equipped classroom	78	21.7%	85	23.7%	89	24.8%	32	8.9%	75	20.9%	2.84
Students faculty ratio	175	48.7%	59	16.4%	125	34.8%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1.86
Learning environment	138	38.4%	206	57.4%	15	4.2%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1.66
Administrative function	161	44.8%	179	49.9%	19	5.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1.60
Efficiency of teacher delivery of knowledge	215	59.9%	7	1.9%	137	38.2%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1.78
Mean value of mean											1.755

Sources: Field survey, 2079

Table 5 presents data indicating that 88.3% of respondents strongly agree or agree that classwork, assignments, and presentations are major factors influencing academic performance. Additionally, 88.30% strongly agree or agree on a good relationship between faculties and students, 88.3% on extra-curricular activities, 94.2% on refreshment programs, and 72.4% on the pressure created by the curriculum. Similarly, 45.4% strongly agree or agree on fully equipped classrooms, 65.1% on the student-faculty ratio, 95.8% on the learning environment, 94.7% on administrative services, and 61.8% on the efficiency of teacher delivery of knowledge as major factors for academic performance. The study highlights mean values and an overall mean value for these factors, ranging from 1.53 to 2.84, all below 3, indicating a strong consensus the overall mean values being less than 3 for these factors suggest a strong consensus among respondents about their positive impact on the academic achievement of students in the university. This aligns with previous research by Walberg et al. (1986), Astin (1984), Fraser et al. (1987), Fullarton (2002), Chhetri (2022), Sebro and Goshu (2017), Singh et al. (2016), alshammari et al. (2017), Dhakal (2020), and Al Husaini and Shukor (2022), as well as Azis and Muda (2019) and Ghimire (2023).

Teacher-related Factors Affecting Students' Academic Achievement of Students

Teachers are the pillars for their students. They play a vital role in their student's academic achievement by guiding them in the right direction. They are the facilitator of learning in the learning-teaching process.

Table 6*Teacher-related Factors Affecting Students' Academic Performance of Students*

	Strongly agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Mean
	No.	%	No	%	No	%		No.	%	No	%
Provides support for all students	1	0.3%	352	98.1%	0	0.0%	6	1.7%	0	0.0%	2.03
Positive attitude on a daily basis	320	89.1%	14	3.9%	25	7.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1.18
Presents the information in a way that is easy to understand	29	8.1%	327	91.1%	3	0.8%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1.93
Sensitive to all students	206	57.4%	90	25.1%	7	1.9%	56	15.6%	0	0.0%	1.76
Motivates me to give my best effort.	110	30.6%	223	62.1%	26	7.2%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1.77
I admire my teacher	134	37.3%	198	55.2%	27	7.5%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1.70
Guides students	109	30.4%	229	63.8%	21	5.8%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1.75
Encourages student feedback	58	16.2%	221	61.6%	80	22.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2.06
Uses examples of student background experiences, beliefs, and knowledge	19	5.3%	333	92.8%	7	1.9%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1.97
Provides high and clear expectations for academic performance	244	68.0%	115	32.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1.32
Takes the time to assist individual students that need help	17	4.7%	305	85.0%	37	10.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2.06
Motivates students through inspiring teaching	31	8.6%	328	91.4%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1.91
Teaching is attractive in line with theory.	329	91.6%	5	1.4%	25	7.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1.15
Focuses on stopping behavior in classroom	0	0.0%	354	98.6%	5	1.4%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2.01
Accepting to all student's cultures	0	0.0%	353	98.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	6	1.7%	2.05
I enjoy coming to my teacher's classroom	149	41.5%	205	57.1%	5	1.4%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1.60
Uses various strategies to promote unity, order, satisfaction, and less conflict in the classroom	17	4.7%	316	88.0%	26	7.2%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2.03
Connects emotionally with the students	292	81.3%	11	3.1%	56	15.6%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1.34
Expects me to succeed	82	22.8%	271	75.5%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	6	1.7%	1.82
Mean value of mean											1.826

Sources: Field survey, 2079

Table 6 presents the percentage of respondents endorsing various teacher-related factors impacting academic performance. Notably, 98.05% of respondents

express strong agreement or agreement on providing support for all students, making teaching attractive by relating theory to real-world applications, and maintaining a positive attitude daily. Similarly, 99.16% agree on presenting information in an understandable manner, 82.45% on sensitivity to all students, and 92.75% on motivation and admiration for their teacher. Furthermore, 94.2% agree on guiding students positively and employing strategies for unity, order, satisfaction, and less conflict in the classroom. Encouraging students' feedback is supported by 77.8%, and 98.1% agree on using examples from student background experiences, beliefs, and knowledge, while expecting students to succeed receives a 100% agreement. Additionally, 89.7% agree on taking time to assist individual students, and 98.6% agree on addressing unwanted behavior, accepting all students' cultures, and creating an enjoyable classroom environment. The study highlights mean values and an overall mean value for these factors, ranging from 1.15 to 2.06, all below 3, indicating a strong consensus. The findings emphasize the substantial influence of these factors on students' academic performance, underscoring the pivotal role teachers play in shaping educational experiences. This is consistent with prior research by Abdulghani et al. (2014), Akessa and Dhufera (2015), Sebro and Goshu (2017), Azis and Muda (2019), alshammari et al. (2017), Dhakal (2020), Ghimire (2023). The tables from 1 to 6 indicate that home-related factors, facilities available on campus, teaching-learning environment and resources, personal habits of students, and institutional-related factors significantly affect the academic achievement of students in the university

Conclusion

The academic achievement of students in the university is influenced by various factors. The findings of the study highlight the significant factors that affect student's academic performance and contribute to enhancing the quality of education at university. Home-related factors have a positive impact on students' academic performance. The study identified that the facilities provided by the campus are a significant factor influencing students' academic performance. The teaching-learning environment, methods, resources, students-friendly environment, and positive teacher-student relationships were key contributors to students' academic success. Personal attributes and behaviors contribute to students' overall educational achievement. Teacher-related factors were identified as significant factors impacting students' academic performance. In conclusion, this study reveals the multifaceted nature of factors affecting the academic performance of students in community campuses of the Tanahun district. The study provides valuable insights for educators, policymakers, and institutions to improve the academic achievement of students. However, knowledge limitations, specifically the study's confinement to the

University of Nepal, particularly community campuses in the Tanahun district, may limit the generalizability of the findings to other contexts.

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Searching for Performance Accountability in Higher Education: A Case Study

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Abstract

Accountability is vital in ensuring universities to provide top-notch education to their stakeholders in higher education. Therefore, it is imperative to examine how universities can achieve intended performance accountability. The study analyzes the performance accountability of higher education, considering core, essential, and supporting components to meet stakeholder expectations. Based on the case study design, the data were collected through semi-structured interviews with stakeholders and secondary sources. The study sample was selected through the purposive sampling method, i.e., the University Authority, the Campus chief, three chairpersons of the subject committee, the president of the Professor Union Unit, the Coordinator of the Self-Evaluation Committee, and four faculties. After analyzing the data, it has been concluded that in order to achieve performance accountability in higher education, it is essential to manage the learning process effectively, have a strategic implementation plan, prioritize leadership, and adhere to accountability processes. These crucial elements are key to creating a successful learning environment, improving the quality of education, and ensuring accountability in the higher education sector. I claimed that the seed capital model is developed to enhance quality education by increasing higher education performance accountability. The study findings can help University officials and faculties improve education quality and policy formulation. Additionally, this study contributes to the existing literature on the institutional process and achieving accountability in all components of higher education.

Keywords: Performance accountability, learning process, faculties, seed capital, quality education



Introduction

With the establishment of the College of Education in 2013 BS and Tribhuvan University in 2016 BS, Nepal made significant strides towards developing its higher education system (Baral, 2016). Over the past decade or more, accountability in higher education has become a major national issue. This has been driven by the escalating costs of college, disappointing retention and graduation rates, employers' worries about graduates lacking the expected knowledge and skills in the workplace, and concerns about the value and learning provided by higher education to students. Recent research confirms that teachers' knowledge and skills are the most critical factors for successful student learning (Darling-Hammond, 1998; Rowe, 2003).

Accountability is being responsible and answerable for meeting established goals and expectations. Experts on accountability generally concur that it is the "answerability for performance" (Romzek, 2000, p.22) or "the obligation to report to others, to explain, to justify, to answer questions about how resources have been used, and to what effect" (Trow, 1996, p. 310). Both Romzek and Trow add to these definitions by asking: Who is accountable, for what, to whom, and how? It is the employees of an organization who contribute to its success through their hard work. When given tasks and authority, individuals become accountable for their work. Similarly, According to Bovens (1999), officials are held responsible for their behavior under the law or code of ethics. In a democratic government, accountability and transparency play a crucial role. Likewise, Pushpanadham (2020) claims that accountability involves ensuring that one's actions meet the standards and expectations set by a responsible body or agency. Likewise, Levin (1974) illustrated four concepts of accountability. Firstly, accountability is performance reporting, which focuses on the objective of education or institutions and outcomes. Secondly, accountability is a technical process that includes an educational delivery system and evaluation. Thirdly, accountability is a political process that indicates that the institution serves to fulfill the goals of particular groups. Finally, accountability is a modification in school operations and governance systems. My focus is on accountability as performance reporting, which is closely related to performance accountability. Romzek (2000) added that it offers an insightful analysis of accountability relationships, outlining four types: hierarchical, legal, professional, and political. It's exciting to explore these different types and understand their implications.

As Leveille (2006) emphasizes a new concept of accountability, the first focuses on performance, and others are regarding transparency and cultural evidence. The primary focus of institutional accountability is now results-driven, which is a significant change from the emphasis on inputs and processes of the past. This shift

in accountability aligns with the evolution of quality assurance in various fields, such as business and medicine. Accreditation has adapted to this change by prioritizing institutional performance. Many regions now emphasize the importance of presenting evidence of student learning outcomes during accreditation reviews. Likewise, Macheridis and Paulsson (2021) revealed five dynamic change categories discussed in the past two decades: efficiency, market orientation, governance, technology and quality. At the same time, the content, the focus and the direction of accountability in these categories have also changed during the period studied.

In the context of Nepal, the policy suggests forming a Quality Accreditation Assurance (QAA) Board to oversee QAA activities. While the University Grants Commission (UGC), Nepal currently performs this function, it is not mandatory. To obtain a QAA certificate, higher education institutions must submit a Self-Study Report (SSR) containing details about their institutional position, internal policies, management, curriculum, programs for teaching and research, and physical infrastructure (University Grants Commission Nepal, 2023). This study focuses on college performance accountability; the criteria given by the University Grants Commission (UGC) (2023) in the SSR (2023) form for the QAA certification in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and Bober (2004) are as follows: learning, curriculum, faculty, learning facilities, funding, research, management, and leadership. These components are further divided into three layers- core components (learning), Essential components (curriculum, faculty, learning facilities, funding, research), and supportive components (management and leadership).

I conducted a detailed study on the embodiment of accountability in higher education at the Constituent Campus of Nepal. This study aimed to assess the ability and dedication of HEIs to fulfill their commitments and achieve overall institutional performance. The study focused on the main components of accountability on campus with the following research questions: 1) How is performance accountability perceived and practiced in constituent Campuses of Nepal? 2) What is the status of performance accountability's core, essential, and supportive components? 3) How can the quality of higher education be increased through seed capital?

The main objective of this research study was to explore three vital aspects pertaining to performance accountability in universities. Firstly, to assess the accomplishment of performance objectives across multiple facets of the campus, such as the curriculum, faculty, learning infrastructure, funding, and research. Secondly, to analyze the attainment of the supportive components of performance, including management and leadership. Finally, to generate a model on seed capital through performance accountability for enhancing quality education in higher education.

Literature Review

In higher education, accountability systems involve gathering and analyzing input, process, and outcome data. This information is shared with educational leaders, policy makers, and other stakeholders to aid in decision-making within and outside the higher education community. The relationship between accountability and accreditation processes is being reevaluated to propose new approaches. In order to promote public confidence, policymakers and educators must prioritize accountability procedures and manage relationships among participants, objectives, resources, benchmarks, and consequences (Leveille, 2006).

Determining the responsible party for a program may appear insignificant, but the hierarchy of authority has a substantial influence. It is imperative to contemplate how performing management control placement will impact the result. One potential solution is to create a specialized department that administers program execution across all public entities (Peters, 2007).

Huisman and Currie (2004) conducted a study on the influence of accountability on higher education policies in Europe and the United States. The study examined how accountability was implemented in four universities and how it affected the quality of education. The authors found that a shift from professional to political accountability, which included softer mechanisms, positively impacted the quality of education. Further, Huisman (2020) stated that higher education institutions face greater scrutiny and are required to provide explanations for their actions and accomplishments. Governments rely on quality assurance and performance indicators, but these may not always be reliable or valid.

Abadie-Mendia (2013) explored how a Southeast US university holds itself accountable for the quality of its undergraduate professional programs and graduates' success. Through 16 interviews with program, college, and administrative participants, the study found that educational quality was substantiated based on performance measures specified by internal and external stakeholders. However, the accountability process varied from program to program, and meeting the demands was challenging due to conflicting demands and limited resources. Semyonov and Platonova (2017) studied the accountability of higher education institutions (HEIs) in five countries: Brazil, Canada, Italy, Portugal, and Russia. The study examined national frameworks and their implementation, focusing on performance-based evaluation and funding. The study reflected on the outcomes and provided recommendations to policy-makers, researchers, and practitioners.

Khanal (2019) studied Nepali community schools and provided evidence that a head teacher's accountability in managing resources can create paradoxes.

He argued that due to the focus on market-based accountability, the head teacher's responsibility could shift between two contradictory goals: providing service and promoting dominance over other school community members. Similarly, Pushpanadham (2020) classified into two main categories: Macro and Micro Accountability. Additionally, the author describes three types of accountabilities - Administrative, Financial, and Academic. For teaching faculty, academic accountability encompasses Professional, Legal, and Student Learning Accountability.

Accountability indicators have varying effects and are interconnected. Performance-based accountability systems are crucial for evaluating higher education teachers. These systems promote self-sustaining institutions and knowledge sharing. Teachers can use these indicators to adjust to the evolving needs of students, businesses, and society (Srivastava et al., 2021).

Similarly, Shrestha (2009) stressed strategic management to improve organizational performance at the university level. Furthermore, he added that higher educational institutions are facing problems in terms of financial constraints and managerial problems in obtaining the multiple goals of the institution. Likewise, Shrestha (2022) analyzed the managerial practices at constituent and affiliated colleges through a mixed-method design, including the leadership role of the campus chief. The Study showed the variability in managerial practices at both types of colleges; however, the practices were satisfactory.

Subedi et al. (2018) studied the discrepancies in the governance system at public campuses in Nepal and their legitimacy. Transparency and accountability, the vital components of good governance, are found to be poor due to a lack of financial constraints in higher education in Nepal. Similarly, Chaudhary (2014) concluded that the learning style preferences of the graduates of public campuses differ according to their studied program, such as management, education and humanities, and gender. Based on quantitative research, Chaudhary (2017) identified that the faculties of Nepal's public campuses are satisfactory in their performance. However, the experiences and gender of the faculties don't matter in job satisfaction.

The aforementioned literature shows that various scholars have studied vivid types of accountabilities regarding foreign Universities, such as Asian Universities, European Universities, and American universities. Al Kadri (2015) has studied performance accountability in Indonesian universities; however, university-level and college-level studies are lacking at the University level except at the school level regarding performance accountability in Nepal. Thus, I have adopted Kadri's components, including Bober (2004) and SSR indicators (2023) of the UGC, Nepal,

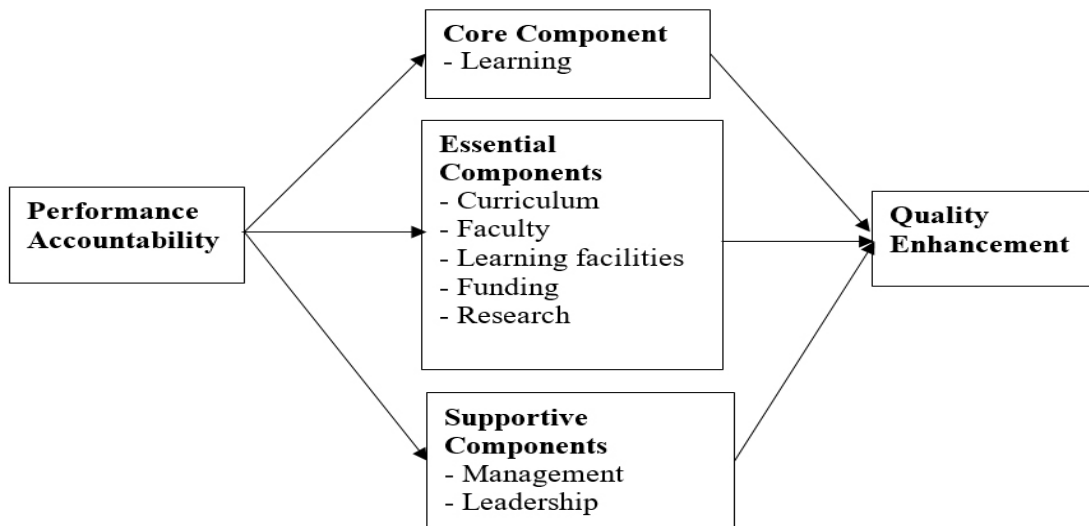
to explore the performance accountability situation in the constituent college of Nepal.

Methods and Procedures

Research on performance accountability in higher education suggests that educational administration can benefit from more in-depth studies to solve problems related to the performance of higher education institutions. A qualitative research method following the case-study design was considered the most appropriate approach to achieve this. In order to gain a more detailed understanding of performance accountability in higher education in Nepal, researchers reviewed the university's eight main components: learning, curriculum, faculty members, learning facilities, funding, research, management, and leadership. The researchers conducted a qualitative study using the case study method, which provided a detailed description and analysis of how the university adheres to the process and achieves the objectives of performance accountability in each of these components.

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework



Note: Components of the performance accountability are adopted from (Al Kadri, 2015), (University Grants Commission Nepal, 2023) and (Bober, 2004).

Sources of the data in this study were obtained through semi-structured interviews from primary subject items, namely stakeholders (official): University authority, the Campus Chief, Three Chairperson of the subject committees, four faculties, the president of the Teacher Union Unit, and the Coordinator of the Self-Evaluation Committee. Similarly, Subject Documents, i.e., some documentation

that corresponds. Before being analyzed, the data and information were classified according to the research question. Data analysis was performed through three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion and verification.

Results and Discussion

Until now, the University of Nepal has been strongly committed to education and education as a philosophical foundation. Moreover, the philosophical framework used in developing educational and non-educational personnel in university education is closely related and consistent with the philosophical foundations of national education because colleges are an integral part of national education.

Accountability in Core Component (Learning)

In the core components, accountability in the learning process is considered. For this, the University and constituent campuses have their own strategic plans in which clearly defined goals and objectives of the college are stated. In this regard, the newly appointed campus authority expressed that “our campus has formulated vision, mission, and goals through the rigorous and engaged workshop, seminar and interaction with stakeholders, feeder campus, teaching, and non-teaching staffs, students as well.” The college has formulated a vision, mission, and goals as its guiding principles. The college makes plans on the basis of vision and mission and carries out the activities, stepping on the goals and objectives. The college prepares its strategic plan on the basis of a previously formulated Vision, Mission, and Goals. Each constituent college is guided by the principle of making it an educational destination with its comprehensive and integrated learning network. As Chaudhary (2014) indicates, there are four dimensions and six sub-dimensions of the learning preferences of college students and their faculty. Among them, 83% of students were active learners, whereas 17% were reflective learners. In addition to this, the teaching subject committees, the campus authority that governs the day-to-day affairs of the institution, frequently evaluate the pre-defined job responsibilities of departments, units, and individual staff. The teaching subject committee is responsible for evaluating the regularity and punctuality of its personnel, faculty, and non-teaching staff. The committee also evaluates the engagements of faculty members and students in research activities and extension programs.

The sampled constituent college has been carried out to maintain consistency of teaching and learning with the academic goals and objectives, such as the conduction of all the classes based on the operational calendar and work plan of the university, but in case of weak students need based classes are also managed by the college. However, internal evaluations of the semester-based programs do

not address the norms and values of the semester system effectively. For the Staff meeting, the Internal Quality Assurance Committee (IQAC) and the provisions of Monitors and sub-monitors in the college shows the strengths but all these wings are not accountable in the quality enhancement of education in terms their terms of references provided by the college and University. Moreover, all the supportive wings created for the quality improvement takes time for the institutionalization as prescribed by the UGC.

Accountability in Essential Components

Curriculum

Five years ago, sampled college provided no input or feedback on the university's curriculum. After becoming the constituent campus, faculty members are involved in the draft committee of the curriculum development and the revision of the curriculum. As the Campus Authority claimed, "I am working as a coordinator of the subject committee of marketing subject for Bachelor's degree." Similarly, the chairmen of the subject committees added, "Three faculties are the coordinators of the draft committee of curriculum development, and some other faculty members are working as a member of that committee." (Personal Communication, 2023 a translated version). Some courses, like English in the first and second semester of the Bachelor's degree, are new, and others are revision only. The faculties of the sampled College write the textbooks of the courses of many semesters as co-authors and single authors. Phuyal (2023) claims that a market-focused program with revised courses and curriculum is necessary to reform higher education in Nepal.

None of the data is recorded in the official records. However, the campus IQAC is the central mechanism to monitor and control academic activities within the institution. They occasionally hold meetings to discuss the feedback received from academic peers and employers. Similarly, departments under each Faculty/Institute have meetings to critically discuss the feedback of its faculty, students, and experts. Some were obtained from the complaint boxes placed at different locations of the institutions, but they are rare.

The campus has maintained good networks with industries, financial institutions, law firms, and local government agencies as prescribed in the curriculum. The campus sends its students to these institutions for internship programs. For instance, the campus works closely with the Banks and other local financial institutions. This network has provided college students with hands-on training for future placements. Besides, the Curriculum of B.Ed. provides practice teaching in the eighth semester by which the college and feeder school have good relations. The college called the head-teachers of the particular schools selected by

the students in the college for the interaction on practice teaching of the students. Faculty A emphasized that “There is the provision of Practice teaching head who coordinates with the head-teachers of the schools and the student-teacher of the college for practice teaching.” In this way, the students get the opportunity to learn practical knowledge in the schools during six weeks. As Chaudhary (2017) claims, the faculties of the community campuses are generally satisfied with their job, and 70% of teachers consider teaching as an exciting job. Thus, the aforementioned networking activities provide evidence of performance accountability in terms of the component i.e., curriculum.

Additionally, imparting moral and ethical values is one of the campus’ mottoes. Yoga is a complete teaching that maintains physical, mental, and emotional balance. It also teaches how to live a blissful life. The students are engaged in Yoga in collaboration with local organizations. Students participate voluntarily in such programs. The campus conducts some programs in collaboration with different governmental and non-governmental organizations.

Besides various elective options, sampled college proposes running supplement programs for particular faculty and subjects. Computer Training, Marketing and Salesmanship Training, Leadership Training, and Entrepreneurship Training are the proposed focused programs of the campus from 5 years before. However, today, a curriculum for non-credited computer courses has been developed and implemented in the institution.

The college has realized the necessity of civic responsibility among the students. Therefore, the campus has been conducting different activities to enhance civic awareness as a Faculty of Humanities and education since its establishment in various forms of entertainment. The campus authority stated, “We have a sub-committee, named ‘public relation center,’ launched following programs in the scheduled action plan in collaboration with various institutions.” The college practiced some activities regarding co-curricular and extra-curricular activities according to the annual plan, such as the students and faculties involved in the flood victims support program, Blood donation program, involvement in various social organizations and participation in social welfare and development program. However, many other huge funding programs can’t be conducted by the college due to the financial constraints. Such type of activities conducted by the sampled college clarifies the degree of performance accountability regarding the one component i.e., curriculum.

Faculty (Members of Faculty)

Faculties are encouraged to create work plans, unit, and lesson plans during

staff meetings, department meetings, and subject committee meetings. The college evaluates teachers' performance based on their academic activities, including their teaching plan. Creating a work plan has proven helpful in ensuring that courses are completed on time. During staff meetings, department meetings, and subject committee meetings, teachers are encouraged to create semester-wise work plans, unit and lesson plans. The college evaluates teachers' performance based on their academic activities, including their teaching plan. Creating a work plan has proven helpful in ensuring that courses are completed on time. The Chairperson of teaching subject committee 'A' said, "Most of the faculties of our department submit the work of their subjects to this committee, but 2/3 of the faculties are not sincere on this provision." Further, he added, "Those faculties who don't make work plans complete their course in additional time." Faculties are observed and monitored by the subject committees and Campus authority.

The campus follows the teaching calendar of the university. The teachers must follow the University's calendar and complete the course on time. The college also prepares its own operational calendar based on the University calendar every semester. The administration monitors the implementation of the academic calendars and corrects them if needed. If the teaching hour allocated in the institution's academic calendar is insufficient, the campus runs extra classes to complete the course on time. The campus offers incentives for extra classes. However, Subedi et al. (2018) concluded that the perception of teachers toward their career development is gloomy due to workload variations and their recruitment process among public campuses in Nepal.

The campus believes that the lecture method still dominates the classrooms, but things have changed since the institution started working on the QAA cycle. The campus has now realized that the teachers should be encouraged to use other teaching methods, especially using technologies and newer methods that are learner-oriented, such as using multimedia and social media, team teaching, group discussion, seminar presentations, demonstrations, field visits, and so on as chairperson of the teaching subject committee 'B' expressed, "All the faculties have laptops provided by the college for the capacity enhancement of the faculties and for the teaching-learning phenomena. Also, we have created a semester-wise messenger group for providing our teaching notes." Similarly, faculty 'C' added, "I provide my lecture notes to the students through a messenger group I created." The teaching-learning strategy using social media in the college is increasing daily. However, teachers were not trained in technology and their uses in classroom teaching in 2015 (Chaudhary, 2015). The faculty members who aren't literate in technology are also beginning to learn basic technology.

The college follows the University's policy and regulations for recruiting teaching and non-teaching staff. However, Bhattarai et al. (2021) concluded that there is a lack of accountability, transparency, and professional mentors in selecting and promoting the faculties in higher education in Nepal. The sampled college has no formal and written provision about the self-appraisal method to evaluate the performance of the faculties; however, the teachers prepare and administer a set of questionnaires to be fulfilled by the students to get information about his/her teaching. It has been done at the end of each academic program. The respective teacher analyzes information received from the students, and the final report is submitted to the campus chief. The finding becomes one of the criteria for evaluating performance and rewarding. Besides this, the college follows the self-appraisal method to evaluate the performance of the faculty teaching, research, and publication in addition to the education qualification. Thus, faculties are loyal to their academic performances.

Learning Facilities

After new intake students get admitted into the academic programs, they are given orientation programs on the nature, objectives, and contents of the courses and academic programs offered to them. Even at the time of admission, the students are given counseling individually regarding the scope of the course as per their academic record and background. Usually, the elective courses are offered in the second year or semester onwards, so the students are advised of their classes. Overall, the student counseling and consultancy services under the counseling division look after the case of assessing the student's needs and aptitudes for the selection of courses. The sampled college has appointed one of the faculty members as a counselor to assess students' needs and aptitudes for a course.

The college has provided package classes to prepare for the final examination, especially for academically weak and disadvantaged students. University Grants Commission has been supporting this package. The respective departments analyze the results of internal and final examinations and recommend extra classes after the internal examination.

Besides other materials, faculties use audio-visual teaching aids to promote teaching-learning activities. The college has 40 laptops, 18 projectors, and a tripod to present audio-visual classes using PowerPoint. The college pays the bill if the teachers buy other teaching aids besides the usual ones.

The students are oriented to the program evaluation system, codes of conduct and other relevant institutional provisions and requirements with the help of a prospectus and annual calendar distributed at the time of admission. All teachers are involved in orientation classes in the first day of the new classes. Sometimes,

external experts are also invited to take orientation and motivational classes. A separate counselor is appointed for the purpose of orienting the students. General and specific orientation programs are given to the students.

Entrance test is conducted at the beginning of each academic year. Prospectus and annual calendars are distributed to the students at the time of filling out the form for the entrance test. Students are informed at the time of the entrance test about the fee structure, provision of scholarships, sent-up test, internal assessment, class time, uniform, the compulsion of bringing identity cards every day, and other college conduct codes.

The college invites scholars/experts of different subjects from different universities to provide wider exposure to students. Although inviting the guest faculty is not regular, they are invited after need analysis of the teachers and students. As the college has been running a master's degree in Education, Management, and Humanities, the teachers need more exposure and resources. Therefore, as chairperson of the teaching committee 'C,' "I noticed that experts are invited frequently to fulfill the needs of the teachers and students. Faculty members agreed with these facts as described in the written document of the College". Inviting guest lecturers from other universities is not enough to develop the learners. In this regard, Phuyal (2023) suggests that after the reformation of a focused curriculum, graduates will be more competent and market-demanded manpower in the near future.

Funding

The University distributes funds to its constituent colleges, allocating budgets across various sectors such as teaching and learning facilities, research, curricular and extracurricular initiatives, and infrastructure development. The college contributed to academic research, pedagogical, and infrastructure funding based on the allocated budget. The college has installed software in the library, administration, exam, and account sections, i.e., Pathshala software. The institution's chief said, 'We are also in the process of installing software for e-library.' Besides this, the College provides easy access to the internet through high-speed Wi-Fi service from the budget allocated in the pedagogical funding.

The college allocated budgets for each faculty to conduct department workshops for five years. Individual departments carried out workshops where students presented their mini-research findings, and the subject teachers provided the necessary guidance. Besides, the president of the Professors Union Campus Unit indicated that "the students of different faculties and levels are taken to educational excursions, industrial tours, and banking internships to enhance their practical knowledge" from the allocated budget in academic funding.

Moreover, the college provides study leave and certain financial support to the teachers studying for MPhil and PhD degrees. There is the budgetary provision of inviting visiting faculties and conducting exposure visits for faculties and students. As Phuyal (2023) identifies, “UGC offers capital and recurrent grants to help higher education institutions with funding.” In the matching fund of UGC and the institution, all the teaching staff have laptops, and projectors are installed in all classrooms, too, with the proper utilization of the learning facilities. However, the Chairperson of the subject committee said that “the monitoring and the evaluation of the faculties regarding the utilization of the laptops is weak in the institution.” Both Faculty ‘A’ and the chairperson of the subject committee ‘B’ claimed that “there is the lack of the initiation of the coordination with the donor agencies like local and provincial government agencies.” They have provided grants to manage drinking water and the first floor of the library building, where all the administrative bodies are functioning. In this way, the community campuses depend upon donor agencies for infrastructure and other developmental activities because of poor financial sustainability policies in Nepal’s public campuses (Subedi et al., 2018).

Research

The University has allocated the budget for research funding, based on which the college’s efforts have promoted the research culture among faculties and students. Apart from the engagement of faculty and students in research activities, the Bachelor’s and Master’s students have to be involved in project reports and thesis writing as a part of the curricular requirements of the university. The concerned departments of the campus are responsible for conducting the proposal call, proposal defense, and viva defense for the students who opt for project work and thesis writing.

The college has formed the ‘Research Management Cell (RMC)’ to promote teacher and student research activities. It organizes different seminars and workshops to encourage the students in research work. The Research RMC encourages teachers to conduct action research on teaching issues through a research program. Each year, the cell invites applications from the faculties for mini-research. The research findings are summarized through the seminar and published in its own research journal. The research management cell has been allocated a budget every year to carry out mini research by the faculties of the College. RMC coordinator, as well as the faculty of the College, has emphasized the ‘conduction of the workshop funded by the University Grants Commission.’ Further, he added that “in our request, the faculties are focused on the research-based activities for the preparation of the publication.”

Out of the total teaching staff, 41.66% (15/36) staff have been guiding the dissertation of Masters level in different departments. Moreover, teachers are also actively involved in research activities by donating to one or other organizations. The campus faculty members regularly publish the articles in local newspapers and magazines. RMC has made a policy to award faculty research projects to enhance professional development.

Accountability in Supportive Components

Management

The college has been conducting an internal assessment as policies of the University. An internal assessment was conducted for the students at the bachelor's level to monitor their overall performance periodically. The college has formed the Examination and Record Management Cell to conduct an internal examination and analyze the results. The campus administration has initiated summative as well as formative evaluation.

In the past, the analyzed data were kept in the manual form only. However, the campus has maintained a database system (Pathshala) using computers. So, the analyzed data are kept in the centralized database management system of the campus for academic purposes. The above-analyzed information is disseminated in the public domain through a website.

There is a mechanism to receive comments or feedback on the published data relating to academic and financial activities. However, the accountability and transparency of Nepal's public campuses are poor (Subedi et al., 2018). The data are published in the campus bulletin every year and the feedback and comments are collected from the stakeholders. Feedback on published data is collected by the Public Information Cell. The Public Information Cell designs questionnaires to collect responses from readers. The public information cell also collects information through the website and the Facebook comment box. The Public Information Cell collects the responses, prepares a report based on collected responses, and submits it to the Campus Chief for implementation. As Shrestha (2022) indicates, "Colleges monitor their educational activities by managing problems as they occur and after they have arisen." In the context of managing the internal fund resources, the coordinator Self Evaluation Committees and the president of the Professor Union Unit noted: "The college has managed the resources obtained from many funding resources, like grass-cutting activity, construction activities funded by NGOs and INGOs, province government, and so on." The sub-committee internally evaluates the management of internal sources, but funds from outside internal sources are utilized according to the contract between the two parties.

Leadership

The college gathers the students' experiences about the institution by developing a set of questionnaires. The questionnaire consists of both open and close-ended questions. The campus has a mechanism to evaluate the students' institutional experience while on the campus. The feedback obtained from the students is used in the future plan of the college. Recently, the campus has conducted a tracer study of its graduates.

Besides academic knowledge, the college imparts other skills for the all-round personality development of the learners. Different sports, quiz contests, poetry competitions, debates, and essay writing competitions are conducted on different occasions. Besides these, the college sends students with bachelor's degrees on an educational tour. The annual function of the campus is also celebrated. The campus sports team is sent to different local, regional, and national tournaments. All personnel, including the campus chief, agreed, "Our Campus has adopted a decentralized way of functioning as a body for various purposes." However, it has not played a lead role in any sector regarding establishing the relationship with the local and neighboring communities and local government wings. The college has formulated a 'public relations center' for societal leadership. As Shrestha (2022) indicates, "College leadership also shows emotional maturity- the ability to appreciate others' ideas- and initiative- being a self-starter." Thus, the leadership role of the campus plays a vital role in the quality of education. Similarly, Shrestha (2009) suggests that internal and external management enhances the entire quality of education in higher education.

Developing a Model for Performance Accountability in Higher Education

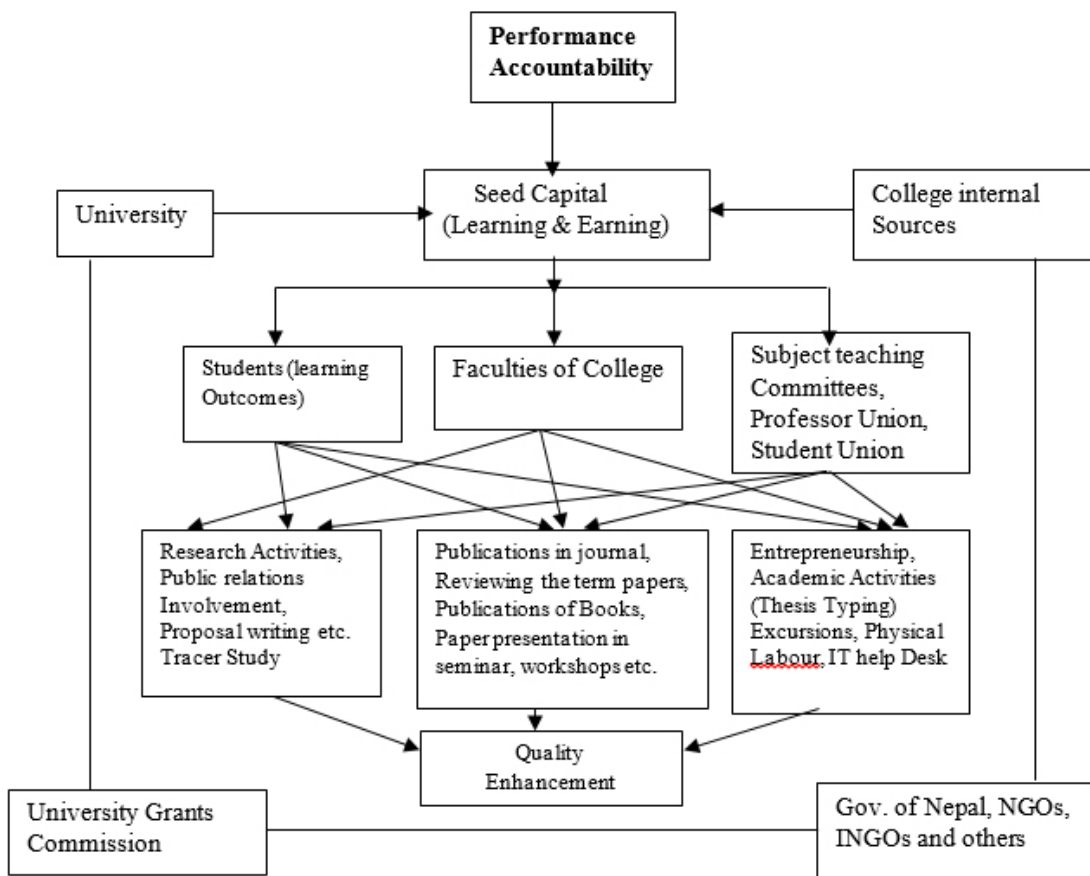
The researcher has analyzed the performance accountability of the institution depending upon criteria provided by Al Kadri (2015) and the University Grants Commission Nepal (2023). The essential components of performance accountability are curriculum, faculty, learning facilities, funding, and research, whereas the supportive components are management and leadership. Both components are responsible for the quality of the institution. Moreover, the performance of students and faculty members is influenced by various factors. As the aforementioned analysis, the sustainability of institutional performance accountability needs a sustainable plan. For the institutionalization of performance accountability, the researcher developed a model of a 'seed money plan.' According to the University authority, "the teachers should provide the seed money for the better performance in academic activities inside and outside of the classroom." Similarly, Clark (2021) states that creating a seed funding program can enhance research productivity in

institutions, especially for scholars who require preliminary data to secure external funding and assess project feasibility. When establishing a seed funding program, it is crucial to consider the recipients, their expected contributions, and how to monitor and evaluate funding outcomes. Being mindful and intentional in setting up the program is essential for its success.

Herber et al. (2017) denoted that the seed funding for this technology was obtained from the academic institution where it was invented. These benefits include expanded funding opportunities, the hiring and retaining of top entrepreneurial faculty, goal setting, entrepreneur development, economic development, and university engagement. On the basis of field study and secondary literature, the following model will be the foundation for performance accountability in higher education.

Figure 2

Model of Performance Accountability based on Seed Capital in Higher Education



Conclusion

Accountability's performance of the learning process components in college appears on student achievement (academic and non-academic), the quality of graduates, and absorption of graduates in their respective fields. Creative culture and the culture of self-learning students learned early. However, there are still problems in the process of mentoring by faculty members of the Chairperson of the teaching subject committee, which is still not running optimally, and assessment processes ignore the assessment process. In the curriculum components, Constituent has many fundamental changes. However, there are inconsistencies between the development and implementation of the curriculum; the curriculum is not entirely relevant and appropriate to the demands and needs of the user. The curriculum focuses on graduates' professional competence and new entrepreneurial education. The performance accountability component of faculty members at a sampled college is relatively effective in terms of the number and qualifications of faculty members. Accountability learning facilities at the sampled college are relatively good. Relatively adequate infrastructure, although still not ideal when viewed from the ratio of students and learning facilities. The college continues to develop human resources for intensive education personnel to manage learning facilities relative to optimal. Not all academicians obtain optimal access to learning facilities.

In addition, coordination is also required so that learning facilities can be used optimally. The college has shown high accountability in terms of funding. The status of the funding management process includes planning, admission, allocation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, reporting and accountability, and auditing with an explanation. University financing plan self-evaluation and analysis of internal and external environmental factors based on the time series of indicators and performance data accomplished in college for a certain period. The constituent campus has already applied the principle of integrated, efficient, effective, one-door policy, control, and transparency in the financing component. Accountability performance on the research component at higher education institutions is still not optimal, judging from the size of funding and lack of productivity of faculty members in conducting the research. The number of studies has relatively increased from year to year, but there is no community service involving all faculty members.

The support component consists of components of management and leadership. Performance accountability in the management component at higher education institutes steadily improved in a better direction. This is demonstrated by the high management support in the learning process, curriculum development, development of faculty members, research development, and resource allocation. The constituent college has a high commitment to aspects of leadership, regardless of the

leadership style, which shows high performance in the accountability aspect of this leadership. This is indicated by high leadership support for the component learning process, curriculum, faculty members, learning facilities, funding, and research. For this, a model on seed capital for performance accountability can enhance the quality of education at the college level by utilizing seed capital obtained from the University, internal sources, the University Grants Commission, and other agencies. It is recommended that the result of this study be applied in policy formulation at the university level and administrative body for quality education.

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Factors Associated with Anxiety and Depression among Elderly Living in Old Age Homes

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Abstract

Anxiety and depression are the most common psychological problems in older people. The older people living in older person's residential care facilities are more vulnerable. This study aims to explore anxiety and depression and associated factors of older people staying in care facilities in Nepal. This is a descriptive cross-sectional quantitative study. A total of 216 older people were recruited from Old Age Homes (OAH) of Kathmandu Valley. Anxiety was assessed using Beck Anxiety Scale and depression was assessed using the GDS-15 scale. Statistical software SPSS 23.0 was used for data entry and analysis. The mean of anxiety was 13.23 ± 6.84 . The prevalence of anxiety disorder in the study population was 8.8 % and depression disorder was 74.5%. Results show gender, marital status, religion, type of previous family, chronic illness, stress, and type of living facilities were significantly associated with anxiety. Similarly, that being male, having chronic diseases, comorbidities, and feelings of stress are related to depression. The difference was statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). Depression and anxiety were also significantly positively correlated ($r = 0.232$, $p < 0.01$). Elderly people living in care facilities had slightly low levels of anxiety and high depression. Government and residential care facilities should be aware to provide appropriate support, care, and early psychological care during the intervention for the elderly so that it will help to control anxiety depression and other health problems so that older people enjoy the quality of life.

Keywords: Mental disorders, older people, aging, stress, health problems



Introduction

Population aging refers to the increasing number of older people in the total population. As demographics continue to shift in the 21st century, the world's aging population will continue to be a focal point for many global decision-makers. Most countries worldwide have experienced population explosions, or are about to. Combining this with declining birth rates and falling mortality rates, the global senior population will continue to reach new heights (Chalise, 2006). It is estimated that by 2050, there will be 1.5 billion people aged 65 and older worldwide, more than doubling the number of individuals in this age group in the year 2020. The percentage of older people (65+) in the global population is expected to increase from 9.3% in 2020 to 16.0% in 2050, indicating that by the middle of the 21st century, one in six people worldwide will be 65 years of age or older (UN, 2020).

Mental disorders are a significant issue worldwide, with one in every eight people living with a mental disorder. Mental disorders involve significant disturbances in thinking, emotional regulation, or behavior, and can cause distress or impairment in important areas of functioning. In 2019, 970 million people around the world were living with a mental disorder, with anxiety and depressive disorders being the most common. Mental disorders are the leading cause of disability, causing 1 in 6 years lived with disability (Who, 2022). People with severe mental health conditions die on average 10 to 20 years earlier than the general population, mostly due to preventable physical diseases. COVID-19 has sparked or amplified much more serious mental health problems in some people.

Anxiety is a feeling of unease, such as worry or fear that can be mild or severe. Anxiety is a natural response to many life stressors. However, when those feelings of nervousness become overwhelming and make everyday life more difficult, it may be a sign of an anxiety disorder. Everyone has feelings of anxiety at some point in their life. Anxiety disorders can make it difficult to get through the day. According to BMGF (2019) anxiety disorders in older adults are fairly common, affecting 10% to 20% of people. However, anxiety disorders often go undiagnosed. Anxiety is found more often than depression and cognitive disorders in older adults.

Depression is another important mental disorder. In 2019, 280 million people were living with depression, including 23 million children and adolescents (BMGF, 2019). Depression is different from usual mood fluctuations and short-lived emotional responses to challenges in everyday life. During a depressive episode, the person experiences a depressed mood (feeling sad, irritable, empty) or a loss of pleasure or interest in activities, for most of the day, nearly every day, for at least two weeks. Several other symptoms are also present, which may include poor

concentration, feelings of excessive guilt or low self-worth, hopelessness about the future, thoughts about dying or suicide, disrupted sleep, changes in appetite or weight, and feeling especially tired or low in energy. People with depression are at an increased risk of suicide. Yet, effective psychological treatment exists, and depending on the age and severity, medication may also be considered.

According to the 2021 census, there are 2.97 million older adults in Nepal, a 38.2% rise from the 2011 census (Chalise, 2023). Of Nepal's total population, the older demographic made up 10.21%. The average annual population growth rate in Nepal during the past ten years has been 0.92%, while the rate for the elderly population has been 3.29%. With the increase of older people, it has also increased the number of older people suffering from mental disorders. However, the mental health related issue is not getting priority and many people may think this is not a priority issue in health as well. Some studies have focused on depression (Chalise, 2014) but the anxiety of older people is ignored. Depression and anxiety are one of the major causes that may lead to dementia and many other health problems. On an ad hoc basis, there may be around 150 thousand people suffering from Dementia, and around 20% of them, around 30 thousand may have symptoms of Alzheimer's disease in Nepal.

The purpose of this article is to explore anxiety and depression and associated factors of older people staying in OAH in Nepal.

Literature Review

On a global scale, fertility is reducing, and infant mortality is declining. As a result, everywhere life expectancy at birth is rising (Chalise, 2019). According to CBS (2014) and Chalise (2023), Nepal's elder population climbed from 6.5% in 2001 to 8.1% in 2011 and 10.2% in 2021. According to a study, the percentage of adults 65 and older is predicted to be around 13% by the year 2050 (Chalise, 2018). But Chalise (2023) argues the Proportions of older persons are increasing more rapidly than we have expected due to rapid fertility decline. Longevity and increased life expectancy can be considered as successes for socioeconomic development and public health programs. However, it also puts pressure on society to deliver the required care and uphold a high standard of living (Chalise & Rosenberg, 2019).

According to Chalise and Rosenberg (2020), seniors have weakened immune systems and are more susceptible to a variety of diseases. According to a study, 52.6% of respondents in rural areas reported having mental health issues, 14.6% had some form of physical disability, and almost three-quarters of respondents had physical health issues (Chalise & Rosenberg, 2019). Physical pain, respiratory issues, gastritis, eye issues, blood pressure, and dental issues were the most often

stated physical health issues among older adults. According to a study carried out by Chalise (2012) in Kathmandu, approximately 60% of seniors had at least one chronic illness. The prevalence of depression among the elderly is significant, according to several research (Chalise, 2014; Manandhar et al., 2019; Sharma et al., 2018). According to a study conducted in Kathmandu, depression affects the elderly who live in the community in a range of 29.7% to 65% (Chalise & Rai, 2013; Manandhar et al. 2019; Sharma et al, 2018). The prevalence of depression among elderly residents of nursing homes ranged from 47.33% to 57.8%, according to research (Chalise, 2014; Ranjan et al., 2014). Additionally, according to a research of a Kathmandu old age home, 32.4% of respondents experienced anxiety (Timalsina et al., 2014). Studies suggest that two-thirds of the elderly in Nepal experience some form of loneliness (CBS, 2014; Chaudhury, 2004; Chalise et al., 2007; Chalise, 2010). Although, the majority of older persons reside with their family members (Chalise & Shrestha, 2005; Singh et al, 2021,). Even though the majority of senior Nepalis live with family members, they frequently express feelings of loneliness. Lack of contact with children and other family members as well as a sense of neglect in the family can both contribute to feelings of loneliness (Chalise et al., 2007b). According to Chalise's book chapter from 2021, a number of elements, including social, physical, and psychological disorders, are likely to contribute to loneliness (Chalise, 2021).

Social Security

Social Security does not have a single definition that everyone agrees on. It varies from country to country. This is significantly different due to laws, cultures, traditions, and values. The basic purpose of social security is to protect people from hardship if they cannot afford their own expenses (Malakar & Chalise, 2019). It is based on the ethical principles of social justice and human dignity. treating mother as a god and treating father as a god are the norms and customary values in Nepali society (Chalise, 2006; Chalise, 2021). In Nepalese culture, growing old is still considered respectable in some social contexts. In Nepal, agriculture is the main economic sector. The majority of Nepalese workers work in unorganized industries and therefore do not receive a regular pension or pension income. In Nepal, only 7% of the elderly are retirees (Chalise & Brightman, 2006). Most elderly people depend on their families, their own money or continue to work. According to Subedi's research from 2003, a significant portion (54%) of the elderly are engaged in non-economic activities of the household. For those working in the formal sector, the Nepalese government enacted the Labor Act 2017 and the Social Security Act 2017 in 2017. However, some business sectors have not yet registered for the scheme.

The Government of Nepal has introduced universal benefits for the elderly. All those

aged 68 and over receive Rs. 4,000 (\$35) per month under this scheme. In addition, widows aged 60 and over and dalit residents of Karnali province of Nepal receive an old age allowance of Rs. 2,000 (USD 17) per month (Chalise, 2023; Chalise et al, 2022). Nepalese elders are very fond of it (Malakar & Chalise, 2019). The majority of older Nepalese are completely dependent on their children and other family members for help and care as they age (Chalise, 2021).

Methods and Procedures

This is a cross-sectional study carried out in OAH of Kathmandu Valley, Nepal. Five OAHs of Kathmandu Valley permitted this study. The census of all older people living in these OAHs was carried out. Inclusion criteria included individuals 60 years and older living at an old age home and those who were willing to participate in this study and were able to listen and give responses. Individuals who had severe psychiatric disorders as reported by the care home authority were excluded. There were 330 older people in OAHs. Around 250 older people were found eligible for this study and 240 participated in this study. However, the questionnaire was completed by 216 older people. The final sample size for this study is 216.

Ethical Consideration

Formal approval for this study was obtained from the ethics committees of the institutional Review Board of Xiang-Ya School of medicine, Central South University, and Nepal Health Research Council. Permission from the concerned authorities of different care facilities in Kathmandu Valley, Nepal was taken.

Verbal informed consent which is commonly used in Nepal (Acharya et al, 2021) was taken from each respondent after explaining the purpose of the study. Respondents' participants in the study were voluntarily and were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time without giving reason and without fear if they wish. Participants, who did not want to participate in the study, were not being forced for participate. Face-to-face interview method was used for data collection.

Measurements

General information measured in this study was age, sex, literacy status, marital status, religion, ethnicity, previous source of income, previous family type, family history of depression and anxiety, and worries regarding living at residential care facilities.

Depression was assessed using a short form of GDS-15 scale (WHO, 2017). The scale consists of 15 items. GDS (SF = 15) was the short version of the widely used Geriatric Depression Scale (GDS) (Yesavage et al, 1983). It is already used in Nepal (Chalise, 2014) with permission from the author. The score of GDS ranges

from 0-15, with a yes/no response of 15 questions. Scores of 0-4 are considered normal, depending on age, education, and complaints; 5-8 indicate mild depression; 9-11 indicate moderate depression; and 12-15 indicate severe depression. The Short Form is more easily used by physically ill and mildly to moderately demented patients who have short attention spans and or feel easily fatigued. It had good internal consistency in the study assessed by Cronbach's alpha (0.76)

Anxiety was assessed using the Beck Anxiety Inventory (BAI) (Beck et al., 1988). The scale consists of 21 items each describing common symptoms of anxiety. The respondent is asked to rate how much he or she has been bothered by each symptom over the past week on a 4-point ranging from 0-3. The items are assumed to obtain a total score that can range from 0-63. Scores between 0-21 indicate that anxiety is not present, scores between 22-32 indicate a mild level of anxiety, scores ranging from 33-48 indicate a moderate level of anxiety, and scores ranging in from 49-63 indicate an extremely severe level of anxiety. The Nepalese version of the scale has already been Validated (Kohrt et al., 2003). It has found good internal consistency in the study assessed by Cronbach's alpha (0.76).

Data Analysis

Data was analyzed through Statistic Package of Social Science (SPSS) version 23. The collected data were analyzed by using both descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, mean, Standard deviation, chi-square, cross-tabulation between the selected variables, and the Score of GDS.

Results

Table 1 presents the general characteristics of the respondents. The total 216 respondents' mean age was 74.13 years. The majority of respondents 70.4 % (152) were female and 29.6 % (64) of respondents were male. Most of the respondents 79.2 % (171) were illiterate and the minority 20.8 % (45) were literate. Regarding marital Status, 44.9 % (97) of the respondents are widows/widowers, 31.5 % (68) were unmarried and 23.6 % (51) were married. 63.9 % (138) of respondents had been staying in old aged homes for one to five years and the minority of the respondents 20(9.3%) had less than 1 year. Major respondents 51.4 percent is of the Brahmin/ Chhetri ethnic group, 44.4 percent (96) of the respondents were from Janajati, and others 4.2% which belong to Madhesi, Dalit, and Muslim. The majority of the respondents 87 % (188) were of Hindu Religion where as 13% (28 number) of respondents were Christian. Most of the respondents 125(57.9%) have no child and minority 37(17.1%) have one child. The majority of the respondent's previous family type is joint family 140 (64.8%) and 76(35.2%) respondents had a nuclear family. Agriculture 63(29.2%) is the major occupation of respondents whereas 12(5.6%)

respondents were service holders previously.

Table 1

Characteristics of Socio-Demographic Data of the Respondents (N = 216)

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
	Mean= 74.13	
60-69	66	30.6
70-79	85	39.4
>80	65	30.1
Sex of Respondents		
Male	64	29.6
Female	152	70.4
Level of Education		
Literate	45	20.8
Illiterate	171	79.2
Marital Status		
Married	51	23.6
Unmarried	68	31.5
Widow/Widower	97	44.9
Ethnic Group		
Brahmin/Chhetri	111	51.4
Janajati	96	44.4
Others	9	4.2
Religion		
Hindu	188	87
Christian	28	13
Number of Children		
No Child	125	57.9
Only one Child	37	17.1
Two or More Child	54	25
Previous Type of Family		
Nuclear	76	35.2
Joint	140	64.8
Duration of Stay		

Less than one Year	20	9.3
One to five years	138	63.9
>five year	58	26.9

Table 2 presents the health-related information of the respondents living in OAH. More than two-thirds (70.8%) of elderly were suffering from at least one chronic disease and 55% have co-morbidity. 29.6% elderly were found worried about their situation. Nearly half (49.1%) have feeling of stress. 15.7% had family history of anxiety and 15.7% had depression history.

Table 2

Health Related Information of Respondents (N=216)

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Chronic Illness		
Yes	153	70.8
No	63	29.2
Presence of co morbid		
Presence of more than one Chronic Disease	119	55.1
Presence of more than one disease	34	15.7
Presence of Worries		
Yes	64	29.6
No	152	70.4
Feeling of Stress		
Yes	106	49.1
No	110	50.9
Family History of Anxiety		
Yes	34	15.7
No	182	84.3
Family History of Depression		
Yes	34	15.7
No	182	84.3
Types of Organization		
Government	107	49.5
Non-Government	109	50.5

Status of Depression and Anxiety

The mean and standard deviation of depression in the present study was 7.55 ± 3.56 . Below table 3 shows 74.5% older people are suffering from some form of

depression. Among the total population 13.4% have severe depression, 31.0% have moderate depression and 30.1% have mild level of depression.

The mean and standard deviation of anxiety of the respondents were 13.23 ± 6.838 . 8.8% older people reported suffering from Anxiety. Among them 5.6% had mild anxiety and 3.2% had severe anxiety. No cases of severe anxiety disorder is found.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics of Depression and Anxiety and their Categories (N=216)

Depression	Frequency	Percent	Mean
Depression Situation			
Depression	216	74.5	7.55
Normal	55	25.5	2.84
Mild Depression	65	30.1	6.72
Moderate Depression	67	31	9.88
Severe Depression	29	13.4	12.97
Anxiety Situation			
Anxiety	19	8.8	13.23
Normal	197	91.2	11.77
Mild Anxiety	15	5.6	26.47
Moderate Anxiety	4	3.2	35.5
Severe Anxiety	-	-	-

Factors Associated with Depression

Table 4 and 5 shows the association between demographic social and health-related variables with depression in older people. It shows age, marital status, living duration, educational attainment, previous family type, religion, number of children, and duration of stay are not significantly associated with depression. On the other hand mean score of depression was statistically significant with sex, presence of chronic disease, presence of comorbid illness, feeling of stress and type of organization.

Table 4

Association between Socio-demographic Characteristics and Depression

Variables	Frequencies	Mean \pm SD	t-Test	F-Test	P
Gender					

Male	64	8.77±3.274	3.32		.001*
Female	152	7.04±3.564			
Educational level					
Literate	45	7.82±3.576	.573		.567
Illiterate	171	7.48±3.565			
Marital status					
Married	51	7.59±3.68		.244	.783
unmarried	68	7.31±3.826			
Window/widower	97	7.70±3.323			
Ethnicity					
Brahmin/Chhetri	111	7.22±3.47		2.238	.109
Janajati	96	7.74±3.66			
Others	9	9.67±2.95			
Religion					
Hindu	188	7.62±3.659		.582	.446
Christian	28	7.07±2.827			
Number of Children					
No Child	125	7.18±3.632		1.818	.165
Only One Child	37	7.81±3.620			
Two or More Child	54	8.25±3.291			
Previous Family Type					
Nuclear	76	7.37±3.762	-.55		.580
Joint	140	7.65±3.458			

Note: SD: Standard Deviation, *represents $p < 0.05$

Table 5

Association between Socio-health Characteristics and Depression

Variables	Frequencies	Mean ± SD	T-Test	F-Test	P value
Duration of Stay					

Less than one Year	20	7.80±3.518		.383	.682
1 to 5 year	138	7.39±3.650			
>5 years	58	7.84±3.397			
Presence of Chronic Illness					
Yes	153	8.58±3.428	1.56		.045*
No	63	7.30±3.608			
Presence of Co-morbid Illness					
Yes	119	8.53±3.740	3.43		.047*
No	34	7.22±3.135			
Worries living					
Yes	64	8.61±3.40	2.88		.004*
No	152	7.11±3.54			
Feeling of Stress among Respondents					
Yes	106	8.87±3.412	-1.28		.002*
No	110	7.21±3.690			
Types of Organization					
Government	107	7.01±3.672	1.885		.030*
Non-Government	109	8.10±3.40			

Note: SD: Standard Deviation, *represents $p < 0.05$

Factors Associated with Anxiety

Table 6 shows the bivariate analysis of anxiety with selected socio-demographic and health variables. Factors associated with Anxiety were gender, religion, education, marital status, presence of chronic illness, Place of living, and feeling of stress among respondents ($p < 0.05$). Being woman, illiterate, unmarried/widow/widower, having chronic health problems, feeling of stress and living in private institutions were positively correlated with anxiety.

Table 6*Association between Socio-demographic Characteristics and Anxiety*

Distribution		Mean \pm SD	Pearson Value	T-Test Value	F-Test Value	P value
Gender						
Male		10.05 \pm 5.035		4.709		.001*
Female		14.57 \pm 7.064				
Educational Level						
Literate		11.41 \pm 6.362		-2.009		.046*
Illiterate		13.71 \pm 6.897				
Marital Status						
Married		10.69 \pm 6.320		5.070		.007*
unmarried		13.56 \pm 7.593				
Widow/widower		14.34 \pm 6.240				
Ethnicity						
Brahmin/Chhetri		12.26 \pm 6.476		2.543		.081
Janajati		14.13 \pm 6.973				
Others		15.67 \pm 8.573				
Religion						
Hindu		12.85 \pm 7.014		4.694		.031*
Christian		15.82 \pm 4.861				
Previous Family Type						
Nuclear		13.18 \pm 7.86	-.075			.020*
Joint		13.26 \pm 6.24				
Chronic Illness						
Yes		13.90 \pm 6.745	-2.267			.024*
No		11.60 \pm 6.843				
Co-morbid Illness						
Yes		13.60 \pm 7.037	-1.836			.068
No		11.60 \pm 6.843				
Type of organization						
Private		14.03 \pm 6.907	1.116			.007*

Government		12.89±6.804			
Feeling of Stress					
Yes		15.05±6.970	-3.959		.001*
No		11.48±6.257			

Note :(1) (SD) Standard Deviation (2); *represents $p < 0.05$

Further, a positive correlation was found between Geriatric Depression Scale and Beck Anxiety by Pearson Correlations $R=0.232(p=0.001)$ and had significance relationship among the factors with $P < 0.01$. It is not shown on the table.

Discussion

Depression

This study found the prevalence of depression was 74.5%. Previous studies from Nepal found the prevalence of depression is generally quite high among institutionalized older people and it is higher than 50% in institutional settings in Nepal (Chalise, 2014; Chalise, 2021; Chalise & Basnet, 2017).

This study further found, being male, having chronic diseases, comorbidities, and feelings of stress are related to depression. Many studies show women have higher depression (Chalise, 2014; Dhungana, 2020). Similarly, a study by Anbesaw and Fekadu (2020) in Ethiopia shows educational status, income, cognitive impairments, family history of mental illness, and poor quality of life were significantly associated with depression. Further, this study shows older people living in government care facilities have lower depression compared to private care facilities. It may be due to older people's worry about managing the cost of living in private care facilities and service is accessible in government care facilities. High depression among residential care facilities may be due to a change in traditional living arrangements and increasing health-related problems (Chalise & Rosenberg, 2020; Singh et al., 2022). Traditionally older people used to live with family members and family members were responsible for care and support during old age. Due to the migration of the young generation, many older people are forced to live in care facilities (Dhital et al., 2015; Khanal et al, 2018; Rai et al, 2018). It has increased anxiety among older people about their social security. The social security system of Nepal is not well developed and is fully dependent on family members (Chalise, 2021; Chalise et al, 2022; Malakar & Chalise, 2019).

Anxiety

This study found; the prevalence of anxiety was 8.8%. Bhattarai et al. (2021) found 27.4% had anxiety whereas 13.1%, 3.6%, and 10.7% had mild, moderate, and severe anxiety respectively in a study in Kathmandu. A study from Turkey shows all types of anxiety disorder prevalence of 17.1% (Kirmizioglu et al., 2009). A previous study from Nepal shows the crude prevalence of anxiety was 22.7 % (Risal et al, 2016). The low anxiety reported in this study is not clear. The low perception of anxiety may be due to cultural differences in understanding the anxiety-related questionnaire in the Nepalese context.

Further, this study found being woman, illiterate, unmarried/widow/widower, having chronic health problems, feeling of stress and living in private institutions were positively correlated with anxiety. The feeling of anxiety is also related to social insecurity. The social security system of Nepal is not well developed and is fully dependent on family members (Chalise & Brightman, Chalise, 2021; Malakar & Chalise, 2019; Chalise et al., 2022; Khanal & Chalise, 2020). Older people living in private institutions had higher anxiety as they have to worry to pay the monthly costs but government institutions provide all the services free of cost (Suwal & Chalise, 2023).

Anxiety and depression in the elderly is a major public health challenge in many developing countries. Anxiety and depression can worsen older adults' physical health, impair their ability to perform daily activities, and decrease their sense of well-being. This study found more than 70% older people have chronic diseases. Therefore, the older people living in these OAHs are more vulnerable to anxiety and depression.

On the other hand, In Nepal, the elderly population is growing rapidly (Chalise, 2006, Chalise, 2020, Chalise, 2023). Since fertility is declining rapidly (Chalise, 2023) it suggests a trend to further increase in the coming days (Chalise, 2023; Chalise, 2018). Studies show that older adults are susceptible to different types of diseases as they age (Chalise & Rosenberg, 2020). With the rapid increase in the number of elderly people, Nepal is likely to face social, demographic, economic, health, and aged care challenges in the coming days (Chalise, 2023). Further, the number of older people suffering from anxiety and depression will also increase in the coming days.

Studies in Nepal show that the long-established culture and traditions of respecting older people are eroding day by day (Chalise, 2021; Khanal & Chalise, 2020). Younger generations move away from their birthplace for employment opportunities elsewhere. Consequently, traditional living arrangements are changing (Pandit & Chalise, 2023; Singh et al., 2021). Many older people are living either with a spouse, alone, or in an institution (Khanal et al., 2018; Rai et al., 2018), and are vulnerable to mental problems like depression, loneliness, and many other physical diseases (Chalise & Khanal, 2021; Chalise et al., 2007; Chalise, 2014; Chalise & Lamsal, 2017; Chalise & Paudel, 2020; Suwal & Chalise, 2023; Maharjan et al., 2018; Mishra & Chalise, 2019). This study has focused on the situation of older people's depression living in different care facilities. This study found; the prevalence of depression was 74.5%. Previous studies from Nepal found the prevalence of depression is generally quite high among institutionalized older people and it is higher than 50% in institutional settings in Nepal (Chalise, 2014; Chalise, 2021; Thapa et al., 2018).

A study from India has found that the mental health status of the older people living in a family is better than institutionalized (Ashis, 2016). In Nepal, many older people want to live with family members, but the out-migration of young people has resulted in institutionalized. The elderly are unable to maintain their land and home duties because young family members frequently move from rural to urban areas or abroad (Dhital et al., 2015). In Nepal, practically all old people want to live with their families despite the embarrassment this causes. Due to the young leaving the family, parents who are left at home alone now feel isolated and alone. Generally, older people do not feel happy living in the absence of their children and may have anxiety and depression. The culture of living in the institution is not well developed. A study shows elderly living in Private institutions have better health than government institutions (Mishra & Chalise, 2019a; Mishra & Chalise, 2019b). On the other hand, the social security system of Nepal is not well developed (Malakar & Chalise, 2018; Chalise et al., 2022) and Nepal may face further problems in maintaining healthy aging (Chalise, 2022; Chalise, 2023), reducing anxiety (Pakwan & Chalise, 2023), and the quality of life of Nepalese older people (Joshi et al, 2018; Joshi & Chalise, 2021).

Conclusion

Anxiety and depression in older people are increasing public health concerns. This study shows the prevalence of depression is high among older people living in OAHs but the prevalence of anxiety (8.8%) seems not so bad. Results show gender, marital status, religion, type of previous family, chronic illness, stress, and type of living facilities were statistically significantly associated with anxiety. Further, this study found the prevalence of depression was 74.5%. This study further found, that being male, having chronic diseases, comorbidities, and feelings of stress are related to depression. With the increasing the older people and the poor social security system, anxiety and depression disorders may increase in the coming days. Government and local policymakers should formulate appropriate policies to make older people active and healthy so that they can enjoy the quality of life.

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Performance of Different Organic Fertilizers on Wheat Yield at Tikapur, Kailali

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Abstract

A field experiment was carried out to investigate the effect of different organic materials alone and in combination on the yield of wheat variety Aditya during November 2021- April 2022 in the Agronomy Field of Far Western University, Tikapur, Kailali. The study was carried out with 7 treatments viz. Farmyard manure (FYM), Vermicompost (V), Trichoderma viridae (T), FYM + V (FV), FYM + T (FT), FYM + V + T (FVT) and Control (without any organic matter) and laid out in Randomized Complete Block design with three replications. Chemical fertilizers were not used in the study. The result showed significantly higher number of effective tillers, thousand grain weight and grain yield in the treatment FVT as compared to other organic fertilizers and their combinations. But plant height was found to be the highest in FT followed by FYM. An increase of 16% and 36.29% grain yield was recorded in FVT over FT and the control respectively. Wheat grain yield from FV (2.28 t/ha) and FT (2.08 t/ha) were statistically greater than FYM or Vermicompost when applied alone. Application of Vermicompost and VT had relatively lower influence on yield attributes and yield as compared to FYM and FT. However, all the treatments were superior over the control in terms of all the yield and yield attributing traits.

Keywords: Farmyard manure, trichoderma, vermicompost, growth

Introduction

Wheat is one of the major food crops after rice and maize occupy a special place in the Nepalese diet as well as in the cropping system of Nepal. This crop contributed 5.67 % to agricultural GDP after rice (13.60 %), vegetable (13.43 %), maize (7.60 %), and potato (6.30 %) in the fiscal year 2021/22 (Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development [MoALD], 2023). Despite its contribution, the area under wheat has decreased by 12.7% as compared to the previous census.

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Among different Provinces cultivating wheat crops in Nepal, Sudurpaschim Province occupies 20.48 % of the land area under wheat after Madhesh (25.53 %) and Lumbini (22.31 %) (MoALD, 2023). Kailali district considered as a wheat super zone by the Government of Nepal has the highest productivity of 3.58 t/ha among different districts in Sudurpaschim Province. However, the average productivity of wheat in Sudurpaschim province is only 2.56 t/ha which is the lowest among all the provinces cultivating wheat (MoALD, 2023).

Different efforts are being carried out by the Government of Nepal to improve the production and productivity of wheat crops. As a result, 27% of land holdings use improved seeds, 5.9% use hybrid seeds of wheat whereas 28% of the land uses pesticides, and 59% use chemical fertilizers as a source of nutrients for improving the production of wheat in Nepal (National Statistics Office 2023). With the increasing use of modern technologies like improved seed, chemical fertilizers, and pesticides, the production and productivity of wheat have improved slightly but not enough to meet the current demands of the country. Due to limited supply of chemical fertilizers during the growing season and practice of burning crop residues after harvest, most of the farmers do not apply appropriate amount of nutrients in the soil as required. Besides, the application of organic manures is very low in the rice-wheat cropping system, as evidenced in digital soil map, which shows 1.6-2.2 % organic matter in the soil of the Kailali district. Gairhe et al. (2021) have also reported that almost 60% of soil in Nepal has low organic matter content. This indicates that current practices of nutrient management especially the application of organic manures and fertilizers are not sufficient to maintain soil productivity for sustainable food production in Nepal.

To improve soil fertility and sustain the long-term productivity of the rice-wheat cropping system, it is essential for farmers to work strategically towards integrated and efficient nutrient management. This includes continuous use of high quantities of organic manures along with bio-fertilizers and appropriate amount of chemical fertilizers. A study report revealed an increase in grain yield of both wheat and maize due to increased soil carbon content and soil microbial activities when farmyard manures were applied along with chemical fertilizers in the long run (Kaur et al., 2008). Among the various sources of organic manures viz. animal wastes, Vermicompost, compost, green manures, crop residues, bone meal, fish meals, humic acid, and bio-fertilizers used in Nepal (Acharya et al., 2020), FYM and poultry manures are commonly applied in the wheat crop at Kailali district. Nowadays, bio-fertilizers are being used as a cheaper input requiring less cost for transportation and application for improving yields of major food crops in the world. The use of *Trichoderma* for increasing resistance to fungal diseases, releasing growth-promoting

hormones (Pandey et al., 2019), and stimulating the growth of roots to favor during drought episodes in cereal crops has been recognized (Modrzewska et al., 2022), which can contribute greatly to the yield of wheat. Similarly, with the encouragement to manufacture organic fertilizers by the Government of Nepal (Ministry of Agriculture Development [MoAD], 2015), vermicompost is being promoted in many districts of Nepal by the local government as one of the best alternatives to amend soil. To improve the yields of wheat through cheaper and easily available organic fertilizers, this study aims to find the effect of different organic fertilizers and their combinations on wheat yield.

Methods and Procedures

Experimental Site

The study was carried out in the Agronomy Farm, Department of Agriculture, Far Western University, Tikapur, Kailali, Nepal during the month of November 2021 to April 2022. Geographically, it is located at an elevation of 161 meters above mean sea level on the latitude of 28°32'26" N and longitude of 81°7'26" E. Kailali district lies in Sudurpaschim Province of Nepal.

Soil and Weather

The experiment site had fluvial non-calcareous soil with the pH value of 7.32. The soil was sandy loam with 40.4% sand and 14.98% clay. The organic matter content in the soil was very low with the value of 1.85%. The soil had 0.09% nitrogen with 75.67 kg/ha and 181.54 kg/ha phosphorous and potassium respectively (NARC, 2023). During the experiment period, the temperature ranged from 10.73°C to 29.37°C with the lowest during the month of January. The average temperature during the crop-standing period was 17.91°C whereas relative humidity ranged from 23.44% to 88.75% with the highest on February and the lowest during April. Site received a total precipitation of 154.22 mm with an average of 0.85 mm during the field experiment. Likewise, the crop received rainfall of 26.46 mm on February 4th, which was the highest during the growth period (NASA, 2023).

Experimental Setup

The experiment was carried out in Randomized Complete Block Design (RCBD) with seven treatments consisting of organic fertilizers and their combination on yield and yield attributes of wheat crop as shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Treatment Details

Treatments	Formulation
Farmyard manure (FYM)	6 ton/ha

Vermicompost (V)	2.47 ton/ha
Farmyard manure + Vermicompost (FV)	6 ton/ha + 2.47 ton/ha
Farmyard manure + Trichoderma (FT)	6 ton/ha + 2ml per kg FYM
Vermicompost + Trichoderma (VT)	2.47 ton/ha + 2ml per kg Vermicompost
Farmyard+Vermicompost+Trichoderma (FVT)	6 ton/ha + 2.47 ton/ha + 2ml per kg FYM
Control	Without any organic fertilizers

Each treatment was replicated thrice. For this, the field was laid out in 247 square meter (19 m × 13 m) area. Altogether there were 21 plots, each plot receiving a treatment was 6m². The distance between each replication was 1 meter whereas that between each treatment was 50cm. For this, the field was irrigated and ploughed with power tiller. The field was laid out one day before to sowing and harrowing was done on 27th November. For making up the treatments, locally available FYM commonly used by the farmers was collected from nearby farm and applied @6ton/ha, as recommended by Government of Nepal, whereas Vermicompost collected from campus farm was applied @2.47 t/ha. Similarly, Trichoderma viridae from Agricare Nepal Pvt. Ltd., Chitwan, Nepal with 10⁹ cfu/ml conidial suspensions was used @2ml/kg of organic manures (FYM or Vermicompost). After mixing Trichoderma for the treatments FT, VT and FVT, they were left in shade for 48 hours to facilitate mycelial growth in corresponding organic manure. The treatments were incorporated in the relevant plots as per the treatments before sowing wheat on 28 November.

Seed and Sowing

The variety of wheat crop used in this research was Aaditya. Seed was sown on 28th November, 2021. Continuous line sowing was done in rows made 25 cm apart. Thinning was done to maintain 10cm distance between each plant.

Cultural Practices

Weeding was done 25 and 50 days after sowing manually and was irrigated twice immediately after weeding. Chemical fertilizers, insecticides, fungicides, herbicides were not used, keeping in line with the organic title of the experiment. Wheat was harvested on April 4, 2022 i.e., 127 days after sowing.

Data Collection

The data on plant height (cm), spike bearing tillers, grains per spike, thousand grain weight, straw yield, grain yield were recorded at the time of harvest. The data were taken from randomly selected 10 plants for plant height, spike bearing

tillers and grains per spike whereas grain yield and straw yield were recorded from the whole plot. The data collected was tabulated and averaged for each parameter in excel sheet. Analysis of variance table was prepared for each parameters and treatments were compared using least significant difference test at 5% level of significance using the software R-studio version 4.2.1.

Results and Discussion

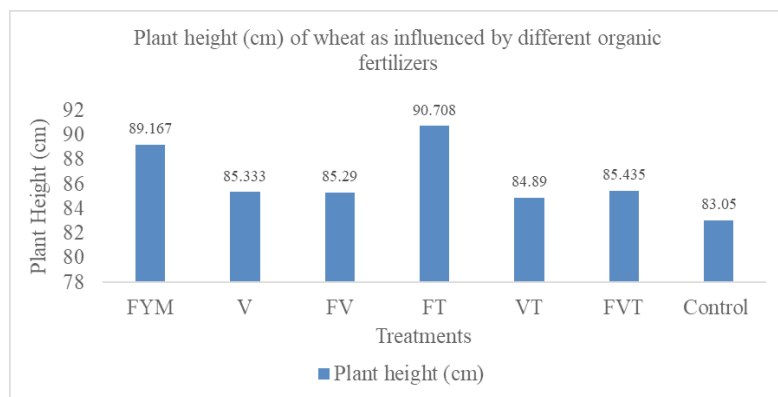
Results obtained after analysis for different parameters viz. plant height, effective tiller number, grains per spike, thousand grain weight, straw yield and grain yield under different treatments are described below.

Plant Height

Average plant height ranged from 83.05cm to 90.71cm with the tallest obtained from the treatment (FT) while plant heights of all the treatments were greater than the un amended control which stands the lowest. Significant differences in plant height was observed among different organic materials and their combinations, as shown in figure 1. The plant height was found to be the highest in the treatment FT which was 90.71cm followed by FYM with the value 89.17cm. This increase in plant height in treatment FT was 8.44% over control, which is in line with a research study on Trichoderma (Mahato et al., 2018). After FT, plant height was also good Ramin plots treated with FYM with an increase of 6.86% in height over control which is in line with a study which also revealed that application of FYM increased the growth parameters like dry matter production, leaf area index, leaf area duration, net assimilation rate and relative growth rate of wheat (Ram et al., 2011). The treatments FTV, V and FV showed slight difference in plant height,

Figure 1

Plant Height of Wheat under Different Organic Fertilizers



numerically but were statistically at par in expressing plant height. It implies that vermicompost supported in increasing plant height. This aligns with a study which showed 13.29% increase in plant height in vermicompost applied plots over un amended control (Cirka et al., 2022). Among these, VT had a slight increase in plant height by 2.167% over control. The plant height was significantly the smallest i.e., 83.05cm in the treatment control at 5% level of significance.

Effective Tiller Count

Number of effective tillers was significant ($p < 0.05$) with 101.33 m⁻² in FV, which was also the highest among the treatments and showed a 20.33% increase over control, as observed in table 1. This increase was slightly higher than FYM (16.64%) which valued to 97.167 m⁻². The observed increase in number of effective tillers due to FYM was in line with the study on wheat which showed that application of FYM significantly increased effective tillers plant⁻¹ of wheat (Ram et al., 2011). This was also supported by another study which stated as organic sources offer more balanced nutrition to the plants, especially micro nutrients which could positively affect number of tiller in plants (Mitnala, 2018). Interestingly, the treatment containing Trichoderma could not perform better in increasing tiller number as compared to farmyard manure. The treatments V, FT and VT were statistically at par in yielding the number of effective tillers m⁻² but were significantly greater than control. Although Vermicompost significantly stimulates the growth of cereals like paddy (Bhattacharjee et al., 2001) but addition of relatively less amount of Vermicompost might have failed to release nutrients sufficient enough to generate large number of effective tillers. The combination of Trichoderma with organic manures performed quite satisfactorily with increase over control which is in line with the findings from a research which revealed that FYM when combined with Trichoderma has promoted the tiller number over control (Mahato et al., 2018). The treatment control yielded the lowest number of effective tillers i.e., only 81 tillers m⁻².

Table 1

Yield and Yield Attributing Traits of Wheat under Different Organic Fertilizers

Treatment	Effective tiller (no.)	Grains per spike (no.)	1 0 0 0 grain weight	Straw yield (t/ha)	Grain Yield (t/ha)
Farmyard manure (FYM)	97.17a	51.00b	54.00abc	3.01a	2.03bc
Vermicompost (V)	82.67bc	50.66b	53.67bc	2.61ab	2.01bc

Farmyard+Vermicompost (FV)	101.33a	51.33b	58.67ab	3.06a	2.28ab
Farmyard+Trichoderma (FT)	85.00bc	49.00b	60.33a	2.82a	2.08ab
Vermicompost+Trichoderma (VT)	84.33bc	47.00b	58.67ab	2.48ab	1.97bc
Farmyard+Vermicompost+Trichoderma (FVT)	92.67ab	59.66a	60.00a	3.12a	2.48a
Control	81.00c	45.33b	50.67c	2.17b	1.58c
F-value	*	*	*	*	*
C.V.	7.09	7.82	6.37	13.12	12.25
LSD _{0.05}	11.24	7.04	6.41	0.64	0.45

* significant at 5% level of significance, treatment means followed by the same letter (s) within column are non-significantly different among each other at 5% level of significance. CV= Coefficient of variation

Grains Per Spike

The number of grains spike⁻¹ ranged from 45 to 59.66 with the lowest in control and the highest in the treatment FVT. Significantly highest number of grains per spike i.e. 59.66 was observed when all organic materials were combined together i.e., FVT at 5% level of significance. It valued 59.66 in the plots treated with FVT followed by FYM and FV which might be due to increase in all other growth parameters contributing the number of grains. All the treatments FV, F, V, FT, VT and control were statistically at par with control in yielding number of grains spike⁻¹ though numerically it ranged from 51.33 to 45.33 in FV and control respectively. FVT treated plot showed 24% increase followed by 11.6% in FV, 11% in F and 7 % in FT over control respectively. The result revealed only 10.5% increase in Vermicompost over the control in yielding number of grains per spike This result is in line with the findings by Devi et al. (2011), who reported 29.57% and 36.76% increase in wheat grains per spike in Vermicompost and (Vermicompost + PSB) over the control. In contradictory to this findings, an increase in 31.8% grains per spike was reported when FYM was applied over the control (Aatif et al., 2017).

Thousand Grain Weight

The treatments FT and FVT were statistically at par in yielding thousand grain weight, which were also the highest among the treatments recorded. The treatment FYM+Trichoderma showed an increase of 13.25% over control, slightly higher to FYM+Vermicompost+Trichoderma that is 12.77%. The treatments

FYM+Vermicompost and Vermicompost+Trichoderma didn't have much significant difference which were 11.04% and 10.79% increase over control respectively. FYM treated with Trichoderma showed the highest thousand-grain weight than FYM treated with vermicompost or Vermicompost treated with Trichoderma. FYM+Vermicompost had yielded quite good thousand-grain weight which is in conformity with a study (Ali et al., 2020). Similarly, Vermicompost when combined with Trichoderma performed significantly better than when applied alone. Positive effect of Trichoderma on size and grain yield has also been reported by (Mahato et al., 2018). 21% increase in 1000 grain weight by Trichoderma harzianum over control has been reported by Hasan et al. (2012) due to increase in vegetative growth of wheat. Similarly, FV and VT were statistically at par in yielding 1000 grain weight. It implies that performance of farmyard manure and Trichoderma were almost similar in increasing the weight of wheat grains, when combined with Vermicompost. In line with our finding, a study also reported significant increase in all the growth parameters and yield attributes except test weight when Vermicompost was applied in wheat in the first year (Davari et al., 2012).

Straw Yield

Significant differences in straw yield were observed in the plots applied with different organic materials over the control. The straw yield ranged from 3.12 to 2.17 t ha⁻¹ with the highest from treatment FVT and the lowest from the control. Straw yield from most of the treatments viz. FYM, FV, FT, FVT were statistically at par but was greater than VT and V. Straw yield from FV showed an increase of 30.44% over control followed by FYM and FT with 27.9%, 23.04% increase over control respectively. In line with our findings, an increase in 30.4% straw yield from FYM over control was reported in a study (Shah & Ahmad, 2006). Straw obtained from V and VT were almost equal with an increase of 16% and 12.5% than control but was the lowest among all other organic fertilizers and their combinations. But in contradictory to our findings, a significant increase in wheat green mass compared to control was reported in a study where vermi-extract was used singly or in combination with Trichoderma (Bubina & Tereshchenko, 2011). All the treatments containing FYM yielded greater amount of straw than without it.

Grain Yield (t/ha)

Significantly highest grain yield was observed in the treatment FVT which was 36.29% increase over the control and 8% more than FV and 16 % more than FT. The highest grain yield (t/ha) in these treatments is due to the highest number of grains per spike, bold grains (as evidenced from 1000 grain weight) and the biomass. Combination of organic matter in soil may have supported for soil micro

environment leading to increased foliage, biomass, root growth leading to increased grain yield (Yang et al., 2020). Similar improvement in grain yield due to increased organic manures was reported in a study (Wahid et al., 1998) and 29-36% increase in wheat grain yield due to use of *Trichoderma harzianum* were reported in Jaipur and Kota (Sharma et al., 2012). An increase in 22.16 % grain yield was observed in the plots applied with FYM over the control. Similar finding was reported by Singh and Patra (2017) who also reported an increase of wheat yield by 19% in FYM as compared to control, though non-significant. Grain yield obtained from FV and FT were statistically at par with the values of 2.28 tha⁻¹ and 2.08 tha⁻¹ respectively. These results revealed that increase in grain yield could be obtained when FYM is supplemented with other organic fertilizers, whether it be *Trichoderma* or Vermicompost or the combination of both. Our results corroborate with the findings by Davari et al. (2012) who found that the combination of FYM + Rice residue + biofertilisers increased the rice yield by more than 80% as compared to control. Among different organic materials used in this experiment VT and V provided significantly lower grain yield but performed better than control, which might be due to lesser number of effective tillers and thousand grain weight. Our finding is in line with the findings by Roberts et al. (2007) who also reported non-significant increase in wheat yield when Vermicompost was applied as compared to other organic manures. The treatments V and VT yielded 18.95% and 19.7% more grains than control, revealing that organic matter content supports in increasing the yield of grains. Application of *Trichoderma viridae* yielded relatively higher when combined with FYM or Vermicompost as compared to when applied single. Similar finding has been reported in rice where increase in grain yield was observed when FYM or Vermicompost were accompanied by biofertilisers and wheat residue (Davari & Sharma, 2010). In contradictory to our findings, a 10-fold increase in yield for tomato plants was observed when water-extractable fraction of Vermicomposts enriched with *T. virens* was applied when compared to the control (Dos Santos Pereira et al., 2021).

Conclusion

Combination of one or more organic materials increased the yield of wheat significantly, under organic condition, but is not sufficient enough to achieve the potential yield of the variety. FVT proved to be superior in most of the yield attributes and yield among all the organic fertilizer and their combination. However, wheat yields were comparable with FV and FT but reduced grain yields were obtained from the treatments FYM, Vermicompost, and VT, indicating that 'FYM' if supplemented with other organic fertilizers though at small amount could statistically improve the grain yield. Similarly, *Trichoderma* when combined with FYM showed

significantly better effect in terms of yield attributing traits and yield as compared to its combination with vermicompost or when Vermicompost applied alone. So, application of Trichoderma with different organic manures could be one of the best alternatives to improve grain yield to some extent in wheat at different locations in far western region. At the same time, this study suggests similar field experiments at different locations but with recommended dose of chemical fertilizers for broader applicability of this research.

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Risk Perception and Protective Health Measure Regarding COVID-19 among Nepali Labour Migrants' Returnee from India

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Abstract

Thousands of Nepali migrant workers returned home from India due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. This cross-sectional study examines the association between risk perception and protective behaviour regarding COVID-19 in returnee migrant workers. The study used opportunistic sampling and 384 participants, based in a quarantine center on return from India, volunteered. Using the health belief model (HBM) as a theoretical framework, a structured interview questionnaire was designed and applied as the key data collection tool. Three health workers were interviewed face-to-face. The study showed that the perceived risk of COVID-19 among participants was medium to low. Participants perceived few barriers and had low self-efficacy levels compared to other constructs. This study further showed that participants were more likely to follow a range of protective health behaviours, but not found all. The

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study revealed a significant association between all risk perception constructs and protective behaviours ($p < 0.05$). This study accordingly highlighted a significant relationship between the respondents' risk perception level and protective health behaviours. The study envisaged that public awareness of risk to the people who returned from India is essential to increase risk perception during the outbreak.

Keywords: Pandemic, migrant worker, preventive behaviour, relationship, risk perception

Introduction

There is still a lot of misunderstanding about COVID-19 (Semple & Cherrie, 2020). The pandemic first appeared in late 2019 in Wuhan China, followed by various variants across the globe. For example, a variant was discovered in southeast England in September 2020 and has since spread to at least 114 countries (Davies et al., 2021). On May 4th, 2021, there were 19,346,442 confirmed active cases worldwide and 343,418 cases in Nepal (Worldometer, may 4 2021) later was in its second wave, and the third initial stage of COVID-19 in varied form.

Public awareness campaigns aimed at changing the public's view of health and safety threats (Gaube et al., 2019). The perception of a health hazard is the most evident pre-requisite motivation to change risk behaviours (Renner et al., 2008). Perceived risk is a complex and multifaceted concept that influences a wide range of health behaviours and decisions, but it is often misunderstood (Waters et al., 2013). A person's ability to determine his or her level of risk is referred as risk perception. Higher risk-taking can result from an inability to accurately perceive risk. Studies of risk perception look at what people say when they're asked to describe and rate dangerous behaviours in a variety of ways (Slovic et al., 1982). It refers to people's reactions, logic, reasoning and scientific thought on the subject of danger and risk management (Slovic & Peters, 2006). Many health behaviour change theories include risk perceptions as a threat, and health behaviour change strategies often target risk perceptions as a threat (Ferrer & Klein, 2015).

Health Protective Behaviour (HPB) is an activity that is related to lowering risk factors and negative health effects as well as promoting a healthier lifestyle. HPB explains people's behaviours to protect from COVID-19 (Harris & Guten, 1979). Physical separation, wearing a mask, keeping rooms well-ventilated, avoiding crowds, washing face, and coughing into a bent elbow or tissue are PHB-related to COVID-19 (WHO, 2019) for maintaining health and preventing disease (Krick & Sobal, 1990).

Thousands of Nepalese manual workers are throughout India (Kansakar et al., 2021). Among them, more than 20 thousand people suffered from COVID-19 (Kayakairan (6 pm), may 5, 2021). After the second wave of COVID-19, most

Nepalese people got back home from several parts of India (My Republica, April 3, 2021). The safe rescue of these people was impossible due to the high prevalence of COVID-19 in the region. The rapid increase in the number of cases and the seriousness of the disease are all signs of a pandemic sweeping India (Kansakar et al., 2021). Nepal is facing a similar increase to India (Basnet, 2021). Migrant workers were more likely vulnerable to the infection than other job holders, as a result, the disease is dreadfully speeding in the community (ILO, 2020; Singh et al., 2020). A remarkable number of Nepalese people have migrated to India in search of jobs from Karnali Province has a higher proportion (CBS & ILO, 2019) and the most susceptible to a pandemic (Chalise, 2020). So, it's crucial to assess and make authentic data on people's understanding and perceptions of safety precautions during the pandemic (Singh et al., 2020).

The lower the degree of protective health behaviour displayed, the lower the perception of risk associated with COVID-19. Thus an individual's risk of infection in a pandemic is affected by both their behaviour and their perception of risk (Barrios & Hochberg, 2020). Awareness and protective actions were positively correlated with risk perception. To encourage protective behaviours, proper risk communication is essential (Asefa et al., 2020). The Government of Nepal (GoN) has taken several preventive measures in response to the danger of COVID-19 transmission (Asim et al., 2020). But these are not sufficient to control the pandemic.

Numerous studies have shown that as the second wave of COVID-19 spreads around the globe. Thousands of Nepali migrant workers in India returned home as a result of the lockdown in both India and Nepal, making them one of the most vulnerable groups to spread COVID-19. Migrants are particularly vulnerable, and many of them are spreading diseases back to their home towns, resulting in a rise in cases in specific areas. To our knowledge, no studies have been found on migrant populations' risk perception and protective health behaviour. This paper intends to examine the risk perceptions and protective behaviours of migrant workers who have recently returned from India and residing in a quarantine centre in Nepal.

Methods and Procedures

Research Design and Sample Population

A cross-sectional study design of quantitative research was conducted with 384 Nepalese migrant workers, who had returned from India and stayed in the Quarantine Center in Birendranagar, Surkhet of Nepal, between July to October 2020.

Sampling

Opportunistic sampling was used; three health workers working in this quarantine centre were recruited for the study for the data collection. Before data collection, they were trained in three hours of theoretical and practical classes regarding research methods that include; data collection, ethical issues, confidentiality, anonymity, reliability, and accurate data collection.

Data Collection Tools

Of the many theories related to explaining risk perception and health behaviour studies, the Health Belief Model (HBM) is one of the most commonly used models (Glanz et al., 2008). Using the HBM, a structured questionnaire was designed and applied as a key data collection tool. It asked for participants' details, perceptions and preventive behaviours. The personal profile of the participants included their cast, age, gender, education, and health status as a modifying factor. A total of 15 items were included in the protective behaviour category as health action (Fertman & Grim, 2010). PHB responses were dichotomous; yes, or no with 1 point given for each correct answer and 0 for each incorrect answer. The items were created using the World Health Organization's health protocols (WHO, 2019).

The responses to the risk perception were collected using 5 levels of Likert scale data which consisted; of strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), non-decided (3), agree (4), and strongly agree (5). Twenty-seven items are formulated based on individual beliefs or constructs of the HBM such as perceived susceptibility, severity, benefit, barriers, self-efficacy, and cues to actions (Fertman & Grim, 2010; Glanz et al., 2008). The total scores were then transferred to percentages. The score of perceived level of belief was $>66\%$, considered high, $33-66\%$ medium, and ≤ 33 low (Khanal et al., 2021).

Reliability of the Study

The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to determine the reliability of the questionnaire (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). The PHB component items had a value of .88 and the items on the Likert scale had a value of 0.80. Two items from the Likert scale and six items from PHB were eliminated after the pretest. A pilot test was done with 12 participants, who were not included in the main study (Teijlingen E Van & Hundley, 2002).

Ethical Consideration

The consent was obtained from the Health Service Department of the Ministry of Social Development (HSDMSD) of the Karnali province as well as Birendranagar Municipality of Surkhet. The consent (verbal/written), from

all participants, was also obtained before the trial of the questionnaires. Their information was kept completely anonymous and confidential. The importance of voluntary engagement was emphasized.

Statistical Test

The Statistical Package of Social Science (SPSS) V.25 version was used for statistical analysis with a significance level of 5% (Coakes, 2012). The data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The frequencies and percentages were computed for categorical variables; and the Chi-square for numerical variables.

Results

The majority of participants (74%) were men and about two-thirds of participants (67%) were aged 20 to 39. The single largest groups were from the Chhetri caste (40%) with one-third, being Dalit (33%). Over one-third (35%) of participants were literate only and on the other end of the scale, only 7% had a higher academic degree. More than four in five (81%) of participants thought they had a good health condition.

Table 1

Modifying Factors of the Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	284	74.0
	Female	100	26.0
Age	Below 20	38	9.9
	20-39	258	67.2
	40-59	76	19.8
	60 and over	12	3.1
Caste	Chhetri	158	41.1
	Brahmin	48	12.5
	Janajati	50	13.0
	Dalit	128	33.3
Education	Illiterate	48	12.5
	Literate	137	35.7
	Basic	68	17.7
	Secondary	75	19.5
	Higher	27	7

Health status	Normal / healthy	310	80.7
	Acute / poor health condition	47	12.2
	Suffers from chronic disease	27	7.0
Total		384	100.0

Level of Risk Perception

Questionnaires were tailored to measure the risk perception of the COVID-19 pandemic among Nepali Labor Migrants returning from India. Table 2 shows that the largest single group in each element of risk perception reported a medium risk level, apart from ‘perceived barriers’ where the most common answer was ‘low risk (42.7%)’. Nearly half perceived themselves to be at medium risk in terms of susceptibility, followed by low level of susceptibility and the fewest (13%) reported a high level of susceptibility. A reasonably similar pattern was found for perceived severity, perceived benefits, perceived self-efficacy and perceived cues to action. In Table 2, the pattern of responses for perceived barriers was different as more respondents reported low levels of barriers than medium or high levels. Moreover, across all perceptions respondents also scored perceived barriers as the highest single factor, and as a result, perceived barriers have the lowest proportion of people who scored it as medium ($M=1.81$, $SD=0.80$).

Table 2

Level of Risk Perception of Study Participants

Risk perception	Risk perception level				Mean	SD
	Low (1)	Medium (2)	High (3)	No response		
Perceived susceptibility	37.0	49.5.0	13.5	-	1.76	.67
Perceived severity	33.3	44.3	21.9	0.5	1.88	.73
Perceived barriers	42.7	32.8	24.5	-	1.81	0.80
Perceived benefit	35.9	54.7	9.4	-	1.73	.61
Perceived self-efficacy	39.1	43.2	17.7	-		.72
Perceived cues to action	34.9	51.3	13.8	-	1.78	.66

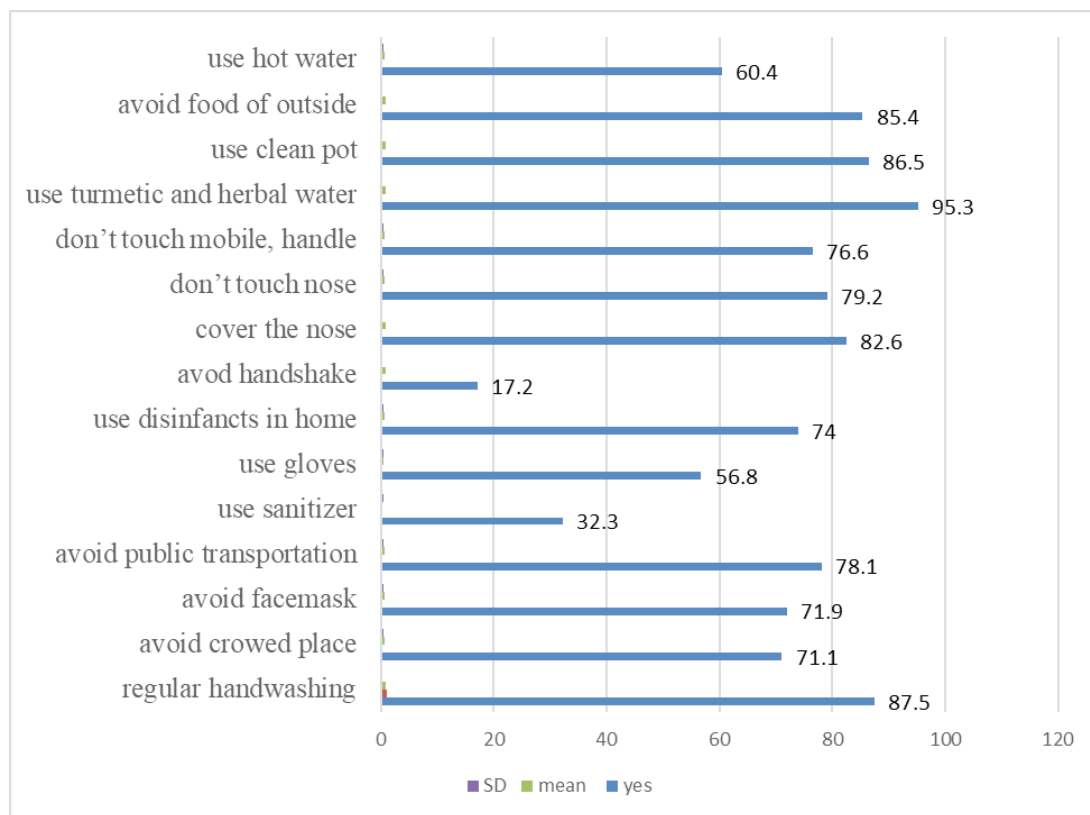
Protective Health Behavior Against COVID-19

Figure 2 shows protective behaviour against COVID-19 by Nepali Labour Migrants Returned from India. Most participants avoided shaking hands, whilst the majority (68%) had not used sanitiser. More than two-fifths (43%) of participants had not used gloves, followed by 29% not visiting crowded places, and 28% did not use masks.

About all (95%) participants used turmeric and herbal water, followed by 87% using a clean pot, 85% avoiding getting food outside, and 77% did not touch the mobile, handle. Simultaneously, the use of facemask proportion was lower (72%) compared to the use of disinfections at home (74%).

Figure 1

Protective Health Behavior Reported by the Respondents



Relationship between Risk Perception and Protective Health Behavior

The Chi-square statistic was confined to assess the association between risk perception behavior and protective behaviour of the Nepali Migrant Labor returnee from India. A study showed that there is an association between susceptibility to risk perception and protective behaviour in (NMLIs). The p -value <0.01 indicates that risk perception on susceptibility and protective behaviour is a statistically significant relationship. In a similar vein, evidence from Table 2 shows that there is a significant difference in the risk perception behaviour (severity, benefit, self-efficacy and cues of action) between protective behaviour (low and high level).

Table 3*Relationship between Risk Perception and Protective Behavior*

Constructs		Protective behavior		X ² test
		Low	high	
Susceptibility	High	71.2%	28.8%	0.001
	Medium	34.2%	65.8%	
	Low	65.5%	34.5%	
Total		50.8%	49.2%	
Severity level	High	66.7%	33.3%	0.000
	Medium	40.6%	59.4%	
	Low	54.7%	45.3%	
Total		51.0%	49.0%	
Benefit	High	69.4%	30.6%	0.001
	Medium	42.9%	57.1%	
	Low	58.0%	42.0%	
Total		50.8%	49.2%	
Self-efficacy	High	63.2%	36.8%	0.000
	Medium	35.5%	64.5%	
	Low	62.0%	38.0%	
Total		50.8%	49.2%	
Cues of Action	High	64.2%	35.8%	0.000
	Medium	39.6%	60.4%	
	Low	61.9%	38.1%	
Total		50.8%	49.2%	

Note: Chi square test ***= $P < 0.001$, **= $P < 0.01$ and *= $P < 0.05$

Discussion

Level of Risk Perception

The present study found that participants had a higher degree of perceived barrier and self-efficacy than other constructs. Accordingly, more than a third (37%) of participants have a low perception of susceptibility to COVID-19 and about half (49%) have a moderate perception of susceptibility. Fewer (13%) people had a higher-level susceptibility. Previous studies on COVID-19 had consistent findings;

more than 80% of Italians living in Italy and Italians living abroad believe they are not at risk of SARS-CoV-2 infection (Motta Zanin et al., 2020). In a similar vein, (Abdelrahman, 2020) concluded that 73.5% of people believe COVID-19 is a harmful disease. Another study indicated that 45% of people believe they are at risk of contracting COVID-19. Men, African, Americans, and others who are less concerned about COVID-19 and more aware of their culture were more likely to believe they are not susceptible than their peers. (Scarinci et al., 2021). An Italian study found that health workers had a higher risk understanding, level of concern, and awareness about COVID-19 infection than the general population (Simione & Gnagnarella, 2020). In a different study, most people were worried 77.4% or were afraid (62.8%) and perceived susceptibility moderated the relationship between subjective health status and emotional reactions significantly (Inbar & Shinan-Altman, 2021).

In this study, more than two-fifths (44%) of participants had a medium level of perceived severity, one-third had a low level, and slightly more than one-fifth (22%) had a high level of perceived severity. On COVID-19, 43% of participants had low perceived barriers. More than two-fifths (43%) of participants had a medium level of self-efficacy, nearly two-fifths (39%) had a low level, and nearly one-fifth (18%) had a high level of risk perception. More than half (51%) of the participants saw medium-level cues to action. Kuang et al. (2020) found that COVID-19 remains an unknown hazard; and that the majority of people believe they are at no (60.4%) or low (23.4%) risk of contracting coronavirus. Just, 8.7 % thought there was a medium risk, and 7.6 % thought there was a high risk. A subsequent study found an association between perceived susceptibility and the seriousness of illness (Weinstein et al., 1991). Another research showed, 91.6% of people believe COVID-19 is extremely contagious, with symptoms comparable to flu and influenza, 84.4% the coronavirus would have a greater effect, 76% and that 45.8% believe it would take longer to recover (Zegarra et al., 2020).

The present study found that most respondents reported a medium rather than a lower-level perception or belief about all the constructs. Very few respondents had a high-level risk perception regarding COVID-19. A study of Iranian medical students reported they perceived themselves to have a mild risk (Taghrir et al., 2020). Another study found similar results that COVID-19 risk perception was moderate to high (Mya Kyaw et al., 2020). Some earlier studies found different results from ours. An online survey conducted on Nepalese health workers found that they perceived their risk of COVID-19 to be high (Sharma et al., 2020). COVID-19 patients in Wuhan China and waiters in Southern Ethiopia Zhong et al. (2021) and Asefa et al. (2020) respectively found respondents had a higher risk perception of the COVID-

19. During the first wave of COVID-19, a systematic study found that the perceived seriousness of the disease was significantly higher than the perceived vulnerability to having COVID-19 (Clavel et al., 2021).

Health Protective Behaviours

Overall, the findings of this study indicated that the PHB of respondents seemed low. The situation includes hand washing, using turmeric and hot water, using face mask, avoiding public transportation, avoiding crowded places, using sanitising, and use of gloves. In contrast with our findings such as almost all participants used recommended protective measures to an appropriate degree, except for wearing masks and gloves (Girma et al., 2020). Nepalese health workers' preventive behaviour was high despite access to an enabling environment was limited (Sharma et al., 2020). Earlier studies are in favour of our findings such as about 88% of participants washed their hands more frequently and for longer periods, while about 82% avoided busy areas, decreased personal meetings and connections, and kept their distance from other people (78%) and 58% using disinfectants (Lüdecke & von dem Knesebeck, 2020). Health workers' preventive behaviour was low, especially among males. Gloves, surgical masks, N95 masks, protective glasses, disposable aprons/overalls, and aprons/jerseys were all used at a rate of 96.6%, 98%, 36%, 21%, 12%, and 22%, respectively (Arslanca et al., 2021). A systematic review conducted on adult found that they were knowledgeable about protective behaviours such as hand-washing, mask-wearing, social distancing, and avoidance behaviours (Clavel et al., 2021).

Association between Risk Perception and Health Protective Behaviour

This study found a significant difference between levels of risk perception for instance vulnerability, seriousness, benefit, self-efficacy, and action cues, and PHB, $p < 0.01$. Consistent with the present findings, fear and the associated risk perception play a direct and indirect role in preventive behaviours (Cori et al., 2021). In a similar vein, the high-risk perception was positively associated with adherence to more than one protective measure against COVID-19 (Oyetunji et al., 2021). An earlier study conducted by Schneider et al. (2021) found a strong positive relationship between health-protective behaviours and risk perception. It means that higher levels of risk perception were correlated with higher levels of protective behaviours. Furthermore, it demonstrates that while health-protective behaviours are related to risk perception, they are not causal (Schneider et al., 2021). If the likelihood of those around us being infected was high, the person felt that further social distancing was needed to reduce the risk (Savadori & Lauriola, 2021). Yıldırım et al. (2021), found susceptibility, perceived risk, and fear were all significant predictors of protective behaviour.

Based on presumed susceptibility and interest in health-promoting behavioural measures, a study using the HBM conducted in the German and Australian population divides people into four categories and found that group 1 has a lower perception of coronavirus severity as well as a lower perception of susceptibility to the disease, indicating a low danger perception and therefore a low desire to participate in health-related behaviours. Group 2 has a lower perceived susceptibility but still follows the rules; the average personal risk is not troubling, but the virus is considered extremely dangerous with perceived severity. Group 3 estimates the individual risk of infection as high, but only partially complies with preventive measures as the perceived benefits do not reflect an important incentive; which means lower perceived severity of the disease. Individuals who belong to group 4 reported both a higher perceived vulnerability and perceived severity (Eichenberg et al., 2021). Another study found an association between overall risk perception, perceived vulnerability, and self-efficacy and using a preventative health behavioural practice (Girma et al., 2020). During the COVID-19 pandemic, vulnerability, physical threat, and fear were found to significantly increase engagement in preventive behaviours (Yıldırım et al., 2021), and greater perceived susceptibility was linked to higher emotional reactions (Levkovich & Shinan-Altman, 2021).

The levels of risk perception of the respondents of this study may have been insufficient due to their low social, economic and educational status (Acharya et al., 2022). This study looks into the risk perception and COVID-19 PHB among labour migrant workers. If people believe COVID-19 is a low-risk virus, the government's efforts to control it can fail. People who believe the risk is low are often more likely to pass it on to others without taking any precautions. The second phase of COVID-19 is spreading in South Asia as we mentioned in this article, which has resulted in more Nepali workers returning home. To condense as well as prevent the spread of COVID-19 and increase risk perception and PHB during the pandemic, public awareness and risk communication are needed.

The purpose of this study was to look at all of the constructs in the HBM to see if they could be used to predict participants' COVID-19 PHB. Our study is, of course, not without shortcomings. This study paints a vivid picture of risk perception and protective behaviour in the context of COVID-19. This study also found a positive relationship between HBM constructs and protective health behaviour, but it was unable to prove causality. Second, there were only two areas of focus risk perception and PHB. Risk communication and knowledge of COVID-19 have not been included in this study. So, this study has covered only a limited number of study variables. Third, the study generalizes the ability of the entire migrant

population to be minimal since it only included migrant workers from one quarantine centre. Fourth, the process of the data collection method was structured. As a result, respondents were unable to convey their distinct subjective feelings and views. Finally, the principal author and co-authors of this study were unable to engage in the data collection process due to the COVID-19 lockdown and victimization. The fact that the data was collected by people from outside of the study, thus this study may not be free from bias.

Conclusion

This study shows low-risk perceptions regarding COVID-19. This suggests that most individuals do not perceive COVID-19 as posing a significant risk to their well-being. Despite low-risk perceptions, the exhibit responsible behavior by adhering to recommended preventive measures. This study highlights a significant relationship between respondents' risk perception level and protective health behaviors. The study emphasized the importance of awareness to increase risk perception among people who returned from India during the outbreak.

Author's Contribution

SPK: Design of the study, analysis of data, interpretation of data, drafting, and approval of the final version of the manuscript. SPK, CS, KB & MS: Conception of the study, interpretation of data, revised the manuscript critically, approved the final version of the manuscript. SPK, CS, KB: collection of data, analysis of data and drafting, SPK, CS, KB, EvT & JA, RBP: Conception of the study, interpretation of data, SK, KV, EvT, PB & UG: revised the manuscript critically, approved the final version of the manuscript.

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Socio-Cultural Dynamics of Cross-Border Labour Migration between Nepal and India

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Abstract

The enduring relationship between Nepal and India is the focus of this study, which delves into the social and cultural dynamics adopted by Nepali and Indian labour migrants in their respective destinations. The study extends to the examination of labour migrants' social backgrounds, encompassing aspects such as religion, caste, ethnicity, education, and family structure. Employing a mixed-methods approach, the study incorporates case studies supported by field observations in the destination countries. The gathered data undergoes analysis through descriptive statistics, allowing for a comparative assessment between the two migrant groups. While the socio-cultural status of both groups exhibits slight differences, disparities in caste and ethnicity indicators are noted between Nepal and India. Notably, a significant proportion of Nepali labour migrants hail from Dalit communities when compared to other caste and ethnic groups. In contrast, Indian labour migrants, predominantly from the Other Backward Class (OBC), exhibit a different trend. The volume of Nepali labour migrants heading to India surpasses that of Indian labour migrants to Nepal. The shorter migration distance for Indian labour migrants enables frequent visits to their place of origin, facilitating the celebration of local traditions and culture. In contrast, Nepali labour migrants encounter fewer opportunities to return to their destination regularly. A noteworthy observation is the comparatively higher educational status of Nepali labour migrants as opposed to their Indian counterparts heading to Nepal. The nuanced differences between the two migrant groups correlate with their religious affiliations and socio-economic backgrounds. Interestingly, both groups exhibit a limited number of enrolled children in destination schools, indicating a shared challenge in accessing education opportunities.

Keywords: Cross-border, labour migration, socio-cultural dynamics, Nepal and India

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Introduction

Migration, a fundamental aspect of human history, encompasses the movement of individuals or groups from one location to another. This phenomenon, dating back to the earliest stages of human evolution, was primarily driven by the pursuit of sustenance and shelter. Over time, as people sought to optimize their living conditions, migration became a means of establishing residence at their preferred locations. The International Organization for Migration (IOM, 2020) offers a precise definition of migration as the act of people or groups relocating either across international borders or within a single nation. This relocation can vary in duration, ranging from temporary and seasonal to permanent, and stems from diverse motives such as economic opportunities, environmental factors, familial ties, or political circumstances. Emigrants are individuals departing from their home country, while immigrants are those arriving in a foreign nation.

Migration patterns to and through India remain largely undocumented. The Department of Foreign Employment (DOFE) offers statistics exclusively for Nepali workers who depart with labour permits issued by the Nepalese government. To legally migrate to countries other than India, Nepalese workers must secure work permits from their home government. However, this statistic does not encompass migration to India, as Nepali citizens can enter India without the need for formal authorization. The volume of India migration is not known. It is expected that about 2-3 million Nepali migrants are working in India.

India stands as the primary destination for labour migrants hailing from the Karnali and Sudurpaschim Pradesh regions. This tradition of labor migration from Nepal to India has been passed down through generations (Bhatt, 2023). In Sudurpaschim Province, migration often follows a pattern where people become permanent residents in the Tarai region and engage in seasonal migration to India. While the majority of Sudurpaschim province residents have chosen India, those with more significant resources venture to Malaysia and Gulf countries in pursuit of employment opportunities. The allure of lower-skilled job accessibility and more economical migration costs, compared to the Gulf and other nations, serves as the main driver for migration to India (Bhatt, 2015).

According to the International Labor Organization (ILO, 2015), a significant portion of Nepalese male migrants fall within the working-age group and possess limited education and skills. While Nepal's industrialization has gradually increased following political transitions, Indian citizens, particularly from states like Uttar Pradesh, have increasingly come to Nepal as laborers. Previously, there was a shortage of skilled labor for machinery-related work in Nepal, leading to the influx

of Indian human resources to support development activities. This phenomenon is now common in all of Nepal's cities. Gill (2003) revealed that a substantial number of households in Karnali and Sudurpaschim provinces have at least one member working in India, while Indians from Uttar Pradesh (UP) and Bihar often come to the eastern Terai region of Nepal to engage in seasonal agricultural labor. Thronton (2016) provided insights into the migration process and motivations of Indian labor migrants to Nepal, highlighting that many originate from less-developed Indian states like Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, driven by factors such as higher wage rates, no requirement for work permits, and proximity to Nepal.

Additionally, Bhatt (2016) noted that a lack of awareness among Nepali labor migrants often leads them to select destinations based on traditional connections, such as friends, relatives, and local contractors. Financial constraints also influence their decisions, with individuals opting for the most cost-effective transportation options and following the preferences of their social network, or "team," at transit points.

In terms of gender dynamics, the majority of male labour migrants tend to head to India from Nepal, while women are left behind due to prevailing social norms (Lokshin & Glinskaya, 2008). However, Thieme and Muller (2010) shed light on the gender inequality aspects of migration to India, where women often accompany their husbands for medical reasons and, with time, adapt to the local socioeconomic conditions. Despite the significant volume of labor migration between Nepal and India, research in this field remains relatively limited compared to studies on migration to third countries. While individual studies have explored labor migration from Nepal to India, there is a notable absence of comparative research between the two countries in this domain. The bi-directional nature of migration, where Nepali migrants seek work in India and Indians do the same in Nepal despite opportunities still existing in their respective home regions, underscores the need for a comprehensive analysis of labor migration between Nepal and India (Bhatt, 2023). To add to the literature of migration, the primary objective of this study is to analyze the socio-cultural dynamics of cross-border labour migration between two countries.

In the broader context, this research contributes to understanding the complex relationship between Nepal and India concerning migration and its profound impact on the socio-cultural factors. By providing informed policy recommendations based on our findings, this study endeavours to foster a positive and cooperative relationship between these neighbouring nations while advocating for safer, well-managed, and reputable migration practices. Ultimately, this research aims to bridge existing knowledge gaps and enhance comprehension of cross-border labor migration dynamics between Nepal and India, facilitating more informed decision-making in this critical domain.

Methods and Procedures

It is believed that reality is objective and common to all the migrant labourers of both countries. The reality is the product of the common concept of migrant labour. Ontologically, the researcher believes that the realities exist in the form of common and objective mental construction of the migrants. Researchers believe that there are some common causes of labor migration even though both countries have plenty of job opportunities. In addition, people migrate from one to another country in search of a job. The ontological premise of this study is to explore the nature of the existing reality related to understanding the cross-border labor migration between Nepal and India. The epistemological understanding was considered to be the primary source of knowledge (Cohen et al., 2011) about the evaluation of socio-cultural dynamics of labour migrants and their' impact on society.

This study is built on the belief that the post-positivism approach. This study aims to explain the socio-cultural dynamics of cross-border labour migration between two countries. The mixed method has been undertaken to explain the situation of cross-border labour migration and its impact on society. Primary as well as secondary data have been used to understand the current position of migration. For quantitative data, a survey has been carried out while for collecting some qualitative data for the study, field observation and interviews with selected labour migrants in both destinations have been carried out. Furthermore, some case studies have been collected to understand the situation better.

This study covers the Sudurpaschim Province, where the flow of labour migrants is high. Most of the Nepali labour migrants from Sudurpaschim Province choose their destination in India, whereas the Indian labour migrants from different locations choose Sudurpaschim Province as their working destination. Indian labourers mostly choose to work at Mahendranagar (the adjacent border to Nepal). Empirically, the study was conducted in Mahendranagar (Bhimdatt Municipality) of Sudurpacchim province, taking the study universe of Indian labour migrants who work at Mahendranagar and Nepalese labour migrants to India from Bhimdatt municipality for at least six months. Some of the case studies and observations have been conducted at the Gaddachouki border, which is enter and exit point for the entire Sudurpaschim Province.

According to data from Bhimdatt Municipality profile (2020), 4865 people from different wards migrated to India for work. Likewise, there is a survey that identified the Indian labour migrants in Bhimdatt municipality (Mahendranagar). As the nature of their jobs relates to the town area, it is observed that about 924 Indian labourers were working in Mahendranagar (Nepal). The sample size for

Nepali labour migrants to India is determined 370 and for Indian labour migrants is determined 280 by using the Yemane formula for sampling. The lottery method is used for selecting the respondents.

Results and Discussion

Migration is a complex phenomenon influenced by various factors, including population growth, limited land resources, family separation, economic challenges, environmental conditions, and political circumstances (Basyal, 2014). Additionally, there is a diversity of migrant types, each hailing from distinct socio-economic backgrounds (Adhikari & Gurung, 2009; Bhatt, 2015).

Volume of Labour Migrants at the Destination

The population of migrant labourers in both of the destinations was not precisely known. In the case of Nepali migrants to India, Bhimdatt Municipality collected data on labour migrants for the Municipality profile in 2020. According to the report, 4,865 people from different wards migrated to India for work. Likewise, there is a survey that identified the Indian labour migrants in Bhimdatt municipality (Mahendranagar). As their nature of jobs relate to the town area, it is observed that about 924 Indian labourers were working in Mahendranagar (Nepal). The survey was focused on four sectors (construction, manufacturing, agriculture, and service) to collect the volume of labor migrants who are staying at least six months in the Bhimdatt Municipality.

Table 1

Distribution of Population of Nepali Labour Migrants to India

Wards	Total Households (HHs)	Population (Migrants)	Percentage
1	644	215	33.4
2	1155	388	33.6
3	1137	243	21.4
4	1278	76	6.0
5	679	325	47.9
6	1936	407	21.1
7	969	216	22.3
8	897	312	34.8
9	1259	305	24.3
10	1777	547	30.8
11	730	175	24.0
12	537	229	42.7
13	862	334	38.8
14	564	275	48.8
15	790	106	13.5

16	581	149	25.7
17	326	66	20.3
18	3805	295	7.8
19	758	215	28.4
Total	20684	4865	23.6

Source: *Bhimdatt Municipality (2020) and CBS (2021)*.

Likewise, in the case of Indian labor migrants to Nepal, a survey found that there were mainly four sectors (construction, manufacturing, agriculture, and service sectors) based on the nature of jobs engaged in Bhimdatt Municipality. There were 924 Indian labour migrants found working in different sectors in the study area (Bhimdatt Municipality).

Table 2

Distribution of Indian Labour Migrants in Bhimdatt Municipality

Job Sectors (Strata)	Total Number of Labourers
Construction Sector (<i>Meson: house construction, road construction, floor & tile setter/marbles</i>)	187
Manufacture sector (<i>carpenter, bricklayers</i>)	381
Service Sector (<i>Hairdresser, Painter, Automobiles, Welders (Grill/steel)</i>)	300
Agriculture sector	56
Total	924

Source: *Field Survey, 2020*.

The above data shows the volume of Indian labour migrants in the municipality and it is expected that a similar number of labour migrants are still working in the different destinations. In general review, we can describe that the volume of Nepali labour migrants to India is more significant than Indian labour migrants to Nepal. It is expected that more than 20 million Nepali migrants are working in the different states of India.

Population of Nepali Migrants to Indian Cities

According to data provided by Bhimdatt municipality, 4865 people migrated to India. Among the total population, 16 percent of females migrated to India. Almost all females migrated with their male partners. Along with them, 67 percent of the

total migrant population is married, 32 percent is unmarried, and only one percent is single or widowed.

Table 3

Distribution of Migrants to India by Selected Characteristics

Characteristics	Migrants' Population	
<i>Sex</i>	(N)	(%)
Male	4,073	83.7
Female	792	16.3
<i>Marital Status</i>		
Married	3,260	67.0
Unmarried	1,573	32.3
Single/Widow	32	0.7
<i>Caste/Ethnic Group</i>		
Hill Brahmin	812	16.7
Chhetri	1,628	33.5
Thakuri	319	6.4
Dalit	1,807	37.1
Sanyasi	92	1.9
Janjati/Tharu	199	4.1
Others	8	0.2
Total	4,865	100.0

Source: Bhimdatt Municipality (2020).

Among the total migrated population to India, the number of Dalit migrants is found to be the highest (37.1%). However, the size of the Dalit population is the lowest (7.7%) in the Kanchanpur district. Likewise, 33.5 percent and 16.7 percent of migrants to India are of Chhetri and Brahmin descent, respectively.

The Population of Indian Migrants to Mahendranagar (Bhimdatt Municipality)

In the case of Indian migrants to Nepal, the survey was carried out based on the nature of jobs because the administrative data of Indian migrants was not found.

The researcher decided to find information about the migrants from their households.

These households were surveyed by giving priority to the selective (major jobs) having a larger size of the population working in the Mahendranagar. The research was carried out focusing on the four significant sectors: service, manufacturing, construction, and agriculture. It was calculated that 924 households were found working in four selected sectors. However, the size of Indian migrants is more significant, and those working in other sectors like business, entrepreneurship, self-employed, and other small businesses are excluded from the research. The migrants working in the brick industries come along with their family members as workers, but in this research, the family was taken as a single household. Due to time limitations and the need for research, the total population of Indian migrants has not been determined.

Table 4

Distribution of Indian Labour Migrants Enumerated in the Study Area (Bhimdatt Municipality) According to Nature of Job

Nature of Jobs	Migrants' Population	
	(N)	(%)
Hairdresser	122	13.2
Welders	78	8.4
Mason/ Road construction	32	3.5
Mason/Building Construction	120	13.0
Mason (Tayal/Marvel/Stone layers)	35	3.8
Bricklayers	226	24.4
Carpenter	155	16.8
Automobile	58	6.3
Painter	42	4.5
Agro farm	56	6.1
Total	924	100.0

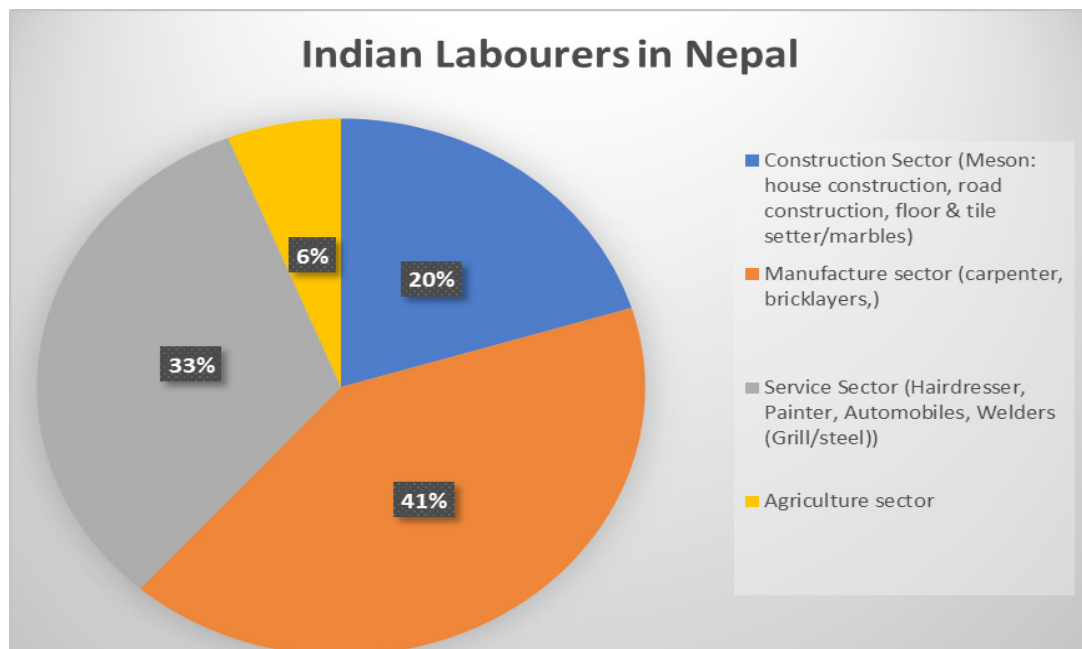
Source: Field Survey, 2020.

Most labor migrants from both groups engage in various types of low-skilled jobs at their destinations. However, there is a notable difference in the types

of jobs undertaken by Indian and Nepali labor migrants. Indian labor migrants are commonly found working in four key sectors: agriculture (41%), services (33%), construction (20%), and manufacturing (6%). In contrast, Nepali labor migrants typically work in household roles such as watchmen, cleaners, and caregivers, as well as in hotels, restaurants, construction labor, agriculture, office support roles, and various manufacturing factories in India.

Figure 1

Working Sectors (Nature of Jobs) of Indian Labourers in Nepal



Social and Demographic Characteristics: Migrants' Age Group

Social characteristics show the general social background of the migrants, which describes the status and position of migration. According to CBS (2012), the population of the Bhimdatt Municipality is 104,549 (male: 51,087 and female: 53,512) with 20,684 HHs (Table 3.2). Likewise, the composition of the population under the age of 15 is 32.7 percent, the working-age population (15–59) is 59.4 percent, and the elderly people ((60+) is 7.9 percent (Table 5).

Social characteristics show the general social background of the migrants, which describes the status and position of migration. Table 5 shows that the mean age of Nepali labour migrants is 28.9 years and that of Indian labour migrants to Nepal is 32.9 years; some differences of about four years. The age group 20–29 years has the highest number of migrants (36.6%) among labour migrants of both

countries who crossed their border for work, including 40% of migrants from Nepal and 32.5 percent of migrants from India. The majority (75.1 % of Nepali and 64.6 % of Indian) of adult migrants between the ages of 18 and 40 years are found to migrate, this is due to the higher potentiality of migrants of this age group who bear age-specific physiological proximity as well as the potential of skill and labour for finding and performing the job in destination countries, whereas 7.8 percent of Nepali children and 6.1 percent of Indian children are found to cross their borders for work in destination countries.

Table 5

Distribution of Respondents by Age and Gender

Age groups of migrants in years	Nepali labour migrants to India		Indian labour migrants to Nepal	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
Up to 19 years	52	14.1	32	11.4
20-29	148	40.0	91	32.5
30-39	91	24.6	69	24.6
40-49	54	14.6	50	17.8
50-65	25	6.7	38	13.6
Total	370	100.0	280	100.0
Mean age (in a year)		29.7		32.8
Less than 15 years	0	0	7	2.5
Children (<18 years)	29	7.8	17	6.1
Adults (18 -40 years)	278	75.1	181	64.6
Others (more than 40 years)	63	17.0	82	29.3
Working age (15-59 years)	370	100	273	97.5
Gender				
Migrants with spouse	113	30.6	103	36.8

Source: Field Survey, 2021.

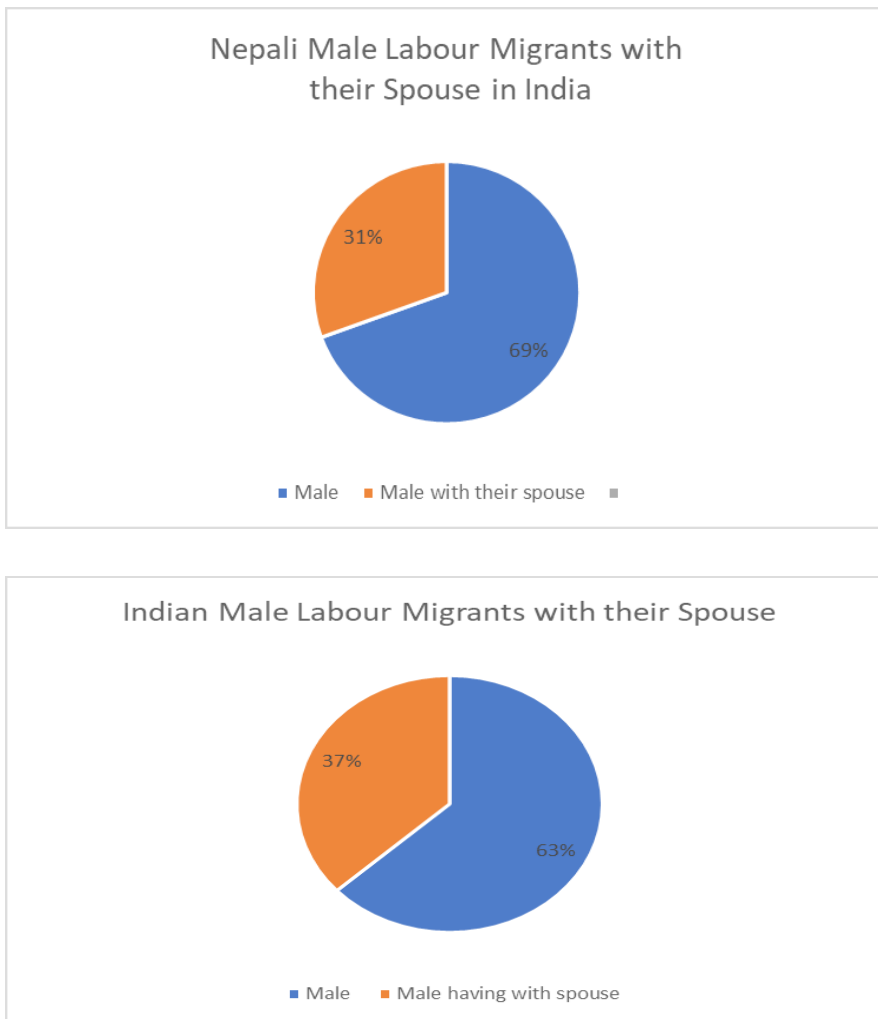
Similarly, 6.7 percent of Nepali labour migrants and 13.6 percent of Indian labour migrants under the age group of 50–65 years crossed their border for work in each other country. It is also calculated that the age group of 60–65 years of Nepali migrants is not found working in India, but the same age group of Indian migrants is found working in Nepal. Because of the closer working destination (distance), the nature of the work, the lower physical burden, and their long experience in the same work, elderly Indian migrants continue to work. However, Brusle (2006) mentioned that many migrants start working in India at an early age and stop after 45 to 50 years or more, which is a different result from the present study. According to Nepal's

population monograph, almost 40 percent of the population was under the age of 20, which indicates Nepal has a predominantly young population.

In general, women tend not to leave their hometowns proactively; instead, they usually migrate with their husbands. Female migration is often motivated less by job opportunities and more by the desire to accompany their spouses. In some instances, medical treatment has also been a reason for migration. The data highlights distinct gender dynamics, with approximately 30.6% of Nepali labor migrants working in India alongside their husbands, while 36.8% of Indian labor migrants are found in Nepal with their wives.

Figure 2

Gender Distribution of Labour Migrants with Their Spouse



The working-age population (15+ years) had a share of 71.5 percent (20.7 million) of the total population, of which 55.6 percent was female (CBS, 2012). Table 5 shows that 30.6 percent of females in Nepal and 36.8 percent of females in India migrated to their destinations with their husbands. Supporting the above statement, ICIMOD (2010) and Nandini (1999) state that the majority of the males generally migrated to India from Karnali and Sudurpaschim Province, but in the case of women, they were not found to migrate individually due to a lack of education and exposures, as well as the fact that they are involved in their households' responsibilities and agricultural works. Along with this, they feel insecure about migrating alone due to increasing cases of trafficking and other violence in the destination. It is thus seen that migration is gender-sensitive, which genuinely implies even the open and comparatively accessible cross-border migration of women in Nepal and India (Shijapati et al., 2019).

Religion of Migrants

Religious beliefs on divine worship, morals, and ethical issues Caste systems are mostly justified within the higher ranks of the system. Religion is justified within scriptures that are regarded as holy or divine. In the studies of migration in the global context, it is observed that migration does have religious factors, though they are not deterministic in most cases (Bramanti et al., 2020).

Table 6

Distribution of Migrants According to Their Religion

Religion	Country of Origin	
	Nepali labour migrants to India	Indian labour migrants to Nepal
Hindu	370 (100.0%)	102 (36.4%)
Islam	0(0.0%)	171(61.1%)
Sikh	0(0.0%)	7(2.5%)
Total	370 (100.0%)	280(100.0%)

Source: Field Survey, 2021.

According to the population monograph, CBS (2012), about 98.6 percent of the population belongs to Hindus, and 0.2 percent is Muslim in Bhimdatt Municipality. From Table 6, it is clear that the total population of Nepali labour migrants in India belongs to the Hindu religion. However, the majority (61.1%) of Indian labour migrants to Nepal belong to the Islam community, followed by others (36.4% Hindu and 2.5 % Sikh).

Caste/Ethnicity of Labour Migrants

Caste or ethnicity has evolved into a distinct cultural identity for people with migratory implications. The caste system deals with hierarchical issues, which are predominantly justified by the traditional system of social stratification in Nepal. The caste system both in Nepal and India broadly borrows the classical Hindu *Chaturvarna* model, consisting of four broad social classes: Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya, and Sudra. The CBS of Nepal identified only 60 ethnic/caste groups in the 1991 Census; 100 ethnic/caste groups were further identified in the 2001 Census, and the list of ethnic/caste groups was 125 in the 2011 Census, which also includes 59 indigenous groups (ethnic nationalities). According to CBS (2012), the most populous Jats (ethnic groups) in Nepal are 17.0% Chhetri, 12.0% Brahmin-Hill, 7.0% Magar, 7.0% Tharu, 6.0% Tamang, 5.0% Newar, 5.0% Kami, 4.0% Musalman, 4.0% Yadav, 2.0% Rai, and 31.0% others. In contrast, the caste/ethnicity of India in political-administrative categorization describes the system as 22.8 percent.

Other Backward Class (OBC) is a collective term used by the government of India to classify castes that are educationally or socially disadvantaged. Likewise, “scheduled caste” (SC) is a term for sub-communities within the framework of the Hindu caste system that have historically faced deprivation, oppression, and extreme social isolation in India on account of their perceived “low status” (CBS, 2012).

Table 7

Distribution of Labour Migrants by Caste/Ethnic Group

Caste/Ethnicity	Nepali labour migrants to India		Indian labour migrants to Nepal	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
Brahmin	52	14.0	0	-
Thakuri	32	8.6	0	-
Chhetri	106	28.7	0	-
Dalit	136	36.8	0	-
Sanyasi/Dashnami	21	5.7	0	-
Tharu	23	6.2	0	-
General Caste	0	-	64	22.9
Schedule Caste(SC)	0	-	33	11.8
Schedule Tribes (ST)	0	-	12	4.3
Other Backward Castes (OBC)	0	-	171	61.0
Total	370	100.0	280	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2021.

Table 7 shows that the majority (36.6%) of the population is from the Dalit community, followed by 28.7 percent of Chhetri, 14 percent of Brahmin, 8.6 percent of Thakuri, 5.7 percent of Sanyasi/Dasnami, and 6.2 percent of the Tharu community that migrated to India from the study area. In contrast, more than half of the population (61%) is from the Other Backward Caste and has come to Bhimdatt Municipality as labour migrants. Likewise, 22.9 percent of the general caste, 11.8 percent of the scheduled caste, and 4.3 percent of scheduled tribes were found to migrate to Nepal (the study area).

According to Bhardwaj (2010), the composition of caste and religious background is almost similar between Nepal and India, where Muslims and Buddhists follow the majority of Hindus. However, in this study, a different trend is seen as there was a mutual dependency for labour, market, social relationships, and services provided in the destination areas. Moreover, it is the reflection of people's religions at their origins that would have strengthened cross-border linkages among the societies in terms of culture. At the same time, Brusle (2006) focused on the circular migration of high-caste men from the Karnali and Sudurpaschim provinces. Likewise, McDougal (1968) mentioned that migration depends to some extent on the cultures of the ethnic groups. He reported that the more significant number of migrants were lower caste people such as *Kamis*, *Sarkis*, and *Damais* from Sudurpaschim Provinces due to their poor economic backgrounds. In this study, the Dalit community, which migrated to India from Nepal, accounts for 36.8 percent of the population, accounting for more than one-third of the population in this sample size.

Similarly, 61 percent of other backward caste Indians migrated to Nepal for work. However, this study shows that the majority of the population from marginalized and socially backward communities migrates to neighbouring countries for work. It might be due to their higher rate of poverty, low status of landholdings (even landlessness), lower educational performance, and the proximity of non-skilled labour. Indeed, the caste or ethnic structure in Nepal and India speaks of some socioeconomic characteristics that are closely related to migratory behaviour.

Education Attainment of Labour Migrants between Nepal and India

Education is the crucial indicator for the Human Development Index (HDI). The country that has more HDI is taken as a comparatively rich country. According to the Global HDI report (UNDP, 2020), the HDI of Nepal is 0.602 (142nd rank), and India's is 0.645 (131st rank). In education, the average expected years of education in the South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC) is 12.7 years, where Nepal secures 5.0 years of education, and India secures 6.5 years of education. It

shows that Indian people have more experience in education. Most of the migrants, after a certain age, leave their homes and migrate to destinations in search of jobs or better options for livelihood. Hence, they have to drop out of school at that age.

Table 8

Distribution of Labour Migrants by Education Attainment

Level of Education	Nepali labour migrants to India		Indian labour migrants to Nepal	
	(N)	%	(N)	%
No Education	32	8.6	100	35.7
Some Primary Education	58	15.7	155	55.4
Primary Education Completed	123	33.2	22	7.9
Some Secondary Education	131	35.4	3	1.0
Secondary Education Completed	26	7.1	0	0
Total	370	100.0	280	100.0
Pearson Chi-Square test	<i>Value</i>		<i>Df</i>	
	290.941		4	
			<i>Sig.</i>	
			0.000	

Source: Field Survey, 2021.

Data revealed that 8.6 percent of Nepali labour migrants and 35.7 percent of Indian labour migrants have no education. Similarly, 15.7 percent of Nepali and 55.4 percent of Indian labour migrants were enrolled in formal education but they did not complete their primary education. Only 33.2 percent of Nepali labour migrants and 7.9 percent of Indian labour migrants have primary-level education. Likewise, 35.4 percent of Nepali labour migrants and 1 percent of Indian labour migrants have some secondary school education. Only 7.1 percent of Nepali labour migrants have completed their secondary level education but there were not found of the respondents from Indian labour migrants have secondary level education.

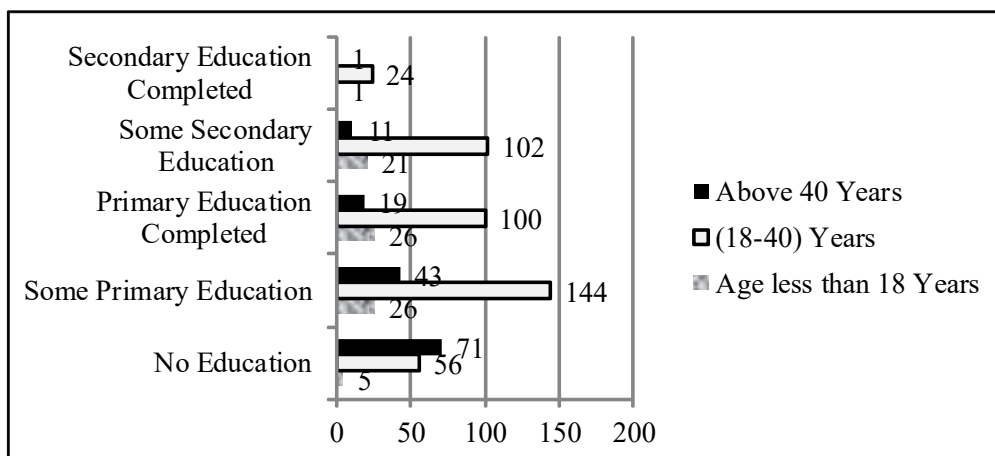
To determine whether the level of educational attainment and country of migrants are associated, the Chi-square test of independence is used in Table 8. The result indicated that the lower p-value of the Chi-square test is evidence of the significant association between education and the country of origin of labour migrants. The frequency table indicates the higher education level of Nepali labour migrants to India in comparison to Indian labour migrants to Nepal. The majority

of the Indian labour migrants have below-primary education levels, while most of the Nepalese migrants have completed primary-level education before leaving their origin. The main reason for the education of Indian labour migrants could be their religious beliefs about education as most of them go to Madrasa for religious education and their formal education attainment is discontinued. They are compelled to join work due to their low-income family conditions.

It is further analyzed that the majority of Nepali labour migrants have better educational attainment than Indian labour migrants. The proportion of educational attainment of the labour migrants was around primary to secondary level education. GIZ/ILO (2015) also mentioned that the working age groups of labour migrants from Nepal have lower education and skill qualifications. The majority of Nepali labour migrants to India lack certified skills, making it difficult for them to reach formal jobs. The proportion of education attainment of Nepali labour migrants is found in increasing order till some secondary education; however, a large proportion of the Indian people do not have formal education, followed by some primary education and primary level education. The trend of migration in Nepal is found to be different than in India due to social and cultural background. In discussions with the Indian migrants' Muslim community, they prefer to go to *Madrasa* (school) rather than getting enrolled in schools for formal education because of their religious faith. Similarly, other Indian migrant communities in Nepal belong to poor and marginalized socio-economic backgrounds and are unable to join schools. However, in the case of Nepal, it has been studied that the majority of people prefer to migrate after completing school education.

Figure 3

Distribution of Labour Migrants by Education Attainment and Age Group



According to CBS (2012), the literacy rate of the population aged five years and above is 65.9 percent. The male literacy rate is 74.2 percent, and the female literacy rate is 58.2 percent. The literacy rate has increased slightly from 2014/15, as in the previous year; the rate for five years and above was 65.6 percent. The urban-rural difference in literacy for five years and above is found wide, with 75.9 percent in urban areas and 59.7 percent in rural areas. From the above figure, it is calculated that 3.8 percent of migrants under the age of 18 years, 42.4 percent of migrants between the age of 18-40 years, and 53.8 percent of migrants above 40 years have no formal education. Likewise, (3.8%, 92.3%, and 3.8%) of migrants have only secondary-level education during the age mentioned above groups.

In the focus group discussion, Indian labour migrants shared that they came to Nepal at an early age with their relatives. They mostly have a poor economic background and are hence compelled to do work at a younger age. They were involved in particular jobs and learned much to become skilled. Indian labour migrants belong to the Islam religion, where they should have been involved in Madrasa rather than formal education, which may be the cause of their poor educational attainment. However, in the case of Nepali labour migrants, the government has provided facilities for schooling in higher education. In comparison to Indian labour migrants, Nepali labour migrants have better education status because of their socio-cultural and economic situation at their origin.

Family Status of Labour Migrants (Family Structure and Size)

According to the 2011 Census of Nepal, the average size of a family in Nepal is 4.6 persons, which is 4.2 in urban households and 4.8 in rural households. The percentage of nuclear households is 17.1 in Nepal. Nearly half (47.2%) of the household heads are in the age group 30 to 49 years, and 25.9 percent of households are headed by female members, which must be due to the high proportion of male labour migration.

Among the respondents, about 51.1 percent of Nepali labour migrants and 32.5 percent of Indian labor migrants are found living with nuclear families whereas 48.9 percent of Nepali and 67.5 percent of Indian labour migrants are found living as a joint family. In the case of Nepali labour migrants, the family size of migrants was 41.6 percent of 2-5 members, 54.6 percent of 6-10 members, and 3.8 percent of having more than ten members in a family. 29.6 percent are of 2-5 members, 58.9 percent are of 6-10 members, and 11.5 percent have more than ten members in a family. In both, 7 percent of respondent families have more than ten members.

Table 9*Distribution of Labour Migrants by Family Structure and Size*

Family Status	Nepali labour migrants to India		Indian labour migrants to Nepal		Both groups	
	(N)	(%)	(N)	(%)	(N)	(%)
Structure of Family						
Nuclear family	189	51.1	91	32.5	280	43.1
Joint family	181	48.9	189	67.5	370	56.9
Pearson Chi-Square Test	Value		Df		Sig.	
	22.442		1		0.000	
Family Size of respondents						
Single	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
2-5 members	154	41.6	83	29.6	237	36.5
6-10 members	202	54.6	165	58.9	367	56.5
>10 members	14	3.8	32	11.5	46	7.0
Total	370	100.0	280	100.0	650	100.0
Person's Chi-square Test	Value		Df		Sig.	
	19.965		2		0.000	

Source: Field Survey, 2021.

Being the more significant number of respondents (63.5%) having more than five members in a family, it is assumed that family size is one of the causes of migration. To determine whether the structure of migrants' families and family size is associated with their country of origin, the Pearson Chi-square test is used where the p-value (<0.001) is less than the level of significance (0.01). It indicates that there is a correlation between the size of the family and the structure of the family in the country of migrants. It is worthwhile to mention here that family structure and its size can affect migration decisions (De Jong & Gardner, 2013), though there is less research on this topic in the Nepal-India context.

Schooling of Labour Migrants' Children

Almost all the children (school age) from Nepali labour migrants' families attended school but, about 42.6 percent of Indian children do not attend school due to their culture and economic conditions. Some of the children are schooling at the destination where their parents are working. About 63.7 percent of Nepali children and 80.3 percent of Indian children are joining government schools at their origin,

whereas 30.3 percent of children of Nepalese labor migrants are schooling at private (boarding schools). However, Indians are not found studying in private schools. The reasons for not studying in private schools are weak economic status and most of them living in villages where government schools are only available. Meanwhile, it is found that the children from migrant families, both Nepali and Indians, join schools in their working destination. About 20 percent of Indian labour migrants' children study in schools of Bhimdatt Municipality (Nepal) whereas 6 percent of Nepali labour migrants' children study in Indian schools.

Supporting the aforementioned data, there exists a case study involving an Indian laborer and his family who have been residing in Mahendranagar for an extended period. Prabesh Gupta, aged 45, hails from an economically disadvantaged family in Pilibhit, India, and made the move to Mahendranagar at the age of 14, accompanying one of the carpenters from his community. His formal education extended only up to the fifth grade, enabling him to read and write to a limited extent. He abandoned his schooling in order to secure employment and sustain himself.

Table 10

Distribution of Labour Migrants According to the Number of Their School Children

Number of School Children	Nepali Labour migrants to India		Indian labour migrants to Nepal	
	(N)	(%)	(N)	(%)
Categories of School				
Govt. School (Origin)	128	63.7	90	80.3
Private School (Origin)	61	30.3	0	0.0
Schooling at destination	12	6.0	22	19.7
Total	201	100.0	112	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2021.

In the initial stages, Prabesh faced considerable challenges while striving to meet the demands of the times and enhance his skills as a carpenter. Those days were exceptionally arduous for him. Nevertheless, he has since transformed himself into a prominent figure within the Mahendranagar carpentry industry. Currently, he employs more than fifty individuals, earning a substantial monthly income of nearly one lakh rupees. Additionally, he disburses daily wages of approximately one thousand rupees to his workers. He has ascended to the role of a reputable contractor,

frequently taking on two to three work contracts per day and hiring his team on a daily wage basis. Prabesh has firmly established himself in Mahendranagar, where he resides with his family. His children attend English medium schools in the area, and he aspires for them to follow in his footsteps in the same profession in the future.

According to him, he has bought a good piece of land and constructed a house in Pilibhit (India). His hard work and dedication to his work make him successful on his own. It has become a person who can create job opportunities for other people. He decides to live in Mahendranagar and follow the same profession. Many people from Mahendranagar go to different cities in India in search of jobs, although people like Prabesh Gupta are working in Mahendranagar and are willing to live here permanently. Thus, it reflects that a person with talent and skills can survive and create job opportunities for others as well.

To assess the circumstances of Indian labor migrants, the previously discussed case study serves as a representation of their livelihood strategy. A significant number of Indian labor migrants persist in their chosen occupations for extended periods and effectively manage their livelihoods. They also prioritise providing their children with an education at their destination. However, when it comes to Indian labour migrants engaged in brick industries in Nepal, their responses regarding their children's education are pretty similar. These migrants have yet to embrace a culture of schooling, maintaining a traditional lifestyle reminiscent of their ancestors. They have inherited the skill of brick-making and continue to follow this path.

Additionally, children from Muslim families within this group often reject the idea of attending school due to cultural practices and the emphasis on labor as a means for their children to earn income for the family. Consequently, they find themselves compelled to work to sustain their lives. In comparison, the number of school-going children among Nepali labour migrants to India is lower than that of Indian labor migrants to Nepal, primarily due to the uninterrupted nature of their employment at their respective destinations.

Travelling Hours and Crossed the Border

The Nepal-India border boasts 22 official entry points, with an additional six designated as immigration points for nationals of third countries, namely Banbasa-Mahendranagar, Gourifanta-Dhangadi, Rupadiya-Nepalganj, Sunouli-Bhairawa, Raxoul-Birganj, and Naxalbari-Kakarbhitta (Ministry of Commerce and Industry/GoI, 1991). According to Table 5.5, a significant majority of migrants from both countries, accounting for about 94.9 percent of Nepali labour migrants and 96.8

percent of Indian labor migrants, traverse the border through the Gaddachouki entry point. In contrast, a smaller percentage, specifically 6.5 percent of Nepali labour migrants and 3.7 percent of Indian labour migrants crossed from the Brahmdev border. Additionally, a mere 1.4% and 1.8% of Indian labour migrants, predominantly from Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and West Bengal, choose the Gourifanta and Sunouli corridors, respectively.

Table 11

Distribution of Labour Migrants by Travelling Hours and Means of Transportation to Reach the Destinations

Time for travel	Nepali labour migrants to India		Indian labour migrants to Nepal		Both groups	
	(N)	(%)	(N)	(%)	(N)	(%)
< 3 hours	-	-	235	83.9	235	36.1
3-8 hours	15	4.1	27	9.7	42	6.5
8-12 hours	174	47.0	11	3.9	185	28.5
12+ hours	181	48.9	7	2.5	188	28.9
Entry Border Points						
Bramhdev/Tanakpur	24	6.5	-	-	24	3.7
Gaddachouki/Banbasa	346	93.5	271	96.8	617	94.9
Dhangadi/Gouriphanta	-	-	4	1.4	4	0.6
Bhairahawa/Sunouli	-	-	5	1.8	5	0.8
Total	370	100.0	280	100.0	650	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2021.

Examining Table 11, further reveals that a substantial majority of Indian labour migrants (83.9%) reach their destination in Mahendranagar within three hours, owing to the proximity, while only 2.5 percent of migrants from West Bengal take more than 12 hours. Meanwhile, 47.8 percent of Nepali labour migrants, favoring longer distances, require 8 to 12 hours for travel, and 48.9 percent take over 12 hours to reach their destination. A minor fraction, comprising 4.1 percent of Nepali labour migrants and 9.7 percent of Indian labour migrants, cover the journey in 3 to 8 hours.

Frequency of Labour Migrants Returning at Origin

People do not usually move for work forever. More than half (51.9%) of Nepali labor migrants go back to their hometowns once a year. About 31.9 percent come back within six months, and 6.8 percent return during festivals or when they need to. On the other hand, 27.5 percent of Indian labor migrants go back home

every month because their workplaces are closer. They usually spend at least a day at home and then go back to work. Only 7.5 percent of Indian labor migrants come back within the year and 21.4 percent return when necessary.

Table 12

Distribution of Labour Migrants by Frequency of Returning at Origin

Frequency of returning at the origin	Nepali labour migrants to India		Indian labour migrants to Nepal		Both group	
	(N)	(%)	(N)	(%)	(N)	(%)
At monthly	2	0.5	77	27.5	79	12.1
At half yearly	118	31.9	27	9.6	145	22.3
One time in a year	192	51.9	21	7.5	213	32.8
During festivals/As per need	25	6.8	60	21.4	85	13.1
During vacation/holidays	33	8.9	27	9.6	60	9.2
During Rainy season	-	-	68	24.2	68	10.5
Total	370	100.0	280	100.0	650	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2021.

The study shows that how far someone has to travel for work affects how often they go back home. People who have to travel short distances usually go home every month, but those who travel long distances go home once a year. If someone goes back to their hometown more often, it is easier for them to celebrate their traditional festivals and keep up with their culture. However, Nepali labor migrants face a challenge because their workplaces are far away, and they cannot go home as frequently. This means they have fewer chances to celebrate festivals with their families. On the other hand, Indian labor migrants find it easier to celebrate with their families because their workplaces are closer to home. The distance to their work destination plays a significant role in how often they can be with their families for festivals.

Conclusion

Throughout the history of migration, it has been a common trend for Nepali individuals to seek job opportunities in India. Similarly, Indian people are known to migrate to Nepal for employment purposes. This migration pattern between Nepal and India is often referred to as circular migration. The majority of migrants in this exchange are typically males aged between 15 and 65, with a significant concentration falling within the 18 to 40-year age range. In terms of religious affiliations, a significant portion of Nepali labour migrants heading to India is

Hindus. In contrast, among Indian labour migrants, the Muslim community forms the largest group, followed by Hindus and Sikhs.

Additionally, Indian labour migrants, particularly those from the Muslim community, tend to have larger family sizes, which can be attributed to factors such as poverty. Larger family sizes are often a driving force for migration within Muslim communities. A key motivation for migration in both countries is the search for job opportunities, particularly among marginalized and socially disadvantaged communities. When it comes to education, Nepali migrants tend to have higher levels of educational attainment compared to Indian migrants. Some of the children of migrants enroll in schools at their parents' work destinations. The social and cultural aspects of these two groups of migrants differ due to their distinct geographical origins, religious beliefs, and cultural backgrounds.

The frequency of returning home for work migrants is significantly influenced by the distance they have to travel. Short-distance travelers, like Indian labor migrants, often go home monthly, facilitating easier participation in traditional festivals and cultural practices. However, Nepali labor migrants, facing the challenge of longer distances to their workplaces, cannot return home as frequently, resulting in fewer opportunities to celebrate festivals with their families. The conclusion drawn is that the distance to their work destination plays a crucial role in determining how often labor migrants can be with their families for festive occasions.

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Challenges and Prospects of Youth Entrepreneurship in Dhangadhi Sub-Metropolitan City, Nepal

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Abstract

Youth entrepreneurs are the driving forces of business innovation enhancing the economic development and transformation of the society. This study investigates the challenges and prospects of youth entrepreneurship in Dhangadhi Sub-metropolitan city, Nepal. Employing a descriptive survey research design of quantitative method, the data were collected through structured questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive statistical tools. 56 respondents were selected using purposive sampling method among young entrepreneurs. The study found that the main reason to start business is being self-dependent followed by upgrading income level. Regarding the challenges of young entrepreneurship, it is found that competition is the main challenge followed by access to finance. However, the major prospects are opportunity of micro enterprises, innovation and creativity, development of entrepreneurial skills, building enterprising culture and economic participation. The government should build up business environment to use their ideas, methods, skills and abilities for entrepreneurship development through flexible rules and regulations and financial supports. This study could be a milestone for future researchers, policy makers, academicians, owners and youth entrepreneurs.

Keywords: Youth, entrepreneurship, constraints, prospects, policy

Introduction

Entrepreneurship plays a major role in the country's economic progress and transformation. It has the ability to establish a sustainable environment for economic development (Ahlstrom & Obloj, 2008). Further, Lamrani et al. (2016) presents



that it is a creative method of combining equitable development, poverty alleviation (Crudu, 2019) and economic growth in a way that is more environmentally friendly. Globally, there is growing concern about lowering the unemployment rate in order to protect the standard of living for both the present and the future (Tessema et al., 2015). Additionally, entrepreneurship provides inventive ways for young individuals to advance their entrepreneurial endeavors. As a result, the idea of encouraging entrepreneurship is increasingly being considered when formulating policies in developing nations to increase youth job options.

The issue of youth entrepreneurship is a current one in the world (Khamis & Yusof, 2021). This is due to the fact that young people are becoming more independent and well-off (Lofstrom, 2013) that invention, economic competitiveness, and provincial development are increasing (Dash & Kaur, 2012), that opening up new businesses can provide positive learning opportunities for others (Green, 2013), that entrepreneurial competence is growing (Eren & Sula, 2012), and that scarcity is decreasing (Ogamba, 2019). In addition, youth are likely to be enormous human resources, change agents, and future leaders who may transform essential company operations into profitable ventures with a significant positive social impact (Ogamba, 2019). Considering that they must expand more quickly and generate more employment chances, they typically have more business opportunities than older entrepreneurs.

The young entrepreneurs that emerge triumphant can serve as motivational role models for other young people, encouraging them to pursue entrepreneurship in the future. Young people lack money, but they do not lack enthusiasm or hard effort. The cost of operation, company licenses, taxes, and registration are only a few of the many financial difficulties they must bear. One of the biggest challenges facing young individuals wishing to start their own enterprises is access to sufficient funding. These difficulties may discourage young people from starting their own businesses (Madu & Okechick, 2017). In many countries, a large number of young individuals with qualifications and recent university graduates are unable to find employment and move abroad in search of opportunities. Brain drain, skilled migration, settlement in industrialized nations, etc. are some of the other problems Nepal faces.

Nowadays, every country recognizes the significance of youth entrepreneurship as a necessary condition for achieving stability, economic growth, effective governance, and resolving the unemployment issue (Ceptureanu & Ceptureanu, 2015). The unemployment problem has disproportionately affected youth populations in nations that are undergoing demographic transition. These factors include the fast expanding urban labor force, the fast growing population,

the mismatch in skills between employers and employees, the uneven growth of the economy, the outdated curricula in schools, and the lack of employable skills (Awogbenle & Iwuamadi, 2010, Madu & Okechi, 2017). They are prepared to provide a window of opportunity for investments in the youth who will make up the following generation of skilled laborers and business owners. This chance will accelerate social and economic development and lessen poverty (ILO, 2005). Young people's micro and small-scale companies (MSEs) are crucial economic players in the production of jobs and revenue (Mekonnen, 2006).

The young people of today have the potential to establish one of the middle-income nations by means of the active, diligent, and imaginative involvement of young Nepalese. Through their entrepreneurial endeavors, young people can increase employment and possibly even create jobs for themselves. As a result, young people are beginning to recognize entrepreneurship as a necessary strategy and a valuable choice for generating revenue (Ryan, 2003). Young entrepreneurship is therefore viewed as an extra way to integrate youth into the market, eradicate poverty, and recognize the social and economic effort of young entrepreneurs. A standard job career is too limited for a long life.

Youth in Nepal are defined by the government as those who are between the ages of 16 and 40, making up 40.35 percent of the country's overall population (PHCR, 2011). Youth, according to the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development is defined as those under the age of fifty. Similarly, youth are defined as pertinent to their circumstances by political parties and business or social entities. Ages 16 to 40 are designated as youth according to the Council Act of 2015 and the Youth Policy. The Youth Vision 2015 separated young people between the ages of 16 and 40 into two groups: ages 25 to 40 and ages 16 to 24. Many studies have examined the issues, socioeconomic circumstances, and success factors associated with youth entrepreneurship.

As a result, this study explores the challenges and prospects of youth entrepreneurship in the context of Dhangadhi Sub-metropolitan city of Nepal.

The main objective of this study is to understand the challenges and prospects of youth entrepreneurship in Dhangadhi Sub-metropolitan city Far Western Province Nepal. More specifically, this research work intended to:

1. To highlight the socio-economic background of youth entrepreneurs in the study area.
2. To present the challenges that encountered by youth entrepreneurs in managing of their entrepreneurship.

3. To explore the prospects of youth entrepreneurship in the Dhangadhi Sub-Metropolitan city.

Literature Review

Youth Entrepreneurship

Youth is typically characterized as the time between childhood and maturity or as a group of recent graduates. However, when it comes to work and education level, this age range makes the greatest sense for classifying this group (Enendu, 2020). Edema and Etim (2017) define it as a group of young individuals who use their distinct identities and bureau to find, take advantage of, and assess opportunities that offer value in order to succeed as entrepreneurs. Additionally, they assess and make use of limited and underutilized resources (Enendu, 2020; Venter, 2014). Numerous studies show that young people are the first to lose their jobs when the economic crisis devastates the labor market and leaves them jobless.

Consequently, a large number of laid-off workers have relocated to rural areas where job opportunities are limited. Consequently, young people are compelled to work for themselves and launch their own firms rather than doing so voluntarily (Muthuraman & Haziazi, 2019). When given access to the right resources, youth can use their abilities to successfully meet development needs while simultaneously taking advantage of chances for growth in the job market (Enendu, 2020). Setting objectives, obtaining financial independence, and figuring out one's role in society all depend on the adolescent years, claim Kew et al. (2015). Many changes that can impact young people's needs, behaviors, and opportunities can take place at this time, including those that are physical, economical, emotional, cognitive, and social.

A study done by Gwija et al. (2014) presents a youth entrepreneur is any young person between the ages of 16 and 35 who has the ability to recognize an opportunity when one arises and seize it to launch and grow both new and existing businesses in a range of industries with the goal of generating capital and value. In the line of Oseifuah (2010) youth entrepreneur as any individual between the ages of 16 and 35 who has the capacity to spot opportunities when they present themselves and seize them in order to build wealth and value by starting a new business or growing an already-existing one in any industry. Further, Sakala (2017) has described to examine youth entrepreneurship as the strategic risk-taking and business venture launch undertaken by a group of young individuals with the goal of generating revenue. Additionally, Youth entrepreneurship is the process through which a group of young people take calculated chances and launch a business endeavor in an effort to improve their well-being and achieve financial advantages. Young people

need to be risk-takers with the ability to recognize opportunities, gather resources, and envision the expansion of their businesses in order to start and run successful businesses. Teenage entrepreneurship is the main topic of this research.

Additionally, young entrepreneurship is the process by which individuals come to realize venture ownership as a feasible choice, come up with business concepts, comprehend the procedures involved in becoming an entrepreneur, and take on the establishment and expansion of a company (Ghimire & Chaudhary, 2021). Venture attributes like innovation, creativity, and risk-taking must be used in conjunction with the available resources for a corporation to prosper (Chigunta, 2002). As per Youth Business International (2009), companies, governments, and other relevant stakeholders in society ought to show their appreciation to young entrepreneurs for their valuable contributions towards the growth of the economy and the reduction of youth unemployment. As a result, the number of young people launching their own enterprises is rising globally as a means of fostering regional development, enhancing economic competitiveness, and generating jobs.

Challenges of Youth Entrepreneurship

Youth entrepreneurship presents a lot of opportunities for young people (Muthuraman & Haziazi, 2019) but the youth people of Dhangadhi are less probable to involve in business activities due to the lending environment. The businessmen are finding it hard to secure conventional banking loan for establishment of ventures and acquisition of existing businesses (Hopson & Hopson, 2014).

Moreover, Diraditsile and Maphula (2018) stated that a number of factors, including a lack of government support agencies, a lack of technical skills and knowledge, a lack of markets, a lack of advanced technology, a lack of proper information, and a lack of financial support, make it extremely difficult for young people to continue in entrepreneurship. However, it is likely that young people lack the leadership skills and entrepreneurial aptitude necessary to launch successful businesses. They focused businesses may also face prejudice in the marketplace from consumers who may have doubts about the quality of the goods and services they provide. In a similar vein, fewer young people are starting businesses due to a lack of resources (Ceptureanu & Ceptureanu, 2015).

Besides, Sitoula (2015) highlighted the difficulties faced by young business owners in Kathmandu. These include limited financial resources, a lack of backing from the government, strict business laws and regulations, a lack of managerial abilities, a lack of technology, a lack of business connections, a lack of a market, etc. Additionally, it was found that financial institutions were hesitant to grant long-term loans for the expansion of businesses.

The government of Nepal is currently focusing more on promoting entrepreneurship in the country since it believes that this is a crucial component of invention and creativity. Mostly, the government, through its ministries, may provide practical policies, guidelines, directives, and protocols that would facilitate the emergence of new enterprises, particularly among young people (Subrahmanian et al., 2017). According to the Ministry of Youth's records, 38 percent of young people are unemployed and 75 percent are underemployed at the moment (CBS, 2021). Young people's unemployment adds to socioeconomic expenses in addition to causing despair in general (Schoof, 2006). It is difficult for young people in Nepal to see their potential as lenders in business due to deeply ingrained social, cultural, and structural barriers. Opportunities for entrepreneurship will be crucial in helping young people into the formal economy, even though traditional employment will continue to play a significant role.

Prospects of Youth Entrepreneurship

Youth entrepreneurship addresses unemployment and increases youths' financial independence (Diraditsile & Maphula, 2018). One of the major issues brought about by rapidly increasing urban labor, population growth, differences in skills between those acquired in school or college and those required for the workforce, outmoded curricula and pedagogy, and unequal economic expansion is youth unemployment (Ayinde, 2008, Awogbenle & Iwuamadi, 2010, Utomi, 2011). It encourages young people to work for themselves and become independent as a means of surviving (Olufemi, 2020). It also creates jobs and encourages the private sector among the general public as well as young people, which is crucial for the nation's economic development and success (Gobbi, 2014). It has also given new optimism to the country's burgeoning innovation projects (Khamis & Yusof, 2021).

In advance, Sitoula (2015) has emphasized the potential for developing youth entrepreneurship, citing examples such as the community's young people's love for entrepreneurship. According to the report, the government needs to do more to ensure the long-term viability of young entrepreneurship. This underscores the necessity of taking decisive action to improve the community's unwelcoming and unsupportive business climate for youth entrepreneurship.

In terms of previously untapped business opportunities, Dhangadhi offers a wealth of them. These include education, agriculture, healthcare, tourism, communication, transportation, manufacturing of pharmaceuticals and related commodities, and information technology. More truthful and creative people are needed in this city to propel the economy to the desired levels of prosperity. Young people appear to be becoming increasingly passionate about entrepreneurship as

seen by their increased enthusiasm (Enendu, 2020). It has also been noted that young people are now regularly organizing meetings, conducting management training, and presenting entrepreneurial seminars. These activities support the development of youth skills that enable them to effectively launch and operate a business and contribute to a better future for the younger generation. For entrepreneurial education to be effective, it must play a significant role in a graduate's experience and concentrate on encouraging an entrepreneurial mindset and supporting self-employment as a viable career path. In other words, it must instill confidence and innovation and guarantee that students are flexible, risk-averse, business-aware, and confident from the start (Enendu, 2020).

In order to contribute to the advancement of community projects like park construction, shopping complex construction, urban regeneration, and river cleanliness, young entrepreneurs must also be motivated (Enendu, 2020). The number of young entrepreneurs is increasing, and this will eventually influence how visible they are as leaders in the business community and as contributors to sustainable economic growth. Young entrepreneurs will play a crucial role in bringing about the nation's much-needed progress and change, particularly in the economic frontiers. This indicates a growing interest in youth entrepreneurship; all stakeholders should pay attention to maintaining and fostering this passion (Enendu, 2020). Because it leverages young people's ideas, inventiveness, and abilities for self-employment and economic growth, youth entrepreneurship is therefore stated to be a foundation of creativity and innovation (Olufemi, 2020, Maritz & Donovan, 2015). Numerous studies demonstrate that young people are a rich supply of fresh concepts that foster success via originality and inventiveness. Youth entrepreneurship is therefore a tactic that encourages a culture of entrepreneurship in the community.

A culture that is enterprising does not just promote innovation and self-initiative, but also a more businesslike mindset. In the line of Antonaras and Dekoulou (2016) social entrepreneurs are social agents who transform obstacles into possibilities. They not only boost the nation's economic competitiveness but also its entrepreneurial culture. All of the initiatives might raise youth income by fostering youth entrepreneurship and skill development, which would ultimately raise the proportion of young people participating in the mainstream economy (Enendu, 2020). After looking through the relevant literature, the researcher discovered that while there have been a few studies done on youth entrepreneurship in Nepal, Dhangadhi City has not seen a formal study. As such, this study is an attempt on the part of the researcher to close the current gap.

Youth Entrepreneurship in Dhangadhi Sub-metropolitan City

Dhangadhi is a highly renowned city with respect to its diverse socio-cultural and religious offerings, as well as its diverse population and economic activity (Subedi & Subedi, 2021). It was a trading gateway of Far Western Provenance, which accounts for its lengthy history in business and trade (Shrestha, 2023). However, Dhangadhi implemented a collective strategy soon after the revolution in the 1970s, which discouraged people from engaging in entrepreneurial endeavors (Subedi & Subedi, 2021). Early in the 1990s, Nepal enacted a democratic constitution that liberalized the country (Shrestha, 2023). The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) encouraged entrepreneurship throughout much of Nepal. The majority of Dhangadhi's entrepreneurs are involved in the informal sector, which includes a variety of small-scale, information-and communication-technology, agro-based, and service-oriented businesses (Subedi & Subedi, 2021). The government has assessed the following organizations: the Cottage and Small Industrial Development Board (CSIDB), the National Productivity and Economic Development Center (NPEDC), the Trade and Export Promotion Center (TEPC), IBDC, FNCCI, and the Micro Enterprise Development Programme (MEDP). Furthermore, the Nepalese government has developed an institutional development policy to help the unorganized business sector, namely in the private sector, and has created an atmosphere that is conducive to the creation of initiatives (Shrestha, 2023). Nonetheless, the Nepali private sector is continuously confronted with an array of challenges, including multiple taxes, terrible infrastructure, a workforce lacking in experience, restricted access to capital, costly raw materials, a lack of customers, challenging land access, corruption, and inadequate services (Rajeev & Mohamed, 2017).

Therefore, to achieve its goal, the Dhangadhi Sub-Metropolitan city needs to engage with the federal and local governments and strengthen its institutional and human capacity. All interested parties should be actively involved in developing inclusive and holistic methods, and concern groups engaged in entrepreneurial activities should receive effective assistance in the form of technical, financial, and infrastructure-related resources, among other things.

Methods and Procedures

This study employed descriptive research design to gain insights into the challenges and prospects of youth entrepreneurship in Dhangadhi City. In this study, the purposive sampling strategy is used for the convenience of the investigator. The respondents who are readily available in Dhangadhi city were chosen. A survey comprising questionnaires was administered to 56 young entrepreneurs representing

various industries. Primary and secondary sources have both been used in this study. Using a questionnaire, primary data from a field survey were gathered. Three sections make up the structured questionnaire that is used: The socio-economic attributes of female entrepreneurs (b) the difficulties young entrepreneurs face in running their businesses, and (c) the future of youth entrepreneurship in Nepal's Dhangdhi Sub-Metropolitan City. The first section of the survey focused on achieving the primary goal, which was to create a profile of the socio-economic traits of young business owners in Dhangadhi City. Information regarding their age group, marital status, education, ethnicity, religion, types of businesses, amount of investment, and sources of startup funding is specifically held in this section. The next section of the survey aims to accomplish the study's second purpose, which is to draw attention to the difficulties faced by young entrepreneurs who want to start their own businesses. A five-point Likert scale was employed in the question to highlight the challenges that young entrepreneurs encounter. In a similar vein, the third aim of the research outlines the potential for young entrepreneurship in Dhangadi. A five-point Likert scale was included in the questions to indicate potential opportunities within the research topic. The respondents were asked to select the opportunity or challenge that they felt offered the most potential.

Results and Discussion

The study's analysis discusses the socio-economic traits of the participants, factors influencing the difficulties young business owners encounter in running their enterprises, and the future of youth entrepreneurship in Dhangadhi. Descriptive analysis, factor analysis, and other data analysis were performed throughout the data preparation phase. The 56 respondents' fieldwork was over when the data preparation process began, and the data was entered into a computer using Excel and SPSS software. Descriptive and factor analysis for the qualitative data in this study were then carried out. After a thorough analysis of the data, themes were developed to determine their significance and relevance.

Descriptive Analysis

Table 1

Socio-economic Background of the Youth Entrepreneurs in Dhangadhi City

Information		Respondents	Percentage
1 Age	Below 20	4	7
	21 -30 years	23	41
	31-40 years	29	52

Total		56	100
2. Sex	Male	39	69
	Female	17	31
Total		56	100
3. Marital Status	Married	37	66
	Unmarried	19	34
	Single	0	0
Total		56	100
4. Ethnicity	Adivasi/Janjati	16	28
	Dalit	4	7
	Madeshi	3	5
	Others	33	60
Total		56	100
5. Religion	Hindu	54	97
	Islam	2	3
	Buddhist	0	0
	Christian	0	0
Total		56	100
6. Education	Literate	8	14
	Intermediate	18	32
	Graduate	28	50
	Masters	2	4
Total		56	100
7. Forms of Business	Sole Trading	55	98
	Partnership	1	2
Total		56	100
8. Amount of Investment	1,00,000- 3,00,000	22	39
	300,001- 5,00,000	16	29
	500,001- 7,00,000	12	21
	Above 7,00,000	6	11
Total		56	100

9. Numbers of Employees	None	15	27
	below 5	20	36
	6- 10	17	30
	11- 15	4	7
	Above 16	0	0
Total		56	100

Source: Field survey, 2023

Table 1 lists the socio-economic traits of young business owners in Nepal's Dhangahi city. Among the group of interviewed youth entrepreneurs, 7 percent belong to the age group below 20 years, 41 percent belong to the age group 21-30 years, and 52 percent belong to the age group 31 to 40 years. This suggests that the majority of young adults who are mature are involved in business to further their careers. Further, among the group of respondents 69 percent are male and 31 percent are female. This percentage shows that maximum numbers of male are involved in business activities due to the family responsibility. The field survey shows that the educational qualifications of the youth entrepreneurs have satisfactory. 14 percent respondents are literate, 32 percent respondents have intermediate education and 50 percent respondents have graduate level which is sufficient for effective business. Similarly, 4 percent respondents have master's level education. For facing risks and uncertainty of business higher level education and training is significant and prerequisite. In the context of marital status 66 percent youth entrepreneurs are married and 34 percent are unmarried. From this, it can be said that, married youth are sincere with their business activities due to the family responsibility. Hence, even after taking care of the family, youth organizations are becoming more and more interested in carrying on with their business. The survey result shows that most of the other group youth entrepreneurs are involved in entrepreneurial activities. Among them 60 percent youth are involved from other group, 28 percent respondents are involved from *Aadibasi/Janajati*, 7 percent from *Dalit* community and 5 percent youth are involved from *Madeshi* community. It is said that most of the other group (*Brahamin* and *Kshitri*) youth people are involved in business activities for their self-dependency and income generation. Moreover, the survey result revealed that the 97 percent youth people are involved from Hindu religion and rest 3 percent are participated from Islam religion. It is clear that most of the Hindu young people are actively participated in different business activities rather than other religions. Further, the survey is found that maximum number of youth entrepreneurs only invested Rs.1,00,000-3,00,000 due to the scarcity of finance. The respondents said that lack of collateral, long documentation process of loan, critical loan payment

process, high interest rate are the major factors of less investment. They need to sources of capital from government and other support agencies. In the context of number of employees, 36 percent youth entrepreneurs have below 5 employees, 30 percent have 6-10 employees and 15 percent youth entrepreneurs are working without employees. Similarly, 7 percent have 11-15 employees. Based on the data it is clear that they have not recruited employees due to the lack of income and extra funds. They involved general activities like accountant, waiter, caretaker, receptionist, field work etc. As the form of business ownership 98 percent consist sole proprietorship. This suggests that Dhangadhi City's young entrepreneurs desire to act as independent contractors and control their businesses.

Table 2

Types of Businesses Operating by youth Entrepreneurs in Dhangadhi City

Nature of Enterprises	Respondents	Percentage (%)
1. Machinery and Electronics	4	7
2. Beauty Parlor and Cosmetic Shop	11	20
3. Grocery Shop	8	14
4. Medical and Surgical Store	4	7
5. Milk Dairy and Bakeries	5	9
6. Fancy Store	6	11
7. Hotel, Café and Restaurant	4	7
8. Books and Stationery	4	7
9. Agriculture and Livelihood	6	11
10. Automotive and Engineering	4	7
Total	56	100

Source: Survey, 2023

The diverse business ventures operated by young entrepreneurs are illustrated in Table 2. The results of the survey indicate that the majority of young entrepreneurs (11 percent) work in the beauty parlor and cosmetic shop industries, while the remaining 4 percent are employed in the machinery and electronics, hotel café and restaurant, medical and surgical, books and stationary, automotive, and engineering sectors, respectively. In a similar vein, 8 percent of youngsters work in grocery stores, 6 percent in fancy shops, and 6 percent in agricultural livelihood. Similarly, 5 percent of youth work in the dairy and bakery industries. The analysis presented that maximum youth entrepreneurs occupied traditional business activities due to the lack of education, training and technical skills. From this, it can be said

that, youth entrepreneurs are lagged behind from the Information Technology (IT) knowledge. However, the youth entrepreneurs are ready to learn technical skills and IT knowledge and want to cross the traditional boundary for the business career.

Table 3

Sources of Capital

Capital Sources	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1. Own saving	15	27
2. Loan from family and relatives	4	7
3. Loan from Commercial banks	6	11
4. Loan from financial institutions and cooperatives	5	9
5. Government support	0	0
6. More than one from the above	26	46
Total	56	100

Source: Survey, 2023

Table 3 presents the sources of capital of youth entrepreneurship. The survey shows that most of the youth entrepreneurs (26 percent) are collected their capital from different sources such as family, friends, banks, cooperatives etc. Based on the survey a major issue is that the government should not give any financial incentives and funds for the development of Youth entrepreneurship. Further, the survey presents that 15 percent youth entrepreneurs are used their own saving amount, 6 percent youth entrepreneurs has collected their capital from commercial banks, 5 percent youth entrepreneurs collected their capital from financial institutions and cooperatives. Likewise, 4 percent has collected fund from their family and friends. This analysis highlights that the youth entrepreneurs want to financial support from governmental and non-governmental institutions with minimum interest rate for development of their business.

Table 4

Reason of Starting Business

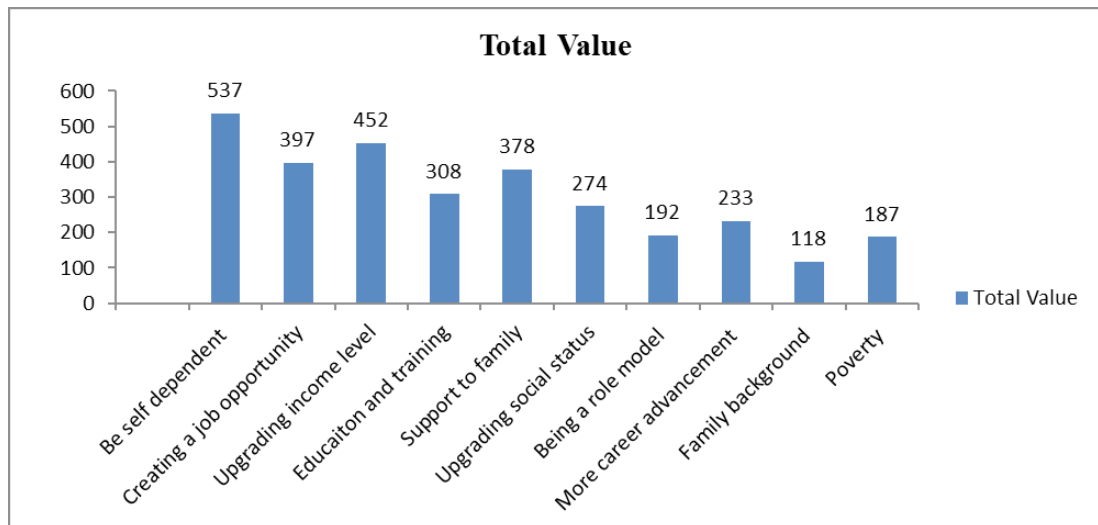
Variables	Respondents										Total Value
1. Being self-dependent	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	15	37	537

2. Creating a job opportunity	0	0	2	2	6	8	12	14	11	1	397
3. Upgrading income level	0	1	0	0	0	3	11	19	17	5	452
4. Education and training	2	3	4	14	10	5	3	5	9	1	308
5. Support to family	0	1	1	2	6	13	16	11	3	3	378
6. Upgrading social status	1	2	5	11	18	13	6	0	0	0	274
7. Being a role model	12	5	13	10	5	7	2	0	0	1	192
8. More career advancement	2	2	18	16	10	2	3	2	0	1	233
9. Family background	23	18	9	2	1	2	1	0	0	0	118
10. Poverty	15	21	6	1	1	2	3	0	0	7	187

Source: Survey, 2023

Figure 1

Reason of Starting Business



Among the ten reasons of starting business (being self-dependent, creating a job opportunity, upgrading income level, education and training, support to family, upgrading social status, being a role model, more career advancement, family background and poverty) being self-dependent is found one of the significant factor.

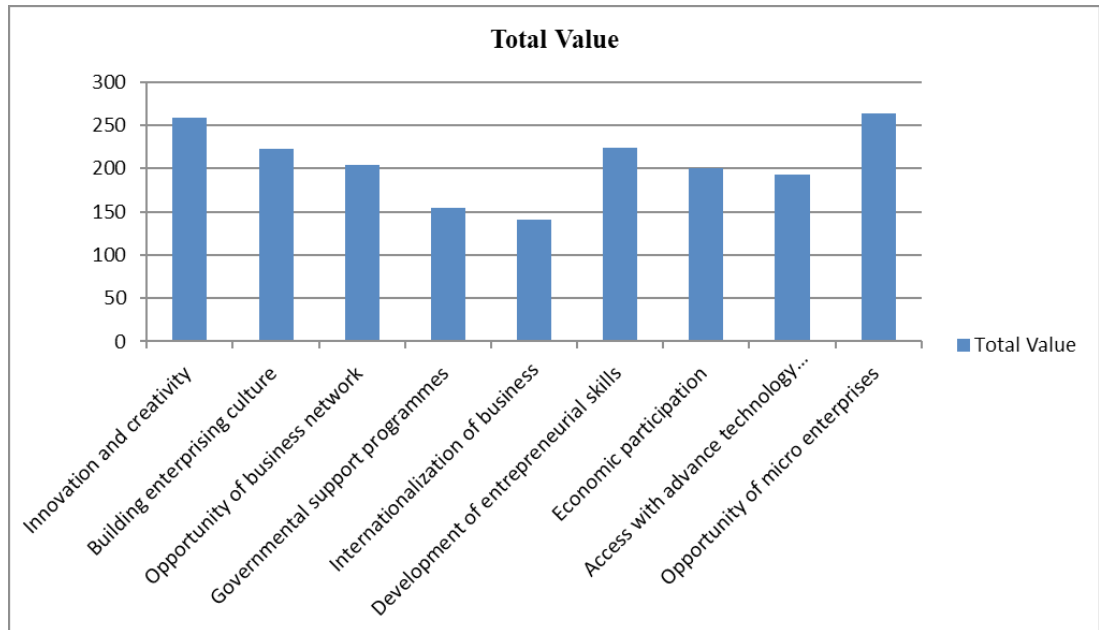
More than 90 percent youth entrepreneurs are inspired by this reason because it has highest (537) ranked value. It is followed by upgrading income level, creating job opportunity and support to family. The reasons behind that youth entrepreneur are wants to self-dependent in their life. Furthermore, they are risk avoiding and focused on traditional business. Thus, it has been discovered that recommendations from friends and family are essential to their business's launch. Analogously, it has been determined that the utilization of skill and ability, together with family support, are satisfactory aspects that impact juvenile entrepreneurship. Self-reliance, on the other hand, has less of an impact on young entrepreneurs than income advancement and financial independence. Young entrepreneurs prefer to be with their families rather than be apart from them, which is the explanation for this. Thus, this component does not always affect young entrepreneurs.

Table 5

Challenges of Youth Entrepreneurship

Variables	Total Value	Summated mean value
1. Access to finance	266	4.75
2. Governmental rules and regulations	218	3.89
3. Inadequate entrepreneurial skills and abilities	229	4.09
4. Social and Cultural constraints	160	2.86
5. Availability of resources	215	3.84
6. Access to market	208	3.71
7. Administrative and regulatory burden	170	3.04
8. Competition	276	4.93
9. Access to modern technology	224	4.00

Source: Survey, 2023

Figure 2*Challenges of Youth Entrepreneurship*

It is discovered that the total mean value of rivalry toward various firm types is 4.9. This suggests that one of the biggest obstacles to teenage entrepreneurship is competition. This implies that the competition is major challenge to youth entrepreneurship. Due to the straight skills, abilities, knowledge and lack of entrepreneurial expertise youth entrepreneurs started traditional business such as grocery, fancy shops, fast food, beauty parlor and tailoring the result is huge competition. Similarly, access to finance is also found problematic factor followed by inadequate entrepreneurial skills and abilities and access to modern technology for youth entrepreneurship. Furthermore, governmental rules and regulations, availability of resources, access to market and administrative and regulatory are significant challenges.

Table 6*Prospects of Youth Entrepreneurship in Dhanadhi City*

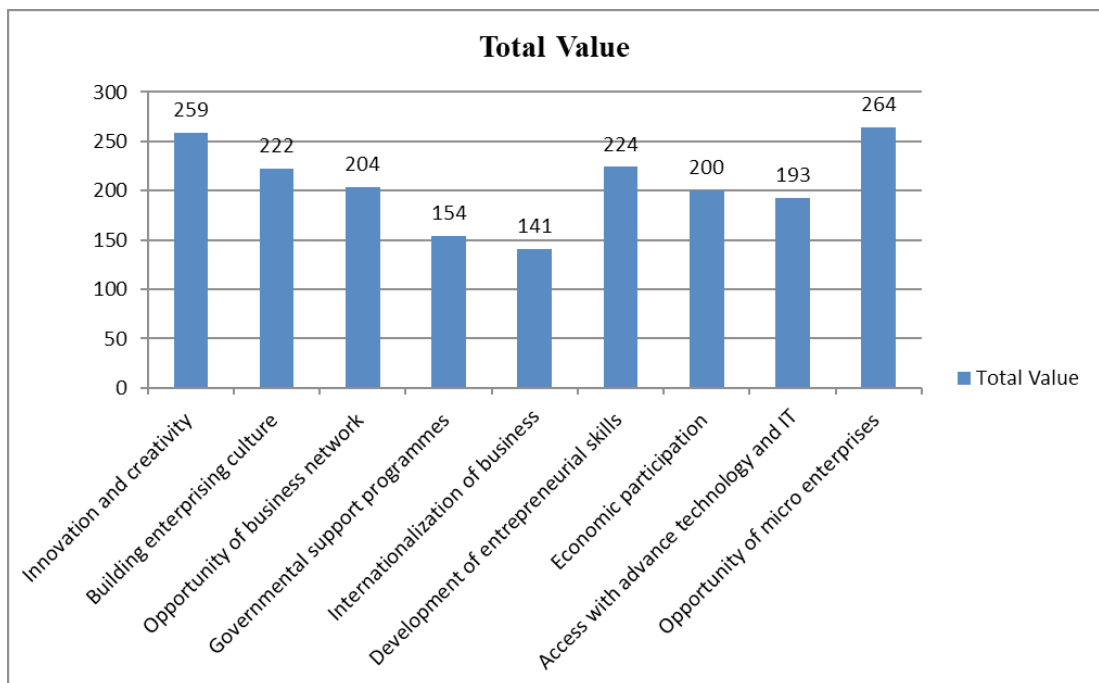
Variables	Total Value	Summited mean value
1. Innovation and creativity	259	4.625
2. Building enterprising culture	222	3.964
3. Opportunity of business network	204	3.643

4. Governmental support programmes	154	2.750
5. Internationalization of business	141	2.518
6. Development of entrepreneurial skills	224	4.000
7. Economic participation	200	3.571
8. Access with advance technology and IT	193	3.446
9. Opportunity of micro enterprises	264	4.714

Source: Survey, 2023

Figure 3

Prospects of Youth Entrepreneurship



The summated mean value of opportunity of micro enterprises is found 4.7. This implies that the small-scale businesses are major prospects for youth entrepreneurship. Availability of local resources, skills and ability the youth are inspired with micro enterprises which make them independent. Similarly, Innovation and creativity is also found an additional opportunity that is followed by the development of entrepreneurial skills. Due to the formal education, training and development programmes the youth entrepreneurs are growing creativity

and innovation which is builds entrepreneurial skills, ability and knowledge. Furthermore, building of enterprising culture, opportunity of business network, economic participation and access with advance technology and IT are significant prospects. Among the various factors, opportunity of micro enterprises is most significant opportunity to the youth entrepreneurship.

Conclusion

On the basis of overall study findings of the present study concluded the obstacles and opportunities associated with young entrepreneurship in Dhangadhi City. This study is simply based on field surveys and data are collected from 56 youth entrepreneurs who are involved in different areas of business. Firstly, this study presents socio-economic characteristics of youth entrepreneurs and reasons of starting business. According to the analysis, among the various reasons to start a business, being self-reliant is the primary one. In the future, scholars must examine young, educated entrepreneurs in diverse nations and ascertain how well their businesses are performing.

The current study also presented the major challenges of youth entrepreneurship in Dhangadhi City. Among the several challenges the study found that competition is a key challenge. Similarly, access to finance is also found problematic factor followed by inadequate entrepreneurial skills and abilities and access to modern technology for youth entrepreneurship.

Moreover, among the several prospects, the study found that opportunity of micro enterprises is main prospects for youth entrepreneurship. Similarly, innovation and creativity is also found an additional opportunity that is followed by the development of entrepreneurial skills.

The results of this study have consequences for the creation of trustworthy guidelines, directives, and plans for enhancing young entrepreneurship. Regarding the policy implications, the findings highlight youth entrepreneurship must need a higher level of financial support from government, expertise and self-employment behavior. As such mutual efforts from the central and provincial government, public, researchers, INGOs, NGOs, private sectors, and other related groups who have a stake in youth entrepreneurs are necessary to solve the challenges. Therefore, policymakers should be considered action holds entrepreneurial knowledge and qualities from the early days.

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Mediating Role of Job Satisfaction in the Nexus between Career Development and Unprofessional Engagement among Civil Servants in Nepal

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate the relationships between career development (CrD), job satisfaction (JbS), and unprofessional behaviour (UpE) in public institutions. Employing a causal-comparative research design, it also examines how job satisfaction mediates the CrD-UpE connection among civil servants in Nepal. Utilizing a quantitative approach and convenience sampling, the study includes 385 civil servants from various government organizations. Data validity and reliability were assessed, and analysis was conducted using SPSS 20 and AMOS 22, including structural equation modeling (SEM). The findings confirm positive links between CrD and JbS and CrD and UpE. Additionally, they underscore the role of JbS in mitigating UpE, highlighting the value of investing in career development to enhance job satisfaction and reduce unprofessional behaviour, particularly among Nepalese civil servants. The study emphasizes the robustness of these relationships and offers practical insights for enhancing career development programmes and fostering employee job satisfaction to minimize unprofessional conduct in public organizations.

Keywords: Professional development, employee satisfaction, unethical conduct, public servants, mediation effect, government organizations

Introduction

In today's dynamic and competitive environment, both public and private organizations recognize the essential role played by their employees in attaining and maintaining a competitive edge (McDonald & Hite, 2023; Qaralleh et al., 2023). Consequently, fostering employee career development has become a strategic imperative (Shahriari et al., 2023; Sheraz et al., 2019). These initiatives empower



individuals to unlock their full potential and, in turn, make substantial contributions to organizational success and longevity (Riyanto et al., 2021). Within this context, job satisfaction, a critical factor in employee well-being, becomes a pivotal element in shaping levels of workforce engagement (Ng et al., 2021; Ashraf, 2019). In addition, career development in HR helps employees grow, advance, and succeed within an organization through planned activities (Trivellas et al., 2015). It includes career planning, skills development, and more to boost job satisfaction, retention, and a skilled workforce (Berhanu, 2023; Plomp et al., 2016). Job satisfaction is the overall contentment and fulfillment individuals derive from their work, influencing motivation, performance, and well-being (Kumari et al., 2021). Satisfied employees tend to perform better, stay longer, engage more, reduce stress, innovate, enhance customer satisfaction, and foster a harmonious workplace (Ahamd, 2023; Ali & Zia-ur-Rehman, 2014). Professional engagement is the commitment, enthusiasm, and involvement individuals have in their roles, impacting job satisfaction and performance (Wang et al., 2020; Gupta, 2015). It is determined by factors like passion, motivation, autonomy, and teamwork (Hilton et al., 2023).

Furthermore, unprofessional behavior refers to actions by employees that go against workplace standards and cause disruptions (Kroukamp, 2006; Roberts & Davenport, 2002). Reasons for such behavior may include job dissatisfaction, low pay, lack of recognition, unclear career paths, poor leadership, heavy workload, burnout, limited autonomy, work-life balance issues, training gaps, and a greater focus on monetary aspects (Lartey, 2021; Ali et al., 2019). A research gap exists in understanding how job satisfaction precisely mediates the connection between career development and unprofessional engagement, including the specific factors involved and the influence of organizational context and individual attributes (Nanjundeswaraswamy, 2023; Wood et al., 2012). On the other hand, there is a lack of empirical studies, particularly regarding the mediating role of job satisfaction in the relationship between career development and reduction of unprofessional engagement, especially within public institutions in the context of Nepal. Further research is needed to pinpoint these nuanced elements to develop more effective interventions and strategies for promoting professionalism in the workplace.

However, the present study aimed to investigate the mediating role of job satisfaction in the relationship between career development and unprofessional engagement of employees within the public institutions. Furthermore, the study intended to discern how career development influences job satisfaction and, subsequently, how job satisfaction impacts the occurrence of unprofessional conduct in the workplace. Additionally, the study sought to identify additional factors contributing to unprofessional engagement and to provide practical guidance

for organizations on fostering professionalism through their career development programs and job satisfaction instruments.

Literature Review

Career development refers to the lifelong process of managing and planning one's career path to achieve personal and professional goals. It encompasses a series of activities and decisions made throughout a person's working life to enhance their skills, knowledge, experience, and opportunities in the world of work (Akhter & Naveed, 2023). Career development involves various aspects, including self-assessment, goal setting, skill development, education, training, career planning, job enlargement, work-life balance, and retirement planning (Jia-Jun & Hua-Ming, 2022). Effective career development can lead to increased job satisfaction, higher earning potential, and a sense of fulfillment in one's professional life (Smet, 2021). It is an ongoing process that evolves as individuals gain experience, and their goals and circumstances change (Dewi & Nurhayati, 2021). The career development plays a crucial role in the success and growth of organizations and it involves helping employees plan and navigates their careers within the organizations (Yarbrough et al., 2017).

Besides that, job satisfaction is a subjective and diverse concept, with individuals prioritizing various factors. While some find satisfaction in meaningful work, others may place greater importance on financial rewards or work-life balance (Sheraz et al., 2019). Organizations frequently endeavor to boost job satisfaction among their employees, recognizing its association with heightened employee engagement, reduced turnover rates, and enhanced productivity (Vorina et al., 2017). The scope of job satisfaction in organizations encompasses a broad array of activities and responsibilities and these activities are focused on comprehending, assessing, and improving employee satisfaction within an organization (Abraham, 2012). A contented workforce tends to exhibit higher levels of engagement, productivity, and dedication to the organization's objectives, underscoring the critical role of job satisfaction in human resource management (Tepayakul & Rinthaisong, 2018).

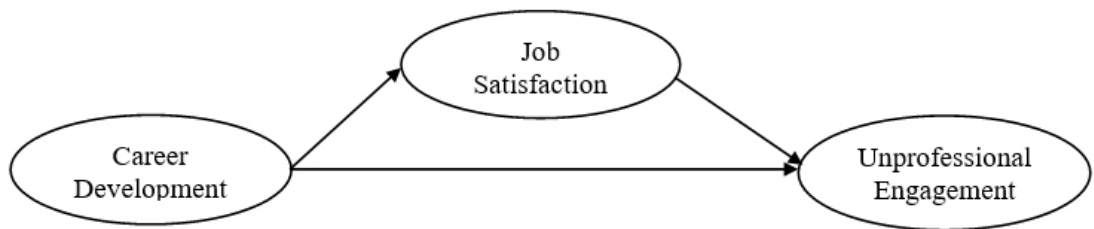
Similarly, unethical engagement of employees refers to instances where employees exhibit behavior, attitudes, or actions that do not align with the professional standards and expectations established by the organization (Anitha, 2014). Such behavior is typically considered inappropriate and disruptive to the workplace environment, and it can negatively impact productivity, morale, and the overall organizational culture (Neault & Pickerell, 2011). Employee unprofessional behavior can arise from various underlying causes and factors. Identifying these causes is crucial for organizations and managers to effectively address the issues

(Chhetri, 2017). Unprofessional behavior may manifest as chronic lateness, frequent absenteeism, rudeness, insubordination, violations of company policies, and other actions that disrupt the workplace or reflect negatively on both the individual and the organization (Zahari, Said & Muhamad, 2022). Addressing unprofessional behavior in the workplace requires ongoing effort and commitment from both leadership and employees. It involves creating a culture that values professionalism and providing the necessary support and resources (Kingshott & Dincer, 2008). By doing so, organizations can cultivate a respectful and productive work environment conducive to achieving their goals.

Based on a comprehensive review of both theoretical and empirical prior studies, the current study identified numerous variables within the respective field. The application of Job Satisfaction Theory in this research is grounded in its assertion that employees who experience contentment are more likely to exhibit increased work engagement and are less prone to engaging in unprofessional behaviors (Hoppock, 1935). However, the primary objective of this study is to establish a standardized conceptual framework aimed at investigate the mediating role of job satisfaction in the relationship between career development and unprofessional engagement among public servants within the context of Nepal.

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework of the Study



Career Development and Unprofessional Engagement

Employees' career development and unprofessional engagement are two interconnected aspects that can significantly or insignificantly impact an individual's professional journey and the success they achieve in their chosen field (Shrestha, 2019). Unprofessional behavior can hinder career growth and damage professional relationships, while a commitment to career development can motivate individuals to address and rectify unprofessional engagement (Adhikari, 2022; Al-Saggaf et al., 2015; Shore, 2005). Moreover, better career development programs can positively influence employee behavior by providing a structured framework for growth,

skill development, feedback, and recognition (Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2007). These programs can foster a culture of professionalism and engagement, reducing instances of unprofessional conduct within the organization (Kingsly, 2015; Grobler & Joubert, 2004). However, the present study designed working hypothesis as per the assumption of positivity.

Alternative Hypothesis (H1): Career development has an impact on reducing unprofessional engagement among employees.

Career Development and Job Satisfaction

Career development programs indeed have a substantial impact on employees' job satisfaction by providing various opportunities for growth, skill enhancement, recognition, and advancement (Abu-Tineh et al., 2023). Additionally, when career development programs incorporate flexible work arrangements or support for work-life balance, they can significantly enhance employees' overall job satisfaction (Sinambela et al., 2023). Organizations that prioritize career development not only benefit from a more satisfied and engaged workforce but also enjoy improved retention rates and a competitive edge in attracting top talent (Akhter & Naveed, 2023). Consequently, investing in these programs is not just a matter of employee development but also a strategic move that can lead to long-term success and prosperity for the organization (Grinshtain et al., 2023). Furthermore, achieving career goals and reaching higher positions within the organization can give employees a profound sense of accomplishment and fulfillment. This satisfaction often extends beyond the workplace and has a positive impact on their overall quality of life (Yusuf et al., 2023). Thus, the current study formulated its working hypothesis based on the assumption of a positive relationship.

Alternative Hypothesis (H2): Career development has a substantial and positive influence on employees' job satisfaction.

Job Satisfaction and Unprofessional Engagement

The nexus between job satisfaction and unprofessional engagement refers to the relationship between how satisfied employees are with their work and the extent to which they exhibit unprofessional behaviors or attitudes in the workplace, like gossiping or disrespecting colleagues (Lindgreen, 2004). Typically, there is a negative association, meaning that higher job satisfaction is associated with lower levels of unprofessional engagement, as content employees tend to behave more professionally (Pelletier & Bligh, 2006). However, in some cases, a positive correlation may occur, where higher job satisfaction leads to more unprofessional engagement, possibly due to overconfidence or reduced motivation for maintaining

professionalism (Salminen & Ikola-Norrbacka, 2010). The present study developed its working hypothesis with the presumption of a positive association.

Alternative Hypothesis (H3): Job satisfaction has an impact on reducing unprofessional engagement among employees.

Mediating Role of Job Satisfaction

Understanding the mediating role of job satisfaction in the nexus between career development and unprofessional engagement can have practical implications for organizations. It highlights the importance of creating an environment that fosters career growth and job satisfaction to reduce unprofessional behaviors, ultimately contributing to a healthier and more productive workplace (Barr et al., 2009; Subedi, 2005). The relationship between career development and job satisfaction, as well as job satisfaction and unprofessional engagement, can be influenced by various mediating factors, such as organizational culture, leadership, and individual personality traits. A positive organizational culture and effective leadership can help reduce unprofessional engagement, even among highly satisfied employees (Lamichhane, 2021). Moreover, providing greater career development programs may ensure a higher level of employee job satisfaction, and satisfied employees tend to maintain professional engagement and behavior within an organization (Ejaz et al., 2023; Shah, 2018). Therefore, the current study formulated alternative hypotheses to explore how job satisfaction mediates the nexus between career development and unprofessional engagement among employees are as:

Alternative Hypothesis (H4): Job satisfaction serves as a mediator between career development and the reduction of unprofessional engagement among employees.

Methods and Procedures

This section outlines the research methodology to address the research gap, answer questions, and test hypotheses. It covers the research design and methods, population, sampling and sample size, data validity and reliability, and data analysis methods.

In this study, a causal-comparative research design was employed by the researcher to assess the mediating role of job satisfaction in the relationship between career development and unprofessional engagement among employees in public institutions. To enhance methodological stiffness, a quantitative research approach was utilized (Creswell & Tashakkori, 2007). The research cohort, comprised of civil servants, underwent a selection process employing convenience sampling methodology. Primary data collection was executed through the distribution of a survey questionnaire, structured with a combination of open-ended queries and a

5-point Likert scale. Besides that, to ensure the relevance and representativeness of this research, the researcher meticulously selected the study population, which comprised civil servants from diverse government departments and agencies across Nepal. This group encompassed individuals of varying job levels, including entry-level employees, non-gazetted officers, gazetted officers, and senior gazetted officers, allowing us to gain a comprehensive perspective on career development, job satisfaction, and unprofessional engagement throughout the civil service hierarchy. This study also aimed to include participants from different government departments. Moreover, this study ensured geographic representativeness by including civil servants from various regions of Nepal, encompassing both urban and rural areas, thereby addressing potential regional disparities in career development opportunities and job satisfaction.

The sample size calculation was performed using the formula prescribed by Cochran (1977): $n = z^2 * p * q / d^2$. For this study, the sample size was estimated as follows: $n = (1.96)^2 * (0.5) * (0.5) / (0.05)^2 = 384.16$, rounded up to 385, which represents the taken sample size for this study. In this equation, n represents the required sample size, z corresponds to the critical value for a 95% confidence level (approximately 1.96), p is the estimated proportion of the population with the characteristic under study (0.5), q is the complementary probability ($1 - 0.5 = 0.5$), and d represents the desired margin of error, indicating the acceptable level of variation in the population parameter estimate (0.05). The study comprised two sets of questions: one for demographic responses and the other for the study variables assessed using a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neutral; 4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly Agree).

In order to ascertain the data's validity and reliability, the study computed Cronbach's Alpha (0.872), Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure (0.848), and Bartlett's test of sphericity Chi-Square (3238.555). Notably, all these statistical measures exhibited highly significant p-values (0.000), as per Pearson's seminal work in 1920. These calculations confirm the reliability and validity of the study's data. The study presented results using tables and diagrams and utilized descriptive statistics (percentages, frequencies, mean/standard deviation) along with inferential statistics like structural equation modeling (SEM) through SPSS 20 and AMOS 22. Furthermore, the researcher followed ethical guidelines (Sarantakos, 1998) and methodological standards (Creswell & Tashakkori, 2007) in data collection, using surveys and interviews for research purposes. The study adheres to the publisher's guidelines and follows APA 7th edition for literature citation and referencing. To maintain academic integrity, Turnitin was employed in this study to ensure compliance with the 20 percent similarity threshold (Shirazi et al., 2010).

Results

This study consisted of two main phases of analysis. The initial phase involved assessing demographic responses using descriptive statistics, which included calculations of frequency and percentage, as well as measures like minimum, maximum, mean, and standard deviation. In the subsequent phase, responses related to the variables underwent inferential statistical analysis, including techniques such as structural equation modeling (SEM) and hypothesis testing. To perform SEM, principal component analysis, exploratory factor analysis, and confirmatory factor analysis were conducted using IBM AMOS 22. On the other hand, in accordance with the data presentation and analysis requirements, the tables and figures used in this study are as follows:

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of the Respondent

Demographic Characteristics	<i>f</i>	%	Demographic Characteristics	<i>f</i>	%
Gender			Years of Job Experience		
Male	261	67.8	up to 5 Years	28	7.3
Female	124	32.2	6 to 10 Years	131	34.0
Age Group			11 to 15 Years	166	43.1
18-28 Years	27	7.0	16 and Above	60	15.6
29-38 Year	97	25.2	Current Job Level		
39-48 Years	190	49.4	Entry Level	148	38.4
49 and Above	71	18.4	Non-Gazetted Officer	178	46.2
Education Level			Gazetted Officer	34	8.8
Primary Level	43	11.2	Senior Gazetted Officer	9	2.3
Secondary Level	134	34.8	Retired	16	4.2
Bachelor Level	152	39.5	-	-	-
Master and Above	56	14.5	Total (N)	385	100

Source: Researcher's Own Survey 2023

Table 1 presents demographic characteristics of the respondents, highlighting the predominant percentages within each group. The data reveals that the majority of respondents are male, comprising 67.8% of the total. Furthermore, the most prominent age group falls within the 39-48 years range, constituting 49.4% of the overall sample. Additionally, a substantial 39.5% of respondents have attained at least a bachelor's degree. In terms of professional experience, a significant portion (43.1%) falls within the 11 to 15 years category. When considering job level, it's

noteworthy that 46.2% of respondents occupy positions as Non-Gazetted Officers, signifying a substantial presence within this job category.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics of the Latent Variables

Items	Min	Max	Mean	Std.	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std.	Statistic	Std.
CrD1	2	5	4.06	.567	-.591	.124	2.494	.248
CrD2	1	5	4.05	.625	-.999	.124	3.406	.248
CrD3	2	5	4.04	.594	-.612	.124	2.060	.248
CrD4	1	5	4.02	.651	-.984	.124	2.832	.248
JbS1	1	5	3.61	.878	-.579	.124	.081	.248
JbS2	1	5	3.72	.683	-.372	.124	.779	.248
JbS3	1	5	3.69	.718	-.394	.124	.320	.248
JbS4	1	5	3.69	.754	-.731	.124	1.281	.248
UpE1	1	5	4.21	.679	-.781	.124	1.570	.248
UpE2	1	5	4.06	.706	-.976	.124	2.121	.248
UpE3	1	5	4.03	.529	-.919	.124	5.255	.248
UpE4	1	5	4.04	.704	-.819	.124	1.907	.248

Note: Sample Size (Valid N) = 385; CrD = Career Development; JbS = Job Satisfaction; UpE = Unprofessional Engagement

Table 2 presents statistical measures for various items, including minimum (Min), maximum (Max), mean, standard deviation (Std.), skewness, and kurtosis. These statistics offer insights into the distribution and characteristics of each item's data. Skewness is employed to assess data distribution asymmetry. When skewness falls between -1 and 1, the distribution is considered roughly symmetric. On the other hand, kurtosis gauges tail and peak characteristics within the distribution. A kurtosis near 3 (with excess kurtosis at 0) suggests a normal distribution. Interpreting the statistics for each item, the “CrD” items exhibit left-skewed and peaked distributions. In contrast, the “JbS” items showcase approximately symmetric and normal-like distributions. Similarly, the “UpE” items display left-skewed and peaked distributions. These observations offer valuable insights into the specific shapes of data distributions for each item.

Table 3*Factors Loading, KMO and Cronbatch Alpha*

Latent Variables	Items	Factor Loading	KMO	Cronbatch Alpha
Career Development (CrD)	CrD2: Training and development programs	.914	.788	.834
	CrD3: Performance management	.891		
	CrD4: Organizational learning culture	.886		
	CrD1: Effective career planning	.878		
Job Satisfaction (JbS)	JbS3: Better compensation	.905	.814	.938
	JbS1: Recognition and rewards	.875		
	JbS2: Work-life balance	.827		
	JbS4: Job security	.609		
Unprofessional Engagement (UpE)	UpE2: Fraud and corruption	.891	.733	.799
	UpE1: Absenteeism	.859		
	UpE3: Poor performance	.697		
	UpE4: Unaccountability	.537		

Note: Total items or statements of three latent variables = 12

Table 3 represents the results of a factor analysis or a similar statistical analysis that explores the relationships between latent variables, items, factor loadings, and measures of reliability. For the Career Development (CrD) latent variable, it consists of four items (CrD2, CrD3, CrD4, CrD1) with corresponding factor loadings ranging from 0.878 to 0.914. The KMO value is 0.788, indicating reasonable suitability for factor analysis, and the Cronbach's Alpha is 0.834, indicating good internal consistency. The Job Satisfaction (JbS) latent variable includes four items (JbS3, JbS1, JbS2, JbS4) with factor loadings ranging from 0.609 to 0.905. The KMO value is 0.814, indicating reasonable suitability, and the Cronbach's Alpha is 0.938, indicating very high internal consistency. The Unprofessional Engagement (UpE) latent variable consists of four items (UpE2, UpE1, UpE3, UpE4) with factor loadings ranging from 0.537 to 0.891. The KMO value is 0.733, indicating reasonable suitability, and the Cronbach's Alpha is 0.799, indicating good internal consistency. Overall, these results suggest that the items for Career Development and Job Satisfaction have strong factor loadings and high internal consistency, while the items for Unprofessional Engagement have somewhat lower factor loadings and good but not excellent internal consistency. Further analysis or refinement of the UpE items might be considered.

Table 4*Estimated Model Fit Indices of CFA*

Indices	P-value	CMIN/DF	RMR	GFI	TLI	CFI	SRMR	RMSEA
Expected Values	≤ 0.05	2-5	≤ 0.05	$>.90$	$>.90$	$>.90$	$<.08$	$<.08$
Obtained Values	.000	2.059	.017	.968	.981	.988	.0386	.051

Note: P-value = Likelihood Ratio, CMIN/DF = Relative X², RMR = Root Mean Squared Residual, GFI = Goodness of Fit Index, TLI = Tucker-Lewis Index, CFI = Comparative Fit Index, SRMR = Standardized Root Mean Squared Residual, RMSEA = Root Mean Square Error of Approximation; Cut off criteria (Gaskin et al., 2014; Hu & Bentler, 1999)

Table 4 displays the expected and obtained values for various indices, likely associated with a statistical model or analysis. The obtained results consistently meet or surpass the anticipated criteria, underscoring the model's robust fit. Specifically, the P-value is notably significant at 0.000, while CMIN/DF aligns with the acceptable range at 2.059. The RMR (.017) and SRMR (.0386) values signify commendable fit concerning model residuals, and the GFI (.968), TLI (.981), and CFI (.988) surpass the targeted thresholds, confirming the model's strong overall and incremental fit. Although the RMSEA (.051) between the ranges of ideal threshold, it still implies an acceptable model fit. In summary, these outcomes indicate that the statistical model effectively elucidates the data, demonstrating statistical significance and reasonable fitting characteristics.

Table 5*Measurement Model of CFA*

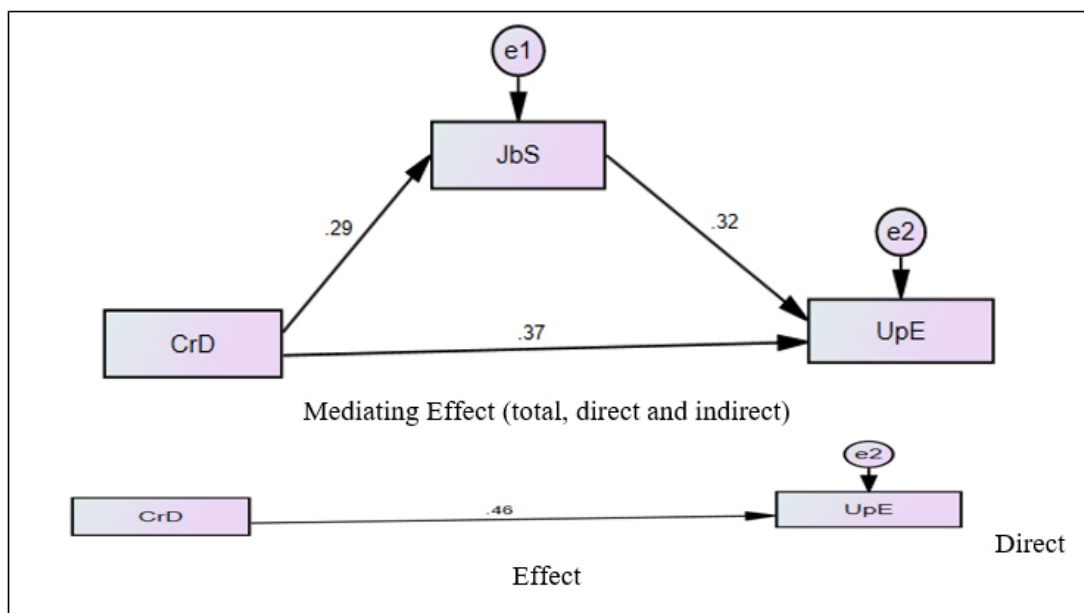
Variables	CR	AVE	MSV	MaxR(H)	CrD	JbS	UpE
CrD	0.938	0.790	0.237	0.942	0.889		
JbS	0.867	0.636	0.149	0.922	0.317***	0.797	
UpE	0.832	0.629	0.237	0.880	0.487***	0.386***	0.793

Note: AVE = Average Variance Explained; CR = Composite Reliability; ASV = Average Squared Variance; MSV = Maximum Squared Variance; CrD = Career Development; JbS = Job Satisfaction; UpE = Unprofessional Engagement; Cut off criteria (Gaskin et al., 2014; Ullman & Bentler, 2012; Hu & Bentler, 1999)

Table 5 presents that a correlation matrix and evaluation criteria for the assessment of measurement models. It is noteworthy that all CR values for the variables (CrD, JbS, and UpE) exceed the recommended threshold of 0.70, signifying robust reliability. Additionally, the AVE values for these variables surpass 0.50, indicating substantial explanatory power over their respective items and strong convergent validity. Moreover, MSV values fall within acceptable ranges, highlighting that the constructs' variance is primarily accounted for by their own items, supporting discriminant validity. The MaxR(H) values, hovering near 1, emphasize the constructs' strong interrelationships. Notably, the correlations between CrD and JbS (0.317) and between CrD and UpE (0.487) are statistically significant (***), suggesting potential associations between these constructs. In sum, this table underscores the constructs' reliability, convergent validity, and reasonable discriminant validity, while also pointing to noteworthy interconnections between specific constructs that warrant further exploration in subsequent analyses.

Figure 2

Structural Equation Modeling Path Diagram



Note: CrD = Career Development; JbS = Job Satisfaction; UpE = Unprofessional Engagement

The figure above illustrates the mediating relationships among latent variables in the study, namely, career development, job satisfaction, and unprofessional engagement among civil servants in Nepal. This diagram helps validate the study's

hypotheses and confirms the mediating impact through Bootstrap confidence (BC) analysis, examining two-tailed significance for total, direct, and indirect effects between these variables. It indicates that there is significant mediating effect of job satisfaction in the nexus between career development and reduction of unprofessional conduct of the public servants.

Table 6

Path Coefficient and Hypotheses Testing

Hypotheses		Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Remarks
CrD	JbS	.325	.054	5.984	***	Accepted
CrD	UpE	.342	.041	8.313	***	Accepted
JbS	UpE	.271	.037	7.317	***	Accepted

Note: (***) Denotes p-value significant at the 0.01 level of significance; Estimate = Beta Coefficient; S.E = Standard Error; C.R. = Critical Ration; P = P-value

Table 6 presents the results of hypothesis testing conducted using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to examine the relationships between latent variables. It uncovers positive connections between Career Development (CrD) and Job Satisfaction (JbS), indicating a substantial estimate (C.R. = 5.984, $P < 0.001$). Similarly, it identifies a positive link between Career Development (CrD) and Unprofessional Engagement (UpE), supported by a significant estimate (C.R. = 8.313, $P < 0.001$). Furthermore, the table highlights a positive relationship between Job Satisfaction (JbS) and Unprofessional Engagement (UpE), indicated by a noteworthy estimate (C.R. = 7.317, $P < 0.001$). These results collectively affirm robust and statistically significant associations among the latent variables, thereby providing support for the acceptance of all three hypotheses.

Table 7

Mediation Effect Analysis of the Study

Categories of Effect	Standardized Estimates	P-value	Result
Total Effect	0.463	0.005	Significant Impact
Direct Effect	0.368	0.005	Significant Impact
Indirect Effect	0.095	0.006	Significant Impact

Note: Based on the Bootstrap Confidence Intervals (BC)

Table 7 presents the results for total, direct, and indirect effects within the model, using Bootstrap Confidence Intervals (BC). The total effect (0.463, $p = 0.005$) signifies a statistically significant overall impact on the outcome, indicating that the combined influences in the model are statistically meaningful. The direct

effect (0.368, $p = 0.005$) emphasizes the importance of direct relationships between CrD, JbS, and UpE. Conversely, the indirect effect (0.095, $p = 0.006$) highlights significant mediated relationships between CrD, JbS and UpE, which also contribute significantly to the overall outcome. In summary, all three categories of effects demonstrate statistical significance, underlining their essential role in understanding the dynamics and relationships within the model.

Discussion

The study aimed to examine the role of career development and job satisfaction in reducing unprofessional engagement among government employees, including issues such as fraud, corruption, absenteeism, poor performance, and lack of accountability. The findings confirm that when public organizations offer career development opportunities to their employees, it can lead to increased job satisfaction. Higher job satisfaction, in turn, tends to reduce the likelihood of employees engaging in unethical conduct within the organization. Therefore, the finding of the study confirms the positive link between Career Development (CrD) and Job Satisfaction (JbS), consistent with prior research (Sinambela et al., 2023). Employees who perceive career growth opportunities tend to have higher job satisfaction. This underscores the importance of investing in employee career development (Akhter & Naveed, 2023). Similarly, it affirms the positive connection between CrD and Unprofessional Engagement (UpE), aligning with existing literature. When career aspirations are supported, employees are less likely to engage in unprofessional behaviors (Barr et al., 2009). Besides that, career development plays a significant role in reducing unprofessional engagement (Ejaz et al., 2023; Shah, 2018). Moreover, the present study establishes a positive relationship between JbS and UpE, suggesting job satisfaction can mitigate unprofessional behavior, which is similar to the results of Grinshtain, Avidov Ungar, and Barenboim (2023).

On the other hand, the statistical significance of all three categories of effects - total, direct, and indirect - demonstrates the robustness of the relationships within the model. These findings underline the importance of considering both direct and indirect pathways when analyzing the impact of CrD on JbS and UpE. Such insights can inform decision-making and strategies aimed at improving outcomes in the studied context, highlighting the complexity and interconnectedness of the variables under investigation. Finally, present and prior research supports the addition of a new perspective on how CrD, JbS, and UpE are interconnected. These findings have practical implications for public organizations aiming to enhance career development and employee satisfaction to minimize unprofessional behavior and unethical conduct among employees.

Conclusion

This study was conducted to investigate the mediating role of job satisfaction in the relationship between CrD and UpE among employees in public institutions. The findings confirm a positive association between CrD and JbS, as well as between CrD and UpE. Additionally, the study establishes a link between JbS and UpE, highlighting the role of job satisfaction in mitigating unprofessional behavior. These results underscore the significance of investing in employee career development to reduce unprofessional engagement, particularly within the context of Nepalese civil servants. Furthermore, the statistical significance of the total, direct, and indirect effects highlights the robustness of the relationships in our model, emphasizing the need to consider both direct and indirect pathways when analyzing the impact of CrD on JbS and UpE. This provides valuable insights for decision-making and strategies to enhance outcomes in public institutions. In conclusion, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of the interconnectedness of CrD, JbS, and UpE, offering practical implications for public organizations aiming to minimize unprofessional behavior and unethical conduct among their employees.

The study suggests that government and government organizations should prioritize employee career development to boost job satisfaction and reduce unprofessional behavior. This can be achieved through career planning, training, fair performance management, and fostering a learning culture. Additionally, organizations should improve compensation, recognition, job security, and work-life balance to minimize unprofessional behavior. While the current findings support evidence-based decision-making for ethical work environments in the public sector, a critical lens reveals limitations tied to methodological choices. Reliance on survey questionnaires may introduce biases and the exclusive focus on job satisfaction as a mediator oversimplifies complex dynamics. Future research should adopt more robust methodologies, like longitudinal studies and cross-cultural comparisons, to provide nuanced insights into the interplay of variables influencing professional conduct, offering more comprehensive recommendations for fostering professionalism in diverse organizational contexts.

This study has several limitations. Firstly, the study relies primarily on self-reported data, which could introduce response biases and inaccuracies in capturing nuanced behaviors. Secondly, the sample size may not be fully representative of the broader population, potentially limiting the generalizability of the findings. Thirdly, the study's duration may not encompass long-term effects and trends; longitudinal data collection could provide a more comprehensive understanding. Finally, resource constraints imposed limitations on data collection and analysis, potentially omitting valuable variables that require more funding.

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Role of Social Media in Promoting Organic Products in Karnali Province, Nepal

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Abstract

This study examines the Karnali Province of Nepal's use of social media to promote organic products. This research examines the unique influence on the growth and awareness of organic products of the global revolution in communication and marketing tactics sparked by the rapid expansion and widespread adoption of social media platforms. The study digs into the tactics adopted in advertising organic products within the unique context of Karnali Province. Data for the study was collected through a survey questionnaire distributed to 300 respondents. The sampling method utilized a convenience sampling to gather diverse information about social media engagement, the choice of social media platforms, marketing strategies employed on these platforms, awareness levels of organic products, consumer behavior, and the effectiveness of organic product promotion. The survey targeted a representative sample of the population in Karnali province. Using the Smart PLS-4 programme, the study analyzed the data it had obtained, concentrating on testing hypotheses and looking at the correlations between the variables. The outcomes contribute to a wider understanding of using social media to promote organic products in addition to providing knowledge particular to a given location. This study adds to our knowledge of how social media, particularly in remote and rural areas like Nepal's Karnali Province, may be a potent and successful instrument for promoting organic products. The results offer useful recommendations for digital marketing tactics customized for certain regional contexts and sustainable agriculture to marketers and policymakers.

Keywords: Social media platforms, promotional strategies, natural goods, digital marketing, sustainable agriculture, consumer perception



Introduction

Social media is a term that describes the interactions between individuals in which they produce, distribute, and/or exchange knowledge and ideas in online communities while applying the social exchange theory (Emerson, 2003) as a marketing strategy for organic farmers. A new method of client interaction has arisen, enabling the filling of niches. The ability to sell a large volume of organic products because to the internet inspired (Anderson, 2007). One benefit of social media is its capacity to cater to niche markets or customers who are dispersed throughout the world. “Social media have become an integral part of marketing strategies and cost structures of many companies around the world,” as Jespersen et al. (2017).

Social media are very different from previous forms of media. They resemble dynamic, interconnected, egalitarian, and interacting creatures that are independent of any governing bodies, according to Peters et al., 2013. User-generated content, sometimes referred to as social media communication, is “now a common source of information; it has changed the tools and strategies companies use to communicate, highlighting that information control now lies with the customer” (Pechrová et al., 2015).

The niche’s characteristics applied to organic goods. However, according to Jensen and Baggesen (2014), “the demand for ‘organic’ or ‘biodynamic’ goods has generally increased. organic products have become increasingly popular due to their potential health benefits, environmental sustainability, and animal welfare considerations. Karnali Province in Nepal offers a wide array of organic products ranging from crops to herbal remedies and handicrafts. The region’s commitment to organic farming practices and sustainable production methods ensures that these products maintain their natural qualities while promoting environmental conservation and supporting local communities.

The misuse of pesticides and fertilizers in the production of food has had a negative impact on public health and safety. Social media in promoting organic products is a powerful tool for promoting organic products. Organic products are good and manufactured from natural materials without the use of any chemicals. The ideal tool for public communication is social media. Everyone participates in social media in today’s digital age because it spreads information quickly and grabs people’s attention (Bernal-Jurado et al., 2017).

In recent years, social media platforms have emerged as powerful tools for communication and information dissemination. These platforms have transformed the way people interact, share ideas, and conduct business. The influence of social media extends to various domains, including the promotion of organic products. This

paper explores the role of social media in promoting organic products in Karnali Province, Nepal. With its unique geographical location and diverse agricultural practices, Karnali Province presents an interesting case study for understanding the impact of social media on organic product promotion. This introduction provides an overview of the significance of organic products, the growing trend of social media, and the specific context of Karnali Province, setting the stage for a comprehensive examination of the role of social media in promoting organic products.

The objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To explore the social media engagement in promotion of organic products.
2. To examine the social media platforms in promotion of organic products.
3. To identify the social media marketing strategies in promotion of organic products.
4. To analyze the role of organic product awareness in promotion of organic products.
5. To examine the effect of consumer behavior in promotion of organic products.

Hypothesis

H₁: There is significant relationship between social media engagement and promotion of organic products.

H₂: There is significant relationship between social media platforms and promotion of organic products.

H₃: There is significant relationship between social media marketing strategies and promotion of organic products.

H₄: There is significant relationship between organic product awareness and promotion of organic products.

H₅: There is significant relationship between consumer behavior and promotion of organic products.

Literature Review

Meliawati et al. (2023) has focused on how Social media altered businesses and brands with their audience. Companies use social media marketing to gain a competitive edge in order to compete. Bittersweet by Najla, a small and medium-sized business, Using TikTok for social media marketing in conjunction with highlighting the quality of the product will increase the probability that consumers will make a purchase. Social media marketing first influences purchase intent,

followed by product quality and, thirdly, a relationship between social media marketing and purchase intent. Tik-Tok, a company that offers information search and services catered to client needs, is an indication with the most important value in social media marketing factors. One indicator, the product's look, has the strongest coefficient association value for the product quality variable. Because of this, Bittersweet by Najla keeps using TikTok as a social media platform for its marketing strategies and raising the standard of its goods.

Tazeen and Mullick (2023) explored the impact of social media platforms, specially face book and instagram, on consumers' inclination to purchase organic products. It investigates consumption patterns and how social media sites contribute to raising public awareness and support for organic products. The findings indicate that social networking sites play a crucial role in shaping users' consumption behavior and influencing their purchasing decisions concerning organic products. Likewise, Kostygina et al., (2022) have analyzed Twitter messages about heated tobacco products (HTPs) to determine their frequency and content. Over the period of August 2016 to July 2021, the number of monthly tweets about HTPs doubled. Organic tweets increased from 29.00 percent to 73.50 percent of all tweets during this period. Evaluating social media's role in promoting HTPs is important for tobacco use reduction and substance abuse prevention efforts.

Nekmahmud et al. (2022) investigated customers' intents to purchase organic products and how social media usage and marketing (SMM) have a direct impact on consumers' sustainable consumption patterns. Likewise, Zhang et al. (2021) have researched the role of digital platforms in reducing customer uncertainty and encouraging the use of novel organic products in rural China. The most important discovery is that a low-cost social media support infrastructure may successfully drive adoption even for a new product like a pesticide.

Gupta and Syed (2022) has studied the relationship between various social media marketing activities impacting Indian consumers' attitudes towards People's readiness to pay a premium price for environmentally friendly products is the goal of this paper. The results of the study suggest that word-of-mouth; interaction, entertainment, and customization are the four main social media marketing activities that shape consumer attitudes towards green products. The resulting optimistic mindset significantly and favorably influences consumers' willingness to pay a premium for environmentally friendly goods.

Balasubrahmanyam and Muthumeenakshi (2021) has analyzed the advertising strategy in the handloom industry to increase sales of handcrafted goods. The tactics of promotion gradually evolved in the contemporary circumstances. It is a

positive indicator for the handloom industry. Sales volume in the handloom sector, in particular, is consistent, and it was at that time that social media entered the market. Due to the integration of all brands under one umbrella, social media currently plays a very significant role and offers a wide range of opportunities to buyers and sellers of handlooms. Manufacturing companies use a cutting-edge strategy to market their branded goods on social media. With the use of social media, domestic and international businesses have adopted an advertising strategy. This essay discusses social media services, social media marketing, and the role social media plays in promoting handcrafted goods and enhancing customer happiness.

Novytska et al. (2021) has focused use of digital technology by a wide range of businesses creates entirely new options for the gathering and analysis of data on markets and consumers, the execution of marketing communications with clients, and the development of brand recognition. Through the use of digital information and communication technology and electronic channels, digital marketing allows for contact with clients and business partners. It has been determined that digital marketing's development in the area of advertising organic products is in its early stages. It has been established that social networks serve as the primary digital marketing platforms for businesses that create organic goods because they don't incur additional fees to hire a marketing expert.

Yekimov et al. (2021) explored the need for ecologically friendly food products with environmentally friendly production methods exists among consumers. Using social networks to promote the products and services of agricultural businesses helps them become more competitive. A farming business that produces ecologically sustainable food items and draws a larger pool of potential customers. The creation of high-quality virtual content using the expertise of competent specialists is required for the efficient advertising of products and services through the usage of social networks. Potential customers will learn more about the company's products and services, as well as how they differ from those of other manufacturers, through the high-quality content that makes up the social network's virtual area.

Pop et al. (2020) examined the role of social media and its impact on ecologically friendly behavior. The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) was used in the current study to explain how social media affects customers' buying intention and motivation (altruism and egoism). The findings highlight the significance of social media on consumer attitudes, subjective norms, and egotistical and altruistic motivations, as well as the influence of these factors as antecedents of purchase intention for green cosmetics. There are significant theoretical ramifications of these findings. The research findings are important for marketers to use to improve social media communication methods to boost consumer motivation and buy intent for

green cosmetics.

Sun and Wang (2020) focused the links between social media marketing, perceived consumer effectiveness, product knowledge, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, price consciousness, and consumers' attitudes and intentions to buy organic products, this study explores the correlations between these variables. This study adds to the knowledge of the characteristics that affect consumers' purchasing decisions for organic products in developing nations, particularly in the setting of social media marketing, by evaluating these variables. However, Lu and Miller (2019) examined the combined effects of social media and customer relationship management (CRM), specifically in terms of duration, on retail sales. The study specifically investigates the effect of altruistic or egoistic marketing postings in relation to CRM membership over time compared to other forms of sales on organic retail sales on a Facebook brand page. The findings indicate that customers are more likely to respond to messages about health benefits over time than to messages about price and environmental benefits.

Schwemmer and Ziewiecki (2018) have studied about the YouTube has transformed into a powerful marketing tool for social media influencers, who collaborate with marketers to promote products through electronic word-of-mouth. However, the extent of this phenomenon has been poorly understood. Through analysis of 139,475 German YouTube videos from 2009 to 2017, the research reveals a growing presence of commercial promotion, particularly in beauty and fashion.

Haff (2017) has studied the social media marketing tactics utilized by the organic food business were examined in this study using content analysis. The findings show which social media platforms and social media marketing techniques are being employed. Chanthinok et al. (2015) identified the social media channels used as those employed by frequency and the capability of the application to meet the targeted marketing goal. The marketing tactics that were evaluated were first classified as transformative or informative, and then further divided into subcategories based on how the consumer would view them.

Conceptual Framework

Social Media Engagement

The level of interaction and interaction between users and content on various social media platforms is referred to as social media engagement. It includes the number of likes, comments, shares, and other participation signals that show how actively a user is interacting with a given article, page, or account. High social

media interaction is frequently a crucial indicator for companies and people looking to increase their online presence. It increases the reach of material and develops a sense of community and connection. Effective engagement techniques can increase consumer loyalty, brand recognition, and the overall effectiveness of digital marketing initiatives (Dessart, 2017).

Social Media Platforms

Social media platforms are online locations where people and organizations may interact, share material, and talk to a large audience. They have completely changed how people interact by making networking, real-time communication, and information sharing possible. Popular websites and apps like Face book, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn serve a variety of interests, from casual friendship to business networking. However, they also struggle with issues like addiction, misunderstandings, and privacy. Social media continues to be a potent instrument for both personal and professional goals, influencing modern communication and online culture despite these worries (Weller, 2016).

Social Media Marketing Strategies

Social media marketing strategies involve leveraging popular social platforms to promote products, services, or brands. Key tactics include creating engaging content, targeting specific demographics, and utilizing paid advertising. Building a strong online presence, fostering community engagement, and analyzing data to refine campaigns are essential elements. Additionally, staying updated with platform algorithms and trends is crucial for success in this ever-evolving field. Effective social media marketing can enhance brand visibility, customer engagement, and ultimately drive business growth (Bajpai et al., 2012).

Organic Product Awareness

The growing knowledge of and appreciation for the advantages of organic foods and products is referred to as “organic product awareness.” It entails raising consumer awareness of the production practices that put sustainability first, stay away from synthetic chemicals, and support environmental and animal welfare. This awareness has raised consumer demand for organic goods, promoting better lifestyle choices and fostering a more ethical and ecological approach to farming and consumption (Briz & Ward 2009).

Consumer Behavior

The study and analysis of how individuals or groups of people choose and act when utilizing goods and services is known as consumer behavior. It includes a wide range of elements, such as psychological, social, cultural, and economic dimensions,

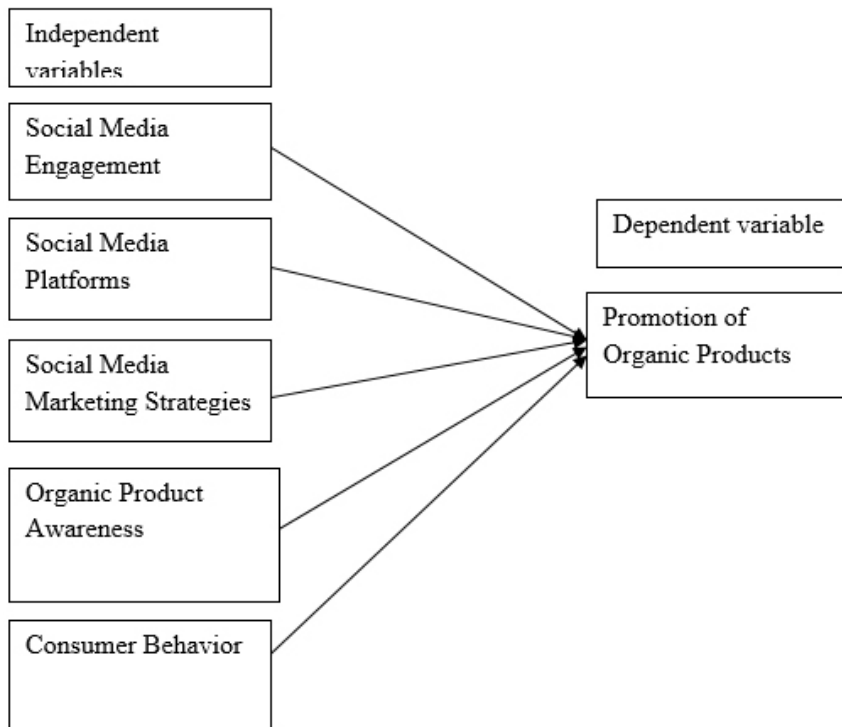
that have an impact on these decisions. For firms and marketers to establish efficient marketing strategies, produce goods that satisfy consumer requirements, and produce positive customer experiences, they must have a thorough understanding of consumer behavior. In order to forecast and affect customer purchase behaviors, it requires examining factors such as motivation, perception, attitude formation, and the effects of advertising, pricing, and social influences (Cummins et al., 2014).

Promotion of Organic Products

It is crucial to promote organic products for both environmental sustainability and individual wellbeing. Natural, chemical-free approaches are prioritized in organic agricultural practices, minimizing damage to ecosystems and customer exposure to dangerous pesticides. By purchasing organic goods, consumers promote sustainable agriculture, the preservation of biodiversity, and the consumption of healthier foods. Companies and organizations are essential in spreading knowledge about the advantages of organic products, promoting their use, and developing a market that values both environmentally friendly practices and consumer wellbeing (Pechrová et al., 2015).

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework



Methods and Procedures

The study employed a quantitative research design to examine the role of social media in promoting organic products in Karnali Province, Nepal. Samples of 300 participants were selected through a convenience sampling techniques because of its practicality and accessibility, as it allows for the selection of participants based on ease of availability rather than a random or systematic method and time and resources are also limited. The sample included individuals who had purchased organic products and were active social media users. Structured Likert scale questionnaires were developed to collect quantitative data. The data were collected in the months of July and August, 2023. Descriptive statistical analysis was conducted to summarize the demographic characteristics of the participants and Statistical software (e.g., SPSS, Excel, and Smart PLS-4) was utilized to perform the data analysis.

Results

Table 1

Demographic Profiles

		No. of respondents	Percentage (%)
Age	Below 25	60	20.00
	26-35	90	30.00
	36-45	120	40.00
	Above 45	30	10.00
Marital Status	Married	180	60.00
	Single	120	40.00
Gender	Male	200	66.67
	Female	100	33.33
Qualification	Primary or below	30	10.00
	Secondary	90	30.00
	Graduation	120	40.00
	Post Graduation	44	14.67
	Above	16	5.33
Occupation	Government service holder	120	40.00
	Private service holder	150	50.00
	Unemployed	30	10.00

Income level	Less than 10,000	30	10.00
	10,000-20,000	80	26.67
	20,001-40,000	130	43.33
	Above 40,000	60	20.00

Source: Field Survey 2023

The table 1 provided the information on the age, marital status, gender, qualification, occupation, and income level of the participants. The majority of respondents were in the 36-45 age range, accounting for 40.00 percent of the total. The next largest group was below 25 years old, comprising 20.00 percent of the respondents. Similarly, 60.00 percent of the respondents were married, while the remaining 40.00 percent were single. The survey had a higher proportion of male participants, accounting for 66.67 percent of the total. Females made up 33.33 percent of the respondents. The largest group of respondents, at 40.00 percent had a graduation qualification. The next significant group, at 30.00 percent had a secondary qualification. Private Service holders were the majority, comprising 50.00 percent of the respondents. Government service holders accounted for 40.00 percent, while the unemployed made up 10.00 percent. The highest number of respondents fell within the income range of 20,001-40,000, accounting for 43.33 percent. The next largest group had an income above 40,000, representing 20.00 percent of the respondents.

Reliability Test

The Cronbach alpha reliability co-efficient was used to evaluate the research instrument's dependability. A reliable co-efficient of 0.6 and above are acceptable and high while a reliable coefficient of below 0.6 shows questionable and poor reliability (Dikko, 2016).

Table 2

Code	N	Cronbach's Alpha	Remarks
CB	5	0.632	Acceptable
OA	5	0.629	Acceptable
PO	5	0.774	Good
SE	5	0.816	Excellent
SP	5	0.769	Good
SS	5	0.609	Acceptable

As shown in the table 2, the Cronbach's Alpha of the variables is higher than 0.6 thus we can say that there is high level of internal consistency among the variables.

Rotated Component Matrix

The matrix reveals the factor loadings of all constructs obtained to be higher than 0.5. It has met the criteria of research. Besides, the communalities values of each item have also been recorded to be higher than 0.5, which is highly reliable. Additionally, the values of each construct are higher than 0.7, which is highly valuable (Hair et al., 2012). Similarly, here according to the table 3, 23 items among 30 items are met the criteria because factor loading more than 0.5, others remaining components 7 are not taken in to account for this study because factor loading less than 0.5.

Table 3

Rotated Component Matrix

Items	Factor loadings
CB3	0.567
CB4	0.730
CB5	0.907
OA4	0.776
OA5	0.898
PO1	0.686
PO2	0.762
PO3	0.756
PO4	0.759
PO5	0.652
SE1	0.708
SE2	0.801
SE3	0.863
SE4	0.785
SE5	0.634
SP1	0.733
SP2	0.656
SP3	0.768
SP4	0.834
SP5	0.606
SS2	0.781
SS4	0.547
SS5	0.761

Smart PLS-4

Smart PLS (Partial Least Squares) is a software package commonly used for structural equation modeling (SEM) analysis. Hypothesis testing is a fundamental aspect of SEM, and Smart PLS provides capabilities to test hypotheses using the partial least squares algorithm (Wang et al., 2023). In Smart PLS, hypothesis testing typically involves assessing the significance of path coefficients, which represent the relationships between variables in the model. Here, the study is conducted Role of social media in promoting organic products. For, this purpose Smart PLS-4 is used which is mentioned as follows.

Figure 1

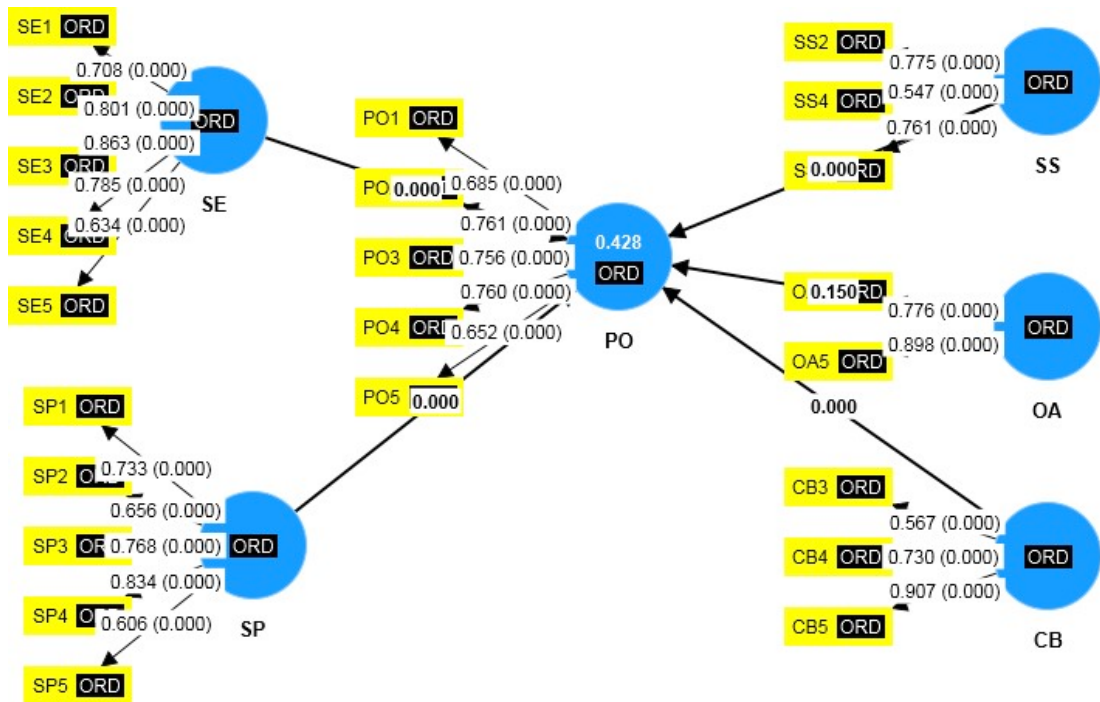


Table 4*Path Analysis*

Path	P value
CB -> PO	*** (0.000)
OA -> PO	0.15
SE -> PO	***
SP -> PO	***
SS -> PO	***

Source: Smart PLS-4

Note: (***) denotes p-value significant at 0.01 level of significance, (CB = Consumer behavior, OA = Organic products awareness, SE = Social media engagement, SP = Social media platforms, SS Social media marketing strategies=, and PO = Promotion of organic products)

According to the above figure and table, the path analysis table 4 presented p-value of Consumer behavior, Social media engagement, Social media platforms, Social media marketing strategies less than 0.01, which indicates that there is significant role of above mentioned variables on promotion of organic products at 1% level of significance. But the p-value of Organic products awareness is 0.15 which is more than 0.01, therefore this result find that there is no significant relationship between Organic product awareness and promotion of organic products.

Conclusion

Consumer behavior has a significant and strong positive influence on the promotion of organic products. This indicates that the preferences, attitudes, and purchasing behavior of consumer play a crucial role in the success of organic products promotion in Karnali Province. However, Organic products awareness has a weak and non-significant influence on the promotion of organic products. This suggests that while consumers may be aware of organic products, their awareness alone may not directly contribute to their promotion. Similarly, social media engagement has strong positive role on the promotion of organic products. This highlights the importance of active engagement with consumers through social media platforms to effectively promote. Likewise, the choice of social media platforms

and effective utilization of their features can greatly enhance the promotion of organic products in the region. In addition, Social media marketing strategies have a significant and strong positive influence on the promotion of organic products. Implementing well-designed marketing strategies specifically tailored for social media can effectively boost the promotion of organic products in Karnali Province.

Organizations promoting organic products in Karnali Province should invest in understanding consumer preferences, attitudes, and behaviors towards organic products. To promote organic products successfully, businesses should actively engage with consumers on social media platforms. This can be achieved through various means such as responding to queries, sharing informative content, conducting polls, and encouraging user-generated content. Businesses should identify the social media platforms that are popular among the target audience in Karnali Province. Understanding the demographics and user behavior of each platform help organizations make informed decisions about where to focus their efforts and allocate resources for promoting organic products effectively. Organizations should develop comprehensive social media marketing strategies specifically designed for promoting organic products. These strategies should leverage the unique features and capabilities of each platform to engage the audience, increase brand visibility, and communicate the benefits of organic products. Partnering with influencers who have a strong presence on social media can greatly enhance the promotion of organic products. Influencers can create authentic and engaging content that resonates with their followers, thereby increasing awareness and interest in organic products. Continuous monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of social media promotion efforts are crucial. Organizations should analyze the impact of their campaigns, track key metrics such as reach, engagement, and conversion rates, and make necessary adjustments to optimize their organic product promotion strategies.

By implementing these recommendations, businesses and organizations in Karnali Province can harness the power of social media to effectively promote organic products and contribute to a sustainable and environmentally conscious consumer culture.

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Consumer Readiness on Rejecting the Choice of Consumption of Plastic Packaged Goods: A Study of Karnali Province

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Abstract

Plastics for packaging have lead to massive environmental pollution and dreadful issues in human life. Thus consumers need to consider its deep-rooted impacts, and refuse the acceptance of plastic packaged goods. The present researchers have opted a critical constructivist perspective inclining at deductive approach to assess the consumer readiness on rejecting the choice of consumption of plastic packaged goods in the context of Karnali Province of Nepal. Causal-comparative research design was used to determine the cause or consequences of selected variables on dependent variables. In order to collect the primary data, an email survey was administered to 365 respondents of various demographic levels replied with the duly completed survey questionnaires. For the analyses, both descriptive and inferential analyses were used. The key findings of the structural equation model revealed that the plastic related concern with regard to health and environmental issues are the main factors influencing plastic rejection. Consumer readiness with regard to plastic rejection are also influenced by subjective knowledge and the weight placed on third party commitment to solving the plastic problem. The findings of the study also revealed significant contribution of the impact of employment status as the essential element determining consumer readiness on rejecting plastic packaged goods in the Karnali province. This indicates majorities of employed consumers have more readiness to reject the plastic packaged goods.

Keywords: Plastic pollution, consumer behavior, structural equation model, environmental concern, subjective knowledge



Introduction

Plastics for packaging are easily available (Jibreel & Al-shwafi, 2019), flexible and inexpensive (Macena et al., 2021) leading to wide use of plastics for packaging. However, most plastics have low recycling or reuse ratios, contributes substantially to environmental pollution (Macena et al., 2021; Borg et al., 2020). Moreover, plastic packages/bag pollution is growing day by day (Jibreel & Al-shwafi, 2019). Macena et al. (2021) have concluded that plastic food packages ultimately leads to environmental pollution. These studies found that the consumers are aware of negative impacts of use of plastic packages. These impacts could be highly observed in increase in human health issues (Adane & Muleta, 2011), decline of natural beauty of environment, sewage blockage, and decline in the population of animals (Jibreel & Al-shwafi, 2019). Also, concluded that changing plastic consumption habits has not been an easy task (Macena et al., 2021).

de Sousa (2023) found that there is a gap between consumer awareness and behavior regarding plastic waste, and that different research areas have different focuses and approaches to address the plastic problem. Scholars also identified some research gaps and opportunities for future studies. Adeniran et al. (2022) found that plastic waste management in sub-Saharan Africa faces many challenges, such as lack of infrastructure, policies, awareness, and incentives. The article also found that plastic waste pollution has negative impacts on the environment and human health, such as soil and water contamination, greenhouse gas emissions, wildlife ingestion, and disease transmission. The article proposed some mitigation strategies, such as waste reduction, recycling, education, and regulation. Environmental impacts of plastics and micro-plastics use, waste and pollution: European Parliament (2016) found that plastics and micro-plastics have various environmental and health effects, such as marine litter, toxic chemicals, endocrine disruption, and food chain contamination. The article also found that the EU and national measures to address the plastic problem are diverse and complex, and that there is a need for more coordination, harmonization, and implementation. Mugobo et al. (2022) found that consumer perceptions and attitudes towards plastic packaging and its environmental impact are influenced by various factors, such as knowledge, awareness, values, norms, emotions, and social influences. The article also found that consumer behavior towards plastic packaging is not always consistent with their perceptions and attitudes, and that there are some barriers and motivators to change their behavior. The article recommended some theoretical and practical implications for future research and interventions.

In Nepal, since 1990 the application of plastic has been increasing, and has led to various environmental issues. Interestingly, some towns in Nepal have

prohibited plastic bags since 2010, however this ban's intended impact hasn't materialized (Bharadwaj, 2016). Nepal has taken some measures to address the issues related to plastic waste and promote environmental protection. Here are a few policies and initiatives that were in place as of September 2021:

1. **Plastic Bag Ban:** In an effort to reduce plastic waste, the Nepalese government introduced a ban on the use of plastic bags with a thickness of less than 40 microns in the Kathmandu Valley in 2015. The ban has since been extended to other cities and districts across the country.
2. **Bagmati Clean-up Campaign:** The Bagmati Clean-up Campaign is a popular initiative aimed at cleaning up the Bagmati River, which flows through the Kathmandu Valley. The campaign involves mass volunteer participation and has helped raise awareness about plastic pollution and environmental protection.
3. **Plastic Free Himalayas:** In 2018, the Nepalese government launched the "Plastic Free Himalayas" campaign, aiming to make the Himalayan region of Nepal free from single-use plastics. The campaign focuses on reducing plastic waste and promoting sustainable alternatives in the tourist areas and trekking routes of the Himalayas.
4. **Waste Management Act:** Nepal introduced the Solid Waste Management Act in 2011 to address the overall management of waste, including plastic waste. The act emphasizes waste segregation, recycling, and the establishment of proper waste management systems.
5. **Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA):** Nepal requires an Environmental Impact Assessment for development projects that may have significant environmental impacts, including those related to plastic manufacturing or waste management. These assessments help identify potential environmental risks and promote sustainable practices.

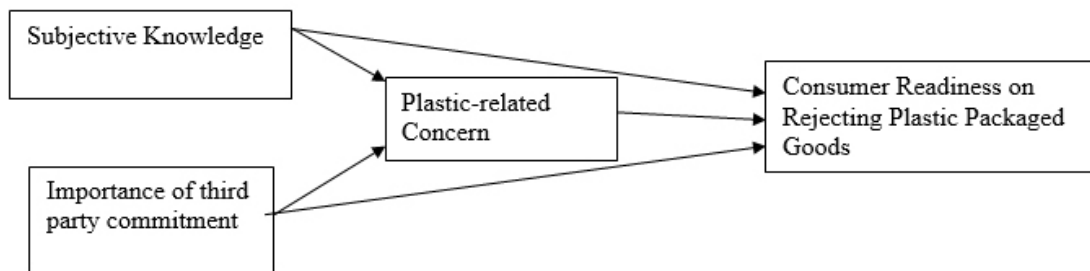
While there may exist policies and initiatives aimed at reducing plastic packaged products in the Karnali Province, it remains uncertain whether consumers are truly ready to reject such products. Despite the implementation of these policies, there is a lack of research examining the actual consumer attitudes, behaviors, and readiness to embrace alternatives to plastic packaging. This research gap highlights the need to explore the extent to which consumers are aware, and has the understanding of the environmental impact of plastic packaging, and the various factors that may hinder or facilitate their willingness to reject plastic in favor of more sustainable alternatives. Similarly, in the same line, while there is growing global concern over plastic pollution and increasing efforts to reduce plastic waste, there is a lack of research specifically examining consumer readiness and the factors influencing the rejection of plastic packaged goods in the Karnali Province. Limited attention has been given to understanding the unique factors that shape consumer

attitudes and behaviors towards plastic consumption in this region. Therefore, the research gap lies in the absence of comprehensive studies that investigate the specific challenges and opportunities for sustainable consumption practices related to plastic packaging in the context of the Karnali Province. Therefore, the general objective of the present work was to evaluate the consumer readiness on rejecting the choice of consumption of plastic packaged goods staying in the specific location. To grasp the general objective, the present researchers have pointed out the specific objectives as listed below. These objectives was to:

1. assess the general understanding of consumers plastic-related concern with regard to the rejection of plastic packaged goods,
2. examine consumers' subjective knowledge about plastic-related issues with regard to rejecting the plastic packaged goods,
3. determine subjective knowledge about plastic-related issues among the consumer, and
4. evaluate commitment of third parties for beating plastic-related environmental impact affects the extent to which consumers readiness on rejecting purchasing plastic packaging goods.

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework



Adopted From: Cavaliere et al. (2020)

The overall research is based on following working hypothesis that was also adopted on (Cavaliere et al., 2020).

H1: There is direct and significant impact of consumer plastic-related concern on consumers readiness on rejecting purchasing plastic packaging goods.

H2-1: The higher the consumers' subjective knowledge about plastic-related issues, the higher the probability that the consumer reject plastic packaging goods.

H2-2: There is direct and significant impact of consumers' subjective knowledge about

plastic-related issues on plastic-related concern.

H3: The importance attributed to the commitment of third parties for beating plastic-related environmental impact affects the extent to which consumers readiness on rejecting purchasing plastic packaging goods.

Methods and Procedures

The current study adopts a critical constructivist perspective and employs a deductive approach to evaluate consumer readiness to reject the consumption of plastic-packaged goods within the context of the Karnali Province in Nepal. A causal-comparative research design is utilized to discern the causes or consequences of selected variables on dependent variables. For primary data collection, an email survey is administered to 365 respondents representing various demographic levels. The respondents provided completed survey questionnaires. Both descriptive and inferential analyses are conducted on the collected data. The survey employs a closed-ended structured questionnaire. The data is scrutinized, analyzed, and interpreted using statistical tools such as SPSS, SPSS Amos, and various statistical methods including descriptive statistics (Mean, standard deviation) and inferential statistics (Correlation, ANOVA, factor analyses, and structural equation modeling). To validate the regression model assumptions, a Multicollinearity test is performed using the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF), and the results indicate values less than 10, suggesting that the constructs are not strongly correlated with each other.

Results and Discussion

Table 1

Demographic Information and Result of ANOVA Test

Demographic information		Frequency	Percent	F-value	Sig.
Gender	Female	270	74.0	1.056	.397
	Male	95	26.0		
	Total	365	100.0		
Age	Less than 30 Years	61	16.7	.668	.782
	30 to 40 Years	117	32.1		
	40 to 50 Years	147	40.3		
	Above 50 Years	40	11.0		
	Total	365	100.0		

Employment Status	Employed	201	55.1	2.243	.010
	Unemployed	76	20.8		
	Student	78	21.4		
	Retried	10	2.7		
	Total	365	100.0		

The demographic data of the sampled consumers and ANOVA between demographic information and dependent construct (Rejection of plastic packaged goods) is described in Table 1. Table 1 reveals that approximately 74 percent of the respondents are males while 26 percent are females, this might be as a result of high number of female consumers and buyers of plastic packaged goods in the Karnali. In addition, Most (40 percent) of the consumers fall within the ages 40-50 years, 32 percent of consumers fall between 30-40 years, 17 percent of consumers fall within the age of less than 30 years, and only (11 percent) are above 50 years. Table 1 further shows on employment status, 55 percent of consumers are employed, 21 percent are unemployed consumers, 21 percent are students and 3 percent are retired.

The ANOVA test is used to assess whether there are statistically significant differences among group means. In this table, the F-value represents the ratio of the variance among group means to the variance within the groups. The significance level (Sig.) is the probability of observing such results by chance. For Gender and Age, the p-values (Sig.) are greater than 0.05, indicating that there is no significant difference among the groups. However, for Employment Status, the p-value is 0.010, suggesting a significant difference among the employment status groups at the 0.05% confidence level.

Table 2

Result of ANOVA test between Demographic Information and Subjective Knowledge

Demographic Information		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Gender	Between Groups	3.778	23	.164	.842	.677
	Within Groups	66.496	341	.195		
	Total	70.274	364			
Age	Between Groups	12.835	23	.558	.680	.865
	Within Groups	279.669	341	.820		
	Total	292.504	364			

Employment Status	Between Groups	23.733	23	1.032	1.322	.149
	Within Groups	266.202	341	.781		
	Total	289.934	364			

The table above represents the result of ANOVA between demographic information and plastic- concern subjective knowledge. There is no significant difference between, gender, and subjective knowledge; age groups, and subjective knowledge; employment status, and subjective knowledge.

Table 3

Result of ANOVA test between Demographic Information and Third Party Concern

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Gender	Between Groups	8.838	24	.368	2.038	.003
	Within Groups	61.436	340	.181		
	Total	70.274	364			
Age	Between Groups	24.994	24	1.041	1.324	.144
	Within Groups	267.510	340	.787		
	Total	292.504	364			
Employment Status	Between Groups	16.899	24	.704	.877	.635
	Within Groups	273.035	340	.803		
	Total	289.934	364			

The Table 3 represents the result of ANOVA between demographic information and third party concern. There is no significant difference between age groups, and third-party concern; employment status. However, there is significant difference of commitment of third party concern among male and female.

Validity and Reliability Analysis

Evaluating and measuring the robustness, accuracy, coherence, and reliability and efficacy of the data and the survey data was essential before testing the hypothesis. The research model is affected by four factors, which are plastic related concern, subjective knowledge, third party concern and consumer readiness for rejecting plastic packaged goods.

Table 4

Result of KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.	.902
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	Approx. Chi-Square	5336.194
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	df	210
	Sig.	0.000

Note: KMO = Kaiser Meyer Olkin

Sample adequacy is measured by Kaiser Meyer Olkin (KMO), which is an index that assesses the appropriateness of factor analysis. The Table 4 shows that the KMO value is 0.902, which is between 0.5 and 1.0, and a value near 1 means that factor analysis is appropriate and the sample is adequate for further analysis. The table also shows that Bartlett's test is used to examine the hypothesis that there is no correlation among the variables in the population. The table above also shows that the value of Bartlett's test is 5336.194 with a sig. of 0.00, which is below the significance level of 0.5, meaning that there is no correlation among the variables or constructs in the population.

Table 5

Rotated Component Matrix with AVE and CR

Variables	Items	Rotated Component Matrix AVE and CR				
		Factor Loadings	Communalities	AVE	Cronbach's Alpha	CR
Consumer Readiness on Rejecting Plastic Packaged Goods	Rej1	.812	.688			
	Rej2	.823	.718	.523	.764	.767
	Rej3	.793	.658			
	PRC2	.750	.679			
Plastic-related Concern	PRC3	.860	.848	.724	.907	.913
	PRC4	.843	.842			
	PRC8	.793	.723			
	SK1	.679	.506			
Subjective Knowledge	SK2	.820	.710			
	SK3	.872	.795			
	SK4	.801	.673	.609	.909	.916
	SK5	.811	.729			
	SK6	.657	.539			
	SK7	.767	.647			

Importance of third party commitment	TPC1	.738	.621			
	TPC2	.865	.775			
	TPC3	.825	.733			
	TPC4	.851	.767	.683	.937	.938
	TPC5	.847	.737			
	TPC6	.834	.735			
	TPC7	.862	.769			

Note: Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
 Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.
 CR = Composite Reliability; AVE = Average Variance Extracted.

The degree to which the measurement items of a construct differ from other constructs is measured by discriminant validity. Discriminant validity is evaluated using two tests: Average Variance Extracted (AVE) analysis and Cross Loading analysis. The square root of the AVE (diagonal in table 8) must be higher than the correlations between the variables (off-diagonal factors in table 8). The diagonal value is higher than the off-diagonal value, as shown in Table 8. The cross loading analysis in Table 5 shows that the individual items of each construct load more on their own constructs than on other constructs. The cross loading difference is also higher than the recommended threshold of 0.1 (Gefen & Straub, 2005), which means that the model has good discriminant validity. The above information shows the Rotated Component Matrix with AVE, MSV, and CR values of the chosen constructs for the study. The values of Cronbach’s coefficient were above the 0.70 standard suggested by (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). This verifies the internal consistency and reliability of the data. Average variance extracted (AVE) was used for the Convergent Validity (CV). CV indicates the extent to which two tests of constructs that are theoretically related are actually related. Composite Reliability (CR) should be greater than 0.5 and CR should be greater than AVE for CV (Campbell & Fiske, 1959). All the constructs satisfy the required criteria for CV. Discriminant Validity (DR) assessment shows that a test of a construct is not highly associated with other tests that measure different constructs. For data validation, certain conditions must be satisfied, such as $CR > AVE$, $AVE > MSV$, and $\sqrt{AVE} > r$ (correlation). The table above shows the results of the constructs after running in SPSS and AMOS.

Table 6*Total Variance Explained*

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	7.833	37.301	37.301	7.833	37.301	37.301	5.106	24.312	24.312
2	3.575	17.026	54.327	3.575	17.026	54.327	4.664	22.211	46.523
3	1.941	9.244	63.571	1.941	9.244	63.571	3.051	14.528	61.051
4	1.542	7.342	70.912	1.542	7.342	70.912	2.071	9.862	70.912
5	.754	3.590	74.503						
6	.609	2.902	77.404						
7	.547	2.604	80.008						
8	.537	2.558	82.566						
9	.445	2.119	84.685						
10	.415	1.978	86.663						
11	.387	1.844	88.507						
12	.368	1.753	90.260						
13	.336	1.602	91.861						
14	.331	1.575	93.436						
15	.269	1.282	94.718						
16	.237	1.130	95.848						
17	.214	1.021	96.869						
18	.198	.944	97.812						
19	.177	.844	98.656						
20	.160	.763	99.420						
21	.122	.580	100.000						

Note: Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

The Table 6 presents the Eigenvalues, which indicate the total variance explained by each component. The initial Eigenvalues for components 1, 2, 3, and 4 are all greater than 1, indicating that only these four factors can be derived. Specifically, component 1 accounts for 24.312 percent of the variance, component 2 explains 22.211 percent, component 3 explains 14.528 percent, and component 4 explains 9.862 percent of the variance. In total, these four factors collectively explain 70.912 percent of the variance in the study, out of a possible 100 percent.

Measurement of Model Fit indices

Figure 2

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

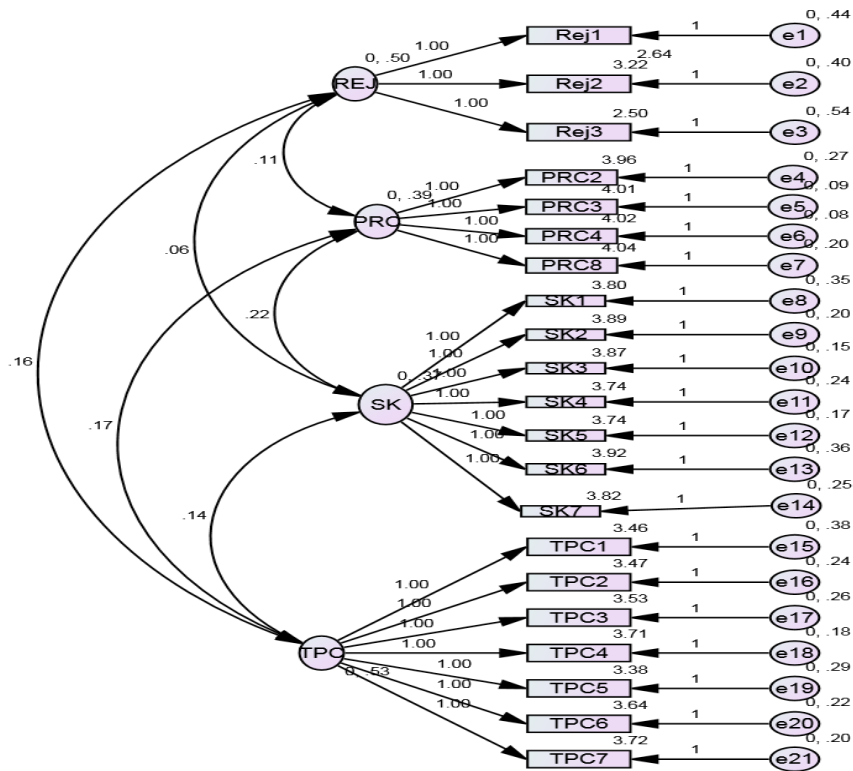


Table 7

Analysis of Model Fit Indices of CFA

Model Fit Indices	Recommended Value	Obtained Value
P-value	≤ 0.05	0.000
Chi-Square/df	< 3	2.955
TLI	> 0.90	0.922
CFI	> 0.90	0.925
RMSEA	< 0.08	0.073
GFI	$> .90$	0.945
RMR	≤ 0.05	0.018

Note: TLI= Tucker-Lewis Index, CFI= Comparative Fit Index, RMSEA= Root Mean Square Error of Approximation in the study of Hu and Bentler (1999); Cutoff Criteria for Fit Indexes in Covariance Structure Analysis were used to describe more detail CFA

The model fit indices displayed in table 7 indicate that the model was acceptable. The model fit is corroborated by (Haire et al. 2010, Hu & Bentler, 1988; Henseler et al., 2010).

Table 8

Model Validity Measures

Constructs	CR	AVE	MSV	MaxR(H)	REJ	PRC	SK	TPC
REJ	0.767	0.523	0.096	0.768	0.723			0.310***
PRC	0.913	0.724	0.331	0.928	0.256***	0.851		0.376***
SK	0.916	0.609	0.331	0.92	0.136*	0.575***	0.78	0.324***
TPC	0.938	0.683	0.141	0.94				0.826

Notes: No validity concerns here.

The above table 8 shows that the value of AVE was greater than 0.5 and values of CR were likewise obtained to be higher than 0.7, both discriminant and the convergent validity has been satisfied. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is no issues of any kind of validity and reliability in the present study.

Mediating Analysis

The mediating analysis was conducted in order to know the direct and indirect impacts of dependent variables on independent variables.

Figure 3

Test of the mediating role of PRC on SK

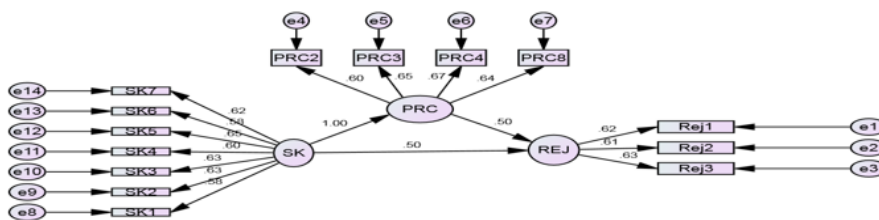


Table 9

Model's Results

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Label
PRC	<---	SK	.591	.050	11.935	***	par_2
REJ	<---	PRC	.300	.087	3.445	***	par_1
REJ	<---	SK	-.019	.090	-.210	.834	par_3

The result in Table 9 shows that the relationship between knowledge on plastic-related and plastic rejection behavior was mediated by plastic-related concern. The higher the consumers' subjective knowledge about plastic-related issues, the higher the probability that the consumer readiness to reject plastic packaging goods. The hypothesis H2-1 was rejected. However, the higher the subjective knowledge about plastic-related issues, the higher the plastic-related concern. Therefore, H2-2 was not rejected.

Figure 4

Test of the Mediating role of PRC on TPC

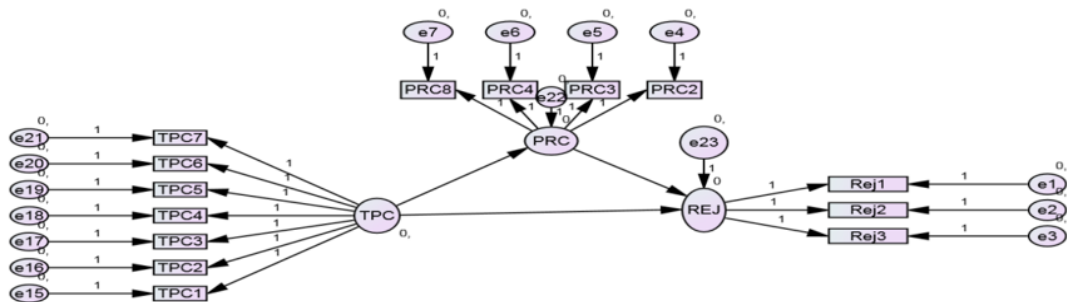


Table 10

Model's Results

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Label
PRC	<---	TPC	.322	.045	7.149	***	par_2
REJ	<---	TPC	.242	.062	3.889	***	par_1
REJ	<---	PRC	.182	.073	2.491	.013	par_3

Notes: (***) denotes p-values significant at the 0.01 level of significance.

The result in Table 10 shows that Third Party Commitment (TPC) has significant impacts on plastic related concern. The table above also shows that Third Party Commitment (TPC) has direct and significant impacts on consumer decision to reject the plastic packaged goods.

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)

By examining the magnitude, significance, and direction of the path coefficients among all independent variables (Plastic-related concern, subjective knowledge, and importance of third-party commitments), the structural model was evaluated. A higher coefficient value shows a stronger impact of the independent variable on the dependent variable. Hypotheses were assessed at a significance level of 1%. The acceptance of hypotheses H1, H2-2, and H3 is confirmed by the path

analysis results, presented in Table 11. This indicates that variables such as plastic-related concern, subjective knowledge, and third-party commitments make a positive and significant contribution to the dependent variable.

Figure 5

Structural Equation Model

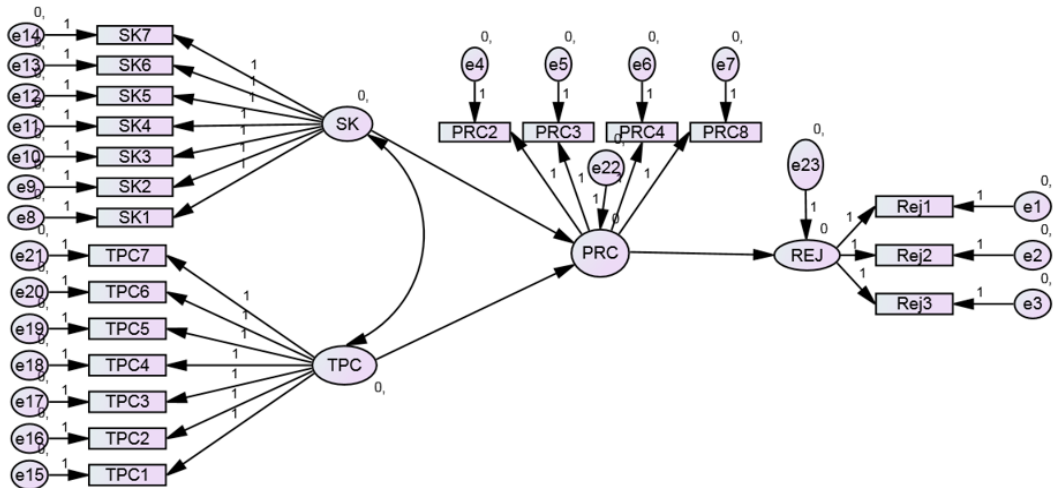


Table 11

Path Analysis Estimates

	Path	Beta	S.E.	C.R.	Significance	Hypothesis
REJ	<--- PRC	0.436	0.077	5.668	***	H1
REJ	<--- SK	-0.019	0.09	-0.21	n.s.	H2-1
PRC	<--- SK	0.628	0.029	22.006	***	H2-2
PRC	<--- TPC	0.201	0.023	8.903	***	H3

*Notes: (***) Denotes p-values significant at the 0.01 level of significance.*

The path analysis of the study model, as presented in above table 11 and Figure 5, revealed that plastic-related concerns have a significant influence on rejecting plastic packaged goods with a value of 0.436 and probability (p) of 0.000 ($p < 0.01$). Thus, H1 is supported. The results are in line of past literature reviews showing that the consumers readiness to reject the plastic packaged goods as consumers have higher environmental concern (Cavaliere et al., 2020; Gu et al., 2023). However, hypothesis 2-1 dealing with the consumers' subjective knowledge about plastic-related issues, and rejecting plastic packaged goods had insignificant negative relationships with each other with a value of -0.019 and probability ($p > 0.01$). Therefore, hypothesis 2-1 is rejected. The results are in line of past literature

reviews showing that though consumers have subjective knowledge of the various issues of plastic, consumers are not showing readiness to reject the plastic packaged goods (Cavaliere et al., 2020). Plastic-related concern has a significant influence on subjective knowledge with a value of 0.626 and probability (p) is less than ($p < 0.01$). Thus, a test of H2-2 is supported. The results are in line of past literature reviews showing that the consumers with higher subjective knowledge about plastic-related issues have higher plastic-related concerns (Cavaliere et al., 2020). Third party concern has a significant and direct influence on Plastic-related concern with a value of 0.201 and probability (p) is less than ($p < 0.01$). Thus, H3 has been supported. The results are in line of past literature reviews showing that the consumers reject plastic packaged goods if the third party has committed for tackling issues stemming from plastic used for packaging (Cavaliere et al., 2020).

Conclusion

This research aimed to empirically analyze how ready consumers are to avoid buying plastic packaged goods in the Karnali Province, using a statistical method called structural equation modeling. This study created and tested a tool to measure consumer readiness to avoid plastic packaged goods in the Karnali province, and explored how it was influenced by factors such as concern about plastic's impact, personal knowledge, and the perceived efforts of others to address plastic environmental problems. The study found that these three factors were important predictors of consumer willingness to reject plastic packaged goods.

Plastics for packaging have lead to massive environmental pollution and dreadful issues in human life. Thus consumers need to consider its deep-rooted impacts, and refuse the acceptance of plastic packaged goods. The present researchers have opted a critical constructivist perspective inclining at deductive approach to assess the consumer readiness on rejecting the choice of consumption of plastic packaged goods in context of Karnali Province of Nepal. The key findings of the structural equation model revealed that the plastic related concern with regard to health and environmental issues are the main factors influencing plastic rejection. Consumer readiness with regard to plastic rejection are also influenced by subjective knowledge and the weight placed on third party commitment to solving the plastic problem. The findings of the study also revealed significant contribution of the impact of employment status as the essential element determining consumer readiness on rejecting plastic packaged goods in the Karnali province. This indicates majorities of employed consumers have more readiness to reject the plastic packaged goods.

To encourage the rejection of plastic packaged goods and promote alternative

choices, both policy and managerial implications can play a crucial role. Here are some measures that can be considered:

Policy Implications

1. Nepalese Government must strictly consider implementing bans or restrictions on certain single-use plastic packaging goods. Such policies create a legal framework that discourages the consumption of plastic packaged goods.
2. Single-use plastic goods and plastic packaging may be subject to taxes or levies by the government. This may make products in plastic packaging substantially more expensive than alternatives, so motivating customers to select environmentally responsible choices.
3. Governments may reward companies that use sustainable packaging techniques with subsidies or tax exemptions. This may influence manufacturers and merchants to select packaging made of recyclable, biodegradable, or renewable resources.
4. Governments can fund projects aimed at creating novel and environmentally friendly packaging solutions. Alternative packaging materials and technologies may be discovered via funding research initiatives and partnerships with academic institutions and businesses.

Managerial Implications

1. Managers might launch awareness efforts to inform customers about the negative effects of plastic packaging on the environment and the advantages of selecting alternatives. Consumer behavior may be influenced by actively advocating eco-friendly options and disseminating information on sustainable packaging materials.
2. Managers can search for and provide plastic-free alternatives for their products on a proactive basis. Investigating other packaging materials, such as paper, glass, or biodegradable or compostable ones, can help with this. Giving consumers this choice may encourage them to shun products packed in plastic.
3. Managers can work with suppliers to find environmentally friendly packaging materials. Businesses may actively promote the development and use of eco-friendly packaging solutions by collaborating closely with their suppliers.
4. Managers may evaluate and improve the packaging they use to reduce the amount of plastics used. Plastic use may be decreased by cutting back on unnecessary packing, adopting lighter materials, and using effective packaging strategies.

5. Managers may support recycling initiatives and become involved by putting in place efficient recycling procedures inside their businesses. To guarantee the correct disposal and recycling of packaging materials, this involves offering consumers specific recycling containers and forming alliances with recycling facilities.

By combining policy implications that create a supportive regulatory environment with managerial implications focused on consumer education, alternative choices, and sustainable practices, it is possible to encourage the rejection of plastic packaged goods and drive a shift towards more environmentally friendly alternatives.

There are several limitations of this present works. Firstly, as this paper is cross-sectional analysis, the time frame for the study was from December 2022 to May 2023. Secondly, the sampling survey conducted were based on respondents from urban and rural settings i.e. Western Rukum, Salyan, Dolpa, Humla, Jumla, Kalikot, Mugu, Surkhet, Dailekh, and Jajarkot. Thus, the findings were based on mixed responses.

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Determinants of Banking Habit of Urban People: A Study of Narayan Nagarpalika, Dailekh

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Abstract

The banking industry has grown tremendously in volume and complexity in the last few decades. The banking habit rate in a country is an important indicator of growth in the economy. The purpose of this study is to find out the determinants of the banking habits of urban people. The study was conducted in Narayan Municipality, Dailekh. The data have been collected through a well-structured questionnaire from customers of different banks in the private and government sector. I selected a sample of 177 respondents from the population for the collection of data and to check the response of different customers. Descriptive and regression are utilized to see the cause-and-effect behaviour. The findings of the study indicate that availability and security play a significant role in the banking habit of urban people. This may help to identify the bottlenecks in the effective banking practices deployment in the urban areas.

Keywords: Availability, convenience, security, banking habit

Introduction

The foundation of every economy is banking activities. Not just in major cities, but also in smaller towns and rural regions, the number of bank branches has grown substantially. Some ways to break down people's banking habits include looking at how often they visit the bank, the number of transactions in their accounts, the kind of accounts they have, the services they use (such as ATMs), the amount of credit or loans they take out, the amount they deposit or save, and so on (Sanghvi et al., 2017). According to research by P and Vijaya (2014), who looked at the level of financial awareness and inclusion among respondents, most people liked



savings accounts because of how easy they were to create and how convenient they were. Most Americans have embraced the convenience of online banking, but many Chinese clients are wary of the technology. Reason being, Chinese consumers have been scared off from using E-banking due to several issues, including security concerns, fraud, theft, and computer illiteracy. Traditional paper checks are still used by many Chinese consumers. The purchasing and selling of things, the payment of bills, the transfer of cash, and the management of investments are all examples of E-banking operations (Qiu, 2008). From economic theory and results from research, the drivers of household savings have been demonstrated to include income level, age distribution, sex, family size, marital status, occupation, educational level, and dependence ratio, among a few others. Many researchers often utilize these factors when they simulate people's saving habits (Anang et al., 2015). Banking channels, computerized transactions, and a plethora of other financial items allow contemporary civilizations to function at varying degrees of financial integration. There is a great deal of variation in people's banking habits and, maybe, in the degree to which the economy is integrated financially since people's sociocultural structures are various (Roy & Sapre, 2016). For the purpose of making a consequent economic choice people need to be accoutered with well-founded economic literacy and behavior (Tóth et al., 2020). The adoption of banking habit among rural individuals has begun to increase, although it has not yet reached the necessary level (Jayaprakash, 2020). The provision of basic financial services to everybody decreases poverty and allows them to better their living situations. Access to financial services enhances the position of the rural poor and contributes to inclusive development (Karanth, 2018). The bank should prioritize its efforts in mobilizing deposits, recognizing that deposit mobilization is crucial for its ongoing survival (Khadse, 2019).

Hence, the banking industry is experiencing significant growth in the states, while the urban sector remains largely unexplored in terms of both savings and investment opportunities. It is important to ascertain the degree of knowledge about banking and its services, identify the causes for low utilization of banking services, and gather recommendations to enhance the use patterns of banking services among the urban population.

The general objective of this study is to examine the banking habit of urban people of Narayan Municipality, Dailekh. More specifically, the present study aims to

1. analyze the availability of banking services on banking habit of urban people.
2. examine the impact of convenience of banking service on banking habit of the urban people.

3. identify the impact of security of banking transactions on banking habit of urban people.

Considering a set of working hypotheses to empirically test and confirm the statistical significance of relationships among different constructs of the study, the following alternative hypotheses have been considered in this study:

H_{A1} : Availability of banking service has significant effect on banking habit of urban people.

H_{A2} : Convenience of banking service has significant effect on banking habit of urban people.

H_{A3} : Financial security of transaction has significant effect on banking habit of urban people.

Literature Review

Machova and Zsigmond (2023) have undertaken study to access the banking habits of Hungarian women. The investigation was done during a period of economic problems. Firstly, COVID-19 affected the economic behavior of people. After that, due to the Russo-Ukrainian conflict and its effects, people have been even more careful in the realm of money. Questionnaire study was undertaken ($n = 437$). Frequencies were employed to examine the survey data. According to the statistics, the bulk of the respondents established their first bank account more than five years ago and were inspired by the workplace and family members. Most Hungarian women spend more than 160,000 HUF using their cards in a month. The number of women holding investments at their bank is extremely low.

Terry (2018) has explored the impact of 18th-century financial upheaval, particularly credit development, on literary culture. Despite the development of personal banking, it has been overlooked by literary historians. The Bank of England's foundation in 1694 led to a more sustainable public credit system, expanding stock ownership opportunities in commerce and insurance industries. The article provides insight into how 18th-century authors used bank services and engaged in financial agreements outside the banking system.

The study analyzes the changing saving and spending habits of college students due to internet banking. A survey of 50 respondents was conducted, focusing on their profile, saving and spending patterns, and their status. Results were analyzed using statistical tools like percent, mean, and rank. Results showed that most college students prefer bank accounts for savings and use online banking apps for daily

transactions. The study found that saving is less important than spending, indicating that internet banking has a significant impact on college students' financial decisions (V., 2019).

Birari and Patil (2016) have conducted study on spending and saving behaviors among junior college, graduate, and post-graduation students in Aurangabad, Maharashtra, found significant disparities in expenditure across various education levels and genders. Both male and female adolescents have diverse spending behaviors, with a small commonality. To change their spending habits, teenagers should save and invest more in term deposits, mutual funds, and gold.

The study aimed to explore the saving and investing habits of women in rural areas, focusing on factors affecting their behavior. Data was collected through a questionnaire and chi-square test, with a sample size of 75. The findings suggest that women in rural areas can support their families by increasing their financial resources and reducing stress. Illiterate and non-working women also show saving tendencies, investing in SHGs, Pigmy, and banks. The research suggests that investing for greater returns can help combat inflation and provide financial security. With increased literacy and employment among women, they are now earning more and saving more (Maiya, 2020).

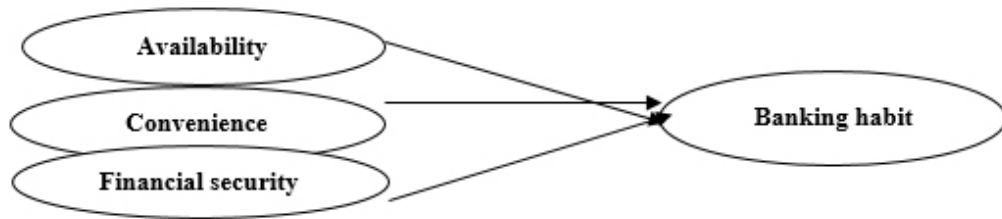
This research tries to discover significant drivers of bank choosing choices by Sudanese clients. Data were acquired from 253 clients in Khartoum State using self-administered questionnaires. The researcher employed mean analysis and exploratory factor analysis to identify the most relevant drivers of bank choosing. The findings indicated corporal efficiency as the most critical variable, followed by bank marketing activities, convenience, and service delivery (Mansour, 2019).

Conceptual Framework

This study focused on the banking habit of urban people and its determinants. For this purpose, the following determinants have been selected through the literature review: Level of awareness on various banking services, motivational factors to use banking services, security of banking deposit system that motivates to use banking system, convenience of banking services, involvement in economic activities of urban people and available of banking services have been taken as an independent variables and banking habit has been taken as a dependent variable. The relationship between independent and dependent variable has been given below.

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework



Methods and Procedures

Primary data were used in this study. This study is grounded in positivist philosophy and employs quantitative research methodology. The study was conducted in Narayan Municipality, Dailekh. Most of the hilly area of Nepal are characterized the large geographical area and low density of population. Due to this reason the number of banking institutions are not available in the easy access of all public. The study's participants were urban people who had bank accounts. The convenience sample method was employed to gather 177 responses from a survey questionnaire. A five-point Likert scale was used, with 1 representing a very low response and 5 a very high response. Frequency, percentage, and regression analyses were performed on the data.

Results and Discussion

Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Respondents were asked in the structured questionnaire form concerning their demographic characteristics, such as gender status, age status, educational level, profession of the respondent, purpose of visiting of bank, obtained of banking information, and mostly used banking services, in their organization. This section of the presentation has included an overview focused on frequency analysis of the demographic profiles of respondents.

Table 1

Demographic Profile of the Respondents

SN	Demographic Variables	Category	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percent
1	Gender Status	Male	97	54.8	54.8
		Female	80	45.2	100
2	Age Status	Upto 30 Years	95	53.7	53.7

3	Educational Level	31 - 40 years	46	26.0	79.7
		41 - 50 Years	23	13.0	92.7
		51 years and above	13	7.3	100.0
		Upto SLC/SEE	46	26.0	26.0
		Secondary Level	83	46.9	72.9
4	Profession of the respondent	Bachelor Level	34	19.2	92.1
		Master and Above Level	14	7.9	100.0
		Student	52	29.4	29.4
		Farmer	34	19.2	48.6
		Business person	27	15.3	63.8
5	Purpose of visiting of bank	Teacher	64	36.2	100
		Deposit Amount	29	16.4	16.4
		Loan	16	9.0	25.4
		Withdraw	19	10.7	36.2
		ATM	22	12.4	48.6
6	Necessary of banking service	All	91	51.4	100
		Vey necessary	50	28	28
		Necessary	124	70	98
		Not necessary	3	2	100
7	Obtained of banking information	Friends	43	24.3	24.3
		Relatives	23	13	37.3
		Neighbour	15	8.5	45.8
		Bank Staff	96	54.2	100.0
8	Mostly used banking services	Deposit	45	25.4	25.4
		Money Transfer	36	20.30	45.8
		For Loan	22	12.4	58.2
		ATM	65	36.7	94.9
		Payment of loan	9	5.1	100.0

Source: Field Survey 2023

The demographic profile of the respondents revealed that there were more men (54.8%) than women (45.2%) who participated in the survey. Similarly, out of the total respondents, 53.7 percent were under the age of 30, 26% were between the ages of 31 and 40, 13 percent were between the ages of 41 and 50, and the final 7.3 percent belonged to the age group of 51 and above. When comparing respondents' educational levels, Secondary Level or Plus 2 made up the majority of respondents (46.9%). According to their profession, the majority of respondents (36.2%) were employees, followed by students (29.4%). Most respondents (70%) believe that banking services are necessary; individuals visit banks to deposit money, withdraw money, and use ATMs; and the majority of respondents (54.2%) get their banking information from banking staffs.

Analysis of Data

This section of analysis covers the analysis of the relationship between the independent and dependent variable using the measuring tools i.e., the descriptive analysis and the inferential analysis based on the responses of respondents.

Descriptive Analysis of Selected Constructs

This analysis has been done based on the constructs developed in the conceptual framework of the study to assess the mean score of the level of agreement of the respondents in terms of their items.

Availability

Table 2

Descriptive Analysis of Availability

SN	Statement	Frequency (Percentage)					N	Mean	SD
		SA	A	N	D	SD			
1	Access of banking services at local Level	79 (44.6)	75 (42.4)	10 (5.6)	10 (5.6)	3 (1.7)	177 (100)	1.77	0.914
2	Availability of quality of banking services	40 (22.6)	89 (50.3)	32 (18.1)	13 (7.3)	3 (1.7)	177 (100)	2.15	0.914
3	Sufficient time available for banking transaction	44 (24.9)	73 (41.2)	44 (24.9)	14 (7.9)	2 (1.1)	177 (100)	2.19	0.940
4	Available of all modern banking facility and services	46 (26.0)	87 (49.2)	25 (14.1)	15 (8.5)	4 (2.3)	177 (100)	2.12	0.967
5	Available of quality services at affordable cost	39 (22.0)	85 (48.0)	27 (15.3)	11 (6.2)	15 (8.5)	177 (100)	2.31	1.138

Note: Figures in parenthesis are in percentage

Source: Field Survey 2023

Table 2 the results show that out of the total, 87 percent of respondents who agreed that the access of banking services at local level can affect the level of banking habit, 44.6 percent respondents strongly agreed and 42.4 percent respondents agreed whereas, 5.6 percent disagree and 1.7 percent respondents strongly disagreed on the statement. It is also evident that large percent 5.6 respondents remained undecided.

It is observed that out of the total, 72.9 percent of respondents who agreed that the availability of quality of banking services can affect the level of banking habit, 22.6 percent respondents strongly agreed and 50.3 percent respondents agreed whereas, 7.3 percent respondents disagreed representing and 1.7 percent of the respondents were strongly disagreed on the statement. It is also evident that 18.1 percent respondents remained undecided.

It is revealed that out of the total, 66.1 percent of respondents who agreed that the sufficient time available for banking transaction can affect the level of banking habit, 24.9 percent respondents strongly agreed and 41.2 percent respondents agreed whereas, 7.9 of the respondents disagreed and 1.1 percent respondents strongly disagreed on the statement. It is also evident that 24.9 percent respondents remained undecided.

It is revealed that out of the total, 75.2 percent of respondents who agreed that available of all modern banking facility and services can affect the level of banking habit, 26 percent respondents strongly agreed and 49.2 percent respondents agreed whereas, 8.5 of the respondents disagreed and 2.3 percent respondents strongly disagreed on the statement. It is also evident that 14.1 percent respondents remained undecided.

It is revealed that out of the total, 70 percent of respondents who agreed that the available of quality services at affordable cost can affect the level of banking habit. 22 percent respondents strongly agreed and 48 percent respondents agreed whereas, 6.2 of the respondents disagreed and 8.5 percent respondents strongly disagreed on the statement. It is also evident that 15.3 percent respondents remained undecided.

Table 2 displays the mean value of availability items, with an average mean value of 3. The results indicate a strong influence of each item on motivation, with a standard deviation ranging from 0.914 to 1.138.

Convenience

Table 3

Descriptive Analysis of Convenience

SN	Statement	Frequency (Percentage)					N	Mean	SD
		SA	A	N	D	SD			
1	Easy access to get banking transaction	85 (48.0)	81 (45.8)	8 (4.5)	2 (1.1)	1 (0.6)	177 (100)	1.60	0.684
2	Settlement of transaction in short time	39 (22.0)	95 (53.7)	34 (19.2)	7 (4.0)	2 (1.1)	177 (100)	2.08	0.818
3	Quick responses client grievance	36 (20.3)	73 (41.2)	45 (25.4)	17 (9.6)	6 (3.4)	177 (100)	2.34	1.017
4	Banking transaction carried out in little efforts	42 (23.7)	89 (50.3)	30 (16.9)	11 (6.2)	5 (2.8)	177 (100)	2.14	0.946
5	Banking products are easy to use	45 (25.4)	78 (44.1)	31 (17.5)	14 (7.9)	9 (5.1)	177 (100)	2.23	1.075

Note: Figures in parenthesis are in percentage

Source: Field Survey 2023

Table 3 the results show that out of the total, 93.80 percent of respondents who agreed that easy access to get banking transaction can raise the level of banking habit, 48 percent respondents strongly agreed and 45.8 percent respondents agreed whereas, respondents representing 1.1 percent disagree and 0.6 percent strongly disagreed to the same statement. It is also evident that 4.5 percent respondents remained undecided.

It is observed that out of the total, 75.7 percent of respondents who agreed that the settlement of transaction in short time affects the level of banking habit, 22 percent respondents strongly agreed and 53.7 percent respondents agreed whereas, whereas, respondents representing 4 percent disagree and 1.1 percent strongly disagreed to the same statement. It is also evident that 19.2 percent respondents remained undecided.

It is revealed that out of the total, 61.5 percent of respondents who agreed that the quick responses client grievance affects the level of banking habit, 20.3 percent respondents strongly agreed and 41.2 percent respondents agreed whereas, respondents representing 9.6 percent disagree and 3.4 percent strongly disagreed to the same statement. It is also evident that 25.4 percent respondents remained undecided.

It is revealed that out of the total, 74 percent of respondents who agreed that the banking transaction carried out in little efforts can raise the level of banking habit, 23.7 percent respondents strongly agreed and 50.3 percent respondents agreed whereas, respondents representing 6.2 percent disagree and 2.8 percent strongly disagreed to the same statement. It is also evident that 16.9 percent respondents remained undecided.

It is revealed that out of the total, 69.5 percent of respondents who agreed that banking products are easy to use that effects the level of banking habit, 25.4 percent respondents strongly agreed and 44.1 percent respondents agreed whereas, respondents representing 7.9 percent disagree, 5.1 percent strongly disagree to the same statement. It is also evident that 5.1 percent respondents remained undecided.

Table 3 displays the mean value of convenience items, with an average mean value of 3. The results indicate a strong influence of each item on convenience, with a standard deviation ranging from 0.684 to 1.075.

Financial Security

Table 4

Descriptive Analysis of Financial Security

SN	Statement	Frequency (Percentage)					N	Mean	SD
		SA	A	N	D	SD			
1	Security of cash	75 (42.4)	88 (49.7)	7 (4.0)	6 (3.4)	1 (0.6)	177 (100)	1.70	0.750
2	Confidentiality of banking transaction	56 (31.6)	90 (50.8)	28 (15.8)	1 (0.6)	2 (1.1)	177 (100)	1.89	0.768
3	Authenticate of banking transaction	42 (23.7)	91 (51.4)	32 (18.1)	11 (6.2)	1 (0.6)	177 (100)	2.08	0.845
4	Low possibility of lost or theft of cash	46 (26.0)	89 (50.3)	36 (20.3)	5 (2.8)	1 (0.6)	177 (100)	2.02	0.794
5	No need to carry cash for economic activities	51 (28.8)	94 (53.1)	19 (10.7)	9 (5.1)	4 (2.3)	177 (100)	1.99	0.898

Note: Figures in parenthesis are in percentage

Source: Field Survey 2023

Table 4 the results show that out of the total, 92.1 percent of respondents who agreed that security of cash has an impact on the level of banking habit, 42.4 percent respondents strongly agreed and 49.7 percent respondents agreed whereas, respondents representing 3.4 percent disagree and 0.6 percent of the respondents

were strongly disagreed on the statement. It is also evident that 4 percent respondents remained undecided.

It is observed that out of the total, 82.4 percent of respondents who agreed confidentiality of banking transaction has an impact on level of banking habit, 31.6 percent respondents strongly agreed and 50.8 percent respondents agreed whereas, respondents representing 0.6 percent disagree and 1.1 percent of the respondents were strongly disagreed on the statement. It is also evident that 15.8 percent respondents remained undecided.

It is revealed that out of the total, 75.1 percent of respondents who agreed that authenticate of banking transaction affects the level of banking habit, 23.7 percent respondents strongly agreed and 51.4 percent respondents agreed whereas, respondents representing 6.2 percent disagree and 0.6 percent of the respondents were strongly disagreed on the statement. It is also evident that 18.1 percent respondents remained undecided.

It is revealed that out of the total, 76.3 percent of respondents who agreed that the low possibility of lost or theft of cash effects the level of banking habit, 26 percent respondents strongly agreed and 50.3 percent respondents agreed whereas, respondents representing 2.8 percent disagree and 0.6 percent of the respondents were strongly disagreed on the statement. It is also evident that 20.3 percent respondents remained undecided.

It is revealed that out of the total, 81.9 percent of respondents who agreed that the no need to carry cash for economic activities can affect the level of banking habit, 28.8 percent respondents strongly agreed and 53.1 percent respondents agreed whereas, respondents representing 5.1 percent disagree and 2.3 percent of the respondents were strongly disagreed on the statement. It is also evident that 10.7 percent respondents remained undecided.

Table 4 displays the mean value of financial security items, with an average mean value of 3. The results indicate a strong influence of each item on security, with a standard deviation ranging from 0.750 to 0.898.

Banking Habit

Table 5

Descriptive Analysis of Banking Habit

SN	Statement	Frequency (Percentage)					N	Mean	SD
		SA	A	N	D	SD			
1	The service of the bank has created the banking habit	69 (39.0)	89 (50.3)	12 (6.8)	6 (3.4)	1 (0.6)	177 (100)	1.76	0.769
2	The behavior of the CSD staff has helped to create banking habit	48 (27.1)	95 (53.7)	28 (15.8)	4 (2.3)	2 (1.1)	177 (100)	1.97	0.790
3	The interest of financial transaction has created banking habit	50 (28.2)	83 (46.9)	24 (13.6)	17 (9.6)	3 (1.7)	177 (100)	2.10	0.975
4	Coordination and helping behavior of bank staff has created banking habit	58 (32.8)	75 (42.4)	22 (12.4)	17 (9.6)	5 (2.8)	177 (100)	2.07	1.045
5	Desire to reduce unsocial behavior help to create banking habit	67 (37.9)	73 (41.2)	16 (9.0)	10 (5.6)	11 (6.2)	177 (100)	2.01	1.123

Note: Figures in parenthesis are in percentage

Source: Field Survey 2023

Table 5 the results show that out of the total, 75.10 percent of respondents who agreed that the service of the bank has created the banking habit, 39 percent respondents strongly agreed and 50.3 percent respondents agreed whereas, respondents representing 3.4 percent disagree and 0.6 percent strongly disagreed to the same statement. It is also evident that 6.8 percent respondents remained undecided.

It is observed that out of the total, 80.8 percent of respondents who agreed that the behavior of the CSD staff has helped to create banking habit, 27.1 percent respondents strongly agreed and 53.7 percent respondents agreed whereas, respondents representing 2.3 percent disagree and 1.1 percent strongly disagreed to the same statement. It is also evident that 15.8 percent respondents remained undecided.

It is revealed that out of the total, 75.10 percent of respondents who agreed that the interest of financial transaction has created banking habit, 28.2 percent respondents strongly agreed and 46.9 percent respondents agreed whereas,

respondents representing 9.6 percent disagree and 1.7 percent strongly disagreed to the same statement. It is also evident that 13.6 percent respondents remained undecided.

It is revealed that out of the total, 75.2 percent of respondents who agreed that coordination and helping behavior of bank staff has created banking habit, 32.8 percent respondents strongly agreed and 42.4 percent respondents agreed whereas, respondents representing 9.6 percent disagree and 2.8 percent strongly disagreed to the same statement. It is also evident that 12.4 percent respondents remained undecided.

It is revealed that out of the total, 79.10 percent of respondents who agreed that Desire to reduce unsocial behavior help to create banking habit, 37.9 percent respondents strongly agreed and 41.2 percent respondents agreed whereas, respondents representing 5.6 percent disagree, 6.2 percent strongly disagree to the same statement. It is also evident that 9 percent respondents remained undecided.

Table 5 displays the mean value of banking habit items, with an average mean value of 3. The results indicate a strong influence of each item on banking habit, with a standard deviation ranging from 0.769 to 1.123.

Multivariate Regression Analysis

To identify the joint effect of all independent variables on banking habit, in this determinant of banking habit is regressed with all independent variables (availability, convenience, and financial security) of the study.

Table 6

Model Summary of Multivariate Regression Analysis

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.603 ^a	0.364	0.353	0.57503

a. Predictors: (Constant): Availability, convenience, and security

Source: Survey Data 2023

The coefficient of determination, or R² value, is shown in Table 6 and represents the percentage of the overall variation in banking behaviors that can be accounted for by the regression of banking service availability, convenience, and financial security. Approximately 36% of the diversity in how urban inhabitants acquire banking habits may be explained by these independent factors.

Table 7*ANOVA of Independent Variable and Dependent Variable*

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	32.738	3	10.913	33.003	.000 ^b
Residual	57.204	173	0.331		
Total	89.942	176			

*a. Dependent Variable: Banking habit of urban people**b. Predictors: (Constant): Availability, convenience, and financial security**Source: Survey Data 2023*

Table 7 of the ANOVA analysis gives a “Sig” value of (.000), which is lower than .05 in this case. As a result, there is a significant link between the independent and dependent variables at 5% level of significance. So, availability, convenience, and security (independent variable) have a positive linear significant relationship with the banking habit of urban people.

Table 8*Coefficient of Multiple Regression Analysis*

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	0.386	0.176		2.201	0.029		
Availability of services	0.219	0.085	0.205	2.585	0.011	0.586	1.705
Convenience of services	0.013	0.090	0.012	0.149	0.882	0.561	1.783
Security of transactions	0.571	0.084	0.478	6.782	0.000	0.742	1.349

*a. Dependent Variable: Banking habit of urban people**Source: Field Survey 2023*

Table 8 indicates the multiple regression analysis. Here, availability, convenience, and security were identified as independent variables, and banking habit of urban people as a dependent variable. The results show that the p-value of availability of services and Security of the transactions are less than the 5 percent

alpha level. This indicates there is a positive relationship between availability of services and security of the transactions on banking habit of urban people. Therefore, the alternative hypothesis is supported. It shows that as availability of services and security of the transactions all rise by one unit, banking habits rise by 0.219 and 0.571 units respectively. Above table VIF value is less than equal to 10, so no serve multicollinearity exit in the model.

Table 9

Summary of Hypothesis

Hypothesis No.	Hypothesis	Result
HA1	Availability of banking service has significant effect on banking habit of urban people.	Support
HA2	Convenience of banking service has significant effect on banking habit of urban people.	Reject
HA3	Financial security of transaction has significant effect on banking habit of urban people.	Support

Availability of banking service has significant effect on banking habit of urban people. The results show that the p-value of availability of services and Security of the transactions are less than the 5 percent alpha level. This indicates there is a positive relationship between availability of services and security of the transactions on banking habit of urban people which has found similar result of (Sanghvi et al., 2017) works.

Conclusion

From the above test we can conclude that, people can develop good banking habits if they are provided with affordable products and services, they get good customer services and co-operation from the banks which facilitate wider use of banking services, it can be concluded as follows:

1. Availability of service has a positive and significant effect on banking habit of urban people. This means that the sufficient availability of service, the increase in the banking habit of urban people.
2. Security of transaction has a positive and significant effect on banking habit of urban people. This means that sufficient considerations in security of transaction, increases in the banking habit of urban people.

This study be helpful to identify the bottlenecks in the effective banking practices deployment in the urban areas.

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