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Editorial

KMC Journal is a double-blind peer-reviewed, open-access multidisciplinary journal published by the Research Management Cell (RMC) of Kailali Multiple Campus, Dhangadhi, Far Western University, Nepal. Published twice a year, this journal provides a platform for the researchers, educators, academicians, teachers, trainers, practitioners and professionals across the world to share knowledge in the form of high quality empirical research papers from different disciplines including Education, Social Sciences, Humanities, Management, Agriculture, Forestry, Law, Science and ICT. The journal encourages national and international researchers and scholars to share their research experiences through publication to the global audience.

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. The Research Management Cell of Kailali Multiple Campus bears all the expenses.

KMC Journal, Volume 6, Issue 2 includes 21 research-based articles from English education, English literature, Education, Management, Sociology, Science, Health Education, Population, Agriculture and Nepali. All these empirical papers have been published after undergoing 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 of Kailali Multiple Campus for the publication of the journal.

Happy Reading!

Editor-in-Chief
KMC Journal

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Perceptions of the Quality of HIV and AIDS-related Communication Materials among Key Population

Toya Nath Pahadi (MPhil)¹, Chitra Bahadur Budhathoki (PhD)²

¹Assistant Professor, Health Education, Mid-West University, Bageshwari Multiple Campus, Kohalpur

²Professor (Health Education) and Dean, Tribhuvan University, Faculty of Education

Corresponding Author: *Toya Nath Pahadi*; **Email:** pahadi.toya@gmail.com

Abstract

Exploring the quality of communication materials from the perspectives of the target audiences is essential for the effectiveness of HIV and AIDS prevention programmes. In this context, a descriptive phenomenological study was carried out in Banke district of Nepal to explore the audiences' perceptions of the quality of HIV and AIDS-related communication materials. In-depth interviews were carried out with nine participants selected through snowball sampling from sexual minority people and female sex workers. The participants were partially satisfied with the quality of the communication materials from the perspectives of attractiveness, credibility, empowerment, practical application, behaviour change and privacy. They were not satisfied with their quality from the perspectives of readability, sufficiency, comprehensibility and access. This study suggests that communication materials including precise and illustrative messages with familiar pictures, symbols and language should be easily available to the audiences maintaining privacy.

Keywords: Prevention, sufficiency, phenomenological study, epidemic

Introduction

The outcome of any HIV and AIDS-related communication programme depends upon the quality of the information, education and communication (IEC) materials utilized to reach the targeted audiences. But the findings of some studies have raised questions about the quality of such materials developed and used for



HIV prevention and control in Nepal. Some recent studies (Shrestha et al., 2017; Kakchapati et al., 2018; National Centre for AIDS and STD Control [NCASC], 2018; Deuba et al., 2020; Wilson et al., 2021) revealed that despite decades of targeted interventions including IEC activities against HIV and AIDS in Nepal, risk behaviours of key populations have not been changed as expected and trend of the concentrated epidemic has not been declined satisfactorily. Condom use is still below (61–73% in 2016) an optimal level and varied across key populations who received educational interventions (NCASC, 2018; Deuba et al., 2020). In addition, there is a greater prevalence of condom-less receptive anal intercourse among men who have sex with men and transgender people (Wilson et al., 2021). A study by Kakchapati et al. (2018) also revealed that only about 29% of female sex workers knew about HIV and their knowledge was not associated with safe sexual practices. Since 12 organizations have been organizing HIV and AIDS-related targeted communication interventions with different designs of IEC materials in Banke district of Nepal (Shrestha, 2018), its effectiveness is still in question. Till the fiscal year 2074/075, altogether 1,012 local HIV-positive cases were identified in the district (Gnawali, 2017). People who inject drugs (2093), sexual minorities (3696), and female sex workers (1740) made up the majority of the estimated 7529 HIV-positive cases there (NCASC, 2016).

One of the main reasons for the lack of expected achievement of HIV prevention and control programmes may be the poor quality of the IEC materials utilized in targeted communication initiatives, especially in the local context. It is necessary to assess the quality of HIV and AIDS-related IEC materials from different perspectives to improve programme outcomes as expected. Traditionally, the quality of the IEC materials has been evaluated from experts' perspectives and objectively based on defined quality indicators (Kakchapati et al., 2018; Deuba et al., 2020). But, how the targeted audiences are experiencing the quality of the available IEC materials is not adequately explored in the local context. All the IEC materials that experts and service providers consider to be of high quality may sometimes not be of the same quality for the audiences. Therefore, the communication programme can be made effective only by identifying how the targeted audiences perceive the quality of the available IEC materials, and what kind of quality they want. NCASC (2004) assessed the effectiveness of print media, radio, television, and billboards in HIV and AIDS communication in Sunsari, Parsa, Banke, Surkhet, and Kailali. Though that study indicated the weaknesses in the means of communication and messages from the audiences' points of view, it was unable to provide sufficient information about the quality of such IEC materials from audiences' perspectives. Almost two decades after the completion of that study, adequate studies have not been carried out from audiences' perspectives to explore if there has been a change in the situation.

In this context, the present study was carried out in Banke district of Nepal to explore the answer to the research question, “How do research participants perceive the quality of HIV and AIDS-related IEC materials they have been exposed to?” Exploration of the quality of available IEC materials from audience perspectives has significant implications for practitioners, policymakers and all other stakeholders to increase the quality and effectiveness of HIV and AIDS-related communication interventions in the national and local context.

Methods and Procedures

This study was carried out by adopting the descriptive phenomenological approach to explore participants’ common perceptions of the quality of HIV and AIDS-related IEC materials to which they were exposed. The participants were selected through snowball sampling from adult key populations of sexual minority people, and female sex workers who were exposed to HIV and AIDS-related means of communication, and aged between 20 and 40 years residing in Banke district in Nepal. Initially, the programme coordinators from the Nepal STD and AIDS Research Center (NSARC) and Western Star Nepal provided contact information for the peer educators they had trained across various key population categories. Subsequently, some participants from each category were recruited through these peer educators, and additional participants were identified based on the information provided by the initial participants. In this district, there are an estimated 824 female sex workers, 1709 men who have sex with men and male sex workers, and 639 transgender people (NCASC, 2017). A total of nine participants including five sexual minority people and four female sex workers were selected for this study. Starks and Trinidad (2007) suggest that typical sample sizes for phenomenological studies range from one to ten participants; therefore, the sample size of this study was appropriate. We realized that the data reached saturation at nine participants when new information began to exhibit redundancy. Among the sexual minority participants, one belonged to the Madhesi community, and four were from the Tharu community. Among the female sex workers, two were from the Brahmin/Kshetri community, and two were from the Dalit and Tharu communities. All participants were literate in Nepali language.

In-depth interviews were conducted using a semi-structured interview guide in drop-in-centers and participants’ residences with help of the selected trained assistants familiar with the respective groups of participants. The recruited trained assistants facilitated rapport-building with the participants, translated certain words into their local dialects (Tharu and Awadhi), and ensured participants felt comfortable during the interviews in their presence. The interview guide consisted of 14 major open-ended questions which were modified as per the need of each

interview context. Interviews were carried out in three phases as recommended by Creswell (2014): initial screening interview, main interview, and follow-up interview. Screening the participants, rapport building, informing them about the study, and obtaining informed consent were completed in the first phase. The main interviews were conducted by demonstrating some of the most widely used IEC materials related to HIV and AIDS in the study area and attempted to explore how the participants perceived their quality. HIV and AIDS-related eight posters, one leaflet, one flipchart, and one short video were presented during interviews to capture the lived understandings of the participants to fulfill the research purpose of the present study. In the initial contact with the participants, we learned that they felt most comfortable being interviewed in their own or their peers' homes, or at the drop-in centers of NSARC and Western Star Nepal, and those interview sites were selected based on their preferences. In their homes, participants arranged separate confidential rooms for the interviews, which they already used to meet and share HIV and AIDS-related information with their peers. Some preferred the drop-in centers' IEC halls, specifically designed for and frequently used for health education and information dissemination by the organizations. The programme coordinators assisted in ensuring the interviews were conducted in a confidential environment. Each main interview was digitally audio-recorded and was completed approximately within one hour to two hours. The audio recordings were transcribed in Nepali language after each interview, and the participants were subsequently contacted to review and verify the accuracy of the transcriptions. If necessary, they were re-interviewed to gather additional information. We employed Colaizzi's seven-step method of descriptive phenomenological data analysis (Colaizzi, 1978, as cited in Morrow et al., 2015): transcribe and familiarize, extract significant statements, formulate meanings, cluster themes, create exhaustive descriptions, produce fundamental structure, and validate findings. From participants' descriptions of how they perceived the quality of HIV and AIDS-related means of communication, three emergent themes and 11 subthemes were identified and analyzed accordingly.

As explained by Lincoln et al. (2018) and Meyers (2019), we utilized methods such as pilot testing of the interview guide, bracketing our preoccupied assumptions and experiences, thick description, following transcription protocol, and member checking to reduce any bias and increase the credibility of data collected. Ethical consideration was strictly maintained in this study. We provided a detailed information sheet about our study to each participant and took written informed consent before starting the interview. Anonymity and confidentiality were strictly maintained and participation was voluntary. In this article, participants' pseudonyms are used to represent their identities.

Results

The participants' perceptions of the quality of HIV and AIDS-related IEC materials with their different perspectives are categorized under three themes: attractiveness and understandability, information reliability and accessibility, and impact and utilization of the HIV and AIDS-related communication materials. The representative significant statements obtained from the participants' descriptions regarding their perception of the quality are presented and analyzed under the subsequent themes and subthemes.

Attractiveness and Understandability of the Communication Materials

Participants used attractiveness and understandability as the primary indicators to assess the quality of communication materials. They evaluated these aspects by focusing on visual appeal and artistry, readability, clarity and comprehensibility, and the incorporation of local language and simplified terminology.

Visual Appeal and Artistry in the Communication Materials

The participants in this study expressed a strong affinity for visually appealing communication materials related to HIV and AIDS. Reshma, a 25-year-old female sex worker, described her preference for posters, stating, "I like the poster better than others, sir. The colorful images and beautiful letters on the poster are touching when viewed from a distance." This sentiment was echoed by Pyari, a 28-year-old transgender participant, who suggested enhancing the posters with even more vibrant colors and creative design elements. Pyari remarked, "But just like to make these posters even better, color also makes them attractive. They would have been better posters if the status [message] had been typed by drawing flowers."

Prema, a 39-year-old transgender participant, stated, "We prefer posters and videos over leaflets and flipcharts because with posters and videos, we don't have to read; we can understand just by watching them." This sentiment was echoed by Reetu, a 27-year-old female sex worker, who mentioned in an interview at the drop-in center of NSARC, "The images on posters are captivating, and the visual stories in videos are heart-touching. However, the leaflets and flip charts are tedious to read."

While the majority of participants perceived the existing posters as visually appealing and responded positively to their design elements, they also expressed a desire for further enhancement. Participants suggested that all communication materials, including videos, leaflets, and flipcharts, should be made even more colorful and artistic. The preference for posters and videos over leaflets and flipcharts highlights the participants' appreciation for visual content that does not require

reading, emphasizing the importance of visual appeal in capturing attention and effectively conveying messages. Additionally, the suggestions for incorporating floral designs into text elements underscore the participants' desire for creativity and innovation across all types of communication materials.

Readability of Communication Materials

This theme delves into the participants' perspectives on the readability of communication materials related to HIV and AIDS. Pyari, a 28-year-old transgender participant, shared her perception, stating, "The basis on which flipcharts and pamphlets are built, they have been sent making properly." This suggests that participants generally found flipcharts and leaflets to be well-constructed and accessible. However, Prema, a 39-year-old transgender participant, expressed difficulty in reading the materials, noting, "It's a little difficult for seeing and reading. I could understand if the letters [text] would have been a little bigger." Similarly, Reetu, a 27-year-old female sex worker, suggested that both posters and the text on them should be larger for better readability.

While participants generally found the size of pamphlets and flipcharts to be appropriate, they perceived posters as lacking in appropriate size. They suggested that larger posters would be more suitable for public display, emphasizing the importance of readability in effectively conveying information about HIV and AIDS. This theme underscores the significance of ensuring that communication materials are comprehensible to key populations, highlighting the need for appropriately sized text and visual elements to enhance readability.

Clarity and Comprehensibility of the Messages

The participants expressed significant challenges in understanding HIV and AIDS-related communication materials, particularly due to confusing language, symbols, and imagery. Pyari, a transgender, voiced her perplexity regarding the term "Naganya" on an ARV poster, stating, "I don't even understand this word. This terminology confused me." Reetu, a 27-year-old female sex worker, proposed a solution for clarity, suggesting, "To make it understandable to everyone, describe each 'Na' of the Na = Na." Similarly, she expressed uncertainty about the symbol "U = U" on another ARV poster, noting, "That U is equal to U is not clear to us." Geeta, a 35-year-old female sex worker, echoed this sentiment, stating, "I don't understand what is meant by these English words 'Undetectable = Untransmittable' in this poster."

The majority of participants encountered confusion with English terminology used in the leaflet. Prema, a 39-year-old transgender, expressed this sentiment, stating, "We do not understand this English. It would have been easier if it had

been written in Nepali.” Furthermore, participants struggled to comprehend the “Linkages Nepal Project” mentioned in the leaflet, as Junu, a 34-year-old female sex worker, shared, “For the first time, I just heard about Linkages.” Reshma, another female sex worker, aged 25, added, “We cannot understand what the Linkages Nepal Project is about.” Additionally, Junu expressed confusion about various terms like “Sankramit Ragat” [infected blood], “Yoni Maithun” [vaginal sex], and “Guda Maithun” [anal sex], highlighting the need for clarity in terminology. Regarding the poster of PrEP, Reshma remarked, “We are confused about this picture,” while Junu suggested, “The explanation must be written.” Reetu recommended clarity in explaining the usage of PrEP, stating, “It would be clear if explained whom, when, how, and for how long to take.” Similarly, Prema suggested, “The work of this PrEP has to be clarified a little,” emphasizing the importance of clear and understandable information. Chadani, a 28-year-old transgender, added, “It should be written in a way that is more understandable.” Overall, participants found various elements in the communication materials, such as terminology, symbols, and imagery, to be confusing and incomprehensible, underscoring the need for clearer and more accessible information.

The majority of participants expressed a preference for concise and clear messages. Reetu articulated this viewpoint, stating, “If understandable words are written, it may be too long. When writing for each word, it may be too much. People do not want to read too much.” Participants recognized the importance of explanatory and precise messaging to enhance understanding. Moreover, most participants favored HIV and AIDS communication materials that offered clarity and ease of comprehension. Pyari echoed this sentiment, remarking,

The Flipchart is easy to understand and attractive for us to get information about HIV and AIDS. In the flipchart, the explanation is written according to the picture, you know. Those who do not know how to read also know from the picture and those who can read learn by reading.

Revealing the comprehensibility of the video demonstrated during the interview, Sonia, a 26-year-old transgender participant, expressed a keen interest in viewing similar videos. She stated, “Sir, we like to watch such informative videos frequently in the future. From the video we just watched here, we clearly understand the technique on how to convince the client to wear a condom while having sex.”

The participants favored the flipchart for its illustrative nature and the alignment of visuals with explanations, and they found the video more comprehensible. However, the study revealed that participants encountered difficulties in understanding the HIV and AIDS-related leaflets and posters due to confusing language, symbols, and imagery. They expressed confusion regarding

various terms, symbols, and English words used in these materials, underscoring the necessity for clarity and simplicity.

Preference for Local Language and Simplified Terminology

Participants emphasized the importance of receiving information in simple Nepali or their local language, expressing difficulty comprehending English terms used in leaflets and posters related to PrEP and ARV. Pyari, a transgender, aged 28, highlighted the challenge, stating, “English is now difficult for many people. Not everyone who knows English knows its meaning. Therefore, it will be better if it is in Nepali.” Chadani, another transgender, also aged 28, echoed this sentiment, suggesting, “It will be better to print in Nepali. I don’t know much English.” Sonia, another transgender, aged 26, supported this view, emphasizing the need for Nepali translations alongside English, remarking, “Some of us are not well educated. There should be Nepali words with English words because we don’t understand.” Geeta, a female sex worker, aged 35, underscored the importance of local language, advocating for Deshi [Awadhi language] translations, explaining,

It is better to make it in the Deshi language. All speak Deshi in our community, but can’t read Nepali. They do not know what is written in Nepali. So it is better to write in the Deshi language for us.

Although both the flipchart and video presented were in Nepali, and all participants were literate in Nepali, they suggested preparing the materials in their local language for easier comprehension. This sentiment is captured in the statement of a 27-year-old female sex worker, Reetu, who said, “Among the materials we saw, the video was easier for us to understand. But we still request that it be made in our local language.”

The most of the participants perceived English and complex Nepali terminologies as incomprehensible and impractical, favoring simple Nepali and local languages. This preference reflects their desire for accessible and understandable communication materials tailored to their linguistic abilities and cultural context.

Information Reliability and Accessibility

The participants evaluated the quality of HIV and AIDS-related IEC materials based on their reliability and accessibility as primary indicators. From their descriptions, four sub-themes emerged: credibility and verification of information, insufficiency of information and need for innovation, accessibility and distribution disparities, and multifaceted information dissemination.

Credibility and Verification of Information

This theme highlights the participants’ emphasis on the credibility and

verification of information contained in HIV and AIDS-related communication materials. Ramesh, a man who has sex with men, aged 30 expressed his trust in the available information, “Really yes; otherwise, why do such things come from?” Similarly, Reetu, a female sex worker, aged 27 emphasized, “We have to believe it. Some friends don’t adopt because they don’t believe. They don’t try to listen to those things.” Pyari, a transgender, aged 28 revealed that they used to verify the credibility of information from multiple sources, “We don’t believe it all at once. We can be sure whether it is true or not only after training, by listening radio, and after getting information from the authorized person.”

Despite expressing trust in the available information, participants also reveal a cautious approach, preferring to verify information from multiple credible sources before fully believing it. This theme underscores the importance of ensuring the reliability and authenticity of information provided in communication materials to gain the trust and confidence of key populations. During the interviews, we observed that nearly all participants preferred to cross-verify any of the four IEC materials presented to them, rather than accepting them without question. Reflecting on this, we find the participants’ choice to verify the IEC materials from various sources before fully trusting them to be both appropriate and logical, especially in the current infodemic era. Ensuring the accuracy of information is essential to establish its reliability and trustworthiness.

Insufficiency of Information and Need for Innovation

This theme revolves around the participants’ perception of the inadequacy of existing HIV and AIDS-related communication materials in providing comprehensive information, particularly regarding emerging technologies. Ramesh, a man who has sex with men, remarked, “Not everything is enough, you know, but there are some shortcomings.” He further expressed a curiosity about advancements in technology, stating, “I would also like to know what kind of things are coming in the new generation [technology] now. It would be good to share what comes in the new generation.” Similarly, Pyari, a 28-year-old transgender individual, highlighted a desire for information about new technology, stating,

We would like to know about the new technology. We have heard a little that people who refuse to come to the clinic for testing there are new technologies like self-tests and CBT [community-based testing], you know. These materials [leaflet, posters, flipchart, and video] have not included such information.

Similarly, Reshma, a 25-year-old female sex worker, emphasized the need for comprehensive information on self-testing and community-based testing (CBT)

through these communication materials, stating, “We need detailed messages about self-testing and CBT because we have heard very little about these technologies.”

In an interview at his home, Ramesh, a 30-year-old transgender, said with aggression,

We are treated negatively and misbehaved with everywhere. The IEC materials are targeted only at us, not at those who hate us. This prevents us from seeking and receiving related care openly in society, which can lead to the further spread of HIV. So, it’s crucial to educate them as well to treat us properly and respectfully.

Aligning with the verbatim of Ramesh, Prema, a 39-year-old transgender, expressed her frustration, stating, “We face stigma and discrimination everywhere we go, including in our homes, communities, service provider institutions, and even hospitals. Therefore, IEC materials should be developed to provide information aimed at reducing these problems and ensuring a friendly environment that allows us to live a normal life.”

In an interview with female sex workers at the NSARC drop-in center, Geeta, a 35-year-old female sex worker, expressed her expectation: “We cannot frequently and openly come here to get information and care. Therefore, we need more detailed information about PrEP [Pre-exposure prophylaxis], HIV testing and ARV [Anti-retroviral drugs) available on the internet and YouTube, which we can easily search for and view on our mobile devices.”

Despite some information being available, participants expressed a desire for more detailed and current content, particularly concerning new advancements in HIV testing methods such as self-tests and community-based testing. They also emphasized the need for public awareness campaigns to reduce stigma and discrimination against them, and suggested providing detailed information about PrEP, HIV testing, and ARV through internet sources to enhance their access to information. To address these gaps, this study highlights the importance of continuously updating communication materials to meet the evolving needs and technological advancements within key populations affected by HIV and AIDS.

Accessibility and Distribution Disparities

This theme highlights the varying accessibility and distribution of HIV and AIDS-related communication materials within communities. Sonia, a 26-year-old transgender individual, noted, “Posters are everywhere in the organizations working for HIV and AIDS.” Reetu, a 27-year-old female sex worker, remarked, “Posters are displayed in hospitals. It is better to display them in the community too.” Similarly,

Reshma, a 25-year-old female sex worker, suggested, “These posters [referring to posters of PrEP and ARV] have to be made a little larger and stuck in many public places. Everyone has to be informed. People understand the message after seeing the poster.” Additionally, Sonia mentioned, “CBS [community-based staff] from the organizations distribute pamphlets to us in our community. We also take them from here [NSARC].” Participants highlighted the availability of communication materials, noting that posters were predominantly found in health institutions and organizations focused on HIV and AIDS care. However, they emphasized the need for broader dissemination, advocating for the placement of posters in public spaces within the community.

Furthermore, participants emphasized the importance of leaflets distributed by community-based staff, acknowledging their role in reaching key populations in various community settings. They recommended expanding distribution efforts to ensure that communication materials are easily accessible to all individuals, regardless of their location or affiliation with specific organizations. This theme underscores the need for equitable distribution strategies to improve access to HIV and AIDS-related information and promote community-wide awareness and education.

Multifaceted Information Dissemination

This theme highlights the participants’ emphasis of utilizing diverse channels for disseminating HIV and AIDS-related information to ensure accessibility for individuals with varying literacy levels and preferences. Pyari, a 28-year-old transgender individual, highlighted, “There are also illiterate friends. These materials [posters, pamphlets, and flipcharts] are not useful for those who cannot read.” Building on this, Reetu, a 27-year-old female sex worker, proposed, “HIV and AIDS-related information should also be promoted from time to time while broadcasting every program such as music, interview, news reading, etc. from mass media like radio and television.” She further shared her experience:

I like both posters and pamphlets. Because one thing is written on the poster, another thing is written in the pamphlet. Many things that cannot be known from the poster can be known from the pamphlet. I learned many things by reading pamphlets.

In another interview at the NSARC drop-in center, Chandani, a 28-year-old transgender individual, shared her thoughts after watching the short video: “I was confused about the role of sexually transmitted infections in HIV transmission when reading the leaflet, but after watching this video, I now clearly understand how individuals with these infections are more vulnerable to HIV.”

Participants highlighted the limitations of traditional communication materials like posters, pamphlets, and flipcharts for those who are illiterate or have difficulty reading. In response, they proposed integrating information into various forms of mass media, such as radio and television broadcasts, which reach a broader audience and accommodate different learning styles. Furthermore, participants recognized the complementary nature of different communication formats, noting that posters and pamphlets often convey distinct information. The short video presentation was perceived as more comprehensible, effectively reducing confusion created by other IEC materials and providing a clear understanding. They emphasized the value of receiving information from multiple sources to gain a comprehensive understanding of HIV and AIDS-related topics.

Impact and Utilization of the Communication Materials

The participants assessed the quality of the communication materials primarily based on their impact and utilization. From their descriptions, three sub-themes emerged: empowerment and confidence, practical application and behavior change, and confidentiality and convenience.

Empowerment and Confidence

This theme highlights the empowering impact of HIV and AIDS-related communication materials on the participants. Pyari, a 28-year-old transgender individual, shared her experience, stating, “It has motivated me a lot. All the materials [poster, leaflet, flipchart, and video] we read and watched here inspired us just as much as the training previously provided in the drop-in-centres and in the community by NSARC and Western Star Nepal.” Similarly, Ramesh, a man who has sex with men, disclosed his experience, “When there was no information before, it was a little scary. But now I have the information, I am not afraid anymore.” Reshma, a 25-year-old female sex worker, expressed her initial apprehension, saying, “At first I felt afraid that what would happen, how it would happen, what would someone say.” Likewise, Reetu, another female sex worker, aged 27, stated, “It also increased our self-confidence after seeing these materials [poster, leaflet, flipchart, and video] that it is possible to live, there is medicine and we can live a comfortable life like everyone else.”

The participants attributed their decreased fear regarding HIV and AIDS, increased motivation, and enhanced self-confidence to the HIV and AIDS-related messages they encountered. By providing valuable information and dispelling misconceptions, the messages served as sources of empowerment and reassurance for individuals facing the challenges associated with HIV and AIDS. Overall, this theme underscores the transformative role of communication materials in empowering key

populations and instilling confidence in their ability to navigate and manage HIV and AIDS-related issues.

Practical Application and Behavior Change

This theme centers on the practical application of HIV and AIDS-related communication materials in addressing real-life challenges faced by key populations. Junu, a 34-year-old female sex worker, shared her experience, stating, “It [messages] were very beneficial. We are protected from HIV and sexually transmitted diseases, you know. I learned how to wear a condom and lube.” Similarly, Reshma, another 25-year-old female sex worker, affirmed, “We learned about PrEP and HIV testing after reading and seeing these materials.” After viewing a short video “Maya Lagchha” during the interview, Reetu, another female sex worker, aged 27, shared her experience, “I learned about how to persuade the customers who are reluctant to use a condom. I like this video because it is directly connected to our real-life situations. I realized our unity to avoid sex without a condom.” Additionally, Geeta, another 35-year-old female sex worker, expressed, “These materials helped us to get HIV and AIDS-related information, changed our prior thinking, and now we practice safer sex behaviors.”

The participants found the information about HIV and AIDS, condom use and lubrication, condom negotiation, PrEP usage, and HIV/STD testing to be highly relevant to their real-life experiences and challenges. They perceived that these materials not only provided valuable information but also facilitated a shift in their attitudes and behaviors towards safer sex practices. Overall, this theme underscores the instrumental role of tailored and practical HIV and AIDS-related communication materials in promoting knowledge, empowering individuals to make informed decisions, and ultimately improving health outcomes within key populations.

Confidentiality and Convenience of the Communication Materials

Participants displayed sensitivity towards confidentiality when accessing and utilizing HIV and AIDS-related information. Prema, a transgender, aged 39, expressed a preference for leaflets, stating:

I like this [pointing to the leaflet] more. Because we can put it in our pocket and can read going anywhere out. No one sees. When people see it, we put it in our pocket, open it and read on the bed while sleeping, and hide it if others see it. . . . We can get information because other people cannot see and hear what we are seeing and reading.

Similarly, Reshma, a 25-year-old female sex worker, echoed this sentiment, “It [leaflet] fits in a small space; even it can be kept in a bag.” Junu, another 34-year-

old female sex worker, also emphasized the convenience of leaflets, stating “It can be placed everywhere; even it can be kept in a purse.” In contrast, Sonia, a 26-year-old transgender individual, expressed her hesitation to carry a flipchart or poster, pointing them and saying, “These are very large and difficult to carry to our home and village. What will others say when they see it, chhyaa [expressing shame]. Instead, we can carry and read a leaflet secretly.” Sonia further expressed her shyness, stating, “Watching such videos at home or in the community is not possible; we would face a lot of negative comments there. We always watch them at NSARC drop-in center.”

The preference for leaflets over posters, flipcharts, and videos reflects participants’ concerns about confidentiality and privacy. Leaflets were perceived as more discreet and easily manageable, allowing individuals to access information without the risk of exposure to others. In contrast, carrying and sharing posters and flipcharts, and watching videos publicly was associated with feelings of embarrassment and shame due to the participants’ fear of disclosure and negative social perceptions toward them. This highlights the importance of considering the mode of information delivery to ensure confidentiality and respect for individuals’ privacy concerns within key populations affected by HIV and AIDS.

Discussion

This descriptive phenomenological study explored the perceptions of key populations regarding the quality of HIV and AIDS-related communication materials. The findings revealed three emergent themes: Attractiveness and Understandability of the Communication Materials, Information Reliability and Accessibility, and Impact and Utilization of the Communication Materials. Within these themes, eleven subthemes were identified. The first theme encompassed visual appeal and artistry, readability, clarity and comprehensibility, and the incorporation of local language and simplified terminology. The second theme included credibility and verification of information, insufficiency of information and need for innovation, accessibility and distribution disparities, and multifaceted information dissemination. The third theme covered empowerment and confidence, practical application and behavior change, and confidentiality and convenience. These subthemes provide valuable insights into participants’ perspectives on the communication materials’ effectiveness.

The theme of attractiveness and understandability underscored the importance of visual appeal, readability, clarity, and preference for local language in communication materials. Similar to the finding of Nunyenge (2013), the present study revealed that participants expressed a strong affinity for visually appealing materials, such as posters and videos, which they believed were effective in capturing attention and conveying messages related to HIV and AIDS. However, aligning to the

finding of the Nepal Health Research Council (2018), they also highlighted the need for further enhancement, suggesting more colorful, artistic, and large enough in terms of paper, text, symbols, and pictures to make the posters even more attractive and readable for better comprehension. These findings indicate that attractive images and layouts with the right typeface and large enough size maximize the visibility, clarity, and readability of IEC materials (Ojo, 2009; Uhrig et al., 2010). In contrast to the finding of the Nepal Health Research Council (2018), the present study uncovered that participants expressed challenges in understanding terminology, symbols, and imagery, particularly when presented in English, advocating for simplified language and explanations aligned with visuals. Similar to the finding of some previous studies (Ojo, 2009; Namuleme, 2013; Wella, 2015), the present study revealed that participants' perceptions of incomprehensibility were caused by unfamiliar images and ambiguous language in the IEC materials. As recommended by Ojo (2009), participants of our study suggested replacing text in English and unfamiliar Nepali words by using simple and familiar Nepali words and designing the messages in local languages. In present study, participants perceived flipchart and video as more comprehensible than poster and leaflet due to illustrations with clear pictures and explanations in them. These findings highlight the significance of considering aesthetic appeal, readability, and language clarity in designing HIV and AIDS-related communication materials to effectively engage key populations.

Regarding information reliability and accessibility, present study explored the credibility and verification of information, the insufficiency of existing materials, accessibility and distribution disparities, and the need for multifaceted information dissemination from participants' perspective. While participants generally trusted the available information, they also expressed a cautious approach, preferring to verify information from multiple credible sources. This indicates that participants do not accept all messages at face value, which is also supported by the findings of Wella (2015). In line with the findings of the Nepal Health Research Council (2018), participants identified significant gaps in the current communication materials. These gaps include a lack of comprehensive information on emerging technologies such as HIV self-testing and community-based testing. Participants also emphasized the need for messages specifically designed to reduce stigma against key populations, the importance of disseminating more information on PrEP, HIV testing, and ARV through the internet, and ensuring equitable distribution of these materials within communities. They also perceived that the IEC materials were not adequately available in public places in the community. As mentioned by the Department of Health Services (DoHS, 2021), it is crucial to use modern and traditional IEC materials to raise HIV and AIDS-related awareness, and knowledge to promote safe behavior among the general public, especially among the key populations. As

recommended by some previous studies (Save the Children & PATH, 2003; NCASC, POLICY Project Nepal, & Sancharika Samuha, 2004), Participants highlighted the importance of continuously updating materials to address evolving needs and technological advancements, as well as utilizing diverse channels for information dissemination to accommodate varying literacy levels and preferences. These findings underscore the importance of ensuring the reliability, comprehensiveness, and accessibility of HIV and AIDS-related information to build trust and promote widespread awareness within key populations.

In line with the findings of Mathur et al. (2016), the present study explored the participants' perceptions regarding the impact and utilization of IEC materials from the perspectives of enhancing empowerment and confidence, practical application and behaviour change, and confidentiality and convenience. Participants attributed their decreased fear, increased motivation, and improved self-confidence regarding HIV and AIDS to the information provided in communication materials. They also recognized the practical relevance of the materials in addressing real-life challenges and promoting safer sex practices. This finding supports the claim by some previous studies (NHEICC, 2060 BS; Cherie et al., 2005; Rice and Atkins, 2013; Gobind & Ukpere, 2014) that audiences adopt the information in their real-life situation if it is practically applicable and beneficial to them. Moreover, participants displayed sensitivity towards confidentiality and privacy concerns, expressing a preference for discreet and easily manageable materials, such as leaflets, over posters, flipcharts and videos. Participants perceived carrying posters and sharing information on mobile phones as more embarrassing. It indicates that maintaining privacy should be considered a major quality issue in designing HIV and AIDS-related IEC materials. These findings underscore the transformative potential of tailored and practical communication materials in empowering individuals, promoting informed decision-making, and ultimately improving health outcomes within key populations affected by HIV and AIDS.

Conclusion

This study provides significant insights into the perceptions of key populations regarding the quality of HIV and AIDS-related communication materials. The findings underscore the importance of considering various factors such as aesthetic appeal, readability, language clarity, information reliability, accessibility, and impact in designing and disseminating communication materials tailored to the diverse needs and preferences of key populations. Overall, this research emphasizes the critical role of tailored and practical communication materials in empowering

individuals, promoting informed decision-making, and ultimately improving health outcomes within key populations affected by HIV and AIDS. By addressing the identified considerations, policymakers, healthcare providers, and community organizations can enhance the effectiveness of communication efforts aimed at raising awareness, promoting prevention, and reducing stigma associated with HIV and AIDS within key populations.

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Psychological Fallout of Sexual Harassment on Women across Various Social Contexts

**Tribhuwon Sharma¹, Mahesh Pokhrel², Roselini Shrestha³, Hricha KC Pandey⁴,
Bhagwan Aryal⁵**

¹Graduate School of Education, Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu, Nepal
ORCID: 0009-0000-9466-5510

²Graduate School of Education, Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu, Nepal
ORCID: 0009-0002-4624-3457

³Manmohan Memorial Institute of Health Sciences, Kathmandu, Nepal
ORCID: 0009-0002-1518-7050

⁴Nobel College, Kathmandu, Nepal
ORCID: 0009-0007-3172-8095

⁵Central Department of Education, Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu, Nepal
ORCID: 0000-0002-9215-3551

Corresponding Author: *Bhagwan Aryal*; **Email:** bhagwan.aryal@cdded.tu.edu.np

Abstract

Sexual harassment (SH) poses a significant threat to mental health, causing profound emotional distress, particularly among women. Despite legal frameworks, the psychological consequences of SH are inadequately addressed. This study examines the prevalence, manifestations and effects of SH through a structured literature review, using sources such as Google Scholar, PsycINFO and PubMed for articles published after 2018 on the psychological effects of SH. The review process included initial screening based on relevance and quality, methodological evaluation and narrative synthesis. The findings reveal SH's severe psychological impact across various settings, including workplaces, educational institutions and intimate relationships, with consequences like fear, anxiety, shame, depression and confidence erosion. Reluctance to report SH further exacerbates the psychological toll. The study highlights the need for comprehensive strategies, recommending accessible mental health services, educational

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campaigns and stronger policies. Fostering a culture of respect, equality and inclusion can enhance survivors' well-being and create a supportive environment.

Keywords: Effect of sexual harassment, effect on women, mental health, confidence erosion

Introduction

Freedom from harassment is a fundamental human right and a prerequisite for physical, mental and social well-being (Boyer, 2021). Sexual harassment (SH), a relatively new concept, is intricately linked with unwelcome behaviour within both men and women concerning matters of sex. However, sexually suggestive remarks are more likely to be seen as sexual harassment by women (Hehman et al., 2022). Various forms that SH can take are elucidated including verbal, non-verbal, indirect and physical manifestations, each contributing to the multifaceted nature of the psychological fallout (Bendixen et al., 2018). SH survivors go through a wide spectrum of intricate psychological emotions, including anger, despair, remorse, worry and vulnerability (Noopura, 2023).

The experience of psychological fallout due to SH is a complex and pervasive issue that leaves lasting scars on the well-being of its victims. As highlighted by Burn (2019), unwanted comments, gestures, or actions based on gender, gender expression, or sexual orientation result in profound emotional distress, including fear, anxiety, shame, and depression. This psychological toll extends to the erosion of self-esteem and a sense of control, giving rise to trust issues in relationships and broader social interactions.

Sharma et al. (2023) provide valuable insights into the specific context of Tribhuvan University, highlighting how SH, spanning verbal, physical, and cyber realms, amplifies the distressing environment for female students. The normalization of inappropriate behaviours intensifies the impact, leaving victims grappling not only with fear and anxiety but also with compromised self-confidence and overall well-being. This cooperative analysis of referenced information emphasizes the urgent need for comprehensive strategies to address the intricate psychological fallout of SH, ensuring a secure and respectful environment in diverse settings.

In the Nepali context, limited studies on SH of female students reveal severe results, such as Mishra and Lamichane (2018) and Gautam et al. (2019), who found around 80% of girls experiencing SH on public transport in the Kathmandu Valley. This collective evidence emphasizes the critical need to address the psychological fallout resulting from SH and implement effective preventive measures in diverse settings. This study highlights the need for further exploration into the psychological impacts of SH on girls and women. Authors provide alarming statistics on global violence against children, indicating that 1 billion children experience some form

of physical, sexual, or emotional violence each year (Devries et al., 2022). Much of this violence occurs in and around schools, underscoring the urgent need for comprehensive strategies to address such issues.

The psychological fallout resulting from SH is a profound and multifaceted issue that significantly impacts the well-being of its victims. As evidenced by research, unwanted behaviors based on gender, gender expression, or sexual orientation can lead to fear, anxiety, shame, and depression, while also eroding self-esteem and trust (Konlan & Dangah, 2023). The normalization of such behaviors exacerbates the distress experienced by victims.

This study delves into the nuanced experiences of individuals who have faced SH, aiming to contribute to a cooperative analysis of the psychological consequences. By shedding light on the intricate dynamics of the emotional aftermath, the article advocates for comprehensive approaches that prioritize both the legal and psychological dimensions, fostering a culture of respect and inclusion. Therefore, this study aims to explore the psychological effects of SH on women by reviewing the literature, analyzing the current understanding of these effects, and elucidating the prevalence, manifestations and effects of SH in various social settings and contexts. Understanding how widespread these effects are is crucial to creating support networks and preventative strategies that work.

Methods and Procedures

We conducted a literature review, in line with a scoping review, using primary sources like Google Scholar, PsycINFO, and PubMed to gather published original studies, systematic reviews, narrative reviews and informative studies. Scoping reviews are crucial for assessing literature scope, determining the need for a systematic review and guiding future research by synthesizing evidence (Smith & Duncan, 2022). Being based on the aim of the research, our search strategy targeted articles published after 2018 and emphasized the psychological effects of SH. Using keywords like “effects of sexual harassment,” “psychological fallouts of SH,” “SH in various settings,” “the impact of harassment on mental health,” and “the psychological effects of SH on women,” several literature searches were conducted. To make sure that the results represent the most recent studies and developments in our understanding of the psychological effects of SH, the review concentrated on literature released after 2018.

Recurring themes and subjects on the psychological effects of SH were identified through the extraction of data. Studies were contrasted to show where findings, approaches and settings were similar and different. To provide a

comprehensive knowledge of the psychological consequences of SH, the synthesized results were interpreted within the larger social, cultural and policy ramifications.

Using keywords, titles, abstracts and headings, the study concentrated on the psychological effects of sexual harassment in a range of social contexts. Citation maps and ‘cited by’ search tools were used, with unpublished works excluded. Study selection was guided by the researcher’s inclusion criteria of only including articles that were peer-reviewed and published after 2018. The study selection was guided by the researcher’s inclusion criteria, with initial screening based on title and abstract, followed by a detailed assessment of methodological quality and alignment with the research focus. A desk review approach, employing narrative review methods, facilitated the synthesis of information, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the psychological ramifications of SH. This review started by describing the development of the review question, setting inclusion and exclusion criteria, search strategy, data screening, quality assessment and critically appraising the included studies.

Results

Psychological well-being varied in the case of SH experiences, with depression, anxiety and stress levels ranging from normal to severe. It also differs in intensity and coping according to the type and place of SH.

Intimate Relationships

SH is most prominent within intimate relationships, leading to severe psychological consequences. Tarzia (2021) highlights the complex emotional labor survivors undertake, using coping strategies like self-blame, protective behaviors, and emotional detachment to navigate the trauma of intimate partner sexual violence (IPSV).

Public Transportation

SH in public transportation is a global threat to women’s safety. In Bharatpur, Nepal, 82.1% of female students reported experiencing SH, including verbal, physical, and non-verbal forms, with fear of repercussions preventing most from reporting these incidents (Wagle et al., 2022). Similarly, Noopura (2023) found significant SH incidents among college students in Kerala, India, leading to anger and depression. The pervasive SH in public transport in megacities like Karachi and London restricts women’s freedom and mobility (Hoor-Ul-Ain, 2020).

Workplaces

SH is prevalent in workplaces, with significant mental health impacts. A systematic review found that 40.8% of female nurses experienced psychological

harassment due to SH, leading to mental and emotional issues (Kahsay et al., 2020). Gale et al. (2019) also reported high rates of workplace abuse among female customer-facing employees, linked to adverse health outcomes. Occupational stressors profoundly affect professionals working with sexual violence survivors, emphasizing the need for targeted interventions (Bozga et al., 2021; Lathan et al., 2021). Not only this, a study reveals that female sex workers in Nepal face a range of forms of violence, including verbal aggression, physical violence, sexual harassment and assault leading to stress and depression (Saud et al., 2024). Whatever the workplace or occupation, the females have to face harassment and psychological stress.

Educational Institutions

SH is a recurrent issue in educational settings. The UNESCO report highlights global SH among students, affecting over 10% in 96 countries (UNESCO, 2019). Faculty and staff reluctance to report SH further complicates the issue (Kirkner et al., 2022). Bondestam and Lundqvist (2020) emphasized the high prevalence of SH among female students and the need for effective preventive measures. Klein and Martin (2021) and Orfan et al. (2022) further illustrate the severity and diverse experiences of SH in higher education.

Virtual Platforms

SH is increasingly prevalent on virtual platforms. George (2024) discusses the severe psychological impact of virtual SH, comparable to real-world trauma, and the need for updated legal frameworks. Virtual reality (VR) simulations show VR's potential as an effective SH training tool (Sadeh-Sharvit et al., 2021). Online SH is normalized within broader gendered power dynamics, emphasizing the need for institutional accountability and educational programs (Rangaswami et al., 2021).

The collective findings from these studies highlight the pervasive nature of sexual violence and harassment among students globally. Faculty and staff reluctance to report instances of harassment further complicates efforts to address this serious issue in higher education. Systematic reviews and surveys reveal a high prevalence of SH among female students, with significant individual impacts and limited effective preventive measures. These findings emphasize the urgent need for more diverse and comprehensive research approaches to combat SH on college campuses. The literature also exposes disparities in experiences based on race, gender, and sexual orientation, with women of color disproportionately affected by severe impacts. Efforts to revise harassment policies and impose sanctions against perpetrators are crucial steps toward effectively addressing this pervasive issue.

On the other hand, SH is increasingly prevalent on virtual platforms, social sites, and the internet as emerging sources and sites for such behavior. George's (2024) research features the profound impact of virtual SH on individuals, highlighting how even in digital environments, the psychological fallout can be severe. Despite the absence of physical contact, victims report experiencing genuine emotional distress comparable to real-world trauma. This suggests that virtual experiences are not devoid of consequences and calls for a reevaluation of therapeutic interventions to support victims of virtual SH effectively. Moreover, the study sheds light on global legal inadequacies in addressing such forms of assault, emphasizing the need for updated legal frameworks to protect individuals in virtual spaces.

In the context of online dating, Filice et al. (2022) explore the potential for technology-facilitated sexual violence, stressing the importance of longitudinal research and qualitative analyses to understand its psychological and social impacts. A study by Sadeh-Sharvit et al. (2021) investigates the use of virtual reality (VR) simulations with virtual agents for SH training. Women participated in a VR job interview scenario where a virtual agent engaged in SH. The findings show that VR induced feelings similar to real-world harassment experiences, evoking fear and uncertainty among participants. VR was seen as an effective training tool for SH prevention, empowering women to practice effective responses to future incidents.

Another research by Rangaswami et al. (2021) reveals that women at universities experience various forms of online SH, which vary across different social media platforms. The study highlights how online harassment is normalized within broader gendered power dynamics and a culture of toxic masculinity on campuses. Respondents emphasize the importance of institutional accountability, educational programmes and community conversations to effectively address this issue (Rangaswami et al., 2021).

These studies highlight the profound psychological impact of virtual SH, demonstrating that virtual experiences can induce emotional distress comparable to real-world trauma. VR simulations for SH training reveal the realistic fear and uncertainty induced by virtual scenarios, underscoring VR's potential as a training tool. Moreover, studies on online SH emphasize the normalization of this behavior within broader gendered power dynamics, highlighting the need for institutional accountability and educational initiatives to address this pervasive issue effectively.

In examining the nuanced experiences of individuals facing SH, the researchers reveal a spectrum of psychological responses and coping mechanisms influenced by the type and context of SH. The studies shed light on the emotional intricacies of IPSV, the intertwining dynamics of power and intimacy facilitating

harassment in various settings and the normalization of online harassment within broader gender dynamics. This body of work underscores the urgent need for multifaceted interventions, institutional accountability, and educational programs to combat SH effectively across diverse environments and platforms. The results underscore the necessity for robust prevention mechanisms, targeted interventions, and support systems to address the diverse needs of SH survivors. Policies should prioritize survivors' voices, challenge prevailing discourses and advocate for structural changes.

Discussion

The comprehensive reviews by Gordon (2018) and Grow (2018) emphasize the pervasive nature of SH, transcending traditional boundaries and affecting individuals across various sectors of society. From intimate relationships to educational institutions, workplaces, transportation, and beyond, the reality of SH permeates multiple facets of daily life. This multidimensional understanding challenges simplistic narratives, as highlighted by Gordon's Foucauldian-Feminist framework, which emphasizes the nuanced experiences of victims and survivors beyond conventional conflict zones. Moreover, Grow's exploration of the ethical and moral dimensions of sex illuminates the complex interplay between physical acts and psychological repercussions. Victims and survivors often confront dissonance between their lived experiences and prevailing societal narratives, exacerbating psychological trauma.

Institutional responses, as noted by Atkinson (2020), frequently perpetuate power dynamics that further undermine survivors' credibility and agency. In this context, it becomes evident that every form of SH, regardless of setting or affiliation, inflicts psychological fallout on its victims, as corroborated by various scholarly perspectives. Therefore, addressing the multifaceted challenges posed by SH necessitates challenging prevailing discourses and advocating for structural changes that prioritize survivors' voices and safety.

The pervasive nature of SH transcends boundaries of place and occupation, necessitating robust prevention mechanisms. Research has illuminated the specific impacts of sexual violence on various populations, shedding light on the unique challenges faced by women veterans and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ) individuals (Atkinson, 2020). For instance, studies by Dichter et al. (2018) uncovered significant effects of intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual assault on women veterans' military careers and decision-making processes, underscoring the need for comprehensive prevention and support programs tailored to this population. Similarly, Campbell (2021) delves into the impact of sexual violence on relationship satisfaction within the LGBTQ community,

offering valuable insights into coping strategies and relational processes with direct implications for clinical practice. These findings underscore the urgency of addressing SH across diverse contexts and populations, highlighting the imperative for targeted interventions to mitigate its profound impact.

Several studies have investigated the psychological fallout resulting from various forms of SH and violence, emphasizing the critical need for tailored support mechanisms and interventions to address the diverse needs of survivors. Despite Nepal's commendable legal framework against SH, as acknowledged by Sharma et al. (2024), the persistent concern regarding the psychological fallout on survivors underscores the importance of moving beyond legal measures.

Specialist sexual violence services, notably Independent Sexual Violence Advisers, play a crucial role in supporting victims through the complexities of the criminal justice system (Hester & Lilley, 2018). These services provide adaptive, empowering, and healing approaches, which stand in contrast to the limitations often encountered in non-specialist agencies. However, the continued existence of these vital services is threatened by current local service commissioning practices. Understanding the psychological fallout from SH within intimate relationships, particularly in the context of IPSV, is paramount (Tarzia, 2021). By acknowledging the specific challenges faced by victims in intimate settings, and the unique dynamics of IPSV, interventions, and support services can be tailored effectively to address the psychological impact and promote healing and empowerment.

Adolescent schoolgirls in Nepal face frequent harassment from male peers, teachers, neighbors, and strangers, especially on public transport. This bullying poses a threat to their physical and mental health, affecting their daily lifestyle and performance (Dangal & Singh, 2020). To combat sexual harassment and protect girls, awareness programs, strong legal measures, and victim-friendly judicial processes are needed. Emotional work and power dynamics contribute to perpetuating harassment, necessitating urgent action for safer environments.

SH is a pervasive problem that affects many facets of society, such as personal relationships, employment, education, and transportation. It harms victims psychologically, thus specific interventions are needed to promote safety and empowerment. These interventions should prioritize the voices of survivors, question dominant narratives, and push for systemic changes. The thorough evaluations emphasize the need for systemic change, a sophisticated understanding of SH, strong preventative strategies, and focused support interventions. They also stress the psychological impact on a variety of populations. However, the study's limitations

include possible biases in the literature selection, the review's scope and its geographic focus may have an impact on how broadly the findings may be applied, highlighting the necessity of more research in a variety of settings.

Conclusion

A synthesis of the literature emphasizes the profound and varied psychological consequences experienced by victims of SH. It is evident even without a systematic review that women suffer psychological fallout from sexual harassment in all social situations. From disturbing statistics highlighting high prevalence rates among vulnerable populations such as nurses, students, and female veterans to nuanced explorations of coping mechanisms in intimate relationships, the impact of harassment on mental health is undeniable. Additionally, reluctance to report incidents of harassment further compounds the psychological toll. Addressing the psychological consequences of SH is as important as implementing legal remedies. Therefore, urgent steps are needed to develop comprehensive support systems and prevention programs that prioritize the voice, safety, and agency of survivors. By fostering a culture of respect, equality, and inclusion, society can create an environment that prioritizes the mental health and well-being of survivors, ultimately contributing to a more supportive and empathetic community.

Particular gaps found in this study should be addressed in future research. To comprehend the long-term psychological effects of SH and the efficacy of therapies over time, longitudinal studies are required. To investigate how SH impacts people differently depending on their race, sexual orientation, and other intersecting identities, intersectional analysis is crucial. An important way to assess the success of interventions is to look at how well different prevention programs and support networks work in diverse social circumstances. It's also critical to look into the obstacles to reporting SH and create plans to motivate victims to come forward. By filling in these gaps, researchers may offer a more thorough understanding of the psychological effects of SH and contribute to the creation of efficient, empirically supported solutions and policies.

Authors' Contributions

TS initiated and led the conceptualization and drafting of the article. Collaboratively, MP, RS, HKP, BA, and TS conducted an extensive literature review and engaged in critical discourse. Additionally, BA supervised the review process, provided substantial support in the editing phase, and managed correspondence related to publication procedures. The ultimate version for publication is approved by all authors.

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Influence of Digital Financial Literacy on Investment Behaviour of Nepali Investors

Padam Raj Joshi (PhD)¹, Babu Ram Rawat²

¹Professor of Finance, Far Western University, Nepal

²Assistant Professor of Finance, Far Western University, Nepal

Corresponding Author: *Padam Raj Joshi*; **Email:** padamrajjoshi@fwu.edu.np

Abstract

This study investigates the influence of digital financial literacy on individual investment behaviour of Nepali investors. In order to explore the influences of digital financial literacy on individual investment behaviour, causal-comparative research design was used and responses from 358 investors were collected through a survey questionnaire. The convenience sampling method ensured statistical reliability and diversity in perspectives. Questionnaires were distributed through various platforms, ensuring anonymity and confidentiality. Descriptive statistics, regression, reliability and correlation were some of the tools used for a thorough study of the data. These methods enabled non-parametric testing and multiple regressions by providing a quantitative comprehension of the variables. The research establishes that digital financial literacy significantly influences investment behaviour in Nepal. The statistical correlation matrix and regression analysis, with an R Square of 0.589, highlight the interconnectedness of digital financial proficiency, financial literacy, financial goal management and individual investment behaviour. Investment behaviour is significantly influenced by financial literacy, digital financial literacy and financial goal management, having the p-value less than 0.05. However, cyber security and awareness did not show a significant relationship with investment behaviour. Policymakers in Nepal are focusing on enhancing digital financial literacy to empower individuals and cultivate a financially literate society. Financial institutions and educators should leverage digital platforms to enhance financial education and prepare individuals for informed investment decisions in Nepal's evolving stock market landscape. Examining the digital financial literacy of Nepali investors can help in making more informed decisions regarding investments by looking at structures, comparing findings with those from other developing nations and assessing the effects of educational efforts.

Keywords: Digital financial proficiency, financial goal management, financial education, behavioural finance

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Introduction

In the digital age, understanding how digital tools and online platforms affect an individual's investment behaviour has led to a considerable evolution in financial literacy. Understanding online banking, payment methods and the variety of investment options available in the digital world requires a transition from traditional financial literacy to digital literacy. A key component of handling the digital world is digital literacy, as demonstrated by the development of financial studies.

Moving forward to the present day, we can see that investors have become more aware of how financial transactions are changing in the digital world. This paradigm shift is reflected in the works of Lusardi and Mitchell (2007) and Atkinson and Messy (2012), which highlight the necessity of including a digital dimension into traditional financial literacy. These studies provide essential starting points, establishing the framework for comprehending the difficulties and possibilities brought about by the incorporation of technology into financial institutions.

In this developing framework, a gap in our knowledge becomes apparent—a gap that goes beyond traditional definitions of financial literacy and demands investigation into the mutually beneficial relationship between digital literacy and financial decision-making. The main goal of this study is to understand the complexities of how people use digital financial literacy to traverse the digital world and make wise investment decisions. The traditional financial literacy pyramid is unable to capture the spirit of this digital revolution, which forces us to reevaluate our presumptions and methods of financial education.

The adoption of digital financial paradigms highlights a knowledge vacuum about the impact of digital financial literacy on the investing behaviour of individuals. Studies by Lusardi and Mitchell (2007) and Atkinson and Messy (2012) demonstrate that traditional paradigms are insufficient for the digital age. This disparity undermines efforts to improve people's digital financial literacy by preventing them from making educated decisions about their digital investments, which could expose them to financial risks.

The main aim of the study is to investigate how digital financial literacy affects individual stock market investment behaviour in Nepal and to evaluate the interactions between the various influencing elements. The study specifically

attempts to investigate how digital financial literacy factors influence individual investment behaviour in Nepal as well as the effects of investment strategy and the influence of friends and family on individual investment behaviour in Nepal.

Nepal has made significant strides in understanding digital financial literacy and its implications for investment behaviour. However, a research gap exists in assessing the effectiveness of specific interventions in improving digital literacy levels. Existing research studies such as those conducted by Nepali et al. (2019) and Budhathoki et al. (2021) have identified the correlation between digital literacy and investment behaviour but has not systematically evaluated the impact of targeted educational programmes. A research gap exists in understanding the nuanced interplay of socio-economic factors and their impact on digital financial literacy. A research gap exists in examining the differential impact of digital financial tools on investment behaviour in diverse geographic settings. A research gap exists in evaluating the implementation and effectiveness of government policies on promoting digital financial literacy.

Financial literacy is essential since it impacts investment behaviour on an individual basis and defines the direction of financial education. Examining the inverted pyramid of knowledge, this study emphasizes the value of digital financial awareness and financial literacy in today's financial environment.

Literature Review

Digital financial literacy is an essential component of financial literacy that combines traditional and digital knowledge. A paradigm change in financial literacy is shown by its emphasis on comprehending digital investments, online platforms, and payment mechanisms (Atkinson & Messy, 2012). Investment behaviour is greatly influenced by financial literacy, which includes both traditional and digital components. Conventional elements influencing decision-making include objectives, risk tolerance, and investment expertise (Barber & Odean, 2001). It is essential to comprehend these psychological elements in order to comprehend the investment climate in Nepal. The present study has examined four aspects of investment behaviours, including digital financial competence, financial literacy, financial goal management, and cyber security and awareness.

Behavioural Finance Theory

Behavioural Finance Theory examines how psychological influences and biases affect the financial behaviours of investors and financial markets. This theory challenges the traditional assumption of rational decision-making, proposing that cognitive biases, such as overconfidence and loss aversion, significantly impact

investment decisions. Recent research by Baker et al. (2022) highlights the role of emotional and cognitive biases in financial decision-making, indicating that these biases can lead to systematic errors in judgment. Additionally, Nofsinger and Varma (2021) argue that understanding these behavioral biases is crucial for developing more effective financial models and policies that better reflect actual investor behavior. Similarly, Barber and Odean (2000), argue that cognitive biases and heuristics can affect an individual's investment behaviour. As a result, making wise decisions about investments in the ever-changing digital scenery requires a thorough understanding of financial literacy, financial goal management, cyber-security, and digital financial competency.

Financial Literacy Theory

The theory of financial literacy places a strong emphasis on the value of having the knowledge and abilities needed to make wise financial decisions. According to this concept, people who possess greater financial literacy are better able to handle their money, which results in improved retirement planning, higher savings rates, and more efficient debt management. Huston (2010), for example, emphasizes that financial literacy includes both application and understanding, stating that people cannot be considered financially literate if they are unable to apply their financial knowledge to real-world financial decisions. Moreover, Xiao and O'Neill (2016) investigate the behavioral facets of financial literacy and propose that financial education has a major impact on individual financial behaviors like investing and budgeting. They contend that improving financial well-being can result from increasing financial literacy through focused educational initiatives and reduce financial stress.

Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) is a widely recognized framework that explains how users come to accept and use technology. TAM posits that perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use are the primary factors influencing an individual's decision to adopt and use new technology. Recent studies, such as those by Lee et al. (2021), have expanded TAM to include factors like social influence and facilitating conditions, highlighting the model's adaptability to various technological contexts. Furthermore, a study by Venkatesh et al. (2022) underscores the relevance of TAM in understanding user engagement with emerging technologies, emphasizing that both intrinsic and extrinsic motivators play crucial roles in technology adoption. Lusardi and Mitchell (2011) emphasized traditional financial knowledge plays a foundational role in the digital age.

Digital financial literacy is gaining traction in Nepal, with a growing

awareness and adoption of mobile banking and digital payment systems. However, challenges such as accessibility and user education remain, highlighting the need for further research and education (Nepali et al., 2019). Similarly, Shrestha et al. (2023) explain that digital financial literacy in Nepal is influenced by socio-economic factors, education levels, income, and cultural norms, highlighting the need for increased adoption of digital financial tools. In a more specific examination, Budhathoki et al. (2021) explored that digital literacy significantly influences investment decisions, emphasizing the need for targeted financial education programs in the evolving digital financial landscape in Nepal. Digital financial literacy is crucial in rural communities, despite disparities in access to digital tools, emphasizing the need for inclusive economic participation (Tamrakar, 2018). Similarly, Rai and Bista (2017) argue that digital literacy is a crucial aspect in ensuring financial stability and security, particularly in the context of digital transactions.

Digital financial proficiency involves using digital tools for financial management and decision-making. Studies indicate that higher digital financial proficiency significantly improves investment decisions by enhancing the ability to analyze information, access diverse options, and make informed choices. Zhang and Liu (2023) found that advanced digital skills improve investment performance and reduce errors, while Smith et al. (2024) noted that such proficiency helps in better understanding and managing risks, leading to strategic decisions. These findings highlight the increasing importance of digital literacy in today's financial environment.

Financial literacy significantly impacts investment decisions by providing individuals with the knowledge to make informed choices. Research shows that financially literate investors excel at portfolio diversification, understanding risk, and avoiding biases (van Rooij et al., 2011; Xiao & O'Neill, 2018). These findings emphasize the importance of financial literacy in effective investment decision-making.

Financial goal management significantly impacts investment decisions by providing clear objectives. Research shows that individuals with specific financial goals engage in more disciplined saving and investing, leading to better financial outcomes. For instance, Farrell, Fry, and Risse (2016) found that goal-setting improves investment performance by encouraging long-term planning and reducing impulsive decisions. Moreover, Serido et al. (2013) emphasize that clear financial goals help investors stay focused and resilient during market fluctuations. These findings highlight the importance of financial goal management in effective investment decision-making.

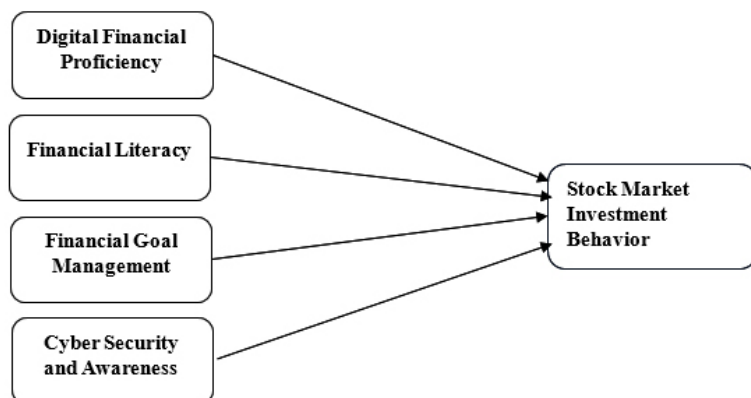
Cybersecurity and awareness significantly influence investment decision-making. Investors increasingly recognize the potential financial implications of cyberattacks, leading to a heightened focus on a company's cybersecurity posture (Zahid et al., 2021). Strong cybersecurity practices can enhance investor confidence, mitigate risks, and protect the value of investments (Künzler, 2023). Conversely, data breaches and cyber incidents can erode investor trust, leading to decreased valuations and capital flight. As such, investors are incorporating cybersecurity performance metrics into their due diligence processes, emphasizing the importance of robust cybersecurity measures and a culture of cyber awareness within organizations (Pigola et al., 2024).

Conceptual Framework

The graphical presentation of the conceptual framework of individuals' investment behavior reactions to tangible and intangible factors is presented in Figure 1, where, individual's investment behaviour is dependent variable and digital financial proficiency, financial literacy, financial goal management and security and awareness act as independent variables. The fundamental purpose of this study is to examine the impact of digital financial literacy on investment decisions behavior. This study followed three theories; Behavioural Finance Theory, Financial Literacy Theory and Technology Acceptance Model (Baker et al., 2022; Huston, 2010; Lee et al., 2021). Behavioural Finance Theory explores psychological influences on investors' financial behaviors, challenging rational decision-making. Financial literacy emphasizes knowledge and abilities for wise financial decisions, leading to better retirement planning, higher savings rates, and efficient debt management. The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) explains how users accept and use technology, focusing on perceived usefulness and ease of use.

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework



Financial literacy and digital proficiency are crucial factors in enhancing investment behaviour. Digital financial proficiency, involving the use of digital tools, correlates positively with active stock market participation. Higher levels of financial literacy, combined with digital proficiency, enhance informed decision-making, risk management, and goal-driven behavior, leading to more cautious and informed investment decisions. Furthermore, relevant hypothesis has been put out and are currently being examined for testing.

Digital Financial Proficiency

Digital proficiency is crucial in utilizing financial tools effectively. It positively influences user satisfaction and adoption, Scholars such as Venkatesh et al. (2003), contributing to increased trust in online platforms. Additionally, Liao and Cheung (2002) argue that digital financial tools are essential for efficient financial transactions, making proficiency a foundational factor in financial interactions. The following hypothesis are proposed to investigate the influence of digital financial proficiency on individual's investment behavior.

H1: Digital financial proficiency has a significant positive impact on individual's investment behaviour.

Financial Literacy

Lusardi and Mitchell (2011) explain that digital financial literacy is an integral variable, requiring a comprehensive understanding of both traditional financial principles and the complexities. Atkinson and Messy (2012) argue that digital financial tools enhancing decision-making in the contemporary era. The following hypothesis are proposed to investigate the influence of digital financial literacy on individual's investment behaviour.

H2: Financial literacy has a significant positive impact on individuals' investment behaviour.

Financial Goal Management

Financial goal management explores how individuals align their financial objectives with their investment decisions. Behavioral economics studies by Shefrin and Thaler (1988) emphasize the role of goal-setting in investment behavior. The following hypothesis are proposed to investigate the influence of financial literacy on individual's investment behavior.

H3: Financial goal management has a significant positive impact on individuals' investment behaviour.

Cyber Security and Awareness

Cyber security and awareness emerge as critical elements in the digital financial landscape. Elnagar et al. (2024) argue that the role of user awareness in mitigating online security risks influences investment decision behavior of individual investors. Individuals with higher cyber security awareness are likely to adopt more secure online behaviors, influencing their investment decisions. The following hypotheses are proposed to investigate the influence of cyber security and awareness on individual's investment behaviour.

H4: Cyber security and awareness have a significant positive impact on individuals' investment behaviour.

Methods and Procedures

This study employs a causal-comparative research design to explore the impact of digital financial literacy on the investment decision of individual investors, which is appropriate for establishing causal relationships by comparing distinct groups. This study focuses on individual investors across various sectors in the context of Nepal. The target population includes individual investors who actively participate in the Nepal stock exchange. A convenience sampling technique was utilized to collect primary data from 358 individual investors, ensuring a balance between selection bias and generalizability while upholding statistical reliability. The research aims to achieve a 90 percent response rate with a significance level of 5 percent, thus ensuring the strength of the data. Data collection involved the distribution of questionnaire surveys through Google Docs and various social media platforms to ensure broad dissemination and the inclusion of diverse viewpoints. To boost response rates, reminder messages were periodically dispatched, while participant anonymity and confidentiality were rigorously upheld. An assembly of statistical methodologies such as descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, regression analysis and ANOVA, were utilized to scrutinize the gathered data, offering a thorough examination of how digital financial literacy influences the decision-making processes of individual investors in the Nepal stock market.

The reliability of the questionnaire was tested using a Cronbach's alpha test, ensuring its validity and reliability. The self-administered test and continuous monitoring of respondents-maintained data quality, confirming its reliability.

Table 1

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.867	.874	5

Table 2 present Cronbach's Alpha for each latent variable along with the item weights. It indicates the strong internal consistency in variables such as digital financial proficiency, financial literacy, financial goal management, cyber security, and individual's investment behaviour, with Cronbach's Alpha values exceeding 0.70, indicating strong correlations among items and a comprehensive assessment of constructs.

Table 2

Item-Total Statistics

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items
Digital Financial Proficiency	.841	5
Financial Literacy	.849	5
Financial Goal Management	.833	5
Cyber Security and Awareness	.849	5
Individual's Investment Behavior	.826	5

Source: SPSS Output

For predicting the influence of digital literacy on individual's investment decision, following regression model has been applied where Individual's Stock Investment Behaviour (IIB) is dependent variable and Digital Financial Proficiency (DFP), Financial Literacy (FL), Financial Goal Management (FGM) and Cyber Security and Awareness (CSA) are independent variables: According to Ngo and La Puente (2012) multiple regression model having more than one independent variables are formulated as,

$$IIB = \beta_0 + \beta_1 * DFP + \beta_2 * FL + \beta_3 * FGM + \beta_4 * CSA + \epsilon$$

Where:

β_0 represents the intercept, which is the expected value of Individual Investors' behavior when all independent variables are zero. Similarly, β_1 , β_2 , β_3 , β_4 , β_6 and β_6 are the regression coefficients and ϵ represents the error term, which captures the unexplained variability in Individual's Investment Behaviour.

Results

The result of the study is based on the responses of 358 respondents. As regards the demographic characteristics of respondents, 67 percent of the respondents were male and 33 percent female. The majority respondents were from the age group of 20-30 years and only 9 respondents were from under-20 years age group. The majority held a Bachelor's Degree, with 52.14 percent holding it. A smaller

percentage had a Master's Degree. The majority were self-employed, with 43.57 percent followed by 29.89 percent employed.

Table 3

Results of the Demographic Response

Description	Gender	No. of Respondent	Percentage
Gender	Male	240	67 percent
	Female	118	33 percent
Age	Under 20 Years	9	2.51 percent
	20 - 30 Years	156	43.57 percent
	30 – 40 Years	96	26.81 percent
	40 – 50 Years	65	18.16 percent
	Above 50 Years	32	8.94 percent
Marital Status	Single	185	51.67 percent
	Married	173	48.33 percent
Academic Qualification	SEE/SLC	28	7.82 percent
	Intermediate	77	21.50 percent
	Bachelor	188	52.14 percent
	Master's	52	14.52 percent
	MPhil/PhD	13	3.63 percent
Occupation	Employed	107	29.89 percent
	Self-Employed	156	43.57 percent
	Students/Not Working	65	18.16 percent
	Unemployed	30	8.38 percent

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 3 shows that the gender disparity in financial market engagement is attributed to sociocultural factors, risk preferences, and financial literacy differences.

Investors of 20 to 30 years are more interested in stock market investments, while teenagers are underrepresented. A majority of respondents have a Bachelor's Degree, suggesting a positive relationship between education and stock market involvement. Self-employed individuals have more financial independence and risk tolerance, while employed individuals may exhibit different investment behaviors influenced by job security and stable income.

At first, the responses of 358 respondents were analyzed through correlation matrix. The correlation matrix reveals that digital financial proficiency ($r = 0.695$) and financial goal management ($r=0.641$) exhibits strong positive correlations with individual investors' behavior (IIB). This indicates that individuals with higher digital financial proficiency and higher financial goal management are likely to possess greater positive investment behaviors. However, financial literacy (0.567) and cyber security and awareness ($r=0.550$) shows significant moderate positive correlations with investors' investment behavior. Higher financial literacy and cyber security and awareness are moderately associated with increased positive investment behaviors.

Table 4
Results of Correlations Analysis

		DFP	FL	FGM	CSA	IIB
DFP	Pearson Correlation	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)					
	N	358				
FL	Pearson Correlation	.523**	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000				
	N	358	358			
FGM	Pearson Correlation	.617**	.530**	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000			
	N	358	358	358		
CSA	Pearson Correlation	.472**	.558**	.663**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		
	N	358	358	358	358	
IIB	Pearson Correlation	.695**	.567**	.641**	.550**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	358	358	358	358	358

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Field Survey, 2024

For predicting the influence of digital literacy on individual's investment behavior, regression was analyzed. The model's R square indicates 58.9 percent of individual's investment behaviour variability is accounted for by the included predictors, indicating moderate to strong explanatory power. The adjusted R square is slightly lower, indicating a good balance between explanatory power and simplicity. The Standard Error of the estimate is 0.48822, confirming the model's effectiveness. The Durbin-Watson statistic, 1.903, indicates no significant autocorrelation in residuals, confirming the assumption of independent residuals in the regression model, enhancing its reliability.

Table 5
Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.767 ^a	.589	.578	.48822	1.903

a. Predictors: (Constant), cyber security and awareness, digital financial proficiency, financial literacy, financial goal management

b. Dependent variable: individual's investment behaviour

The regression model explains a significant portion of Individual's Investment Behaviour variability, with a substantial sum of squares (52.212). The residual sum of squares (36.469) represents unexplained variability, indicating a better fit. The total sum of squares (88.680) covers both explained and unexplained variables. The model has 357 degrees of freedom, with a mean square value of 13.053, indicating the contribution of each predictor to explaining individual's investment behaviour.

The F-statistic (54.762) indicates the impact of predictors on individual investment behaviour, with a higher F-statistic indicating a significant collective effect, indicating the regression model's efficacy in explaining response variable variation.

Table 6
ANOVA^a

	Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	52.212	4	13.053	54.762	.000 ^b
	Residual	36.469	353	.238		
	Total	88.680	357			

a. Dependent variable: individual's investment behaviour

b. Predictors: (Constant), cyber security and awareness, digital financial proficiency, financial literacy, financial goal management

The constant term (.310), representing the estimated value of an individual's investment behaviour when all predictors are zero, does not significantly contribute to predicting investment behavior. Moving to the predictors, Digital financial proficiency significantly increases investment behavior, with a one-unit increase indicating a substantial 0.379 increase in investment behavior, supported by a highly significant p-value ($p < 0.05$). Similarly, financial literacy positively impacts investment behavior, with a one-unit increase indicating a .156-unit increase in individual investment behavior, indicating favorable investment behavior. This effect is statistically significant ($P = 0.013$). Effective Financial Goal Management significantly increases individual's investment behaviour by .260 units, indicating a positive relationship between goal management and more positive investment behaviour. Conversely, cyber security and awareness have a positive but non-significant association with individual investment behaviour, with a one-unit increase corresponding to a .096-unit estimated increase, but not statistically conclusive ($p = 0.119$).

The analysis shows that digital financial proficiency, financial literacy, and financial goal management positively influence investment behaviour, while cyber security and awareness do not show significant relationships.

The regression analysis examined the relationship between individual's investment behaviour and digital financial proficiency, financial literacy, financial goal management, and cyber security and awareness, establishing a multiple linear regression equation.

$$\text{IIB} = 0.310 + 0.379\text{DFP} + 0.156\text{FL} + 0.260\text{FGM} - 0.96\text{CSA}$$

Table 7

Results of Regression Analysis

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Standard Error	Beta		
(Constant)	.310	.244		1.270	.206
Digital Financial Proficiency	.379	.062	.418	6.065	.000
1 Financial Literacy	.156	.062	.169	2.521	.013
Financial Goal Management	.260	.094	.217	2.762	.006
Cyber Security and Awareness	.096	.061	.115	1.569	.119

a. Dependent variable: individual's investment behaviour

For exploring whether there is any significant relationship between digital financial literacy and individual stock investment behaviour, hypotheses were tested. This test found a significant relationship between digital financial literacy and individual stock investment behavior, with a p-value of 0.000, indicating strong evidence to accept the hypothesis. Similarly, financial literacy and financial goal management have a significant relationship between with individual stock investment behaviour, highlighting the impact of financial knowledge and effective goal management on investment behavior of individual investors. However, the study found no significant relationship between Cyber Security and Awareness and individual stock investment behavior, rejecting the hypothesis with a p-value of 0.119.

Table 8

Summary of Hypothesis Test

S.N.	Alternate Hypothesis	P-Value	Decision
H1	Digital financial proficiency has a significant positive impact on individual's investment behavior.	0.000	Accepted
H2	Financial literacy has a significant positive impact on individuals' investment behavior.	0.013	Accepted
H3	Financial goal management has a significant positive impact on individuals' investment behavior.	0.006	Accepted
H4	Cyber security and awareness have a significant positive impact on individuals' investment behavior	0.119	Rejected

Source: SPSS Output

Discussion

Shakila and Hariyanto (2024) demonstrating how the financial management of young people and working women is impacted by digital literacy and the results indicate that digital literacy has a positive effect on working women's financial management. The current study adds to and validates the findings of Shrestha et al. (2023) about the socioeconomic determinants of financial literacy. The findings indicate a noteworthy correlation between financial literacy and the investing behaviour of individuals in stocks, underscoring the pragmatic influence of financial

literacy on investment choices. This broadens the perspective on financial decision-making by providing a more sophisticated understanding of the socio-economic elements found in earlier studies.

This study explores investment decisions in Nepal based on digital financial literacy, addressing a knowledge gap in emerging economies. It explores relationships between investing behaviour, cyber security awareness, financial literacy, digital proficiency, and financial goal management.

The study's conclusions complement and add to the body of knowledge already available on investing behaviour and financial literacy. Prior research has demonstrated the significance of digital competence and financial literacy in forming safe investment practices. For instance, the high positive association ($r = 0.567$) between financial literacy and investment behaviour in this study supports Lusardi and Mitchell's (2014) emphasis on the crucial significance of financial literacy in making educated financial decisions. Similar to this, Xiao and Porto's (2017) findings—which emphasized the expanding significance of digital literacy on financial decision-making in an increasingly digital world—are reflected by the strong positive impact of digital financial competence on investing behaviour ($r = 0.695$).

The study emphasizes age- and gender-related trends and identifies specific demographic factors influencing investment behaviour in Nepal. Gender disparities and a greater proportion of young individuals are consistent with risk choices, financial knowledge, and societal elements. In particular, the large proportion of young adults (20–30 years old) and the underrepresentation of teenagers corroborate the findings of Van et al. (2011) regarding the favorable relationship between age and market engagement. According to Cole et al. (2011), the majority of respondents (52.14 percent) have a bachelor's degree, suggesting a strong correlation between education and stock market participation. Furthermore, the substantial proportion of independent contractors (43.57percent) implies that risk tolerance and financial independence impact investing behavior, which is consistent with Barber and Odean's (2001) study on trading volume and overconfidence.

The correlation matrix indicates a strong positive relationship between individual investors' behaviour, financial goal management, and digital financial competency, implying that greater competency in these domains influences better investment behaviour. This underscores the significance of digital financial literacy in developing economies, where the prevalence of digital technologies is increasing. This is supported by regression research, which shows that there is a substantial 0.379 rise in investing behaviour ($p < 0.05$) for every unit increase in digital proficiency. In line with Beckmann's (2013) emphasis on the significance of

digital skills in financial decision-making, this highlights the crucial role that digital literacy plays in the financial markets. Similarly, financial literacy and financial goal management also positively impact investment behaviour, with statistically significant coefficients (0.156 and 0.260, respectively). These results align with the findings of Lusardi and Tufano (2015), who identified financial literacy as a key determinant of financial behavior, and the work of Gathergood (2012), who emphasized the role of financial planning and goal setting in promoting positive financial behaviours. However, the non-significant relationship between cyber security awareness and investment behaviour ($p = 0.119$) suggests that while cyber security is important, it may not directly influence investment decisions in the same way as digital financial proficiency or financial literacy. This finding diverges from some literature, such as the work of Reurink (2018), which posits that cyber security concerns can affect financial behavior. However, it highlights the need for further research to explore the nuanced relationship between cyber security awareness and investment behaviour in different market contexts.

Conclusion

The examination of the influence of digital financial literacy on the conduct of investors in Nepal implies that digital financial literacy plays a pivotal role in influencing the decisions taken by individuals in the domain of investments. This significant role is supported by the statistical evaluation, where the R Square value of 0.589 reveals that approximately 59 percent of the variability in investment behaviour can be clarified by a blend of digital financial literacy, traditional financial literacy, and financial goal management. The substantial R Square value signifies a strong correlation between digital financial literacy and investment behaviour, underscoring the significance of financial literacy in diverse aspects.

In order to draw these deductions, the study scrutinized information obtained from 358 investors. The data scrutiny was performed using robust tools like Microsoft Excel and SPSS 27, which facilitated a thorough investigation of the connections between the variables. The study emphasizes the importance of integrating both digital and traditional financial literacy into educational programs. This dual methodology guarantees that investors possess a comprehensive grasp of financial principles, enabling them to navigate digital and traditional financial environments proficiently.

Even though the awareness of cybersecurity did not display a notable direct impact on investment behavior, this fact does not detract from its importance in the broader context of financial literacy. Cybersecurity awareness is crucial for the secure execution of financial transactions and the safeguarding of personal financial data. Nevertheless, its direct effect on investment decision-making seems to be

less significant compared to the fundamental aspects of financial literacy and goal management.

The research is subject to certain limitations, such as possible bias in the sample, difficulties in assessing digital financial literacy, and the impact of extraneous variables on investing conduct. Additional limitations on generalizability include the chronological scope of the study, survey response biases, and technological accessibility. Additionally, the findings' application to other contexts may be impacted by cultural, psychological, and specific legislative and regulatory conditions found in Nepal.

Longitudinal investigations, larger sample sizes for improved representation, and the use of mixed-methods techniques for deeper insights are possible avenues for future research on this topic. In-depth analyses and useful suggestions could be obtained by doing comparative research with other areas, evaluating the effects of digital financial education initiatives, and investigating psychological aspects such as risk management and technological assurance. Digital platforms are suggested for financial institutions and educators to provide comprehensive financial instruction, preparing individuals for investment selections and contributing to Nepal's economic growth and stability by promoting financial literacy through digital channels.

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The Good Muslim as a Quest for Jus Post Bellum in a Nation in Transition

Sita Ram Bhatta¹, Rushma Bhul²

¹Associate Professor, Kailali Multiple Campus, Dhangadhi

²MA English 4th Semester Student at Kailali Multiple Campus, Dhangadhi

Corresponding Author: Sita Ram Bhatta; Email: bhattasitara5@gmail.com

Abstract

This paper explores the search for justice after the war in Tahmima Anam's novel, *The Good Muslim*. The novel deals with the aftermath of 'the Liberation War of Bangladesh' in the 1970s and early 80s, when the country was gravely suffering from famine, consecutive murders of their prominent leaders, political upheavals, natural disasters, and paralyzed democratic norms in the hands of a Dictator Hussein Muhammad Ershad. In such a context, Maya Haque, the protagonist of the novel, and an erstwhile freedom fighter continues writing and fighting for modern education, justice for the rape victims of the war, and democracy in the country. The study analyzes narrative data from the novel to see how the female characters struggle for justice after the war. For this purpose, it uses Larry May's insights on 'jus post bellum'. May has proposed six criteria for post-war justice, including 'reconciliation' and 'rebuilding', to maintain lasting peace in a post-war society. The novel entails these conditions and brings transitional justice to the fore of discourse through the literary creation. The paper claims that the protagonist is not only raising her voice for certain characters in the novel, rather she is constantly contributing to the broader issue of jus post bellum, which has been the most important, yet the most 'neglected' topic in just war theories. The article concludes with the idea that a fictitious work like *The Good Muslim* can be a good voice for the voiceless and a loud and clear advocacy for justice after the war. It can contribute to maintaining law and order and build up lasting peace preventing further violence in a postwar society.

Keywords: Jus post bellum, citizen's trial, democracy, struggle, meionexia



Introduction

Tahamima Anam has written the Bengal trilogy: *A Golden Age* (2007), *The Good Muslim* (2011), and *The Bones of Grace* (2016). They all deal with the Haque family in the historical-political backdrop of late twentieth-century Bangladesh. The second among them, *The Good Muslim* is a story of two siblings, Maya and Sohail Haque, who actively participated in the Liberation Movement of Bangladesh in 1971.

The Good Muslim intertwines the Haque family's story with Bangladesh's post-war crisis in the 1970s and 1980s. During the two decades, Bangladesh witnessed various types of catastrophes. The country's prominent leaders like Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Tajuddin Ahmad, and Ziaur Rahman were assassinated one after the other. Huge floods and cyclones devastated the lives, properties, and infrastructures. Unfair replacements of rulers and 'coups' challenged the country's stability, peace, and order. Ultimately, the government was trapped in the hands of a Dictator Hussein Muhammad Ershad who had hindered the democratic institutions and practices. In such a chaotic setting, the protagonist, Maya, struggles to educate women and children, takes care of rape-victim women of the war, and challenges the Dictator for incapacitating the democratic system. She joins the teams of women like Jahanara Imam who demand "a citizen's trial" in which "the killers and collaborators would be tried and sentenced" (Anam, 2011, pp. 213, 212). Side by side she struggles with her brother, a religious fundamentalist who has sent his son Zaid to madrasa for his education, and insists Zaid be admitted to a modern school.

In such a context, Maya's struggle can be seen as 'a war' after a war. In a war, women have to undergo unearned suffering. The armed war has been over, but Maya still fights 'the war' for justice and basic human rights. What can be the broader academic relevance of Maya's quest for justice in post-war society? This paper attempts to seek an answer to this question concerning just war theory.

Literature Review

The Good Muslim is a widely acclaimed novel, which has been analyzed and studied from various perspectives. In her analysis, Farzana Akhter (2018) shows her concerns about the subordination of women in the aftermath of war where their voices have been silenced and their real contributions have been ignored (p. 94). She shows how Maya, the protagonist, challenges the status quo, reverses the role, and takes her agency. As the title suggests, she focuses on "Women's Role in War and Nation-building" (p. 93). Women like Maya and Piya "have contributed to the birth and rebuilding of Bangladesh in different ways" but "has been overshadowed by male heroism" (p. 94). She ends the article with a note, "Genuine revision of the national narratives that gives voice to women's contributions in war and nation-

building, along with gender-sensitive reforms, will pave the way for women's empowerment and promote gender equality in public and political arenas (p. 105). Literary texts like *The Good Muslim* can recognize such voices and help maintain women's agency.

Sharma and Bhavya (2020-021) make a feminist interpretation of the novel and raises the issues of "sexual exploitation and social injustice" (p. 1). Akhtar mentions the tag of *birangonas* ('war heroines') a tag given by the Father of the Nation, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman to the rape victims of war as "intended to honour all women – political activists, freedom fighters, rape survivors and so on – who participated in the national struggle" (Akhtar, 2018, p. 97). However, "the tag soon became a signifier of shame and humiliation" and "turned out to be a mark of dishonour and disgrace" (p. 97). Sharma and Bhavya echo the same predicament of the wartime rape victims that "these *birangonas* received public humiliation and societal disowning" (Sharma & Bhavya, p. 4). Both of these authors raise issues of severe injustice committed to rape-victim women.

Ahmed (2020) also takes up the feminist perspective to read the novel. She concentrates on how South Asian "feminist interventions" to "religious fundamentalism" have paved the way to open avenues for the making of "The South Asian New Woman" (p. 186). Ahmed ends the discourse with the contributions of South Asian female authors like Tahmima Anam whose "secular ideals can be instrumental in leading the path towards framing a discourse of liberal Islam on the global map" (p. 195).

In Ruvani Ranasinha's observation, "Anam interleave[s] issues of Islam, secularism and female emancipation in [...] Bangladesh" (Ranasinha, 2016, p. 129). Ranasinha "explores the overlapping, gendered parameters of Islam, agency, piety and secularism in the feminist fiction" written by contemporary South Asian women authors including Tahmima Anam (p. 129). Ranasinha discusses the tussle between the rising "religious fundamentalism" and secularist ideology carried by both of the siblings and shows how fatal the former is from the example of the death of Sohail's son, Zaid.

Majid and Jalaluddin (2018) entitle their article, "The Conflicts between the Secular and the Religious in Tahmima Anam's *The Good Muslim*". As is clear from the topic they raise the conflict between the secular and religious ideologies represented by the siblings in the novel. They later comment on the duality, "Anam's writing demonstrates the faults in thinking of the secular and the religious as a form of binary" (p. 30). Majid and Jalaluddin refer to one significant point about Maya's 'attempts for reconciliation'. Sometime in the 1980s in the plot, Maya is haunted by the

memories of the war that she had initially tried to push aside. In a secret meeting with survivors of the war, Maya controversially says: “I think – I believe – that the first thing we must do is admit our own faults, our own sins. So much happened during the war – we were not just victims. She is also haunted by her actions soon after the war when she used her medical skills to help abort babies conceived through the rapes of approximately 200,000 Bengali women. (pp. 35-36)

This ‘reconciliatory’ role of Maya is in line with Larry May’s principles of *jus post bellum*. For reconciliation maionexia, “demanding less than one is due” (Stahn et al., 2014, p. 20).

Kulkarni (2020) remarks that “*Good Muslim* is also overloaded with the incidents of rape and abortion” (406). He is concerned about the theme of “gender-based violence and domestic violence” in the novel (p.406). He concludes his article with the assertion that “a literary work must represent the true picture of society in which it is created” (p. 407).

Lal (2019) analyzes “the troubled relationship between empathy and silence” (p. 1). She associates Maya and Sohail’s relationship with empathy and silence and the “negotiation of their irreconcilable differences over religion illustrates how their inability to accept gaps in empathy prompts them to adopt conflict-eschewing silences that lead to the complete breakdown of empathy” (p. 1). She concludes her article by summing up the idea, “The novel shows how the refusal to acknowledge the co-existence of empathic connections and dissonances often leads people to either embrace oppressive forms of empathy that violate others’ silences or to forego empathy completely by adopting evasive silences” (p. 15).

Bhattacharya (2017) connects the rise of religious fundamentalism to overshadow the trauma of the freedom war,

It shows how the nexus between politics and religion tries to impose an Islamic identity erasing the traumatic past, and thus hindering the process of healing from the scars of trauma and how individual acts of resistance function to challenge such acts of imposition and erasure. [...] in the matrix of the novel the conflict between the linguistic and religious identity gets articulation in the microcosm of the family and [...] individual resistance to the erasure of the past helps the nation to take its first step towards a process of healing. (p. 186)

Interestingly, Sohail is devoted to proselytizing orthodox Muslims, and the then-dictator is committed to imposing political authoritarianism. Both of them are so rigid that they hinder the roads to justice Maya wants to pursue at the level of family as well as nation. Both of them are trying to impose a Muslim identity.

Salim (2021) tries to “locate through Maya and Sohail Haque, (the two major characters of the narrative) the doctrines of Islam that get entwined with their Bengali origin” (p. 31). She probes into the psychology of the characters to see their “transformations contributing to the identity of the ‘Good Muslim’” (p. 31). She analyzes the issues like secularity and fundamentalism, language and identity politics, postcolonial identity, and the troubled gender and identity of a ‘good Muslim’.

Zubair et al. (2018) explore the novel through the lens of transnational feminist theory. He asserts that the “novel successfully highlights the patriarchal and national interventions in the formation of the woman’s reality in the early days Bangladesh” (p. 8). Like the scholars above he also sees the feminist agenda as more significant in the novel. Madhurima Sen reads the novel along the lines of memory, identity, and gender roles. Sen presents “a discussion of the gendered construction of national identity and the complexity of gender roles in the novel” (Sen p. 1).

As we look closely into the pattern of the literature cited above, it is clear that most of the scholars have contributed productively to the study of the fictitious society of the novel along the lines of gender roles and identities. They have raised other genuine issues from the novel as well. However, as Amrah Abdul Majid has indicated above, the scholarly conversation has left space to use the lens of just war theory, especially *jus post bellum*, for the study of the novel. This research article has been written to fulfill that glaring lacuna.

Theoretical Framework

War has three phases: beginning, middle, and ending. Just war theorists have named their discourses as *jus ad bellum*, *jus in bello*, and *jus post bellum* respectively. Since *Jus ad bellum* deals with the first phase of war, it is concerned with the reasons to fight, the appropriateness of the situation to fight, the authority of the fighters, and so on. It discusses why and when a country or a community can enter a phase of war from a phase of peace. The second, *jus in bello* guides how to fight, who should (or shouldn’t) be fought against, what kinds of weapons should(n’t) be used, etc. The last among them *jus post bellum*, that is, “justice after war” deals with maintaining long-lasting peace with mutual respect and harmony between the victors and the defeated party so that a sense of revenge, humiliation, and hatred would not be cherished in the minds of the defeated party which are likely to lead to perpetual violence whenever they got an opportunity.

Despite the newness of the term, the concept *jus post bello* “has deep roots” (Iverson, 2017, p. 12). Scholars on just war theories like Surya Subedi, Paul Robinson, J. M. Iverson, Carsten Stahn, Larry May, and others maintain that just

war theories, in general, are “dualist” in nature since they focus on only the two aspects of the theories: *jus ad bellum*, and *jus in bello* (Iverson, p. 19, Stahn et al., 2007, p. 921, Robinson, 2003, p. 1). The third stage of the war and the discourse on *jus post bellum* have largely been “underdeveloped”, “under-theorized”, “sidelined”, and “neglected” in international law, politics, and moral philosophy (Iverson, p. 3, Brough et al., p. 36). Eric Patterson confirms this situation that the “traditional just war theorists largely ignored *jus post bellum*, or just end to war” (Brough et al., p. 35). Recently, *Jus post bellum* has been “receiving fresh attention in just war theory scholarship” and has become, what Easterday et al. claim, “one of the most cutting-edge issues in today’s ethics of war and peace” (Stahn et al., pp. 1, 5, 15; Iverson, p. 8). Besides, whatever work has been done on *jus post ballum* is related to, as Immanuel Kant asserted, a ‘duty’ of a victor towards the defeated (Stahn et al., p. 935). Mark Evans echoes the same idea that *jus post bellum* is “depicted as an account of what just victor can and should do in securing the goal of a just peace which is the ultimate aim– the basis of the just cause– of a just war (Stahn et al., p. 27). Scholars like Kant, Evans, and others point out victors’ responsibility to the defeated in the aftermath of a war. Eric Patterson names the peace after the war as “victor’s peace” (Brough et al., p. 48). In this discourse, the agency of the victims, the issues of post-war management, and “successful transition from armed conflict to a just and sustainable peace” are “largely ignored” (Iverson, p. 13, Brough et al., p. 36).

Iverson (2017) defines *Jus post bellum* as “establishing a just and lasting peace” the function of which is “the successful transition from armed conflict to a just and sustainable peace” (p. 4, 13). Brian Orend takes *jus post bellum* as “justice at the conclusion of a conflict” and “transition from violence back into a better peace” (Stahn et al., 2014, p. vii).

Highlighting the importance of *jus post bellum* Easterday et al. contend that “successful transition from armed conflict to peace is one of the greatest challenges of contemporary warfare” (p. 1). They define *jus post bellum* as “the process of ending war and building peace” (p. 1). May and Forcehimes (2012) note, “*Jus post bellum* concerns societies that are trying to regain peace after a period of war or armed conflict. In this sense, there is considerable overlap between transitional justice and *jus post bellum* (pp. 1-2). May introduces the notion of *meionexia* regarding post-war reconciliation and writes that “justice for Aristotle lies between the extremes of taking too much (*pleionexia*) and taking too little (*meionexia*), and context matters, except for the fact that Aristotle does not directly mention *meionexia* – perhaps it is one of the unnamed vices. But he clearly does hold that justice involves taking only what is one’s due (p. 34).

As May and Edenberg put it:

It is not merely peace that is at issue, but a just peace, where mutual respect and the rule of law are key considerations. [...] The *jus post bellum* literature focuses, as one might expect, on the achieving of peace. [...] While *jus post bellum* theorists want a just peace, not merely any peaceful settlement of hostilities, they focus on the stopping of hostilities. *Jus post bellum* principles all are aimed at securing a just and lasting peace at the end of war or armed conflict. Discussion of these principles has been standard fare in the Just War Tradition for several thousand years, even if *jus post bellum* principles are not usually given the status afford to *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello* principles. (cited in Iverson, 2017, p. 5)

Peace after war is normally an oppressive concept. Eric Patterson calls it a “victor’s peace” (Brough et al., 2007, p. 48). An enduring peace is maintained based on mutual respect and harmony.

May proposes “at least six *post bellum* principles: retribution, reconciliation, rebuilding, restitution, rebuilding, restitution, reparation, and proportionality”, what we might call 5R & P” (Stahn et al., 2014, p.15). Retribution is “bringing those to account who committed wrongs either by initiating an unjust war or by waging war unjustly” (p. 16). May sees complexities in the implementation of retribution because “holding criminal trials and then punishing often popular state-leaders” is a challenging job (p. 16). After making the wrongdoers accountable for their crimes proportionate to the offense committed the next step is reconciling the victim and the perpetrator. A balance between retribution and reconciliation is to be made cautiously. May believes that parties come to a lasting peace where mutual respect for rights is the hallmark” (p. 17). May points out that reconciliation is taking the “center stage” these days (p. 17). To maintain just peace it is significant to “call upon all those who participated in devastation during the war to rebuild” (p. 17). May refers to the different views of scholars about the notion of reparation. He sees there should be “duties of reparation” of the victors towards “the unjust vanquished” (p. 18). The last principle of *jus post bellum* is proportionality. While applying the above principle there should be proportionality between offense and punishment. Care should be taken about “not to impose more harm on the population of a party to a war” (p. 18).

Methods and Procedures

This research work applies the qualitative research method. It takes narrative data from the novel *The Good Muslim* written by Tahmima Anam and analyzes them focusing on the post-war situation of Bangladesh as represented in the novel. For

the analysis, it applies the post-war theory of May as discussed in *Jus Post Bellum: Mapping the Normative Foundations* (2014). In the book, May presents “six *post bellum* principles: retribution, reconciliation, rebuilding, restitution, reparations, and proportionality, what we might call 5R&P” (Stahn et al., 2014, 15). Tahmima Anam’s novel *The Good Muslim* exposes these elements effectively. Also May discusses the concept of *meionexia*, meaning “demanding less than one is due, or perhaps not demanding all that is one’s due” (p. 20). If both victors and victims demand less than they deserve, that can open an avenue for respectful harmony and a long-lasting peace process. May is concerned about transitional justice’ which is related to the change of the regime after the war. In postwar Bangladesh, the regime of West Pakistan changed and Sheikh Mujibur Rahman took responsibility for the newly-born nation.

In May’s opinion, “*Meionexia* does not simply call for compromise or settling for less. Instead, *meionexia* requires that in some cases people not demand what they are due as a way to gain a more secure and lasting peace (p. 20). For the sake of lasting peace, it is necessary. May further writes,

On the assumption that all people strive for a just and lasting peace, there is no loss of integrity involved even when the parties decide to give up what is morally important to them. In the sense that all parties will equally get what they strongly desire, a just and lasting peace, there is a sense in which *meionexia* as a *jus post bellum* principle is closely related to justice understood in distributive terms. (p. 20)

To justify this May gives an example of South African TRC in which both former victims and former perpetrators had to come to a compromise to maintain harmony and prevent further violence.

Results and Discussion

Tahamima Anam’s novel *The Good Muslim* (2011) is an advocacy for ‘justice after war’ (*jus post bellum*). Through the narrative of the fiction, it criticizes the dictatorship of the Post-war Bangladesh of the 1970s and urges for *jus post bellum*, that is, “the successful transition from armed conflict to a just and sustainable peace” after the Liberation War of Bangladesh in 1971 (Iverson, 2017, p.13). The six *post bellum* principles proposed by May– “retribution, reconciliation, rebuilding, restitution, reparation, and proportionality” are supposed to maintain just peace after severe armed conflicts (Stahn et al., 2014, p. 15). May sees legal and moral aspects of these principles.

Justice is what Maya strongly stands for. She wants to contribute to the newspaper by writing about war. She likes the idea of Jahanara Imam calling for a

trial for all the war criminals because she believes that it is “never too late to seek justice” (Anam, 2011, p. 222). She begins her article “I am here to tell you a few truths about our war” (p. 226). This is the role of a truth-teller. In her brief document, she makes people aware of their “responsibility [...] to acknowledge the criminals” who were living among them (p. 226). The “Dictator” seems to let “the crimes of the past to go unpunished” (p. 226). Whether it be the Dictator or the people, not to stand for the trial against the crimes is to be “complicit in those crimes” (p. 226). She has a firm idea that the “Dictator isn’t going to hold a fair election” (p. 222). Fair elections are the basics for maintaining law and order in the country. So, Maya wants “to get him out” of the power (p. 222). She talks about setting up a “citizen’s trial” in which the traitors, “the killers and collaborators would be tried and sentenced” (pp. 213-212). Talking to Shafaat, she expresses her wish to write about the Razakars who, she thinks, “should be tried” (p. 223). She comes to know later that Aditi and Shafaat lacked “a sort of moral core” (p. 224). Maya was imprisoned because she wrote an article criticizing the Dictator for not bringing justice to the victims of war. This is an example of the protagonist’s efforts to seek for retributive justice.

She works voluntarily at the Women’s Rehabilitation Centre. Women like Piya arrive crying and say that they were ‘thrown out’ from her home because she is a rape survivor. Rehana easily allows her shelter. Women like Piya are increasing in the Rehabilitation center; some of them “had been raped in front of their husbands and fathers” (Anam 69). Maya tells these women that their lives will soon go back to normalcy, and a reunion with their family members will take place. Although it is a false promise, she goes on consoling them. Sheikh Mujib called them “heroines, war heroines”, “Birangona” and “had promised to take care of them” (p. 70, 142). Maya is strictly against this labeling ‘Birangonas’ because “calling them heroines erases what really happened to them” (p. 223). Neither do they fight on the battlefield for any medals, nor is there any prestige with that tag. Rather, Maya contends that those women are “the damage” or “the war trophies”, who “deserve for them to remember” (p.223). With these raped women, Maya has witnessed and helped them in “abortions”, and saw them terror-stricken “to file a police report” and/or tell their husband or father (p. 223). Within these traumatic memories, Piya keeps coming into her eyes. Women’s Rehabilitation Centre has taken responsibility for rehabilitating them. Those “abandoned” women respond that they don’t want to be “heroines”, as was declared by Mujib because they are “ashamed” and want to “leave [their] shame behind”(p. 70). Maya talks to her mother, “Isn’t it better, ma, to erase all traces of what happened to them? That way they can start to forget” (p. 142). By doing this, the activists are attempting to rebuild the damaged lives, families and the women’s raped bodies. Also, it can be interpreted as

The process of rebuilding is another principle of *jus post bellum*. While visiting the parliament building with her mother, too, On Independence Day, the Dictator lay wreaths at Shaheed Minar, the Martyr's memorial. Shaheed Minar is an icon of shared memory. It was "the first thing the Pakistan Army destroyed in the war [...] and] "the first thing to be rebuilt", but Maya wished they had left it broken, because now, shiny and freshly painted it bore no signs of the struggle" (p. 44). He even "tried to change the name of the country to the Islamic Republic of Bangladesh" (p. 42). He makes speeches "on the importance of regional unity" saying "nothing about the killings" (42). He is "[e]ager to befriend the old enemy" (p. 42). In Avishai Margalit's opinion, it is unethical. While visiting with her mother at the parliament house, Maya hears people shouting "the Dictator's corruption" (p. 104). Questions are raised about the Dictator's lawlessness and impunity. Ironically, Maya hears that people are telling that "the Dictator is a great leader" (p. 58). But she uses this nickname often and doesn't mention the name of the 'dictator'. It shows that she doesn't like him. She wants to overthrow the dictator and reinstitute democracy, by restoring people's power in their hands. Side by side, she wants to reinstate the lost dignity of rape victims. So her efforts are centered on restitution.

Maya has seen death, especially her patients', passing from close. She reflects, "Death had even skirted past Nazia, leaving scars on her legs but allowing her to live" (p. 131). These 'scars' have made memory traces for Maya, too. As Mohona asks them how many of them present there have in the meeting hall lost their dear ones to the war, they raise their hands and mention the date and details of the incident. Their confessional narratives touch Maya and leave her "shivering" (p. 97). Voices are raised by "the wounded souls" to collect the data about the atrocities and "identify all the killers" (p.97). Maya opines to see their own faults, their own sins, too. Her line and lane are clear about maintaining justice. She intends "the cruelty of the country" to be 'resolved' and "the collaborators that ran free and never went to jail for murder and rape" to be brought into legal action (p. 99). She is in favor of law and order.

When Maya asks Rokeya about President Zia's death, she shows her ignorance and indifference. Maya is shocked. She is surprised that "it didn't matter" to people even the two of the Presidents of the country were murdered and now they are living "in the throes of irony, with their very own Dictator, their injustices, their dirty little war down south" (p.157). Despite all this, people are not concerned about maintaining law and order. Maya's view of justice is boldly reflected in her speech in the court. In front of the judge, she defends the content of her article "as a plea to try the war criminals, not as a slight against the Dictator" (p. 286). In her opinion depriving people of their "right to protest is a serious offence" in a democratic state

(286). Her lawyer highlighted her family legacy of freedom fighting and appealed to the judge to stay bound to “the ideal of justice” (p. 287). Thus, as a freedom fighter, Maya is freed by the court.

When the Pakistani prisoners are released and are flying back to Pakistan, a woman says, “They said they don’t want us. Where are we supposed to go? What do we eat?” (p. 69). This reveals the traumatic state of the rape victims who were rejected by family as well as society. Some women are concerned that “[t]he new government had allowed a few of the enemy soldiers to return home to Pakistan, as a gesture of generosity in the face of victory”, and many women went with them” (p. 69). The victims were not consulted and the narrator observes the soldiers “unshackled” (p. 69). It shows a state of ‘impunity’ because there was no realization of the atrocities committed by the Pakistani Army. The Pakistani “prisoners of war were released” and “no sorries were exchanged” (p. 70). But the government is telling them to forgive. It is an awkward way of asking people to forgive:

It was time they were told to forgive. Forgive and forget. Absolve and misremember. Erase and move on. The country had to become a country. Just as it had needed them, once, to send their brothers into the fighting, to melt their pots and surrender their jewelry, so it now needed them to forget. (p. 70)

This policy of ‘forgive and forget’ assigned by the Dictator is weird. He doesn’t seem to have taken the consent of the victims, nor has he encouraged the perpetrators to confess their crimes. It appears to be like rubbing salt in the wounds of the victims instead of healing them. To erase the trauma without any proper address to the victims doesn’t sound rational. In May’s terms, it is the case of proportionality that retributive justice is left loose. The victims want the Pakistani soldiers to deserve the punishment according to their offense.

Jahanara Imam was called “Shaheed Janani, *Mother of Martyrs*”, and “had written a book about losing her son in the war” (p. 95). Like others who had lost their family members and relatives in the war, she hadn’t forgotten it. This is an ethical obligation. She questions that even thirteen years after the war “the men who committed murder” were still let “to run free, to live as the neighbors of the women they had widowed” (p. 96). In her observation, people like Ghulam Azam had betrayed the Bangladeshi revolutionaries assisting the Pakistan Army. She thought they shouldn’t have been considered for Bangladeshi citizenship. She is in favor of justice. Maya assimilates Jahanara’s statements and feelings with her own and so do the others when the latter is speaking about the crime and impunity related to the revolution.

Maya and Joy attend the second mass meeting addressed by Jahanara Imam in which she talks about “the war criminals” (p. 212). Jahanara goes on to speak, “Mujib and Zia had failed to punish the killers, and now the Dictator would never push for a trial. The collaborators will continue to live among us, [...], if we don’t do something” (p. 212). They had already waited for fourteen years for any action to be taken against the culprits. Now she decides to seek “justice” through alternative means if the state doesn’t give (p. 212). She thinks of setting up a “citizen’s trial” in which “the killers and collaborators would be tried and sentenced” (pp. 213-212). People like “Ghulam Azam, Nizami, and the Razakars who raped [their] country in ‘71” would be announced a verdict by “people’s tribunal” (pp. 213-212). Her concern is for the boys who were killed, the women who were raped, and the nation itself that was ‘raped’ needed justice by punishing the culprit. She further says,

Right now, across the country, thousands of women live with the memory of their shame. The men who shamed them roam free in the villages. No one reminds them of the sin they have committed. For those women, this trial. For them, Justice must be done. If the courts of this nation will not bear witness to their grief, *we* will bear witness. *We* will bring them justice. It is our duty, our most solemn duty as citizens, as survivors. (p. 213)

Jahanara Imam delivers this speech in 1985, February. Since 1971, these processes had to be started. ‘Shame’ is a form of painful memory. The men who committed the atrocities are ‘roaming’ around freely. They have not confessed their crime. It gives a picture of complete anarchy. In Jahanara’s opinion, the state is indifferent to ‘bear witness’ on behalf of the victim women. She declared that they would do it to bring ‘justice’ for their fellow women.

In the post-war decades “religious and political orthodoxy” was growing in Bangladesh, and “war criminals ha[d] not been tried and many accused of collaboration ha[d] been reinstated into their former positions” (Sen, 2022, p. 189). The rape survivors were not fully integrated into society and the voice for secular liberal democracy was facing more challenges.

In 1992 a program was arranged in Sahrawardy Field where the victims of the revolution and their family members were gathered. The mass is full of “people who have come to bear witness and the ones who have come to tell their stories” (p. 289). Those who were observers or sufferers of the war tell their stories of trauma. Jahanara Imam, Piya Islam, and others tell their excruciating experiences in front of the masses. When Maya’s daughter Zubaida asks her whether Ghulam Azam is going to be hanged, Maya answers that “he has to be tried first” (p. 192). This is another evidence of Maya’s unwavering conviction on justice.

The plot oscillates between personal and political history, like movements in the Ludo game that Zaid, Sohail's son, plays. The newly 'born' country, Bangladesh, is in transition. The Pakistani army has recently retreated leaving painful memories to people and the country of Bangladesh. The narrator says, "The retreated army has left its traces" and the wound of war hasn't healed yet (Anam 4). They have left 'war children', raped and widowed women, orphans, and memories of atrocities. The new leader Mujib has started "printing the new currency and renaming all the buildings" (p. 26). In Dhaka, they have "changed the road numbers" (p. 51). Dhanmondi had been renumbered, even creating confusion for people. 'Paltan Maidan' has been changed into 'Shishu Park' (p. 232). This 'Maidan' is associated with historical memories. It is "the place where Mujib had made all his speeches, and where the Pakistan Army had surrendered, and where he had returned after his nine months in exile and inaugurated the country" (p. 233). With the change in power politics, these things have changed in Bangladesh and are efforts to rebuild the nation.

During the two decades in the plot, there have been so many changes in Bangladesh. However, the overall picture is still a gloomy one: the tanks appearing and disappearing in the street, leaders elected and defeated, two presidents already murdered, killing of tribal people in the south of the country, and not identifying and punishing the war criminals. Bangladesh is still in conflict. The narrative represents that conflict in two dimensions: secular humanitarianism versus religious orthodoxy represented by Maya and Sohail respectively; and the war criminals including the Dictator versus the moral witnesses and victims like Piya. Both of these conflicts are associated with war, religion, and ethical issues which shape and are shaped by memory.

The novel *The Good Muslim* ends with an assimilation of Maya and Sohail seeing "[a]ll that is good in her brother, and all that is good in her" in Piya and her descendants (p. 293). Maya has asked Sohail for forgiveness. She realizes that "[h]is wound is her wound. Knowing this, she finds she can no longer wish him different" (p. 293). This sense of integration evades earlier distance between the siblings. Maya seems to have come above anger or hatred with her brother. This reconciliatory vibes in the style of a speaker in TRC, Maya said, "I think— I believe— that the first thing we must do is admit our own faults, our own sins. So much happened during the war— we were not just victims" (p. 97). This is a call for reconciliation on the one hand make "not demand[ing] what they are due as a way to gain a more secure and lasting peace" (Stahn et al., 2014, p. 20). As Larry's notion of *meionexia* envisions "there is no loss of integrity involved even when the parties decide to give up what is morally important to them" (p. 20). Doing this "all parties equally get what they desire, a just and lasting peace" (p. 20).

Conclusion

Maya's role in *The Good Muslim* is that of a seeker of justice. Apart from her role as a crusading doctor, and a humanitarian activist, she has contributed significantly to raising the issue of post-war justice, which is called *jus post bellum*. Despite the long history, *jus post bellum* has been the neglected area of just war theory compared to *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello* in international law, moral philosophy, and politics. The traditional just war theories focused more on why to fight and how to fight overshadowing the third stage of war how to build lasting peace and prevent the repetition of violence. More and more discourses are required to highlight the complexities and trauma of post-war management. The content of the novel *The Good Muslim* and the efforts of women like Maya have brought the issue to the fore. She writes and fights for justice for the victims of war like Piya Islam. She treated injured soldiers, children, and other needy people during the war. Despite this, Maya's role is often limited to the advocacy of women and their emancipation. This paper has attempted to correct the partial evaluation and discussed that her role is that of a humanist beyond any feminist agenda. In this woman-centric novel, Maya seems to be a moral witness exposing the real face of evil, and asking for a lasting and dignified peace for all people, especially for women in a war-ravaged nation.

Since the issue of transitional justice is yet to be addressed even after nearly two decades of the formal ending of the armed conflict in Nepal, the subject matter of novels like *The Good Muslim* and its discussion concerning post-war justice remains relevant for the audiences of countries like Nepal.

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Exploring English Teachers' Cooperative Practices in Teaching Writing Skills

Bhim Lal Bhandari

Associate Professor in English Education

Tribhuvan University, Butwal Multiple Campus, Butwal, Nepal

Email: blbhandari2024@gmail.com

Abstract

Cooperative language learning (CLL) is considered one of the communicative approaches in which students participate in collaborative learning activities in actual classroom settings. This research aims to examine English instructors' cooperative practices in instructing writing skills. I employed the narrative inquiry to explore the teaching and learning stories of teachers through their lived stories. This research study seeks to add to the discourse of cooperative practices in English language classrooms to enhance the writing skills of learners in the context of Nepal. Four English instructors from four public secondary schools in Rupandehi district were purposefully selected as participants for this study. The in-depth unstructured interview was used as a tool for collecting data. I adopted social constructivism as a theoretical framework. This study uncovered that the teacher participants used CLL activities such as think-pair-share and group work activities to energize, optimize and enhance students' writing skills. Moreover, CLL increases learners' insights and confidence by enhancing their creativity and critical thinking ability in writing through teamwork and makes them more responsible and accountable for learning themselves through their active engagement in various cooperative activities. The study reveals teacher participants' effective practices of cooperative language learning in generating and creating fresh information to offer a solution to the assigned writing tasks and make learning successful. Teamwork, group work and think-pair-share activities contribute to the learners' success in writing skills.

Keywords: Classroom management, group and pair work, ICT, think-pair-share



Introduction

English Language Teaching (ELT) around the globe has been changed along with different methods of instructional delivery. In the Nepali context, teaching English remains dominated by a conventional textbook-laden, teacher-centred, classroom-based style of instruction in which knowledge is transmitted directly to the learners. Teachers usually provide readymade information to the students so they always remain passive. The knowledge presented by teachers is usually unchallengeable and students have to accept it (María & Luisa, 2016). This type of chalk-and-talk method of teaching seems ineffective in ensuring quality learning. I intend to explore English teachers' cooperative learning experiences in teaching writing skills.

Cooperative language learning (CLL) is a learner-centred instructional method in which, in small groups, everyone with learners of various levels of capacity works together to achieve a common mutual goal under the guidance of the teacher. In CLL, students are active in the development of learning rather than being passive recipients of the result of any supplied knowledge, which enhances the quantity of student engagement and discussion in the target language (Azizinezhad et al., 2013; Nadif & Benattabou, 2021)). Learners' involvement can be increased by maximizing their talking time in CLL.

Literature Review

In the CLL method, students collaborate in pairs or groups with shared learning objectives (Zhang, 2010). It creates a favourable atmosphere for interactions between students and teachers and student-to-student on an issue inside and outside the classroom setting. Thus, teachers and learners can learn better in sustained and meaningful ways when they do something together. It develops both content knowledge and social skills of the learners working cooperatively and collaboratively. Cheong (2010) asserted that in CLL, learners have access to various learning contexts, collaborating within and occasionally beyond the school setting (as cited in Qutoshia, & Poudel, 2014). Students can discuss together and transmit their information to each other in developing ideas to write during the teaching-learning process. This study may contribute to enhancing the writing proficiency of learners.

Explaining things and readymade answers to writing tasks by the teachers do not support learners in writing. Until and unless students have extended participation in educational endeavours, they cannot develop in-depth knowledge and social skills; communication and critical thinking, innovation and teamwork in writing skills. Cooperative learning (CL) maximizes the use of collaborative tasks involving

small groups of students in the learning environment, going beyond just assigning assignments and placing students in groups (Jacobs & Hall, 2010). Therefore, it is essential to involve them in cooperative activities to achieve their common goal.

In this regard, Sijali (2017) explored the efficacy of CLL for enhancing learners' ability level in English. The study indicated that is more effective than the conventional way of teaching in enlightening students' proficiency in English. Similarly, a research study conducted by Erdogan (2017) in Turkey indicated that cooperative writing activities supported the learners to feel confident and comfortable and decreased their writing anxieties. Nevertheless, it did not address the issues of secondary-level English teachers in teaching writing skills.

In the context of Nepal, Saphari (2018) conducted research on practices of cooperative learning in Kailali district. The study found that cooperative learning was quite effective. Group work and pair work are two effective ways it may be employed in the CL process. Due to time constraints, a lack of physical resources, and classroom management issues, it was challenging to implement CLL. Likewise, Yusuf et al. (2019) explored the efficiency of cooperative language learning to improve and enhance students' writing skills. The study showed that cooperative learning techniques assist them in improving their writing skills by engaging them in writing activities. So, cooperative learning techniques engage learners in writing and provide a choice of competitive activities in the class by promoting cooperation in pairs or groups. The study indicated the need for cooperative language learning in teaching writing in a comfortable and less threatening atmosphere.

Alroomi (2023) found that teaching with the CL technique had a favourable impact, with students expressing a willingness to adopt CL approaches in writing and spoken classes. Furthermore, it is a more efficient method of increasing student involvement and providing relevant input and output to students. A recent study by Hamriati et al. (2024) found that both teachers used the think pair and share cooperative learning model. It is beneficial in boosting the improvement of critical thinking skills, expressing ideas, improving student engagement in discussions, and providing more opportunities for group members to contribute. However, during implementation, teachers were inconsistent with the given time; very few students were not able to submit their argument conclusions. So, teachers had to exercise discipline in managing time during instruction to ensure that all students had an opportunity to contribute their discussion conclusions.

Writing skills have become a challenging issue for many teachers and students as students' fluency and competency in writing abilities determine their achievement in both the classroom and in society. In the Nepali context, English teachers have been teaching writing skills at the school level in Nepal for years

but it does not seem to be effective as the teachers dictate essays, stories, letter writing, report writing and question-answers to the students without engaging them in cooperative activities. As a result, they only memorize writing-related tasks just to pass the examinations. CLL is the most widely used and preferred method in language teaching worldwide (Wolfensberger & Canella, 2015). Despite its widespread recognition, use and effectiveness in foreign contexts, CLL has not been widely implemented in the Nepalese context. It is less explored and updated through research works regarding how teachers practice CLL and implement it in teaching writing skills in the Nepalese context. There is a theoretical, contextual, and thematic gap in the same discipline as the available research says nothing about this. The results of this study can contribute to my colleagues, teachers and students in teaching and learning English in general and teaching writing skills in particular.

The primary objective of the research is to explore cooperative learning practices of English language teachers in teaching writing skills. The study has responded to the following research question: How do English instructors practice cooperative language learning in teaching writing skills?

As a theoretical foundation for my research, I used social constructivism, which is particularly relevant to this topic. It creates an enjoyable learning setting since knowledge is socially and culturally formed via interaction (Vygotsky, 1978). The fundamental idea of social constructivism is that knowledge is actively generated by learners via communication with peers and teachers, rather than by the instructor. Learners actively generate knowledge rather than passively acquire information (Jonassen, 1991). So they construct new knowledge by being active themselves. However, social constructivists claim that knowledge is the result of collaborative production in a sociocultural framework mediated by language; learning is promoted via interactive processes of information exchange, negotiation, and discussion (Wang, 2008). By interacting and sharing ideas and experiences, we not only solve problems but also create new discourse.

In the process of learning, learners construct knowledge with the support of their teacher or their peer's scaffolding. Understanding learners' zone of proximal development (ZPD) is extremely beneficial in improving instruction and learning activities, more effective, more efficient and better. To Vygotsky (1978), by scaffolding pupils can achieve activities which they are unable to accomplish by themselves. Vygotsky's social interaction theory shows that peer assistance is crucial for group learners to acquire new knowledge and skills effectively (Lin, 2009). Learning takes place when learners interact with each other.

Methods and Procedures

This study used the narrative inquiry method as it is connected with the lived experiences of an individual and with the life stories. One of the few human endeavours that is extensively accepted as a fundamental facet of existence and a vital mode of human expression is the tale (Kim, 2016). This study aimed to investigate the CLL techniques used by English language instructors when instructing writing abilities in language classrooms through their lived narratives.

Four participant teachers were selected purposively from four public schools in Rupandehi district. Out of them, one was a male and the other three were females who had been practising cooperative teaching in their classrooms. A modest population size is helpful for accurate data analysis. Following notification and obtaining participants' permission (Creswell, 2014), time was fixed for an interview. Then their views were taken by conducting in-depth interviews in their first language to uncover their cooperative learning practices in teaching writing skills. With their permission, the participants' opinions were documented, and their pseudonyms were used to maintain their privacy and confidentiality. Later, the instructor interviews were conducted after data saturation had been attained (Trotter, 2012). Their experiences and practices inside and outside the classrooms were meaningful and helpful in analyzing their views and practices in teaching and learning writing skills cooperatively.

Results and Discussion

Teachers' Practices of CLL in Teaching Writing Skills

Cooperative language learning increases students' participation in teaching learning activities and provides them opportunities to engage in active communication between students and teachers. Learners are involved in the target language interaction through modes of interaction like think-pair-share, group work, pair work, cooperation, full class interactions, etc. (Ur, 2008). Interaction facilitates and enhances the logical capacity of the students. In this context, Dinesh shared, "After getting the practical ideas from training and workshop seminar, I engaged my students to think over the assigned tasks; shared with their friends. They got input when they wrote on the topic collaboratively in a pleasant atmosphere."

His life story showed that he shifted from his teacher-centred teaching to learner-centred teaching forming different groups or pairs and asking the learners to think over the problem and share their ideas. While working together, they build rapport with each other share their ideas and learn social and teamwork skills. Students' linguistic, mental, and social skills are stimulated through cooperative

interactive assignments and create powerful learning opportunities reducing learning anxiety in a less threatening learning environment (Azizinezhad et al., 2013; Nadif & Benattabou, 2021).

When he makes students work in pairs, groups and think-pair-share, they think critically and creatively. His practice is similar to Johnson and Johnson's (1999) idea of CLL. They organize, oversee, and assess their education since they are its directors themselves with little guidance from the teacher. There is the direct and active involvement of the learners. In this line, Manju asserted, "I worked with the students on the task they shared ideas related to it. Then I exchanged their writings and asked them to edit spelling, punctuation, grammar and format. From peer correction, they got input and feedback from each other." From her lived experience, it is clear that Manju involved her students in correcting their pairs' writing to develop their writing proficiency. She used group work and made the class interactive. Hence, CLL generates interactive language, affective climate, learner responsibility autonomy and individualized instruction (Brown, 2001). Students play a more active role in group decision-making and receive less instruction from teachers as sources of knowledge. He facilitates the students to explore new ideas to complete the assigned task. They get input and feedback from each other.

It is believed that students' learning becomes permanent when they involve themselves directly in learning. Caicedo Trivino (2016) also asserted that the use of CLL in teaching writing engaged students to express their ideas and supported them to be independent for the improvement in their vocabulary, use of certain grammatical structures and style correction.

Dividing Students into Groups and Pairs

Learning and working together in groups or pairs increases students' active engagement. Engaging students requires great effort on the part of the teacher. When the students are in groups and pairs, they feel more secure (Brown, 2007). Through group and pair work, students can have more chances to use language in the classroom. Students play a more participatory and decision-making role in the group, and the instructor's position as a source of information is diminished (Harmer, 2009). Group and pair works generate interactive language and promote learner responsibility and autonomy in learning language. Emphasizing learners' active involvement in learning, Benjamin Franklin declared,

"Tell me and I forget
teach me and I remember
involve me and I learn"

The above proverb is associated with learners' involvement in cooperative activities. They explore meaning by interacting in the assigned task with their friends collaboratively. Before teaching writing skills, they divide the students into different groups and give them a task. Dinesh asserted, "Forming different pairs or groups, I made them work and speak more. When I started speaking less and let my students communicate more, there was an apparent shift in my classroom." His narratives explored that he made learners work collaboratively. As a facilitator, speaking less he guided the students to generate new ideas. His experience is in harmony with Munawar and Chaudhary (2019). They claimed that supportive learning procedures have a significant sustainability outcome on the achievement of students to engage them in writing activities and improve their writing skills in the classroom.

Reetu asserted, "In pairs or groups, my students feel comfortable and easy to share ideas with their partners without hesitation confidently." Through these cooperative activities, students feel comfortable and easy to learn from each other and construct new knowledge. Group efforts encourage the other group members to contribute and keep one another on task working towards their common goals. Working in groups, with every participant a specialist in their respective subject, offers students an environment in which to study and practice (Aktaş et al., 2022). Interaction, active discussion, cooperation, participation and good relationships among group members make learning effective. Regarding this, Erdogan (2017) claimed that cooperative writing activities support students to feel confident and comfortable and decrease their writing anxieties. I also believe learners feel comfortable and construct new knowledge through cooperative activities when they are free from anxieties.

Gita narrated her story of using CLL in these words; "My shy and uninterested students work together to solve the problems. They improve their writing proficiency as they are motivated to work together confidently in pairs and groups with the feeling of intimacy." Gita claimed that an atmosphere of cooperation and mutual helpfulness motivates even shy and uninterested students to work confidently. They can learn how to work collaboratively and cooperatively to accomplish the task. It encourages them to participate in solving the problem and promotes enthusiasm among students and engagement between them (McCafferty, 2006). Hence, CLL helps students increase their participation since they can share ideas and increase their self-confidence. Thus, they feel comfortable working in groups and exploring more ideas on the assigned task.

The idea of Gita is in harmony with Yumi and Erina (2015) who explored that cooperative learning has an affirmative effect on learning English. It also increases a strong sense of self-confidence in writing and influences their attitude towards

writing ability. When peers encourage one another during the process of learning, students learn more efficiently and effectively (Keshavarz et al., 2014; Li, 2009). Like Gita, Manju had a similar experience. She stated, “I facilitate my students by providing a problem and making them interact with the problem.” Gita stated that CLL provides a natural atmosphere to the learners in learning language through the use of think-pair-share and group undertakings through communication strategies. Her view is in harmony with Gass (1997) and Long (1996) who stated interaction offers students the chance to obtain clear feedback and suggestions (as cited in Muho & Kuran, 2014). As a teacher, I also believe students who engage in interaction are more inclined to take ownership of their education. Group idea sharing gives them the chance to hone their social skills, teamwork and collaboration, interaction and critical thinking, creativity, management, and presenting skills. His perspective is supported by social constructivism theory, which holds that learning occurs most effectively when activities are completed collectively and experiences are shared (Johnson & Johnson, 1989).

In this line, Reetu asserted, “There is a feeling of cooperation rather than competition among the members of a group in CLL.” Since there is competition among the groups but not with individual learners, every group member shares the same objective. They therefore provide a mental contribution to their group. It can be compared to competitive learning, when students compete with one another to meet academic objectives. Studies reveal that compared to competitive or individualistic learning, cooperative learning has advantages for higher-order thinking, more frequent development of fresh concepts and solutions, and greater transfer of knowledge between contexts (Johnson & Johnson, 2000). Therefore, learning is not only the transformation of knowledge from the teacher but it is the reconstruction of experiences from learners and teachers.

Classroom Management in Cooperative Learning

In class management, managing time, space discipline, resources and instructional materials addressing learners’ multiple intelligences and managing interaction with equal sharing of tasks among members of the group is vital. Successful application of CLL requires proper seat arrangement to suit group and pair works. Moreover, teachers must have the required skills to conduct such activities.

Regarding this, Manju shared, “In my class, there are large numbers of learners with multi-level intelligence. I divide groups having both talented and weak students so that they can share ideas and get benefit from each other.” Her narrative revealed the fact that she addressed learners’ multiple intelligences providing opportunities for both talented and weak learners to work cooperatively

and collaboratively. They could share knowledge. Manju's narrative of CLL is in harmony with (Kagan, 1994). He emphasizes that addressing various intelligences effectively may be achieved through cooperative learning. In groups, learning is effective as the bright students support the weaker ones and vice-versa.

Dinesh claimed, "In my school, the seating arrangement is suitable for face-to-face interaction. So, I organize group activities and maximize their interaction." His life story of teaching showed that he maximized interaction through group activities. The more teachers talk, the less opportunity there is for the learners (Scrivener, 2005). It is therefore, the teacher needs to balance teacher talking time and student time. The efficacy of CL and the ZPD idea of peer-guided learning depends on how the classroom furniture is arranged (Vygotsky, 1978). Teachers need to approach their work with a clear vision, professionalism, enthusiasm, commitment, planning, and managerial skills in implementing cooperative activities.

ICT in Cooperative Practices

The application of information and communication technology (ICT) to education is indispensable for improving teachers' professional skills in the 21st-century classroom. After the pandemic situation of Covid 19, teachers have adopted and integrated technology to improve their pedagogic activities. ICT has increased access to resources and information allowing teachers and learners to interact at any time. Teaching English has undergone a significant transformation due to the application of ICT at school.

Regarding this, Dinesh asserted, "I use ICT devices and make my students use them more than in the past. I share writing-related issues through e-mail. Now, they find the solution to the assigned writing tasks and share." His lived experiences of using ICT devices supported him to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of his teaching-learning activities. Integration of ICT in cooperative writing eased and helped improve students' writing performance (Franco-Camargo & Camacho-Vasquez, 2018). It can connect both teachers and students to work and learn together cooperatively.

Manju emphasized, "I used to share teaching materials rarely with my students and colleagues through ICT tools in the past but now, I am using them frequently. They support us to engage learners and teachers for collaborative learning and professional development." Manju's narratives showed that she hardly used ICT devices in sharing information with her students and colleagues in the past, however, these days, she uses it to maximize collaborative learning as well as boost her professional development. Interactive ways of teaching and learning are possible through cooperation among learners and teachers with improved ICT access to the

required information. Her lived experience is close to Wardlow and Harm (2015) who mentioned that technology created space to maximize collaborative learning by increasing engagement in learning. Thus, this shows that both language teachers and learners get benefits from practising language inside and outside the class if they use technology devices.

Gita claimed, “Sometimes, I motivate my students by playing videos of short films. The next day, I asked them to write film reviews discussing in pairs. I exchange the final version with their partner and ask them to provide and receive feedback.” She asserted that her pupils’ innovative and interactive instruction has been stimulated by the usage of ICT in the classroom since they are working in pairs on the assigned task that she delivers to the class with excitement. She further added, “Sometimes I make my students share their writing tasks through e-mail. They enjoy sharing and learning a lot of new things within a short time.” Gita’s experience revealed that she was incorporating and implementing ICT skills in collaborative activities as a part of her professional life. Learners explore new ideas via the process of e-mail interaction. Her view is in harmony with Wang and Fang (2005) who asserted that the use of the Internet supports learners to learn in cooperation autonomously.

Instructors do not transfer knowledge; rather, knowledge is generated. Learners use information that has been collaboratively produced with their peers and participate in personal meaning-making discourse via the use of constructivist tools (Akpan & Beard, 2016). According to social constructivism, students may develop their cognitive abilities and create knowledge with the help of technology, teachers, and peers I also believe these types of collaborative activities through e-mail help them develop their writing skills naturally.

Conclusion

This study aims to explore cooperative learning practices of secondary-level English language teachers in teaching writing skills. Therefore, narrative inquiry is suitable for the study as teachers creating discourse in ELT class can support their learners to construct innovative ideas, skills and new knowledge by working together cooperatively inside and outside the class. The study reveals teacher participants’ effective practices of cooperative language learning in generating and creating fresh information offer a solution to the assigned writing tasks and make learning successful. Teamwork, group work and think-pair-share activities contribute to the learners’ success in writing skills. Social constructivism theory holds that learning is socially and culturally created via interaction, students learn best when they work together in small groups and share their experiences. The study shows that teaching writing skills through CLL enhances students’ creativity, teamwork and cooperative

skills allowing students to express their preferences. Moreover, the use of ICT supports teacher participants to feel more comfortable in creating an appropriate learning atmosphere. Thus, by engaging the students in cooperative writing activities teachers can increase problem-solving skills and critical thinking ability to improve their writing skills and make their performance better.

The small-scale nature of the study may restrict the application of its findings. Thus, a mixed-method research study must be carried out in the future covering a large area and population to bring teachers' wider practices of CLL in teaching writing skills in public schools. It is hoped that the insights of the study raise awareness on teachers to implement CLL in teaching writing skills. It will facilitate them to make teaching and learning effective reducing their learners' anxiety and providing a natural learning atmosphere in the arena of ELT.

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Embracing Opportunities and Navigating Challenges: Teaching Pronunciation in the EFL Context of Nepal

Pitambar Paudel, PhD

English Education, Tribhuvan University, Prithvi Narayan Campus, Pokhara, Nepal

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5706-170X>

Email: pitambarp@pncampus.edu.np

Abstract

English is a vital medium for international communication and academic progress in Nepal, making the mastery of pronunciation crucial for students aiming to thrive in a globalized world. This study explores the intricate landscape of pronunciation instruction in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) settings, examining various perspectives, challenges and effective teaching methods. Factors influencing pronunciation acquisition include learners' native language, exposure to the target language, motivation and instructional strategies. Pronunciation instruction covers phonemes, intonation, stress, rhythm and connected speech, all essential for effective spoken communication. Challenges in teaching pronunciation involve neglect, first language interference and reception issues, highlighting the need for innovative teaching strategies. Effective methods include minimal pairs, modeling and imitation, audio recordings, phonetic symbols, pronunciation drills, visual aids, error correction, contextualization and integration with other language skills. This study emphasizes the importance of a holistic approach to pronunciation instruction, raising awareness of its role in language education, and promoting continuous professional development for educators. Future research should explore innovative pronunciation teaching methods, considering new trends in language education and pedagogical advancements. By prioritizing pronunciation instruction and using evidence-based practices, educators can help learners achieve greater fluency, accuracy and confidence in spoken communication within diverse linguistic and cultural contexts.

Keywords: Challenges, factors, instruction, pronunciation, techniques



Introduction

Teaching pronunciation in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts, particularly in countries like Nepal, presents unique challenges and opportunities. Nepal, nestled in the heart of the Himalayas, boasts a rich cultural tapestry and a growing demand for English language proficiency in various spheres, including education, business and tourism. As English continues to gain prominence as a global lingua franca, the importance of effective pronunciation instruction cannot be overstated. However, navigating the complexities of teaching pronunciation in EFL settings, especially in Nepal, requires a nuanced understanding of linguistic, cultural and pedagogical factors.

Recent research underscores the significance of pronunciation in language learning and communication. Studies by Jenkins (2015) and Derwing and Munro (2015) highlight the crucial role of pronunciation in intelligibility and comprehensibility, emphasizing its impact on successful communication in English-speaking environments. In Nepal, where English is often learned as a second or foreign language, the need for clear and accurate pronunciation is particularly pronounced. However, achieving native-like pronunciation may be unrealistic for many learners, leading to a focus on intelligibility rather than accent reduction (Levis, 2018). While achieving native-like pronunciation may be challenging for many learners in the Nepalese context, prioritizing clear and accurate pronunciation remains paramount for effective communication in English-speaking environments. Educators can empower learners to confidently engage in successful communication by focusing on intelligibility rather than accent reduction, bridging linguistic barriers and enhancing their language proficiency. As pronunciation plays a crucial role in language learning and communication, ongoing research and pedagogical innovations will further support the development of effective pronunciation instruction in the EFL context of Nepal and beyond.

The challenges of teaching pronunciation in EFL contexts like Nepal are multifaceted. Cultural and linguistic differences between Nepali and English phonological systems pose significant hurdles for learners and educators alike. Research by Kandel (2010) suggests that Nepali learners may struggle with English sounds that do not exist in their native language, such as the distinction between /p/ and /ph/. Moreover, the influence of Nepali phonology on English pronunciation, known as L1 interference, can impede learners' ability to produce accurate English sounds (Kang, 2016). The multifaceted challenges of teaching pronunciation in EFL contexts like Nepal underscore the importance of addressing cultural and linguistic differences between Nepali and English phonological systems. While research highlights specific areas of difficulty, such as the distinction between certain English

sounds, the broader influence of Nepali phonology on English pronunciation, known as L1 interference, further complicates the learning process. Nevertheless, by recognizing and actively addressing these challenges, educators can develop targeted strategies to support learners in overcoming pronunciation barriers and enhancing their overall language proficiency. Through targeted instruction and pedagogical innovation, educators can empower Nepali learners to navigate these linguistic complexities and communicate effectively in English-speaking environments.

Pedagogical approaches to teaching pronunciation in Nepal have evolved, reflecting broader trends in language teaching methodologies. Historically, methods such as the grammar-translation approach and the audio-lingual method placed little emphasis on pronunciation, focusing instead on grammar rules and vocabulary memorization (Florez, 1998; Fraser, 2000). However, the communicative approach, which gained prominence in the 1970s, advocated for a more holistic view of language learning, encompassing communicative competence, including pronunciation (Celce-Murcia et al., 1996). The evolution of pedagogical approaches to teaching pronunciation in Nepal reflects broader shifts in language teaching methodologies. While traditional methods like the grammar-translation and audio-lingual approaches historically neglected pronunciation in favor of grammar and vocabulary, the rise of the communicative approach emphasized the integral role of pronunciation in achieving communicative competence. As educators in Nepal continue to adapt and innovate in response to changing educational paradigms, integrating effective pronunciation instruction within a communicative framework remains essential. By embracing pedagogical approaches prioritising meaningful communication and pronunciation skills development, educators can empower Nepali learners to navigate linguistic challenges and succeed in diverse language contexts.

Despite recognising pronunciation's importance, challenges persist in integrating effective pronunciation instruction into EFL curricula in Nepal. Limited resources, including outdated textbooks and a scarcity of trained language instructors, hinder efforts to prioritize pronunciation teaching (Tiwari, 2023). Additionally, the dominance of traditional teaching methods and a lack of professional development opportunities for teachers contribute to the perpetuation of ineffective pronunciation teaching practices (Kandel, 2010; Egwuogu, 2012; Tiwari, 2023). The challenges surrounding the integration of effective pronunciation instruction into EFL curricula in Nepal persist despite the acknowledged significance of pronunciation in language learning. Limited resources, such as outdated textbooks and a shortage of qualified language instructors, pose significant obstacles to prioritizing pronunciation teaching in educational settings. Moreover, the entrenched dominance of traditional teaching

methods and a lack of professional development opportunities for teachers further hinder efforts to address pronunciation effectively.

However, recognizing these challenges presents an opportunity for proactive measures and innovative solutions. Investing in updated resources, such as modern textbooks and instructional materials, can provide educators with the tools necessary to effectively incorporate pronunciation instruction. Additionally, providing teachers comprehensive training and professional development opportunities can empower them to employ contemporary pedagogical approaches that prioritize pronunciation skills development.

Furthermore, fostering collaboration and exchange among educators, researchers, and policymakers can facilitate the sharing of best practices and the development of tailored strategies to address the specific needs of Nepali learners. By collectively addressing these challenges and promoting a concerted effort to elevate the importance of pronunciation instruction, educators can better equip Nepali learners with the necessary skills to communicate confidently and effectively in English-speaking environments.

In recent years, there has been a growing awareness of the need to address pronunciation instruction more systematically in Nepalese EFL classrooms. Adopting innovative pedagogical approaches, such as task-based learning and computer-assisted pronunciation training, alongside incorporating authentic listening materials and interactive speaking activities to enhance learners' pronunciation skills. The growing awareness of the importance of systematic pronunciation instruction in Nepalese EFL classrooms, coupled with advocacy for innovative pedagogical approaches, signals a promising shift towards addressing the challenges and enhancing the effectiveness of pronunciation teaching. By incorporating task-based learning, computer-assisted pronunciation training, and authentic listening materials, educators can create dynamic and engaging learning environments that empower learners to develop their pronunciation skills in meaningful contexts.

Teaching pronunciation in the EFL context of Nepal presents both challenges and opportunities. While cultural and linguistic differences pose obstacles to effective pronunciation instruction, recent research and pedagogical innovations offer promising avenues for improvement. By acknowledging the importance of pronunciation and embracing innovative teaching methodologies, educators in Nepal can empower learners to communicate confidently and effectively in English-speaking environments. A significant gap in the existing research on teaching pronunciation in the EFL context of Nepal lies in the lack of exploration into evidence-based strategies and interventions specifically tailored to address the linguistic and cultural challenges unique to Nepal. Although the text underscores

the importance of updated resources, comprehensive teacher training, and innovative pedagogical approaches, it provides limited discussion on the practical implementation and effectiveness of these strategies within Nepalese classrooms. Additionally, there is a dearth of research examining the impact of socio-cultural factors on pronunciation teaching and learning in Nepal, overlooking crucial contextual nuances that may influence instructional practices. Closing this gap would provide invaluable insights for educators, researchers, and policymakers seeking to develop contextually relevant and effective pronunciation instruction in Nepal, ultimately enhancing language learning outcomes for Nepali EFL learners. In this context, this study explores the challenges and opportunities associated with teaching pronunciation in Nepal's context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL).

Methods and Procedures

This research employs a document review and analysis methodology to investigate the challenges and opportunities related to teaching pronunciation in Nepal's English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context. Drawing on a comprehensive literature review, including studies by Jenkins (2015) and Derwing and Munro (2015), the study explores the historical evolution of pronunciation teaching methods and identifies key factors influencing pronunciation instruction in Nepal. Through document analysis of primary and secondary sources such as academic papers, government reports, and educational policies, the research aims to extract pertinent information regarding current practices, challenges, and opportunities in pronunciation teaching. Data extraction and coding techniques are utilized to identify recurring themes and patterns, while thematic analysis facilitates the systematic examination of extracted data. The synthesized findings are interpreted to develop a comprehensive understanding of pronunciation teaching in Nepal, with insights from scholars such as Florez (1998) and Fraser (2000). While delimitations of the methodology, such as potential biases and reliance on existing literature, are acknowledged, the research aims to provide valuable insights for enhancing pronunciation instruction in the Nepalese EFL context and guiding future research directions (Kandel, 2010; Smith, 2020). Despite the acknowledged delimitations, this research endeavors to offer valuable insights into pronunciation instruction in the Nepalese EFL context, serving as a foundation for future studies and pedagogical advancements.

Results and Discussion

This descriptive research, grounded in secondary sources, aims to investigate diverse viewpoints and perspectives concerning pronunciation in EFL. The study delves into several key aspects, including factors influencing pronunciation acquisition, the constituent elements of pronunciation, the significance of

pronunciation, challenges encountered in pronunciation instruction, and effective techniques for teaching pronunciation.

Factors Affecting the Learning of Pronunciation

In the realm of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction, a multitude of factors converge to shape pronunciation acquisition. Kenworthy (1992) identifies native language, age, exposure, phonetic ability, attitude, and identity as pivotal elements, while Gilakjani and Ahmadi (2011), emphasizes accent, stress, intonation, rhythm, motivation, exposure, intelligibility, and varieties of English. Notably, motivation and exposure stand out as critical influences, with Bernaus et al. (2004) emphasizing the impact of personal or professional goals on learners' desire for native-like pronunciation. Moyer (2007) reinforces this perspective, underscoring the significance of positive orientation and experience in language acquisition.

Furthermore, exposure to the target language emerges as essential, as indicated by Gilakjani and Ahmadi (2011), who suggests that learners primarily acquire language through comprehensible input. Shumin (1997) accentuates the challenges adult learners face due to limited exposure, which can impact fluency and cultural pragmatics. Attitude is another crucial factor, with Elliot (1995) noting that learners with positive attitudes towards pronunciation exhibit better proficiency. Instructional approaches significantly shape pronunciation learning, with Elliot (1995) highlighting a lack of emphasis beyond introductory levels, while Barros (2003) discusses the influence of age and mother tongue transfer on pronunciation accuracy. Avery and Ehrlich (1992, as cited in Thanasoulas, 2003) further elaborate on the impact of mother tongue influence on pronunciation, particularly in sound perception and production.

Understanding these factors offers valuable insights for educators tailoring effective pronunciation instruction in EFL contexts like Nepal. Recent research by Smith and Johnson (2018) suggest that incorporating motivational strategies and providing ample exposure to authentic English contexts can significantly enhance learners' pronunciation skills, underscoring the importance of addressing these factors in EFL pedagogy. Moreover, pronunciation acquisition is influenced by a variety of learner variables (Brown, 2007). These include native language, age, exposure, innate phonetic ability, identity and language ego, and motivation and concern for good pronunciation. Native language plays a pivotal role in pronunciation learning due to inherent phonological differences among languages (Brown, 2014). Learners' efforts to overcome these differences and their familiarity with their native languages sound system contribute significantly to improving English pronunciation.

Age also plays a crucial role, with pre-puberty children showing potential for native-like pronunciation through continuous exposure (Brown, 2007). While the notion of a critical period beyond puberty remains debated, research indicates possibilities for adults to achieve native-like accents (Singleton, 2005). Exposure to the target language in authentic contexts is paramount for language acquisition, highlighting the importance of ample comprehensible input (Saville-Trolke, 2006). Innate phonetic ability, often associated with exposure to English-speaking environments, influences learners' success in sounding like native speakers (Brown, 2014). However, various factors, including biology and physiology, contribute to individuals' abilities to attain native-like pronunciation. Identity and language ego also play significant roles, with positive attitudes towards the target language and its speakers enhancing pronunciation learning (Dörnyei, 2009; Haider & Shakir, 2023). Learners who identify positively with the target language and its speakers are more likely to succeed in developing native-like pronunciation. Motivation emerges as a dominant influence, with high intrinsic motivation correlating with better pronunciation outcomes (Meléndez, 2006; Tanner, 2012; Ute & Christiane, 2000). Conversely, a lack of motivation may hinder pronunciation improvement efforts.

Components of Pronunciation

Pronunciation in speaking skills encompasses the production of sounds both in isolation and in connected speech. According to Kelly (2000, p.1), phonemes and suprasegmental features are integral components of pronunciation, while Ur (2005, p.47) identifies the sound of language, stress, intonation, and rhythm as fundamental aspects. Similarly, Kenworthy (1992, pp.10-11) outlines a range of components including the combination of sounds, word stress, rhythm, weak forms, and intonation. The following discussion highlights these components.

Sounds/Phonemes

Phonemes constitute the smallest distinct units of sound in a language, essential for distinguishing between words. They are produced through various articulatory processes and play a crucial role in language comprehension and production (Ur, 2005). Sounds are articulated in different manners involving the movement of air through the vocal tract, such as stops, fricatives, and nasals, each contributing to the formation of distinct phonemes (Roach, 2009). This discourse discusses how phonemes, the smallest units of sound in a language, produced through different articulatory processes, are essential for distinguishing words, with sounds articulated in various manners influencing phoneme formation.

Intonation and Tone

Intonation refers to the variation in pitch across an utterance, while tone

pertains to distinctive pitch levels that differentiate word meanings. These aspects are significant in conveying nuances of meaning and communicative intent in spoken language (Ladefoged & Johnson, 2011). Intonation patterns also serve pragmatic functions, such as indicating sentence types (e.g. declarative, interrogative) and conveying emotions (Celce-Murcia et al., 2019). This component highlights the significance of intonation and tone in spoken language, with intonation conveying nuances of meaning and communicative intent, while tone distinguishes word meanings, and both serve pragmatic functions such as indicating sentence types and conveying emotions.

Connected Speech

Connected speech refers to the natural flow of language in continuous discourse, characterized by features such as catenation, intrusion, linking, contraction, elision, and assimilation. Understanding these features enhances learners' ability to comprehend and produce spoken language in authentic contexts (Celce-Murcia et al., 2019). Moreover, connected speech phenomena reflect the dynamic nature of language production, where speech sounds undergo modifications in connected discourse for ease of articulation and fluency (Celce-Murcia et al., 2019). These discussions focus on how understanding connected speech features aids learners in comprehending and producing spoken language authentically, reflecting language's dynamic nature.

Rhythm

Rhythm denotes the regular pattern of stressed syllables in speech, contributing to the musicality and cadence of language. It involves the systematic arrangement of stressed and unstressed syllables within utterances, influencing overall fluency and intelligibility (Roach, 2009). Rhythmic patterns vary across languages and dialects, affecting the prosodic characteristics of speech and contributing to its naturalness and expressiveness (Celce-Murcia et al., 2019). Rhythm in speech, characterized by the systematic arrangement of stressed and unstressed syllables, impacts fluency, intelligibility, and prosodic characteristics across languages and dialects, contributing to the naturalness and expressiveness of speech.

Stress/Accent

Stress or accent refers to the emphasis placed on particular syllables within words, contributing to their perceptual prominence. Mastery of stress patterns enhances learners' ability to convey meaning effectively and facilitates clearer communication (Celce-Murcia et al., 2019). Additionally, accent variation may occur due to regional, social, or individual differences, influencing the intelligibility

and comprehensibility of spoken language in diverse contexts (Roach, 2009). Pronunciation encompasses the production of individual sounds, as well as suprasegmental features such as stress, tone, intonation, rhythm, and connected speech, all of which are essential for effective spoken communication.

Importance of Pronunciation

Pronunciation in spoken language acquisition involves the mastery of individual sounds and suprasegmental features, essential for effective communication. According to recent research by Derwing and Munro (2015), these components encompass phonemes, intonation, rhythm, stress, and connected speech phenomena. Phonemes, as highlighted by Kelly (2000), are the smallest units of sound that distinguish meaning in language. Recent studies by Hayes-Harb and Watzinger-Tharp (2012) emphasize the importance of understanding phonetic features and articulatory processes in pronunciation instruction. Additionally, intonation patterns, as noted by Gussenhoven and Chen (2008), play a vital role in conveying pragmatic functions and emotional nuances in spoken discourse. Rhythm, another integral component, influences the cadence and fluency of speech, as discussed by Dauer (2005). Stress and accentuation, as highlighted by Cutler and Otake (2017), contribute to lexical prominence and aid in conveying emphasis and meaning in spoken language. Furthermore, connected speech phenomena, including catenation and assimilation, as explored by Bybee (2010), reflect the natural flow and coarticulatory processes inherent in spoken language production. Understanding and mastering these components are essential for learners to achieve intelligible and fluent spoken communication.

Pronunciation in Individual and Social Life

Pronunciation serves as a vital component not just in personal expression but also in shaping social identity, reflecting affiliations with specific communities and social groups. This intersection between pronunciation and social identity encompasses intricate dynamics of power, solidarity, and group membership, often leading to stigmatization and the delineation of in-groups and out-groups. Moreover, socio-economic factors, such as prestige and social status, significantly influence pronunciation, contributing to non-reciprocal intelligibility between different social groups. In discussing the resistance to pronunciation change, recent research by López-Madrado (2020) elucidates how individuals may perceive their mother tongue as a deeply rooted aspect of their identity, akin to an “umbilical cord” connecting them to their cultural and linguistic heritage. This perspective underscores the formidable challenge individuals face when attempting to modify their pronunciation while learning a second language, as it involves altering a fundamental aspect of their self-concept. López-Madrado’s findings underscore the increasing significance

of pronunciation teaching in language education, highlighting its elevated importance compared to conventional emphases on grammar and vocabulary.

Pronunciation in Language Use and Language System

Pronunciation plays a pivotal role in both the use and system of language, facilitating effective communication and conveying meaning in discourse. Within spoken discourse, participants engage in specific speech events with defined topics and purposes, aiming to convey their messages clearly and accurately. This process involves packaging information into meaningful units or sense groups, with tone and intonation serving as crucial elements for signaling prominence and conveying social meanings. Recent studies by Gussenhoven and Rietveld (2019) emphasize the significance of intonation in expressing speaker involvement and conveying pragmatic information in discourse. Furthermore, the distinction between stressed and unstressed syllables is essential for intelligibility and effective communication, with stressed syllables receiving greater muscular effort than unstressed ones. Recent research by Smith and Johnson (2018) underscore the importance of stress placement in facilitating comprehension and ensuring accurate pronunciation, particularly for learners at various proficiency levels. At the segmental level, understanding the distinctive sounds in a language is crucial, as they express differences in meaning. Additionally, awareness of allophones, which are phonetic realizations of phonemes in specific sound environments, requires knowledge of articulatory phonetics and an understanding of how sounds are produced in the target language, as highlighted by recent studies in phonetics and language acquisition (Soleimani et al., 2020). Studies underscore the importance of understanding articulatory phonetics and sound production in the target language for recognizing allophones.

Pronunciation in Pedagogy

In the realm of pedagogy, pronunciation stands as a cornerstone within classroom dynamics, wielding significant influence over learners' language acquisition journeys. Within the diverse tapestry of a classroom, learners bring forth their individual identities, each imbued with unique sociolinguistic nuances and motivations driving their pursuit of language proficiency (Smith & Johnson, 2018)). Pronunciation serves as a mirror reflecting not only the phonetic accuracy of speech but also the sociolinguistic and political attitudes underlying learners' engagement with non-native accents (Levis, 2018). Consequently, educators are tasked with the multifaceted challenge of navigating these intricacies, crafting pronunciation instruction that acknowledges and accommodates the diverse linguistic backgrounds and sociolinguistic orientations of their students (Soleimani et al., 2020). By

recognizing the integral role of pronunciation in shaping learners' language identities and attitudes, educators can foster inclusive and empowering learning environments that honor the linguistic diversity present within the classroom.

The discourse above underscores the indispensable nature of pronunciation within the realm of second language acquisition. It emerges as a fundamental component shaping learners' linguistic competence and communicative abilities. Successful pronunciation acquisition hinges not only on effective pedagogical strategies but also on collaborative efforts between teachers and students throughout the learning journey. Indeed, pedagogical perspectives highlight the pivotal role of intelligible pronunciation in fostering communicative competence. However, the crux lies in setting realistic and relevant goals tailored to students' communication needs, with active student participation being integral to the learning process. In essence, pronunciation proficiency is attainable through a symbiotic relationship between educators and learners, wherein both parties actively engage in the pursuit of linguistic mastery.

Challenges in Teaching Pronunciation

In the realm of pedagogy, pronunciation stands as a cornerstone within classroom dynamics, wielding significant influence over learners' language acquisition journeys. Within the diverse tapestry of a classroom, learners bring forth their individual identities, each imbued with unique sociolinguistic nuances and motivations driving their pursuit of language proficiency (Smith & Johnson, 2018)). Pronunciation serves as a mirror reflecting not only the phonetic accuracy of speech but also the sociolinguistic and political attitudes underlying learners' engagement with non-native accents (Levis, 2018). Consequently, educators are tasked with the multifaceted challenge of navigating these intricacies, crafting pronunciation instruction that acknowledges and accommodates the diverse linguistic backgrounds and sociolinguistic orientations of their students (Soleimani et al., 2020). By recognizing the integral role of pronunciation in shaping learners' language identities and attitudes, educators can foster inclusive and empowering learning environments that honor the linguistic diversity present within the classroom. In the same vein, Kelly (2000) identifies two key problems associated with teaching pronunciation: neglect and reactive teaching strategies. Pronunciation tends to be overlooked in language instruction, and when addressed, it is often done reactively rather than through strategic planning. Similarly, Harmer (2008) highlights issues related to students' auditory and speaking capabilities, as well as challenges with intonation. Additionally, Curttenden (2001) points out inherent difficulties in pronunciation itself, discrepancies between spelling and pronunciation, large class sizes, and the scarcity of authentic audio materials as major obstacles in pronunciation teaching.

Reception Problem

A significant challenge in pronunciation learning is the reception problem, where learners struggle to accurately perceive sounds spoken by the speaker. When learners cannot clearly hear a sound, their brain may interpret it as the closest sound in their native language. For example, the English dental fricative /θ/ in “those” may be misheard and produced as a dentalized [d], resulting in the pronunciation of “dose” (Smith, 2020). This reception issue hampers learners’ ability to accurately replicate the target pronunciation, leading to deviations from the intended pronunciation.

First Language Interference

The influence of a learner’s native language on their English pronunciation is a common challenge in language acquisition. For instance, the aspiration of consonants like /p/ differs between English and languages such as Nepali. In English, /p/ is aspirated, while in Nepali, it is not. As a result, Nepali speakers learning English may pronounce words like ‘pig’ without aspiration due to the influence of their native language (Byrne & Hilbert, 2020).

Sound Existence

Research suggests that individuals may find it challenging to hear and replicate sounds that are not present in their native language. For instance, Nepali speakers may struggle to distinguish between sounds like “sheep” and “ship” because the Nepali language lacks distinct phonemes for /s/ and /ʃ/ [commonly represented as /ʃ/]. According to studies by Werker and Tees (1984), speakers often face difficulties in acquiring new phonetic distinctions beyond those present in their first language due to the influence of linguistic background and phonetic inventory.

Learners

Recent studies underscore the significance of the individual learner as a crucial variable in pronunciation teaching, with various factors influencing its success or failure. Key factors identified include the learner’s age, exposure to the target language, extent and nature of prior pronunciation instruction, aptitude, and motivation (Derwing & Munro, 2015; Levis, 2018; Thomson & Derwing, 2015). These factors interact in complex ways to shape the learner’s pronunciation proficiency and development.

Inconsistency and Irregularity of English

The English orthography is widely recognized for its inconsistency and irregularity, making it challenging to predict pronunciation solely based on spelling. For instance, the same sound /k/ can be spelled differently in words such as “cat,”

“kite,” “check,” and “queue.” This inconsistency poses difficulties for learners and can impede their mastery of pronunciation (Carney, 1994; Crystal, 2013; Venezky, 1970). The inconsistent and irregular nature of English orthography, exemplified by varying spellings for the same sound, presents challenges for learners in predicting pronunciation solely based on spelling, thereby impeding their mastery of pronunciation.

Inability of the Learners to Read Transcription

The incapacity of learners to read phonetic transcriptions presents a significant obstacle. When learners struggle to identify and reproduce pronunciation symbols from dictionaries, their learning process becomes greatly impeded. This challenge is well-documented in the literature (Gatbonton & Segalowitz, 2005; Jones, 2003; Roach, 2009). The documented struggle of learners to decipher and replicate pronunciation symbols underscores the critical need for innovative approaches to phonetic instruction and dictionary usage in language learning contexts.

Techniques of Teaching Pronunciation

Approaches to teaching pronunciation have undergone significant evolution within language instruction, transitioning from a traditional focus on isolated speech sounds to a more communicative approach centered around connected speech. Despite this progression, many educators still grapple with the importance of pronunciation in language education and its integration into the curriculum. Questions often arise regarding the necessity of pronunciation instruction, the effectiveness of various teaching methods, and the value of drills targeting specific sounds and patterns (Smith, 2020). While contemporary pronunciation textbooks may reflect updated understandings of pronunciation, the teaching methodologies often align with behaviorist principles of language acquisition. These methods typically involve exercises such as imitation, discrimination drills, oral reading, and comparisons between native and target language sound systems.

The debate over whether pronunciation warrants dedicated instruction and which instructional approaches are most effective persists. Some advocate for direct instruction, which explicitly focuses on pronunciation skills through targeted exercises and feedback, while others prefer an indirect approach, integrating pronunciation practice into communicative language activities (Jones, 2003; Kirkova-Naskova, 2023). This ongoing discussion underscores the need for research-based insights into the efficacy of different teaching strategies and the role of pronunciation in language learning. As language education continues to evolve,

educators must critically evaluate instructional practices to ensure the most effective and engaging learning experiences for students.

In a similar vein, research on pronunciation strategy use has opened another avenue of inquiry into effective language learning techniques. For instance, Nooteboom and Quené (2013) observed that advanced ESOL learners employ various self-monitoring strategies to rectify mispronunciations. These strategies encompass imitation, paralinguistic (such as speed, volume, and clarity), adjustments in voice quality settings, and focusing on individual sounds, clusters, syllables, or words, as well as prosodic structure. Additionally, studies indicate that high- and low-achieving learners adopt different pronunciation learning strategies (PLSs), with variations depending on the task (Szyszka, 2017). In Szyszka's (2017) research, it was found that both groups of learners predominantly utilized certain PLSs, including checking pronunciation in dictionaries and reading words and texts aloud. Furthermore, Sardegna (2022) conducted strategy-based instruction and examined its effectiveness. The study revealed that such instruction fosters learner autonomy and self-regulated learning.

Learners trained to utilize pronunciation strategy protocols demonstrated greater success when they practiced frequently, exhibited higher motivation to continue practicing after the instruction period ended, and reported a heightened sense of self-efficacy. Dalton and Seidlhofer (1994) outlined eight primary techniques for teaching pronunciation: elicited mechanical production, listen and repeat, discrimination practice, sounds for making contrasts, cognitive analysis, communicative activities and games, whole brain activities, and learning strategies. They emphasize that pronunciation exercises should be simple, accessible, fun, and involve both reception and production. Some adults may initially feel awkward making exaggerated facial expressions when practicing vowel sounds, but once they overcome this, they tend to enjoy the pronunciation work. In the same connection, Ur (2005) expands on techniques for improving learners' pronunciation:

- Imitation of teachers or recorded models of sounds, words, and sentences.
- Recording learner speech, contrasted with native models.
- Systematic explanation and instruction, including details of mouth structure and movements.
- Imitation drills: repetition of sounds, words, and sentences.
- Choral repetition of drills.
- Varied repetition of drills, including varied speech, volume, and mood.

- Learning and performing dialogues with choral work and varied speed, volume, and mood.
- Learning by heart sentences, rhymes, jingles, jazz chants, and tongue twisters.
- Self-correction through listening to recordings of one's own speech.

Additionally, Ur suggests techniques for teaching pronunciation with spelling, such as dictation of words or sentences with similar spelling problems, reading aloud syllables, words, phrases, and sentences, and engaging in various dictation exercises. These techniques aim to enhance learners' pronunciation skills effectively. Similarly, Schaetzel (2009) outlines four key techniques for teaching pronunciation:

- Foster a positive attitude towards accuracy in pronunciation.
- Identify and address specific pronunciation features that challenge learners.
- Raise learners' awareness of the prosodic aspects of language, such as intonation and stress patterns.
- Emphasize the development of learners' communicative competence alongside pronunciation skills.

These techniques aim to create a supportive learning environment that encourages accurate pronunciation while also enhancing learners' overall communicative abilities. According to Beare (2017), there are three primary techniques for teaching pronunciation:

- Utilize minimal pairs
- Teach word stress patterns
- Introduce stress and intonation

These methods focus on developing learners' ability to distinguish between similar sounds, understand word stress patterns, and grasp the nuances of stress and intonation in spoken language. Teaching pronunciation in second language acquisition requires a multifaceted approach to address learners' diverse needs. One effective technique involves the use of minimal pairs to highlight specific pronunciation differences (Derwing & Munro, 2015). Additionally, modeling and imitation are crucial in helping learners develop accurate pronunciation through auditory modeling (Celce-Murcia et al., 2019). Providing students with audio recordings of native speakers pronouncing words and phrases simultaneously enhances listening and speaking skills (Pennington, 1996). Introducing phonetic symbols aids in understanding and producing specific sounds accurately (Roach, 2009). Furthermore, pronunciation drills and repetition exercises reinforce correct pronunciation patterns (Gilbert, 2008). Visual aids, such as diagrams and mouth

shapes, illustrate how sounds are produced physically, enhancing students' articulatory awareness (Dalton & Seidlhofer, 1994). When done supportively, error correction helps students self-correct pronunciation errors (Vandergrift, 1997). Integrating pronunciation practice into meaningful contexts, such as dialogues and role-plays, increases student motivation and engagement (Nunan, 2004). Focused practice on problematic sounds and integration with other language skills are also essential for comprehensive pronunciation instruction (Derwing & Munro, 2015). Concerning the context of Nepal, research showed that Most teachers favored employing drilling as the most convenient technique for teaching pronunciation in the classroom. Additionally, teachers were observed to utilize minimal pairs, visual representations of phonemes, pronunciation and spelling activities, and listening and reading exercises (Bhattarai, 2023; Karki, 2018). These techniques, supported by research and pedagogical theory, provide a comprehensive framework for enhancing learners' pronunciation proficiency.

Conclusion

The comprehensive exploration of pronunciation instruction in EFL contexts reveals a multifaceted landscape characterized by diverse perspectives, challenges, and effective teaching techniques. Numerous factors influence pronunciation acquisition, including learners' native language, exposure to the target language, motivation, and instructional methods. Pronunciation instruction addresses diverse components such as phonemes, intonation, stress, rhythm, and connected speech, all pivotal for proficient spoken communication. Moreover, the significance of pronunciation transcends linguistic competence, impacting learners' social identity, language use, and pedagogical approaches. Challenges in teaching pronunciation encompass neglect, first language interference, and the reception problem, underscoring the necessity for innovative instructional strategies and heightened awareness of learners' individual requirements.

Effective teaching techniques encompass a breadth of approaches, including minimal pairs, modeling and imitation, audio recordings, phonetic symbols, pronunciation drills, visual aids, error correction, contextualization, and integration with other language skills. Research on pronunciation strategy utilization has introduced another dimension to effective language learning techniques, encompassing imitation, paralinguistic, adjustments in voice quality settings, and focusing on individual linguistic elements such as sounds, clusters, syllables, or words and prosodic structure. Furthermore, studies suggest that learners with varying levels of proficiency adopt different pronunciation learning strategies (PLSs), with strategies varying depending on the task. Regarding instructional interventions, strategy-based instruction has been examined for its efficacy. Such

interventions promote learner autonomy and self-regulated learning. Learners trained in pronunciation strategy protocols exhibit increased success when practicing frequently, are motivated to continue practising beyond the instruction period, and report enhanced self-efficacy.

The implications of these findings are multifaceted. Educators should embrace a comprehensive approach to pronunciation instruction that accommodates learners' diverse needs and fosters communicative competence. Educators can enhance learners' pronunciation proficiency and overall language acquisition by integrating evidence-based techniques into pedagogical practice. Moreover, raising awareness of the importance of pronunciation in language education is crucial for its inclusion within curricular frameworks and instructional priorities. Continuous professional development opportunities for educators can facilitate the implementation of effective teaching strategies and ensure pedagogical excellence in pronunciation instruction. Additionally, future research should explore innovative approaches to pronunciation teaching, considering emerging language education trends and pedagogical theory advancements. Ultimately, prioritizing pronunciation instruction and embracing evidence-based practices empower learners to achieve greater fluency, accuracy, and confidence in spoken communication, facilitating their integration into diverse linguistic and cultural contexts.

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Teacher Educators' Experiences of Integrating Digital Technologies in English Language Teaching

Dammar Singh Saud

Far Western University, Nepal

ORCID: 0009-0009-3029-7830

Email: dammarsaud68@fwu.edu.np

Abstract

Incorporating digital technologies into English Language Teaching (ELT) has become an essential aspect for enhancing teaching and learning experiences. This hermeneutic phenomenological study explores the experiences of four university-level English language teacher educators in Darchula regarding integrating digital technologies into ELT. Utilising semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis guided by the DigCompEdu Framework, the research reveals the educators' lived experiences with digital technology integration. The findings highlight how digital tools are employed to improve teaching and learning experiences, boost student engagement, enhance access to educational materials, and create dynamic and interactive learning environments. Despite these benefits, the study also underscores the need to address technical challenges and adopt a balanced approach to using online resources to maximize advantages while mitigating potential drawbacks. By providing teacher educators and policymakers in Nepal with insights into the significance of digital technologies and the potential of the DigCompEdu framework, this article aims to promote more effective integration of digital technologies in ELT classrooms.

Keywords: English language teaching, DigCompEdu Framework, digital resources, digital competence

Introduction

Digital technology has been reshaping the global education landscape, and Nepal has not remained untouched by this transformation. Despite the growing availability of digital resources, English language teacher educators in Nepalese universities have faced challenges when it comes to seamlessly integrating digital



practices into their classrooms. The problem lies in the limited competence among these educators, which has been a significant hindrance to the successful incorporation of digital technology into instruction.

Prior research has primarily focused on various aspects related to ICT in English Language Teaching (ELT), such as its role (Gnawali, 2020; Hidayati, 2016; Wright, 2014), promises and barriers (Acharya, 2014; Laudari, 2019; Muslem et al., 2018; Ramorola, 2010), the disconnection between ICT policies and actual practices (Rana, 2018), ICT's role in online education (Jha, 2020; Pangeni, 2017), and the digital competences and practices of EFL teachers in ELT classrooms (Poudel, 2021, Saud, 2021). These studies highlight the potential of digital technologies in enhancing ELT but also underscore the significant barriers, particularly in the context of teacher competence and the practical implementation of ICT policies.

However, gaps remain in understanding the lived experiences of ELT teacher educators in integrating digital technologies into their teaching practices, particularly in the remote regions of Nepal. This gap is critical as addressing it can lead to more effective strategies for overcoming barriers and enhancing digital competence among educators. The DigCompEdu Framework, which outlines specific skills and competencies required for effective digital integration, emerges as a valuable resource in this context.

This study delves into the exploration of challenges and prospects associated with digital practices in English language education within Nepal, utilizing the European Framework for the Digital Competence of Educators (DigCompEdu) as its theoretical lens. By conducting semi-structured interviews with four ELT teacher educators from university campuses in Darchula and performing a thematic analysis of the data, this research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the obstacles and requirements faced by these educators.

The DigCompEdu framework offers a holistic perspective on the precise skills and competencies essential for teacher educators to proficiently incorporate technology into their teaching methodologies. This study analyzes the framework's potential to address the challenges faced in English language education in Nepal by focusing on its six areas of digital competence: professional engagement, digital resources, teaching and learning, assessment, empowering learners, and facilitating learners' digital competence.

This study seeks to enhance the existing body of knowledge concerning digital practices in ELT classrooms in remote parts of Nepal. It aims to offer ELT teacher educators and policymakers a deeper comprehension of the importance of digital competence and the potential utility of the DigCompEdu framework. The

ultimate objective is to facilitate a more streamlined integration of technology within ELT classrooms, thereby equipping educators and students with the necessary skills for instruction that incorporate digital technologies. Furthermore, the findings and insights garnered from this research may hold relevance beyond the Nepalese context, potentially offering valuable guidance to other regions facing similar challenges in the integration of digital practices within English language education.

By investigating these aspects, this research intends to fill the existing gaps in the literature and contribute to a more nuanced understanding of digital technology integration in ELT, ultimately aiding in the development of more effective educational strategies and policies.

DigCpmEdu Framework

The emergence of digital technologies has brought about profound changes in human behaviour, mirroring the transformative impact on language teaching driven by the integration of advanced educational technologies. Dias-Trindade et al. (2021) stated that the European Framework for the Digital Competence of Educators serves as an invaluable resource for equipping educators with the essential skills needed to effectively incorporate digital technologies into their teaching methods. This framework, rooted in the beliefs upheld by Ghomi and Redecker (2019) and García-Vandewalle García et al. (2023), underscores the crucial role of educators in nurturing digital competencies in students as an integral part of education in the digital age.

The DigCompEdu framework, elaborated by Dias-Trindade and Moreira (2020), presents a comprehensive model for addressing ICT-related issues in English Language Education through three dimensions: Educators' Professional Competencies, Educators' Pedagogic Competencies, and Learners' Competencies. Within these dimensions, six sub-dimensions—Professional Engagement, Digital Resources, Teaching and Learning, Assessment, Empowering Learners, and Facilitating Learners' Digital Competence—encompass a total of twenty-two specific skills, providing a detailed and holistic perspective on the competencies educators need for proficient digital practices in language classrooms. Employing this framework to assess ELT teachers' experiences with ICT and their reported competencies offers a nuanced understanding of the integration of digital technology in ELT classrooms. This approach aligns with the insights of Caena and Redecker (2019), highlighting its potential impact across various educational levels. Furthermore, the emphasis on enhancing digital proficiency among university students and educators, as highlighted by Zhao et al. (2021), reinforces the ongoing

importance of prioritizing these skills within higher education institutions. The framework, as grouped into these six main areas, outlines specific competencies that educators should possess, which are discussed in the following sections.

Professional Engagement

Professional Engagement in education underscores the vital role of educators in using digital tools to enhance communication within their educational institutions, encompassing interactions with students, parents, and external stakeholders (Redecker, 2017). This involves educators collaborating with peers, actively participating in knowledge sharing, and contributing to the development of innovative teaching methods. Reflective practice is central to this aspect, prompting educators to engage in self-reflection and group discussions, critically assess their digital teaching approaches, and actively enhance digital pedagogy within their personal and educational communities (Cabero-Almenara et al., 2021). Additionally, educators are encouraged to utilize digital resources for ongoing professional development to stay updated on the latest technologies and best practices, aligning with the overarching goals of fostering effective organizational communication, promoting professional collaboration, facilitating reflective practice, and supporting continuous digital professional development.

Digital Resources

Educators play a pivotal role in the realm of digital resources, as highlighted by Redecker (2017). They must be competent in selecting, creating, and managing digital materials, considering various factors such as learning objectives, teaching context, pedagogical strategies, and the learner demographic. This competence extends to adapting and enhancing openly licensed or permissible resources and developing new digital educational materials while aligning with specific learning goals, context, pedagogical approaches, and the target audience. Proficiency in organizing digital content for accessibility, safeguarding sensitive content, adhering to privacy and copyright regulations, and understanding the use and creation of open licenses and open educational resources with proper attribution is also crucial (Moorhouse, 2023). These competencies encompass key objectives: selecting digital resources, creating, and modifying digital resources, and managing, protecting, and sharing digital resources.

Teaching and Learning

In the realm of Teaching and Learning, educators play a pivotal role in integrating digital tools and resources into their teaching practices, effectively managing digital interventions, and exploring innovative pedagogical approaches (Redecker, 2017). This area underscores educators' capacity to utilize digital

technologies to enhance learner engagement, both individually and collaboratively, both within and beyond formal learning settings. It also encourages educators to offer timely, personalized guidance and support while experimenting with novel methods of assistance. Collaborative learning takes centre stage, promoting the use of digital tools in group assignments to improve communication, teamwork, and knowledge co-creation (Ibrahim, 2023). Furthermore, self-regulated learning is emphasized, with educators leveraging digital technologies to aid learners in planning, monitoring, and reflecting on their learning journeys, as well as showcasing progress, sharing insights, and fostering innovative problem-solving. The overarching objectives revolve around seamlessly integrating digital tools into teaching, providing guidance, facilitating collaborative learning, and supporting self-regulated learning.

Assessment

Assessment plays a pivotal role in education by leveraging digital tools for both formative and summative evaluations, and diversifying assessment approaches (Redecker, 2017). Educators are expected to possess the skills to create, select, critically evaluate, and interpret digital data related to learner activities and performance to enhance teaching and learning (Hidayah & Prihantoro, 2022). They should use digital technologies to provide timely feedback, adjust teaching methods, and offer personalized support. Furthermore, educators must help learners and parents understand and utilize data generated by digital tools for decision-making. This encompasses assessment strategies, evidence analysis, feedback, and planning, all aimed at improving the assessment process through digital means.

Empowering Learners

Empowering Learners, as highlighted by Redecker (2017), underscores the crucial need to provide equitable access to learning materials and activities, especially for learners with special needs, considering individual expectations, abilities, digital proficiency, and cultural backgrounds. It accentuates the educator's role in fostering digital literacy, responsible digital engagement, ethical technology use, critical thinking, and creativity. Entrepreneurship education is also central, focusing on cultivating an entrepreneurial mindset and skills to prepare learners for the opportunities presented by the digital economy and society (Chung & Choi, 2023). This encompasses objectives related to accessibility, inclusion, differentiation, personalization, and active learner engagement, ultimately creating an inclusive and dynamic learning environment that caters to diverse learner needs while encouraging active participation and creativity.

Facilitating Learners' Digital Competence

Facilitating Learners' Digital Competence, as outlined by Redecker (2017),

encompasses educators' proficiency in using essential digital tools for teaching, learning, and assessment, including virtual classrooms, and learning management systems, along with competence in handling digital devices such as interactive whiteboards, tablets, and laptops. This domain also underscores the importance of digital security, necessitating educators to possess knowledge and skills for safeguarding digital infrastructure, data, and information, including the ability to counter cyber threats and implement recovery measures during digital emergencies. Subsequently, educators must be equipped to manage crises, deploy recovery protocols during service disruptions, and ensure uninterrupted teaching and learning during emergencies (Iskandar et al., 2022). This overarching goal encompasses sub-areas such as Information and Media Literacy, Digital Communication and Collaboration, Digital Content Creation, Responsible Use, and Digital Problem-Solving, each of which delineates objectives related to promoting information literacy, fostering responsible digital behaviour, and enhancing problem-solving skills among learners.

Research into teachers' digital competencies has revealed disparities between their perceived skills and actual abilities. Zhao et al. (2020) found that while teachers generally considered themselves proficient in digital competencies, they often lacked the ability to create digital content. Similarly, Monteiro and Leite (2021) observed that the underutilization of pedagogical support hampers digital transformation in higher education, impacting both emergency and long-term scenarios. Bond et al. (2018) emphasized that universities focus on enhancing digital skills among future professionals to prepare them for ICT's growing relevance in various contexts, particularly the workplace, where these skills enhance problem-solving and solution-seeking capabilities.

Despite these findings, there remain significant gaps in understanding how to effectively bridge the gap between perceived and actual digital competencies. Specifically, teachers often feel competent in general digital skills but lack specific capabilities in digital content creation. Additionally, there is a notable underutilization of available pedagogical support, which is crucial for successful digital transformation. Moreover, existing research often does not account for the specific challenges faced by teachers in diverse educational contexts.

Addressing these gaps is critical because without proficiency in digital content creation, teachers cannot fully leverage technology to enhance learning experiences. Furthermore, the underutilization of pedagogical support can impede the long-term sustainability of digital initiatives in education. Understanding and addressing the unique challenges in different teaching contexts ensures that professional development programs are relevant and effective.

The design and execution of this research were informed by these identified gaps in several ways. The literature highlighted the need to focus on specific digital competencies, such as content creation, guiding the development of targeted research questions and hypotheses. Recognizing the importance of pedagogical support informed the methodology, ensuring that the research examined both the availability and utilization of such support in different educational settings. Additionally, the research design incorporated a diverse range of educational contexts, ensuring that the findings would be broadly applicable and relevant.

The DigCompEdu framework was pivotal in this research, providing a comprehensive tool for assessing educators' technology utilization skills and consistently revealing deficiencies in technology integration (Caena & Redecker, 2019; Monteiro & Leite, 2021; Zhao et al., 2020). By identifying specific challenges in various teaching contexts, the research was able to propose tailored professional development initiatives. These initiatives aim to enhance technology integration, improve engagement and critical thinking, and ensure that professional development programs are customized to meet educators' needs.

Furthermore, the research underscored the adaptability of the DigCompEdu framework, which ensures its continued relevance as technology evolves. This adaptability makes it a valuable resource for informing policies, curricula, and professional development initiatives at national and regional levels, ultimately ensuring that educators are well-equipped to meet the evolving needs of students in today's digital era.

Methods and Procedures

This research adopts a hermeneutic phenomenological approach, grounded in the belief that our understanding of the world is shaped by individual subjective experiences, relativist ontology, and value-laden axiology (Taylor & Medina, 2013). This method was chosen to delve deeply into participants' lived experiences, emotions, and perceptions, offering profound insights into the phenomenon at hand. This interpretative paradigm facilitates an in-depth exploration of English language teacher educators' lived experiences and perceptions regarding ICT integration in ELT.

Data Collection

Four teacher educators (TEs) were purposefully selected from two higher education institutions in Darchula, based on their extensive and relevant experiences, to explore their lived experiences of ICT in ELT. These participants, all with at least five years of teaching experience and active involvement in ICT integration, provided rich insights. Semi-structured interviews were conducted in Nepali in familiar

settings at their institutions, with each participant interviewed twice for about an hour each session. The interviews focused on their experiences with digital content creation and pedagogical support, were recorded, transcribed, and translated into English. Respondents were assigned alpha-numeric pseudonyms for confidentiality, and identifying information was removed. Participants reflected on past encounters with ICT, detailing their successes, challenges, and the impact on their teaching practices. Complementary field notes captured non-verbal cues and contextual details, while reflective writings by the researcher offered ongoing interpretation. Guided by the DigCompEdu framework, the study assessed technology utilization skills, with the primary emphasis on the qualitative data reflecting the participants' lived experiences. This comprehensive approach informs tailored professional development initiatives to enhance technology integration and improve educational outcomes in ELT.

Data Analysis

This research utilized thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's (2006) method to explore ICT integration in ELT. The process began with data immersion to deeply engage with participants' narratives, followed by systematic labelling of meaningful units and identification of recurring patterns and connections. Themes such as Benefits of ICT Integration, Professional Engagement, Digital Resources, Teaching and Learning, Assessment, Empowering Learners, Facilitating Learners' Digital Competence, Challenges in ICT Integration, and Strategies for Overcoming Challenges were derived from these patterns. Each theme was rigorously defined to accurately reflect the data and align with research objectives. The analysis synthesized these themes into a cohesive narrative, emphasizing implications for enhancing technology use in ELT. To ensure credibility, member checking and peer debriefing validated interpretations, while ethical considerations were strictly observed throughout, ensuring participant confidentiality, privacy, and adherence to ethical principles.

Findings and Discussion

In this section, I delve into the findings and discussion of our study on the integration of digital technologies in ELT within the context of Darchula, Nepal. Through a hermeneutic phenomenological approach and guided by the DigCompEdu framework, I explore the lived experiences and perspectives of English language teacher educators. These findings illuminate both the challenges and opportunities associated with digital technology integration in ELT, offering insights into effective strategies and implications for pedagogy and policy.

Benefits of ICT Integration in English Language Teaching

This study delves deeply into the advantages of integrating digital technologies into English Language Teaching, drawing insights from the perspectives of four teacher educators. Their voices resoundingly endorse the positive impact of ICT across various educational dimensions. TE1 vividly illustrates this impact, stating, “Interactive whiteboards and online quizzes have transformed my classes. They engage students more actively, make lessons more appealing, and were particularly invaluable for remote teaching during the pandemic.” TE2 supports this view, noting, “Digital tools like gamified platforms and educational apps not only motivate students but also streamline administrative tasks and enhance personalized feedback.” TE3 emphasizes, “ICT has made course materials more accessible and increased student participation,” while TE4 highlights, “It fosters collaboration and improves writing skills through interactive learning experiences.”

In contrast to traditional methods, which retain value, these insights underscore the multifaceted benefits of ICT in enhancing student engagement, motivation, and learning experiences. These findings resonate with student-centred approaches and underscore the importance of equipping students with digital literacy skills essential for thriving in the digital age. As highlighted by TE1, TE2, TE3, and TE4, integrating digital technologies creates dynamic and interactive learning environments that accommodate diverse learning styles and improve overall class effectiveness.

Moreover, these qualitative findings align with previous research (Gnawali, 2020; Hidayati, 2016), which also supports the positive impact of ICT in education. By connecting these voices directly, this study not only validates but also enriches the understanding of how digital technologies can effectively support English Language Teaching. This comprehensive perspective advocates for continued integration efforts and underscores the transformative potential of ICT in enhancing educational outcomes.

Professional Engagement

Professional engagement is a crucial component influencing the career progression of TEs, encompassing organizational communication, collaboration, reflective practice, and digital continuous professional development. Within ELT, TEs have embraced digital technologies to revolutionize their professional practices. They rely heavily on platforms like email, messaging apps, and video conferencing tools to facilitate efficient communication with students, colleagues, and other stakeholders. For instance, TE1 highlighted how Zoom transcended geographical boundaries, enabling international academic conferences and global scholarly

exchange: “Zoom has been instrumental in connecting us with colleagues from around the world. It’s not just about meetings; we’ve hosted entire conferences where scholars from different continents could participate and share their research.”

Messenger groups such as WhatsApp, cited by TE2, facilitate seamless communication within organizations: “WhatsApp groups are our lifeline for quick updates and discussions. We use it daily to coordinate with our department and ensure everyone stays informed.”

Similarly, TE3 and TE4 emphasized using online surveys for feedback and learning management systems for instructional communication: “We use online surveys to gather student feedback promptly, which helps us adjust our teaching methods in real-time,” noted TE3. TE4 added, “Learning management systems have transformed how we deliver course materials and interact with students. It’s made teaching more interactive and accessible.”

Moreover, professional collaboration among TEs thrives in the digital landscape, leveraging platforms for communication, resource sharing, and collaborative projects. TE1 exemplified the use of learning management systems for academic collaboration (Wulantari et al., 2023). TE2 emphasized cross-location collaborations via video calls to enhance knowledge about digital technologies in ELT. TE3 fostered community through online webinars, enriching teaching methodologies. TE4 engaged in workshops and conferences, utilizing digital technologies to disseminate teaching strategies (Dhanavel, 2023). These experiences underscore how digital tools transform professional engagement and advance ELT practices.

The integration of digital resources in education, including selection, creation, modification, management, protection, and sharing, significantly enhances student engagement and learning outcomes. TEs prioritize selecting resources aligned with learning objectives, reliability, and accessibility. They employ systematic evaluation criteria to ensure equitable access (Moorhouse, 2023). TEs actively engage in crafting and modifying digital materials to optimize student comprehension and engagement (Heine et al., 2023). Platforms like Google Classroom and OneDrive are used for content management, emphasizing privacy and copyright considerations (Inamorato dos Santos et al., 2023).

In interpreting these findings, TEs’ conscientious approach to digital resources fosters a dynamic educational environment that enhances student engagement and educational outcomes. Their dedication to quality education and equitable access is evident in their selection and adaptation of digital materials.

While managing and sharing resources effectively, TEs acknowledge the importance of ethical and legal considerations in digital education.

Teaching and Learning

In their pursuit of effective teaching and learning strategies, the teacher educators (TEs) examined in this study have prominently incorporated digital technologies into their instructional methods, utilizing a diverse array of tools and platforms to elevate the educational experience. For instance, TE1 emphasized the use of multimedia projectors and interactive whiteboards to create dynamic lessons, stating, “Multimedia elements engage students visually and help in better understanding complex topics.” Similarly, TE2 highlighted the integration of Google Classroom and Messenger groups for remote instruction during the pandemic, noting, “These platforms allowed me to maintain regular interaction and provide immediate feedback outside class.” TE3 and TE4 recommended educational websites and apps, enabling students to explore supplementary materials independently and participate in enriching online discussions, enhancing their overall learning journey.

In terms of guidance and support, these TEs adeptly harnessed digital technologies to provide continuous assistance and foster collaboration among students. TE1 established online discussion forums, where students freely exchanged ideas and received peer feedback, affirming, “The forums encourage active participation and help students develop critical thinking skills.” TE2 utilized video conferencing for personalized support and feedback, explaining, “I use ‘track changes’ in Microsoft Word to give detailed feedback on assignments, which students find very helpful.” TE3 and TE4 maintained seamless communication through learning management systems, ensuring students received timely guidance beyond regular class hours, with TE4 noting, “I believe in being accessible to students whenever they need clarification or support.”

The integration of digital tools extended to collaborative learning practices, where the TEs effectively utilized online platforms to stimulate student collaboration. TE1 facilitated meaningful discussions through online forums, fostering a sense of community among students, who shared, “The forums allow us to debate topics and learn from each other’s perspectives.” TE2 encouraged student engagement by sharing relevant resources and supporting discussions via video conferencing, emphasizing, “Collaborative learning helps students develop teamwork skills essential for their future careers.” TE3 and TE4 utilized various communication channels to promote interaction and problem-solving among students, illustrating the importance of digital platforms in facilitating active participation and collective learning experiences.

Lastly, concerning self-regulated learning, the TEs empowered students to take ownership of their educational journey using digital tools and resources. TE1 utilized social media and online forums to foster self-directed learning and critical thinking, stating, “I encourage students to explore topics independently and share their insights online.” TE2 employed learning management systems for self-assessment and progress tracking, affirming, “Students can monitor their own progress and adjust their learning strategies accordingly.” TE3 encouraged independent exploration through online resources, noting, “Digital tools enable students to delve deeper into topics of interest and develop a deeper understanding.” TE4 utilized online quizzes and interactive platforms to promote self-paced learning and adaptive study habits, remarking, “These tools help students assess their understanding and make improvements.”

In interpreting these findings, the teacher educators in this study have adeptly integrated digital technologies into their teaching, guidance, collaborative learning, and self-regulated learning practices. By amplifying the voices of the TEs and their students through direct quotations and specific examples, this study illuminates how these practices enhance the overall educational experience, preparing students effectively for the challenges and opportunities of the digital age.

Assessment

The theme of Assessment revealed nuanced insights into how TEs integrate digital technologies within their educational contexts. TEs utilized various assessment strategies, with TE1 highlighting the use of Google Forms and Google Classroom for quizzes and assignments, emphasizing immediate feedback and progress tracking. TE4, in contrast, employed a broader range of digital tools such as online quizzes and digital portfolios, offering flexible assessment formats. Reflecting on their practices, TE2 and TE3 expressed challenges in developing digital skills and allocating time for further exploration. This variability underscores the need for targeted professional development initiatives to support TEs in effectively integrating digital technologies into assessment practices:

TE1 remarked, “I find Google Forms very useful for quick quizzes. It helps me see where students are at and adjust my teaching accordingly.”

TE4 elaborated, “Digital portfolios allow students to showcase their work in diverse ways, which helps me assess their understanding more holistically.”

Concurrently, the subtheme of Analyzing Evidence highlighted TEs’ efforts in interpreting assessment data to inform teaching strategies. TE1 documented students’ work digitally to facilitate ongoing reflection and track academic progress over time. In contrast, TE2 utilized a learning management system to monitor online

interactions and submissions, focusing on student engagement indicators. TE3 emphasized metrics such as participation rates and completion rates to gauge learner involvement, while TE4 applied digital tools for comprehensive analysis of learner activities:

TE2 explained, “The LMS helps me track student engagement patterns, which guides how I adjust my lessons based on their online activities.”

TE3 noted, “I look closely at participation rates to understand how actively students are engaging with the course content.”

These insights underscored the pivotal role of digital tools in providing actionable insights into student learning behaviors and academic performance. Such data-driven approaches enable TEs to tailor instructional strategies effectively:

TE4 reflected, “Analyzing digital data helps me understand where students struggle and where they excel, allowing me to adapt my teaching to better support their learning.”

In interpreting these findings, it becomes evident that while some TEs adeptly integrate digital tools for assessment and data analysis, others face challenges in developing these competencies. This variability highlights the importance of continuous professional development tailored to enhance digital skills among educators. By supporting TEs in leveraging digital technologies more effectively, educational institutions can foster improved teaching practices and enhance learning outcomes in diverse educational settings.

Empowering Learners

The concept of empowering learners in education involves equipping students with essential tools and knowledge to take charge of their learning journey. Throughout this study, participants articulated their experiences and strategies, illustrating a nuanced understanding of these themes. In the subtheme of accessibility and inclusion, one participant emphasized, “I use educational apps that provide captions and audio descriptions to ensure all students, including those with disabilities, can access the content effectively.” This approach highlights a commitment to equitable learning environments through digital tools. Another participant shared, “I integrate online platforms that allow students to engage in discussions and collaborative projects, promoting inclusivity in classroom interactions.”

Regarding differentiation and personalization, participants discussed varied approaches tailored to individual student needs. As one educator stated, “I curate online resources that cater to different learning styles and interests, allowing students

to explore topics at their own pace.” This practice underscores a personalized approach to learning facilitated by digital tools. In contrast, another participant noted, “I utilize adaptive learning technologies that adjust content based on student performance, ensuring each learner receives targeted support.”

In the realm of actively engaging learners, participants highlighted diverse strategies to foster student involvement and initiative. One participant remarked, “I encourage students to use digital platforms for independent research and project-based learning, fostering their curiosity and critical thinking skills.” This approach demonstrates how digital resources can empower students to drive their learning experiences. Another educator shared, “I incorporate gamified learning apps that motivate students to tackle complex concepts through interactive challenges.” Such methods illustrate innovative uses of technology to enhance student engagement and learning outcomes.

These voices from the study illuminate the multifaceted role of digital technologies in empowering learners. They underscore themes of accessibility, differentiation, and active engagement as essential components of effective educational practices. Comparatively, studies by Chung and Choi (2023) and Ayuningtyas et al. (2023) reinforce these findings, showcasing similar trends in employing digital tools to foster inclusive, personalized, and engaging learning environments. Collectively, these insights contribute to a richer understanding of how educators harness technology to empower students and promote educational equity and efficacy in diverse contexts.

Facilitating Learners’ Digital Competence

TEs play a pivotal role in fostering learners’ digital competence across various dimensions, as highlighted by participants’ experiences. In the realm of information and media literacy, TEs emphasize critical evaluation and responsible usage of digital information sources. One participant noted, “We teach them how to critically assess online sources, to question what they read, and to verify information before using it.” This aligns with findings by Bilki et al. (2023), who similarly emphasize the importance of source credibility and discernment of reliable content.

Furthermore, TEs facilitate digital communication and collaboration through online platforms, enhancing students’ skills beyond the physical classroom. A participant reflected, “We use forums and group projects to teach them how to communicate effectively online, to work together despite being physically apart.” This approach mirrors insights from Iskandar et al. (2022), highlighting the role of online tools in bridging educational boundaries.

In the subtheme of digital content creation, TEs guide students in creatively using digital tools. One participant shared, “We encourage them to explore different media forms and create content that’s meaningful and engaging.” This hands-on approach fosters digital literacy and content creation proficiencies among learners.

Addressing responsible use, TEs educate students on online safety, privacy, and ethical behavior. A participant emphasized, “We discuss the importance of protecting personal information online and behaving ethically in digital spaces.” This aspect of digital competence is crucial in today’s interconnected world.

Moreover, in digital problem-solving, TEs create environments that encourage experimentation and application of technical knowledge to real-world issues. Participants noted, “We want them to think critically and apply what they’ve learned to solve problems using digital tools.” This approach aligns with fostering creative thinking and practical skills necessary for navigating digital challenges.

These experiences underscore the significant role of TEs in nurturing learners’ digital competence despite challenges such as time constraints. By focusing on participants’ voices and experiences, this qualitative exploration reveals nuanced insights into how TEs actively shape digital learning environments. These findings not only resonate with previous research but also highlight the contextual nuances and personal perspectives that enrich our understanding of effective digital education practices.

Challenges in Integrating ICT in English Language Teaching

The challenges faced by the TEs provide a comprehensive view of the complexities involved in integrating digital technologies into ELT. TE1, for instance, highlighted technical issues such as unreliable internet connectivity, equipment malfunctions, and power outages that disrupt both teaching and learning. They expressed concerns about students’ overreliance on online resources, potentially hindering creativity and productivity, while also emphasizing the risks of cybercrime and bullying associated with ICT use. TE2 echoed these sentiments, noting the continuous adaptation required for new software and the financial burdens of specific digital tools. They lamented the influence of politically appointed leaders lacking expertise, which stifles innovation and effective ICT adoption in classrooms. TE3 and TE4 further underscored challenges with frequent power outages, unreliable internet connections, and unequal access to technology among students, all of which impact teaching effectiveness and student engagement.

These voices illustrate the multifaceted challenges in implementing ICT in ELT. As TE3 noted, “Frequent power outages and unreliable internet connections disrupt our ICT integration efforts and dampen student enthusiasm.” Similarly,

TE4 emphasized, “Technical disruptions and slow internet speeds make preparing and delivering ICT-based lessons time-consuming and frustrating.” These firsthand accounts highlight the disruptive impact of technical limitations and infrastructure deficits on educational processes.

Comparatively, the literature supports these findings, indicating that technical glitches, infrastructure inadequacies, and financial constraints hinder effective ICT use in education (Acharya, 2014; Bashyal, 2022; Rana, 2023; Laudari & Maher, 2019; Ramorola, 2010). Concerns about an overreliance on online resources stifling creativity are also echoed (Laudari & Maher, 2019). Moreover, the influence of political factors and organizational culture on ICT integration in academic settings is a recognized barrier (Acharya, 2014). Teacher-related challenges, such as inadequate training and reluctance to embrace technology, further complicate efforts to leverage ICT for enhanced learning outcomes (Bashyal, 2022).

In interpreting these findings, it becomes evident that addressing the diverse challenges highlighted by TEs is crucial for effective ICT integration in ELT. Strategies must focus on improving infrastructure reliability, providing targeted training and support for educators, and fostering a conducive organizational culture that values technological innovation. By addressing these issues, educational institutions can mitigate disparities in technology access and empower educators to harness ICT’s potential for enriching teaching and learning experiences in diverse educational contexts.

Strategies for Overcoming ICT Integration Challenges in ELT

Effectively addressing the challenges associated with the integration of digital technologies in English Language Teaching requires a collaborative effort from various stakeholders, including educational institutions, policymakers, and teacher training programs. As one participant expressed, “It’s not just about having the latest gadgets; we need reliable infrastructure to support our lessons. Stable internet and up-to-date devices are crucial.” Mitigating technical issues is foundational, and allocating sufficient funding is essential to enhance accessibility. Equally critical is comprehensive training for educators, as another participant noted, “We need training that goes beyond basic skills. Troubleshooting and using educational software effectively are key.” This sentiment underscores the need for educators to be proficient in technology use to seamlessly integrate digital tools into teaching methods.

Fostering a supportive and collaborative culture within educational institutions involves addressing political barriers and fostering an environment conducive to innovation. A participant emphasized, “Decision-making processes

need to be streamlined to support quick adaptation to new technologies.” Facilitating the exchange of best practices among educators fosters innovation and cooperation, essential for effective ICT integration. Educating students about responsible ICT use is equally vital, ensuring they navigate online resources safely and responsibly. A participant shared, “We must teach students about digital citizenship and how to critically evaluate information online.”

In interpreting these findings, while the challenges related to ICT integration in ELT are diverse and apparent, they are not insurmountable. Coordinated efforts involving stakeholders can effectively address these challenges. By addressing technical issues, providing robust training and support, ensuring equitable access to technology, and promoting a collaborative culture, ICT’s full potential can be realized in enhancing teaching and learning experiences. This prepares students for the digital age, equipping them with essential digital literacy skills to thrive in a technology-driven world.

Conclusion

The integration of digital technologies in ELT in Nepal presents both opportunities and challenges. This study explores these dynamics using the DigCompEdu Framework, focusing on its implications for equity and social justice in education in remote areas like Darchula. English Language TEs in these regions have transformed their teaching practices significantly with digital tools, moving away from traditional methods. They highlight challenges such as technical issues and concerns about over-reliance on online resources, while also acknowledging the benefits like enhanced learning experiences and diversified teaching methods. Multimedia and interactive content are praised for catering to diverse learning preferences and creating engaging classrooms. As the educational landscape adapts to digital technologies, there is a growing need for resources and support to improve educators’ ICT skills.

The experiences of English Language TEs align with the DigCompEdu Framework, demonstrating their proficiency in using digital tools for professional engagement, resource management, teaching, and assessment. However, challenges persist in managing digital resources effectively, diversifying assessment strategies, differentiating learning experiences, and fostering digital problem-solving. This underscores the importance of continuous professional development and a holistic approach to integrating ICT into ELT in alignment with the DigCompEdu framework.

This research provides a detailed exploration of digital competence through the DigCompEdu framework in the context of ELT in Darchula, Nepal. A

hermeneutic phenomenological study of English language teacher educators sheds light on theoretical and practical aspects of digital technology integration. The study's alignment with the DigCompEdu framework demonstrates its relevance and adaptability in guiding educators' digital competencies within authentic teaching environments. This contribution enriches existing literature by illustrating how the framework can effectively address the unique challenges and opportunities presented by the digital landscape in ELT.

Pedagogically, the study emphasizes student-centered approaches in ELT, illustrating how digital technologies empower learners, enhance engagement, and foster digital literacy. This highlights the need to adapt teaching methods to meet modern students' evolving preferences and needs. From a policy perspective, the study offers insights for educational institutions and policymakers, informing evidence-based strategies to integrate digital tools into ELT curricula effectively. By aligning policy recommendations with study findings, policymakers can address technical and training-related challenges, leading to improved learning experiences, student outcomes, and digitally literate learners. In summary, this study advances our understanding of applying the DigCompEdu framework in ELT, laying groundwork for future research and policies to enhance digital competence and seamless technology integration in English language education.

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Teachers' Perceptions towards English Language Teaching Pedagogy in Secondary Schools of Nepal

Bhakta Raj Bhatt

Far Western University, Gokuleshwor Multiple Campus, Darchula, Nepal

Email: bhattabraj2@gmail.com

Abstract

Recently research on English language teaching pedagogy has been receiving increased attention throughout the world, with a primary focus on classroom teaching strategies. This qualitative research study aims to explore the narratives of English language teachers about the use of English language teaching pedagogy in secondary schools in Nepal. The participants purposively selected for this study were four English language teachers teaching at the secondary level in public schools of Kanchanpur district. The researcher used narrative inquiry as a research method in which interview protocols with open-ended questions were employed as research tools to obtain information. The findings of the study showed that secondary English teachers have been shifting their classroom pedagogy from traditional teacher-centred approaches to modern innovative student-centred approaches. The study further revealed that teachers keep the knowledge of both teacher-centred and student-centred methods and techniques but practise them in the classrooms in their ways due to the limitations of prescribed methods. The study also revealed students' level of English as the main barrier to their learning progress. The implication of the study is that the teachers should create more learning opportunities and environments inside and outside the classroom to increase students' maximum time engagement in English learning-based activities that provide them with more exposure to English and enhances their learning.

Keywords: Grammar translation, narrative, challenges, student-centred

Introduction

I remember the days when I was a student at the school level. English language teaching pedagogy at that time was based on the Grammar translation method. As I remember now, we students used to be asked to learn word meanings



from English to Nepali, translate English texts into Nepali and memorize the answers that were made for us to write or given in the text. I also remember the way we were taught English grammar at the secondary level which used to be based on the deductive way of teaching. Our English teachers used to make us learn the formulas/structures of grammatical rules and asked us to apply those rules to make sentences. So, the classroom pedagogy of ELT at that time was similar to what Richards and Rodgers (2014) say about the Grammar translation method. They state, “GT method makes the use of bilingual word lists, translation equivalents and memorization as techniques for teaching learning activities (p. 7). They also state, “GT method makes the use of deductive way for teaching grammar that is by presentation and study of grammar rules” (p. 7). A similar practice of teaching English was employed during my school years, too. The teaching activities and techniques adopted at that time were completely teacher-centred and authoritative which never addressed the interests and needs of the students. Most of the teachers even used to give physical punishments, emotional threats and scolds in the class. The teaching-learning environment at that time was teacher-dependent, teacher-centred and authoritative. With the very practice of classroom pedagogy in my school years, I passed the School Leaving Certificate level with good marks. I was hoping for a shift in teaching methodology in higher education but found a similar practice. English was never taught in English and the same traditional Grammar-translation method was introduced and practised in later years at higher levels, too. Translation of English texts into Nepali and study of grammar rules were mainly focused. Later, in my early teaching career years, I also employed similar practices in my classroom pedagogy for a long time. I used to make my students memorize Nepali equivalents of English words, made bilingual wordlists for them to learn, made them write formulas/structures of grammar rules with examples and asked them to learn, translated English texts into Nepali while teaching in the class and so on. Due to this, I still feel difficulty and hesitation speaking and talking in English.

But later years of my teaching career, I gradually learned about innovative methods of ELT classroom practices and got the opportunities to take part in different trainings on ELT pedagogy. My MPhil study also made me realize the classroom pedagogy that I had been practising for a long. I learned many teaching strategies from my Gurus who taught me in MPhil classes. They made me learn using innovative classroom methodology. Mainly, I learned how to make students engaged in the classroom with different learning activities. Before I joined there and many other trainings, I had been practising an age-old teaching method in my classroom pedagogy. However, there had come into practice many innovative methods like communicative language teaching, community language learning, total physical response, task-based language teaching, problem-solving, cooperative language

learning, etc. for effective classroom pedagogy. Talking about innovation in teaching, Bhattarai (2021) states, “recent developments in the field of language teaching and learning have modified teaching-learning styles and has made a paradigm shift in second language teaching and learning from traditional methods to modern ones” (p. 18). Similarly, Bastola (2021) asserts, “there has been a paradigmatic paradigm shift in techniques and methodologies” (p. 45). These statements of scholars indicate that teaching methods and techniques have undergone significant changes over time. In recent years of my teaching career, especially after the achievement of my MPhil degree, I have been trying my level best to practice and implement different student-centred teaching methods and techniques in my classroom pedagogy. I mostly practice group work, pair works, conversations, project work, dialogues, role play, task-based, problem-solving, presentation, elicitation, assignments etc. to make students engaged in learning.

Based on my experience of being an English language learner for years and more than one and half decades experience of teaching English triggered me to study the pedagogical practices English teachers use in their classroom teaching because in my belief most of the teachers are still not using or not properly using student-centred classroom pedagogy. Bhandari (2020), in this context states, “Many of the teachers teaching English are not using learner centered instruction in the way it should have been used” (p. 10). It can be verified by the students who come to join the university level after their school level graduation with very poor competence and performance in English. I feel that the situation of teaching-learning we had during schooling years and earlier years of my teaching, and the situation we have now have been changing. Teachers’ roles in the classroom have come into a change from ‘Doctor-knows- best’ (knowledge provider) and authoritative to facilitator, mentor, role model, planner, assessor, guide, etc. (Nunan, 1991). In this changing scenario of English language teaching pedagogy, I feel it a pertinent issue to explore how secondary-level English teachers narrate their perceptions and experiences on ELT pedagogical practices in their classrooms.

ELT Pedagogy: Methods and Techniques

Language teaching is a dynamic field that is constantly evolving with innovative pedagogical methods and techniques. The teaching of English as a foreign or second language is without exception, therefore, language teachers need to stay up to date with the latest teaching trends or methods and techniques in the field. Teaching methods and techniques in classroom pedagogy play a crucial role in achieving teaching objectives. A method that is implemented in the classroom is often regarded as the heart of teaching-learning activities. It is an overall plan for the presentation of linguistic items which is procedural (Anthony, 1963). Freeman

(2000) says “Language teaching methods are a coherent set of links between actions and thoughts in language teaching” (p. 1). Similarly, a method is the practical realization of an approach that determines the types of activities, the role of teachers and learners, and the kind of materials to be used in the classroom (Harmer, 2007). In the same line, Richards and Rodgers (2014) also state, “a method refers to a specific instructional design or system based on a particular theory of language and language learning, contains detailed specifications of content, roles of teachers and learners, and teaching procedures and techniques” (p. 245). These all indicate that the teaching method is an overall plan for classroom pedagogy. If we go through the history of foreign/second language teaching, several methods for classroom pedagogy emerged and were practised in different periods and situations. From Grammar Translation Method to Communicative Language Teaching and many other pedagogical methods like Community Language Learning, Total Physical Response, Natural Approach, Content-based, Text-based instruction, Content and Language Integrated Learning, etc. emerged and came into practice (Freeman, 2000). History depicts that their demerits opened the door for a new method to emerge one after another. Bhattarai (2021) states, “a method which works best in one context may not work effectively in another context, a teacher should select methods and techniques that are contextual and culture-sensitive” (p. 4). It means the ‘one size fits all’ concept cannot apply to language teaching methods. A particular method that emerged in a particular period and situation cannot work in all situations. Therefore, teachers must select and use teaching methods and techniques based on the situation they are teaching. In this context, Richards and Rodger (2014) state, “as the teacher gains experience and knowledge, he or she will begin to develop an individual approach or personal method of teaching and adds, modifies and adjusts the approach or method to the realities of the classroom” (p. 251). Furthermore, following Kumaravadivelu (2001), “language pedagogy, to be relevant, must be sensitive to a particular group of teachers teaching a particular group of learners pursuing a particular set of goals within a particular institutional context embedded in a particular socio-cultural milieu” (p. 538). This indicates that the pedagogical methods language teachers employ in the classrooms are determined and guided by the socio-cultural context of the class.

Since these methods are more prescriptive and impose theories rather than freedom and autonomy both for the teachers and learners, they cannot bring any qualitative change in language teaching (Bhandari, 2020, p. 10). Similar to this context, Pennycook (1989) asserts, “methods are prescriptions for classroom behaviour, and that teachers are encouraged by textbook publishers and academics to implement them whether or not the methods are appropriate for a particular context” (cited in Freeman & Anderson, 2011, p. xii). Nowadays, teachers who can practice

Communicative Language Teaching perfectly in their classrooms are considered successful teachers and those who are more on the Grammar Translation Method are considered old-fashioned and unsuccessful. Moreover, pre-service teachers who are trained to base their teaching on these methods, especially communicative ones, face an overwhelming experience when they start teaching in an actual classroom. They come to realize that what has been theorized does not usually reflect reality (Can, 2009, p. 1). In the same line, Kumaravadevelu (2006) argues, “theorists propose methods and teachers practice them and what teachers practice in the classroom is different from what is advocated by theorists” (p. 84). In this sense, classroom practices are going beyond the prescribed methods. Scrivener (2011) states, “teachers generally do not want to take someone else’s prescriptions into class and apply them; rather they work out for themselves what is effective in their classrooms” (p. 33). I feel that different classroom techniques are practised beyond the method’s prescription because a method cannot achieve immediate objectives of teaching and learning in all situations. So, teachers practice different classroom techniques based on their needs and the nature of the class/ topic they are delivering. Such pedagogical techniques which are mostly practised in the classrooms are mainly divided into two categories: student-centred techniques and teacher-centred techniques. Role play, games, dialogue, dramatization, pair work, group work, problem-solving, project work, presentation, etc. are student-centred techniques which provide enough opportunities for students to participate in learning activities. Whereas question answer, drill, memorization, demonstration, explanation, illustration, etc. are teacher-centred techniques which do have not much concern for learner needs (Bhandari, 2020, p. 11). From this, it can be said that world practice of foreign/second language teaching especially English language teaching is going beyond the constraints of methods and seems to be shifting from traditional teacher-centred methods to student-focused activities in the classroom. Teachers who employ student-centred pedagogical techniques in their classrooms can contribute to the quality improvement of language teaching and learning. But many teachers are still applying traditional, Grammar Translation methods, teacher-centred techniques and activities like question answers, demonstration, drills and dictation (Bashyal, 2018). And I believe that experienced teachers may be addressing the needs of the students in their classroom pedagogy.

Methods and Procedures

This is a qualitative study comprising interpretivism as a research paradigm and narrative inquiry as a research method. As the qualitative study is to get subjective realities, it advocates for the understanding and interpretation of human and social reality. Krauss (2005) states that there are multiple realities (i.e. truths,

worldviews) constructed by human beings who experience a phenomenon of interest. In the context of this study, truths, and worldviews are teachers' perceptions and experiences which are subjective, and knowledge and meanings are acts of interpretation. In this study, as a research method, I have employed narrative inquiry as Clandinin and Connelly (2000) state, "narrative inquiry captures and investigates experiences of human lives that are woven of stories" (p. 211). Similarly, Polkinghorne (1995) states that narrative inquiry uses stories to understand the meaning of human actions and experiences, the changes and challenges of life events and the differences and complexity of peoples' actions. He further states, "Narrative inquiry strives to put events into the stories of experience to locate the experience in time and place. It incorporates the feelings, goals, perceptions and values of the people whom we want to understand" (cited in Kim, 2012, p. 11). In this study, to explore the perceptions and experiences of the use of English language teaching pedagogy, I selected four English teachers having more than ten years of teaching experience at the same level from four different public schools of Kanchanpur districts, Nepal. The reason behind choosing the research site and participants is entirely purposeful because of the familiarity and easy access to the place and participants. For the collection of data, I used narrative interviews as a tool as Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) argue "the world from the subjects' points of view, to unfold the meaning of their experiences, to uncover their lived world before scientific explanations" (cited in Barkhaizenet et al., 2014, p. 16). I developed interview protocols with open-ended questions, personally met each participant, took their consent for audio recording and recorded the interview. I took interviews in Nepali language so that it would be easy for them to share their experiences openly. I transcribed audio recordings before translating them into English so that the data would not go beyond their sharing. I went through transcribed data several times to generate clear ideas; developed themes based on their narratives and analyzed them. To maintain ethical consideration, I assigned pseudonyms to the participants, and followed all ethical standards from beginning to end.

Results and Discussion

Data collected using in-depth interviews with teacher participants were analyzed and interpreted under three main themes.

Shift in Classroom Pedagogy

All teacher participants in my study revealed that they had a great remembrance of learning English through the Grammar Translation Method in their school days which used to be mostly practised for English language teaching classroom pedagogy. Howatt (1994) states, "the Grammar Translation Method is based on the translation of texts and the study of grammar rules as its main teaching-

learning activities” (p. 132). In response to the question I asked, ‘How did you learn English and what methods did your teacher use to employ in classroom pedagogy in your school days?’ My research participant Ms. Binita stated,

Classroom pedagogy of English at that time was based on the Grammar Translation Method. Teachers used to translate English texts into Nepali, they used to write Nepali equivalents of English words on Blackboard, make us write answers to questions given in the text and ask us to memorize the next day. For example, ‘Where is Kamal’s shop?’ ‘Kamal’s shop is under the tree’. I mean to say that it was a rote-type of learning without having any knowledge of its application.

This story of Binita demonstrated that English learning environment during her schooling was not student-friendly. Her story also indicated that GT method was a basis for teaching English in the classroom, and writing and memorizing were the primarily focused in the class. Similar to Binita’s experience, another research participant Mr. Krishna narrated,

Classroom Teaching at that time was GT method-based and teacher-centred. Teachers used to be mostly active, and students used to be mostly inactive/passive in the classroom. It was a one way delivery of messages like someone was delivering a speech in front of the class. Using the Grammar translation method only teachers used to deliver teaching content in the classrooms. But nowadays, it has been quite changed. Sometimes, to make the concept clear of particular words only, we translate English words into their Nepali meaning or in students’ mother tongue.

Krishna’s narrative showed that he was taught English with teacher centred methods and techniques in the classroom. His narrative revealed that students’ involvement in learning activities was very rare at that time. His narrative also revealed that he brought change in his teaching style learning from schooling experience. In line with the participants sharing, Richard and Rodgers (2014) state “the Grammar translation method makes use of bilingual word lists, translation equivalents and memorization as techniques for teaching learning activities. The teacher was the main authority in the class. Students’ native language was the medium of instruction. There was little interaction between teachers and students in the classroom” (p. 6). Similar to the statement of Richards and Rodgers, Binita and Krishna, in their school days, experienced learning English mostly through the GT Method, but after they entered a teaching career, as shared, brought a change in their teaching strategies. In this context, Mr. Dinesh explored his experience and narrated,

Teaching-learning at that time and now is quite different. I also in the earlier years of my teaching career practised the GT Method more in my classroom teaching but gradually reduced and started practising student-centred techniques. And, nowadays, I mostly create opportunities for my students to engage them in different activities like group work, pair work, role play, puzzles, conversation, etc. in the classroom and facilitate their learning.

This story of Dinesh showed that he learned teaching from his experience of schooling years, and from early career years of his teaching profession. His story indicated a perceptual and attitudinal change occurred within him which because of his long-term practice and experience in the same field of teaching English (Prettyman, 2018). His story further revealed that he provides students the opportunities to involve them in learning activities. In a similar context, Ms. Diksha, one of the experienced participants mentioned,

I usually make my students engaged in the classroom in different activities. When I teach a passage, I generally ask students to read, guess the meaning of new/difficult words from the text, write answers on the whiteboard etc. I make them participate in conversational activities to teach speaking through role play, pair work, group work, games, etc. Similarly, while teaching prepositions, I ask them to keep things in different places and ask questions. They answer using prepositions like; in, on under, over, by, etc. and learn the use of it. I also use quizzes and spelling contest sometimes to enhance their vocabulary power.

Diksha's narrative clearly demonstrated her utilization of student-centred teaching techniques in the classroom. Her narrative also revealed that she has shifted her pedagogical strategies from teacher centred-teaching to modern innovative student-centred teaching. In this way, the narratives of almost all teacher participants revealed that they want a shift in classroom pedagogy which they have been experiencing and practicing from their years of involvement in teaching-learning pedagogy. Student-centred classroom techniques create opportunities for them to engage in learning activities and enhance both teachers' and students' levels of knowledge. Such practising in the class also provides students autonomy for learning as Bhattarai (2021) states, "learner autonomy is based on the principle of learner-centeredness" (p. 18), and the teachers' role has been changed from knowledge provider to facilitator, guide, mentor or advisor. Thus, the traditional way of classroom teaching has shifted to a learner mode of learning (Bhandari, 2020).

Challenges in Classroom Pedagogy

Since the students' basic knowledge of English is too poor, it is very difficult

for teachers to implement student-centred teaching techniques in the classroom. In this context, Ms. Binita narrated that,

Many students in my class are afraid of speaking English because of their poor basic knowledge of English. Some students are very weak in English and cannot even write ABCD, cannot write their names in English. 'How they reached to secondary level, I don't know'. Others also, if I ask any question or ask them to take part in any activities they hesitate to speak English and just remain silent. I think they have very little exposure to the English language because English is taught as a compulsory subject for 45 minutes only a day at school. It is not used as a medium of instruction for other subjects and language for communication there.

This narrative of Binita showed that students lack exposure to English. It further demonstrated that a single period cannot provide them with enough exposure to practising English. Her story also revealed that either English language has to be made the medium of instruction and language for communication at school or students have to be provided with enough English-speaking environments inside and outside the school to promote their English language learning. Similarly, in response to my question 'What hampers you to implement student-centred techniques in the classroom?' Ms. Diksha reported,

In our context, the main challenge is students' poor base in English. The second thing is students' 'first language interference'; they always ask for translation in their mother tongue. And, other things are also there like the school environment, overcrowded classes, fixed seating arrangement in the class, lack of techno-friendly classroom management, inaccessibility of internet, lack of teacher training, the pressure of completing the course in time, etc.

The story of Diksha explored that there are many hardships teachers have to face in their classroom teaching besides students' poor English base, and clearly indicates that English teachers in the Nepalese context have been teaching English in under-resourced conditions which ultimately impedes students' learning pace. Another participant Mr. Krishna also shared a similar problem. He stated,

I want to make my students active in the classroom. I, most of the time, provide them opportunities to take part in learning activities like group work, pair work, conversation, role-play, presentation, etc. Some take part also but the majority of students do not take part. They do not respond using English; they very rarely utter English words in their mouth. This is also because of a lack of enough practice in English.

This story of Krishna displayed that despite providing learning opportunities, majority of students do not participate in learning activities. It showed that students hardly speak English or answer in English. In addition, his story demonstrated that teachers need to motivate the students to increase their participation in learning activities because they lack sufficient practice and exposure in English. Regarding encountering challenges, almost all teacher participants' experiences were found similar. Their stories revealed that they want to employ student-centred teaching methods and techniques in their classroom teaching, but there are several challenges they have to cope with. Among them, students' poor English background is the main challenge which particularly hampers students' active participation in learning activities. In this sense, as Bashyal (2018) states, problems like the language level of students, the legacy of Grammar-translation and Structural methods, and the lack of an English environment in school seem to be impeding students' learning progress (p. 228).

Perceiving Classroom Pedagogical Methods and Techniques

Nowadays, classroom pedagogy seems to be shifting from traditional Grammar-translation and teacher-centred teaching to modern innovative learner-focused teaching-learning. My research participants narrated that they are not limited to any particular method to be practising in their classrooms. Mr. Krishna explored his experience of using methods in his class and mentioned,

According to the nature of the teaching topic, I select teaching methods and techniques in the classroom. Mostly I use CLT, TPR-like student-centred methods. But sometimes, while teaching passages, I use the GT Method also. First, I explain the text in English if students do not understand, I translate the text into Nepali and English words into Nepali equivalents to make their concept clear, because their base in the English language is so poor. I think, a single teaching method cannot work in all situations and for all teaching topics. So, I use teaching methods and techniques in a mixed way. Techniques from CLT, TPR, GT method, direct method, Audio-lingual, etc. can occur in a single class.

This narrative of Krishna demonstrated that he is not bound to use a particular teaching method. He has the understanding as Bhandari (2020) argues that “no method or technique is unique, original and universal and best to all the learners at all times as they have their own pros and cons” (p. 13). Similar to the context, Banjadi (2020) states, “the need for more efficient practice in ELT has triggered a shift away from searching out a perfect one-size-fits-all teaching method towards focusing on certain learners in particular backgrounds” (p. 9). These statements also indicate that classroom teaching in recent times is not confined to any particular methods.

This means, pedagogical methods and techniques are contextually determined. Similar like Krishna, Ms. Binita also narrated her experience of using methods and techniques in her classroom. She stated,

In my earlier years of teaching, I used to prepare written lesson plans for my class teaching and used to employ methods and techniques accordingly. But gradually, later, I left it. It was not possible, too. Nowadays, I just mentally prepare lessons, and according to the topic and classroom environment/situation, I use teaching methods and techniques. Determining particular method beforehand is not possible because in class we sometimes need to use the GT method, the Communicative and sometimes the other. So, it is not fixed what method is to be used in today's class. To tell the truth, sometimes we teach without considering what method is being used. We make our method according to the needs of the class. But we want to make our class student-centred.

The story of Binita evidently demonstrated that though teachers keep knowledge of different language teaching methods and techniques, they are not employing particular methods at once in a single class. Rather they have been using their ways of teaching in the classroom. In this context, Scrivener (2011) states, "Teachers, over the years of their teaching experience, slowly build a personal methodology of their own, constructed from their selection of what they consider to be the best and most appropriate of what they have learned about" (p. 33). Her story also indicated that teachers want to address learner needs in their classrooms even by making their self-constructed methods and techniques. So, classroom pedagogy as teachers' perception showed, is not limited to prescribed methodological barriers. They were found practising what Waters (2016) proposes as "A re-invention innovation strategy which suggests a more compatible, 'blended' form of pedagogy" (p. 2). A very positive thing is that language teachers were found to be learner-friendly in Nepalese secondary English classrooms. Regarding the use of pedagogical methods and techniques in the classroom, Ms. Diksha narrated,

I prefer to use student-centred teaching methods and techniques but the classroom situation and students' level of English do not support me. I generally attempt to use CLT and other learner-centred methods and techniques like pair work, group work, project work, role play, games, problem-solving, presentation, etc. in my classroom but sometimes classroom situation makes me compelled to use the GT Method. I think, a particular method does not fit in all teaching contexts. So, according to the need, I use GT Method, CLT, TPR, Content-based, task-based, problem-solving etc. and

mostly I use methods and techniques in a way that facilitates my students' learning because I keep students' learning in the centre.

This narrative of Diksha pointed out that there are many hindrances to practising student-centred methods and techniques in classroom teaching. Her narrative also indicated that Nepalese English teachers keep knowledge of both teacher-centred and student-centred teaching methods and techniques and mostly prefer to implement student-centred methods and techniques going beyond the restrictions of prescribed methods. In response to my question, 'How do you come to decide on pedagogical methods and techniques for your classroom teaching?' Mr. Dinesh reported,

Mainly, we decide on pedagogical methods and techniques for classroom teaching based on the topic we are going to teach. Next, we need to consider the classroom situation, and most importantly we need to keep in mind the students' level of English. And, when I speak English only in class, most students understand nothing. To make them understand, I need to use translation. Most of the texts are given in foreign contexts which are very difficult to understand for our students. But, when I teach speaking, language functions and other communicative types of topics, I use different learner-centred methods and techniques and engage students in learning activities.

This narrative of Dinesh clearly showed that classroom atmosphere and students' proficiency in English influence the selection of pedagogical approaches and strategies. His narrative explored that in Nepalese secondary English classrooms, it is not an easy task to implement learner-centred methods and techniques. It further revealed that teachers need to adjust their teaching as the situation demands of 'how to teach' and what pedagogical methods and techniques to be employed. His story also showed that teachers utilize methods and techniques according to the need in the class to get students comprehend. In this sense, regarding employing pedagogical methods and techniques, aforementioned findings demonstrated as Richards and Rodgers (2014) mention, "as the teacher gains experience and knowledge, he or she will begin to develop an individual approach or personal method of teaching and adds, modifies and adjusts the approach or method to the realities of the classroom" (p. 251). My teacher participants were found to be adapting their pedagogical methods and techniques in their classrooms. Their shared stories, in this way, revealed to some extent the reality of what teachers perceive and how they practice the pedagogical methods and techniques in their classroom teaching. Their stories also displayed a positive movement that English language teaching pedagogy in Nepalese classrooms is shifting from traditional trends of teaching to modern innovative ways of teaching-learning.

Conclusion

This study explored the perception and experiences of secondary-level English teachers towards the use of ELT pedagogy they are employing in their classroom teaching. It also attempted to find out the challenges they face while implementing student-centred classroom pedagogy. The study revealed that English language teachers are shifting their classroom pedagogy from traditional teacher-centred approaches to modern innovative learner-centred approaches. The study further revealed that teachers keep knowledge of both teacher and student-centred methods like; Grammar translation, Direct, Audio lingual, Communicative Language Teaching, Task-based, Total Physical Response, Situational teaching, problem-solving, etc. Similarly, they know classroom teaching techniques like; group work, pair works, role play, games, project work, presentation, etc. Despite the huge list, as the study revealed, teachers were found flexible in the selection of classroom teaching methodology. They seem versatile to work out in their ways choosing techniques from the range of methods which Scrivener (2011) calls “a collage methodology” or ‘principled eclecticism” (p. 33). They believe that a particular prescribed method cannot be applicable in all the situations because of its limitations. The study also explored teachers’ positive perceptions towards the use of student-centred methods and techniques in their classroom pedagogy despite many challenges like; students’ poor base in English, their L1 interference, overcrowded classes, etc. They also believe that student-centred classroom pedagogy provides maximum learning opportunities to the students.

Since the world practice of English language teaching has been shifting its focus to innovative, more communicative and learner-friendly teaching, Nepalese secondary English teachers also have been adapting their teaching accordingly. As the study revealed students’ level of English is the main challenge of ELT classrooms in the Nepalese context, teachers are mainly suggested to create more learning opportunities and environments inside and outside the classroom. Students need to be motivated and encouraged for their active participation in learning activities. Students’ maximum time engagement in ELT-based learning activities provides them with more exposure to English and enhances their learning. This is a small-scale research study limited to four secondary-level English teachers from public schools in the Kanchanpur district of Nepal; therefore, the findings may not be applicable in all situations throughout the country. The study only used interview protocols with open-ended questions for the collection of data. The findings could have been different if verified with class observation. However, the study can be useful for teachers teaching English at the secondary level. It can equally be useful for further research in the concerned area.

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Unveiling Body Politics: The Grotesque and Alienated Representation of the Monster in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*

Prabeen Kumar Awasthi

Himalaya College of Engineering, IOE, Kathmandu, Tribhuvan University, Nepal

Email: awasthiprabeen2048@gmail.com

Abstract

Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* explores on the complexities of body politics and societal norms through the narrative of Victor Frankenstein and his creation, the monster. This research paper analyzes the novel through the lens of rejection, Otherness and the societal constructs of beauty and acceptance. The research investigates on the intricate intersections of various discourses in shaping the notion of "black body" throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Furthermore, it highlights on how Shelley's portrayal of the hideous and marginalized body of the monster in her text aligns with the ideological constructions of black bodies. The monster, with his physical deformities and alien appearance, serves as a powerful symbol of the Other, highlighting society's tendency to fear and ostracize those who are different. Drawing on Julia Kristeva's concept of "the abject," Michel Foucault's notion of "biopower," and Freud's idea of "uncanny," this paper searches how Shelly's text reflects broader cultural anxieties and critiques societal norms. Through a detailed analysis of textual evidences, including direct quotes from the novel, this paper examines the implications of the monster's rejection to socio-cultural norms and the societal forces that shape his identity. The paper concludes that exclusion of Frankenstein's creation from the society directly stems from the societal constructs and responses towards bodies. Perception of bodies reflects more about the culture observing them than bodies themselves. In its essence, *Frankenstein* stands as a poignant narrative about the dangers of marginalization and the importance of empathy and acceptance in a diverse society. This paper underscores the critical need to understand how societal constructs shape perceptions of marginalized bodies, paving the way for future research to explore these dynamics in contemporary contexts and to develop strategies for fostering greater inclusion and acceptance.

Keywords: Biopower, body politics, cultural anxieties, empathy, Otherness

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Introduction

Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* is a seminal work in the Gothic literary tradition, exploring themes of creation, identity and societal norms. At the center of Shelly's text is a grotesque creation, the monster, who is brought to life by the scientist Victor Frankenstein. The monster's physical appearance, particularly his yellow skin, sets him apart from society and leads to his alienation and eventual descent into violence. This research article aims to dissect the body politics at play in Shelley's text, focusing on how the monster's appearance shapes the narrative and reflects broader cultural anxieties.

The portrayal of the monster's physical appearance in *Frankenstein* raises significant questions about the nature of identity and the influence of societal constructs upon it. It shows that the society plays an important role in determining an individual's identity. The monster's grotesque body becomes a symbol of the Other, representing society's fear of the unknown and the unfamiliar. This raises the question of how societal norms and prejudices influence the perception of physical appearance and the treatment of those who do not conform to these norms. The problem statement of this research lies in understanding the complex implications of the monster's alienation and de-familiarization from society due to his grotesque physical appearance. It seeks to explore the multifaceted societal rejection faced by individuals who do not fit into the accepted norms of physical beauty. This rejection not only marginalizes them but also profoundly shapes their identity and behavior. By delving into these dynamics, the study aims to uncover how societal constructs of beauty and normalcy contribute to the stigmatization and dehumanization of those who are perceived as different, ultimately influencing their self-perception and interactions with the world.

This research paper seeks to address several key questions regarding the portrayal of the monster's physical appearance in Shelley's text. Firstly, how does the monster's appearance reflect broader cultural anxieties and societal norms of the time? Secondly, what role does societal rejection play in the monster's descent into violence and alienation? Thirdly, how does Shelley use the monster's physical appearance to critique societal norms and prejudices, particularly regarding physical beauty? Fourthly, in what ways does the monster's alienation from society highlights the theme of Otherness in the text? Lastly, how does the depiction of the monster's body politics in *Frankenstein* resonate with contemporary issues of identity, acceptance, and the treatment of those who do not conform to societal standards of appearance? These questions aim to comprehensively explore the intersection of body politics, societal norms, and identity formation in Shelley's work, providing a robust framework for analyzing the broader implications of the monster's portrayal.

To address the research objectives and questions, this paper draws upon various theoretical insights from different scholars and fields. One theoretical framework is the concept of the “abject” proposed by Julia Kristeva. Kristeva suggests that the abject is that which is rejected by society, considered impure or taboo, and therefore must be cast out to maintain social order. The abject involves a reaction to a threatened breakdown in meaning caused by the loss of the distinction between subject and object or self and other. In *Frankenstein*, the monster’s physical appearance can be seen as an abject figure, representing a collapse of these distinctions and leading to his alienation and marginalization from society. Kristeva’s concept is useful to analyze how societal norms and prejudices contribute to representing the monster as the Other. Another relevant theoretical perspective is Michel Foucault’s concept of “biopower.” Foucault argues that modern societies regulate and control bodies through various mechanisms, including norms of appearance and behavior. In *Frankenstein*, Victor Frankenstein’s effort to create the grotesque body of the monster can be observed as an exercise of biopower, as he seeks to control and manipulate life itself. This perspective allows the researcher to explore the power dynamics at play in the novel and how they contribute to the monster’s alienation.

Additionally, the concept of the “uncanny” proposed by Sigmund Freud is applied to provide insight into the monster’s effect on society. The uncanny refers to something that is familiar yet unfamiliar, creating a sense of unease. The monster’s appearance, with its human-like features but grotesque form, embodies the uncanny, leading to fear and rejection from those around him. This concept, in this paper, helps to analyze the psychological impact of the monster’s presence on the characters in the novel. Furthermore, the concept of “monstrosity” has been used to show the monster as an embodiment of societal apprehensions and anxieties. Monstrosity is often used in literature to represent the Other, highlighting how society constructs and enforces norms of acceptability. By examining the monster’s monstrosity in *Frankenstein*, the research explores and analyzes how societal norms of beauty and normalcy are reinforced and challenged in the text.

Literature Review

Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* has been extensively studied by scholars, particularly concerning its exploration of themes like the monstrous, the Other, and societal norms. Critics have interpreted the novel as a reflection of societal fears and anxieties, with the monster symbolizing the rejected and marginalized Other. In the mid-1970s, feminist critics such as Moers (1976) and Gilbert and Gubar (1979) initiated a significant reappraisal of the text, emphasizing Shelley’s critique of traditional gender hierarchy and maternal power structures. Moers examines the

portrayal of female characters and their roles in shaping the narrative, while Gilbert and Gubar focus on the novel's gothic elements and its implications for feminist literary theory. Moreover, scholars like Mellor (1998) and Halberstam (1995) have contributed to understanding *Frankenstein's* critique of societal norms and its intersection with issues of gender, sexuality, and race. Mellor's analysis explores the theme of monstrosity as a metaphor for societal anxieties surrounding gender roles and scientific experimentation, highlighting Shelley's challenge to patriarchal authority. Halberstam explores the novel's portrayal of gender ambiguity and non-conformity, arguing that Frankenstein's monster disrupts traditional binaries of male and female, challenging normative ideas of identity and embodiment.

Mellor and Halberstam's analyses, while insightful, also raise questions about how contemporary issues of identity, power, and societal acceptance are relevant to current debates on body politics and cultural anxieties. Mellor's focus on monstrosity and Halberstam's examination of gender ambiguity are particularly pertinent to understanding the broader implications of Shelley's narrative and its enduring relevance in literary discourse. Reflecting on their perspectives, this research aims to further explore how Shelley's critique in *Frankenstein* resonates with the aforementioned issues, particularly through the lens of body politics and cultural anxieties. This paper also seeks to deepen the understanding of how Shelley's novel continues to provoke discussions about the construction of identity and the treatment of marginalized individuals in society.

Some Marxist critics have examined the monster's Otherness through the lens of class conflict and economic estrangement, acknowledging his societal position (Mellor, 1976). However, the complexity of the monster's Otherness cannot be fully understood through a purely Marxist lens. In this interdisciplinary approach to Shelley's text, the paper aims to consider feminist and Marxist insights alongside issues of race, representation, subjectivity, and Otherness. While acknowledging the importance of feminist and Marxist theories, this paper argues that the monster's status as an outsider primarily stems from his physicality, firmly situating him within the racial hierarchy of the early nineteenth century. Malchow (1993) has explored the racial dimensions of the monster's Otherness, there remains a gap in understanding the political construction of the black body's discourse during this time. Expanding on Malchow's research, this paper aims to explore the politics surrounding the monster's grotesque and marginalized body within the Shelley's text. Smith (1995) explores the monster's portrayal as a representation of the unknown and unfamiliar, highlighting society's tendency to fear and reject what it does not understand. This interpretation aligns with the idea of the abject forwarded by Kristeva, where the monster's physical appearance is deemed impure and taboo, leading to his

alienation (Kristeva, 1982). Gigante (2000) highlights on the essence of ugliness, characterizing it as that which “not only evokes disgust but persistently insists upon its presence” (p. 577). She examines ugliness as a deeply embodied and interpersonal phenomenon, implicating both the observer and the observed in its experience.

Contrary to conventional interpretations, Gigante contends that the creature is not deformed but inherently ugly, highlighting the distinction between deformity and ugliness. She suggests that “ugliness possesses a transformative power, threatening to disrupt and disorient its subject as an alien entity within the societal system” (p. 583). While Gigante’s exploration of beauty and ugliness offers a nuanced understanding of encountering unattractive bodies, this research extends by probing into the societal and cultural ramifications of the monster’s alienation from dominant social structures. The research posits that the creature’s identity is not solely defined by its physical appearance but is shaped by the societal norms and prejudices from which it is excluded.

The racial undertones in *Frankenstein* have also been a point of interest for scholars. Baldick (1987) discusses the implications of the monster’s yellow skin, suggesting that it can be read as a commentary on race and identity. This interpretation is supported by Mellor (1976), who argues that the monster’s body symbolizes society’s anxieties about scientific knowledge and the consequences of overstepping natural boundaries. This aligns with Foucault’s concept of “biopower,” where bodies are regulated and controlled by societal norms (Foucault, 1978). Mellor (1976) further suggests that the monster’s alienation from society reflects the theme of isolation and the human need for acceptance. This interpretation resonates with Freud’s concept of the “uncanny,” where the familiar becomes unfamiliar and causes unease (Freud, 1919). The monster’s rejection by Victor Frankenstein, his creator, also highlights the theme of abandonment and the consequences of playing god.

Previous studies on *Frankenstein* has provided valuable insights into its themes and characters, particularly in relation to the portrayal of the monster. Scholars have extensively examined the monster’s physical appearance and its societal implications, emphasizing its grotesque nature and the societal rejection it faces. However, existing literature predominantly focuses on these aspects, leaving a notable gap in exploring deeper dimensions of the monster’s identity. Specifically, there is a need to explore dimensions of monster’s identity beyond its physicality, such as the emotional and psychological experiences of alienation and neglect that the monster undergoes. This gap highlights the necessity to further investigate how Shelley’s depiction of the monster’s marginalized existence challenges societal norms and prompts reflections on broader issues of identity construction and societal acceptance. Thus, this paper aims to unveil the body politics in *Frankenstein* by

critically examining the representation of the grotesque, alienated, and neglected monster in the text, exploring its multifaceted implications for understanding cultural apprehensions and societal norms.

Methods and Procedures

This research employs a qualitative approach to analyze Shelley's text and explore the themes of body politics, societal norms, cultural complexities and the alienation of the monster in the text. The primary method of data collection is textual analysis of *Frankenstein*, utilizing thematic coding to systematically categorize textual passages. This involves a close reading of the novel to identify passages that discuss the monster's physical appearance, his interactions with society, and the themes of alienation and Otherness. Secondary sources such as literary critiques, scholarly articles, and theoretical works provide context and support for the analysis, framing the discussion within relevant theoretical frameworks such as Julia Kristeva's concept of the abject, Michel Foucault's theory of "biopower," Freud's idea of the "uncanny," and the concept of "monstrosity" in literary theory.

The data analysis process includes coding and categorizing textual passages according to key themes and concepts identified during the thematic analysis. This approach ensures a systematic and organized exploration of how Frankenstein's physical appearance symbolizes body politics, cultural anxieties, and societal norms in the text. Patterns and connections between these themes are then identified to develop a comprehensive understanding of the novel's portrayal of the monster and its broader implications.

Results and Discussion

The analysis of Shelley's *Frankenstein* reveals a complex interplay of themes and symbols that reflect broader cultural anxieties. The monster's physical appearance, particularly his yellow skin, serves as a focal point for exploring these themes and their implications for identity, acceptance, and the Other. One of the central themes that emerges from the text is the notion of the Other, represented by the monster. From the moment of his creation, the monster is rejected by society, including his creator Victor Frankenstein. This rejection is evident in the monster's own words, as he laments, "Was I, then, a monster, a blot upon the earth, from which all men fled and whom all men disowned?" (Shelley, 1818, p. 105). This sense of alienation and Otherness is further emphasized by the monster's physical appearance, which sets him apart from the rest of humanity.

Julia Kristeva's concept of the abject provides a useful framework to analyze the monster's Otherness. According to Kristeva, the abject is that which is considered impure or taboo, leading to its exclusion from society (Kristeva, 1982).

In *Frankenstein*, the monster's physical deformities, including his yellow skin and grotesque features, render him abject in the eyes of society. The monster utters, "I, the miserable and the abandoned, am an abortion, to be spurned at, and kicked, and trampled on" (Shelley, 1818, p. 145). This is exemplified in the reactions of those who encounter him, such as when "Felix, Safie, and Agatha react with horror and disgust at the sight of him" (Shelley, 1818, p.126). This reaction highlights society's fear of the Other and its tendency to reject what it deems as different or abnormal.

The sense of rejection is highlighted in Frankenstein's initial reaction to his creation, where he describes selecting the monster's features as beautiful but later recoils in horror at the sight of his completed creation, indicating society's influence on his perception of beauty (Shelley, 1818). The monster's physical deformities, including his yellow skin and grotesque features, render him abject in the eyes of society, as exemplified by the reactions of those who encounter him (Shelley, 1818). The rejection and fear of the Other is highlighted by the monster's own questioning of his humanity, "I am alone and miserable; man will not associate with me; but one as deformed and horrible as myself would not deny herself to me" (Shelley, 1818, p.145) suggesting that society's rejection has deeply affected his sense of self. Additionally, the monster's Otherness is emphasized by its exclusion from society. As Shelley writes, "The being finished, Frankenstein, placed his creation under a care of a mountain" (Shelley, 1818, p.55). This shows that the monster's grotesque giant body is something that is unacceptable for the society.

Furthermore, Michel Foucault's concept of biopower provides insight into the power dynamics at play in the novel. Foucault argues that modern societies regulate and control bodies through various mechanisms, including norms of appearance and behavior (Foucault, 1978). Victor Frankenstein's monster can be interpreted as an exercise of biopower, as he seeks to control and manipulate life itself. This control over the monster's body reflects society's desire to maintain order and uphold norms of acceptability. This theme is evident when Victor describes his obsessive efforts to create life as, "A new species would bless me as its creator and source; many happy and excellent natures would owe their being to me. No father could claim the gratitude of his child so completely as I should deserve theirs" (Shelley, 1818/2003, p.38). Victor's desire to control life and impose his own norms onto his creation underscores the biopower he exerts.

The theme of the uncanny, as described by Sigmund Freud, is also evident in the novel's depiction of the monster. Freud defines the uncanny as something that is familiar yet unfamiliar, causing a sense of unease (Freud, 1919). The monster's human-like features, such as his ability to speak and reason, combined with his grotesque appearance, embody this concept of the uncanny. The duality of familiarity

and strangeness is highlighted through the creature's own words: "I expected this reception...All men hate the wretched; how, then, must I be hated, who am miserable beyond all living things! Yet you, my creator, detest and spurn me, thy creature, to whom thou art bound by ties only dissoluble by the annihilation of one of us" (Shelley, 1818/2003, p.93). The creature's articulate speech and reasoning contrast starkly with his hideous appearance, evoking both familiarity and strangeness, which leads to fear and rejection from those around him. Victor's reaction upon first seeing his creation also underscores this concept of the uncanny: "I started from my sleep with horror; a cold dew covered my forehead, my teeth chattered, and every limb became convulsed...His jaws opened, and he muttered some inarticulate sounds, while a grin wrinkled his cheeks" (Shelley, 1818/2003, pp. 60-61). The creature's partially human yet grotesque form elicits a profound sense of unease, highlighting the psychological impact of his presence in society.

Shelley's *Frankenstein* through body politics reveals some themes that reflect cultural anxieties. The monster's physical appearance, as a symbol of the Other, serves as a focal point for exploring these themes and their implications for identity, acceptance, and the construction of normalcy within society. In *Frankenstein* the monster's physical appearance is a source of horror and revulsion for those who encounter him. Shelley describes the monster as having "yellow skin scarcely covered the work of muscles and arteries beneath; his hair was of a lustrous black, and flowing; his teeth of a pearly whiteness" (Shelley, 1818, p.59). This description emphasizes the grotesque nature of the monster's appearance, highlighting society's fear of the Other and its tendency to reject what it deems as different or abnormal.

The monster himself is acutely aware of his own Otherness and laments his rejection by society. He questions his own humanity, "Was I then a monster, a blot upon the earth from which all men fled and whom all men disowned?" (Shelley, 1818, p.105). This sense of alienation and Otherness is a central theme in the novel, reflecting broader cultural anxieties about identity and acceptance. The rejection of the monster by society also reflects Michel Foucault's concept of biopower, whereby modern societies regulate and control bodies through various mechanisms. "I am alone and miserable; man will not associate with me; but one as deformed and horrible as myself would not deny herself to me" (Shelley, 1818, p. 145). This quest ultimately ends in tragedy, as the monster's attempts to befriend the family are met with fear and violence, further reinforcing his Otherness and alienation.

In *Frankenstein* the disruption of social categorization by ugliness is prominently depicted through the creature's ostracized existence. The creature's repulsive physical form renders him incapable of fitting into any recognized social category, a realization he confronts after facing rejection from numerous characters.

This rejection not only shows the implications of bodies and social classifications but also highlights the socially constructed nature of all bodies, as noted by Siebers (2001) as he asserts that “the body provides insight into the fact that all bodies are socially constructed and these social attitudes and institutions determine far greater than biological fact the representation of the body’s reality” (p. 737). The creature’s inability to conform to conventional standards of beauty or sublimity denies him access to these coveted categories, that is why, he is alienated and excluded from the society. To gain acceptance, the creature must elicit feelings associated with the beautiful or sublime. This theme is evident in Victor Frankenstein’s reaction upon first seeing his creation:

Unable to endure the aspect of the being I had created, I rushed out of the room, and continued a long time traversing my bedchamber, unable to compose my mind to sleep. At length lassitude succeeded to the tumult I had before endured; and I threw myself on the bed in my clothes, endeavouring to seek a few moments of forgetfulness. But it was in vain... I took refuge in the courtyard belonging to the house which I inhabited; where I remained during the rest of the night, walking up and down in the greatest agitation, listening attentively, catching and fearing each sound as if it were to announce the approach of the demoniacal corpse to which I had so miserably given life. (Shelley, 1818, pp. 60-61)

This evidence highlights Victor’s immediate horror and rejection of the creature, solely based on his appearance, reinforcing the idea that societal standards of beauty and sublimity marginalize those who do not meet these aesthetic norms. The creature’s existence, therefore, poses a significant threat to these established categories, reflecting the novel’s deeper exploration of the conflict between societal expectations and individual identity.

Societal classifications sharply delineate between the beautiful and the sublime while simultaneously marginalizing the ugly in *Frankenstein*. The creature, a unique embodiment of this dichotomy, defies easy categorization, rendering him inherently unclassifiable within these societal constructs. His grotesque appearance challenges conventional beauty standards upheld by society, which Edmund Burke defines as “qualities that inspire love or similar passions” (Burke, 1844, p.112). The rejection the creature faces is deeply rooted in these societal norms, exemplified by characters like Caroline and Elizabeth, whose beauty is not only admired but also influences their social acceptance and status within the narrative (Shelley, 1818). According to Edmund Burke’s aesthetics, beauty encompasses qualities that evoke positive emotions such as love or admiration (Burke, 1844). In Shelley’s portrayal, characters like Caroline, Victor’s mother, epitomize this ideal, with her beauty symbolizing not just physical attractiveness but also moral virtue. Victor’s

descriptions of Elizabeth further emphasize this societal valuation, associating her physical beauty with virtues like benevolence and angelic qualities. For instance, Victor describes Elizabeth as having “the soft and benevolent mind of the dove” and “the celestial smiles of the angel” (Shelley, 1818, p. 35). In contrast, the creature’s appearance, described with terms like “dull yellow eye” and “straight black lips,” stands in stark contrast to these ideals (Shelley, 1818, p.35). His inability to conform to these beauty standards highlights the arbitrariness and superficiality inherent in societal judgments based on physical appearance.

Through her characters including the monster in the text, Shelley “defends, and yet skeptically attacks, domestic and social tranquility” (Bowerbank, p. 419). The portrayal of beauty and domesticity underscores the significance of the social order established by prevailing categories. Characters like Caroline, Elizabeth, and Justine epitomize the delicate beauty and beloved status associated with these categories. Caroline, representing the epitome of bourgeois beauty, stands in stark contrast to the creature’s grotesque features, described as having a “dun white sockets,” and “straight black lips” (Shelley, 1818, p. 35). While Caroline is admired for her beauty by various observers, the creature also perceives her as the embodiment of idealized femininity. Upon encountering a portrait of Caroline in the possession of young William Frankenstein, the creature juxtaposes Caroline’s beauty with his own ugliness:

As I fixed my eyes on the child, I saw something glittering on his breast. I took it; it was a portrait of a most lovely woman. In spite of my malignity, it softened and attracted me. For a few moments I gazed with delight on her dark eyes, fringed by deep lashes, and her lovely lips; but presently my rage returned; I remembered that I was forever deprived of the delights that such beautiful creatures could bestow and that she whose resemblance I contemplated would, in regarding me, have changed that air of divine benignity to one or expressive of disgust and affright. (Shelley, 1818, p.100)

The portrayal of Caroline as having “dark eyes,” “deep lashes,” and “lovely lips” encapsulates the conventional ideal of feminine beauty. Victor’s monster encountering such beauty elicits a complex mix of emotions, ranging from dismay to fleeting comfort, as it serves as a stark reminder of his own ugliness. He recognizes the allure of beauty and momentarily believes he could attain it. However, he soon realizes the impossibility of ever possessing it himself. Moreover, the creature understands that he will never evoke the same emotions in others that beauty does. This recognition of his exclusion from the pleasures associated with beauty is evident in his lament: “I was forever deprived of the delights that such beautiful creatures could bestow” (Shelley, 1818, p.100). Thus, the creature’s unique position as an ugly, impoverished, and neglected being is accentuated by his inability to receive affection from those deemed beautiful.

Though the monster is excluded from the society and he is not considered beautiful, one might consider classifying him under the category of the sublime. Edmund Burke (1844) links various attributes with objects that elicit feelings of sublimity, such as vastness, ruggedness, and grandeur, among others. However, the qualification for sublimity also hinges on perceiving an object with horror without experiencing physical threat or intense pain. According to Burke, the sublime embodies a state between indifference and utter anguish. Yet, the creature cannot be categorized as sublime because he does not embody or evoke traditional sublime qualities. While he possesses traits like malevolence, vastness, and ruggedness (Shelley, 1818), these characteristics do not warrant a classification as sublime. The monster's treatment throughout the novel contradicts the notion of him being perceived as tolerable or admirable in a sublime sense.

Burke also emphasizes the perception of objects, whether they evoke beauty or sublimity, and the physiological effects they produce. According to Burke, "whatever is fitted in any sort to excite the ideas of pain and danger; that is to say, whatever is in any sort terrible, or is conversant about terrible objects, or operates in a manner analogous to terror, is a source of the sublime" (1844, p.51). The monster being unable to evoke feelings of beauty or sublimity results in the pain and danger he provokes. Although Burke describes the sublime as a "delightful horror" that brings reverence, the monster incites disgust. Despite his potential to evoke these passions, the creature is met with extreme repulsion from everyone. This reinforces his inherent ugliness. Burke further maintains that the sublime requires the "greatness of dimension" (p.73), distinguishing it from beauty (p. 91). The creature, though only vast in height, accepts that he is ugly and expresses it as, "My person was hideous and my stature gigantic: what did this mean? Who was I? What was I? Whence did I come? What was my destination? These questions continually recurred, but I was unable to solve them" (Shelley, p. 89). Despite possessing physical attributes that might typically evoke a sense of the sublime, the creature is instead met with hostility. Social constructions dictate that the beautiful are conventionally well-formed and aesthetically pleasing, while sublime objects are often viewed with a sense of tension. The perception of a body determines its classification within social constructs.

Thus, examining *Frankenstein* through the prism of body politics and societal norms unravels a rich tapestry of interconnected themes and symbols resonating with broader cultural concerns. Victor Frankenstein's creature's status as an outsider underscores themes of alienation and societal rejection, reflecting how societal norms and power dynamics influence acceptance and exclusion. The exploration of societal standards of beauty and ugliness, and their impact on individual worth, reveals the

complex interplay between appearance and societal acceptance, highlighting the rigid classifications that marginalize the different. Victor Frankenstein's pursuit of scientific knowledge and power brings to light themes of ambition, responsibility, and the consequences of unchecked hubris, with his actions perpetuating societal classifications and reinforcing power hierarchies. The creature's struggle to define his own identity and self-perception in the face of societal rejection raises critical questions about the impact of external judgment on self-worth and identity. By examining these themes, intricately woven together, Shelley's text offers a profound exploration of human nature, societal dynamics, and the quest for belonging in a world defined by rigid classifications and expectations. This analysis underscores the importance of understanding the ethical dimensions of scientific endeavor and the social responsibilities that come with it, making *Frankenstein* a timeless reflection on societal values and power structures.

Conclusion

Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* presents a profound exploration of body politics and societal norms through the character of the monster, illuminating themes of rejection, Otherness, and the implications of societal standards of beauty and acceptance. Throughout the novel, the creature's existence challenges societal constructs and responses toward bodies perceived as different or unconventional, critiquing the rigid categorizations imposed by society that perpetuate exclusion and marginalization based on physical appearance. The harsh judgment the creature faces underscores society's fixation on conventional standards of beauty and sublimity, revealing inherent biases and fears rather than intrinsic qualities of the bodies themselves. Shelley's narrative serves as a poignant reflection of society's flawed perceptions and the consequences of such categorizations.

By examining the consequences of societal judgments and the quest for power over life, Shelley's work provokes thought and reflection on the complexities of human nature and societal dynamics. The novel explores the concept of biopower through Victor Frankenstein's ambitious pursuits, reflecting society's desire to control and manipulate life itself. Victor's scientific experimentation and creation of the monster symbolize ethical dilemmas surrounding scientific innovation and the boundaries of human knowledge. Shelley prompts readers to consider the ethical implications of unchecked scientific progress on individual identity and societal values. This paper opens up possibilities for further research into intersections of aesthetics, identity politics, and biopolitics in literature. Future studies could explore Shelley's critique of societal norms in *Frankenstein* and its relevance to contemporary debates on beauty standards, discrimination, and ethical responsibilities in scientific advancements.

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Child Rights Violation in Iweala's *Beasts of No Nation*: A Study of Traumatic Experience of Child Soldier Agu

Rajendra Prasad Pant¹, Amisha Gajurel²

¹Assistant Lecturer at Kailali Multiple Campus, Dhangadhi, Nepal

²Student of MA English III Semester at Kailali Multiple Campus, Dhangadhi

Corresponding Author: Rajendra Prasad Pant; Email: rajendra.rp2000@gmail.com

Abstract

This paper examines various aspects of the life of protagonist Agu and other child soldiers evolved in the war in Uzodinma Iweala's novel, *Beasts of No Nation*. The concern of this paper is to explore the after-effects of West African Freedom War on the life of children from the perspective of child soldiers. The effects of trauma on the ruined life of child soldiers in their post war life formulate their social status regarding future generation too. The question of child right during guerilla war in unnamed West African country is the major concern of the novel including other factors those have serious impact upon the lives of the people living in West Africa. The research tool used for research is traumatic effects for the development of psychology in life of people with reference to Cathy Caruth, Van der Kolk and Ruth Leys. The research methodology used for analysis is library research textual analysis. The major finding is that the study of the discourse of traumatic effects of child rights violations that Iweala builds up in *Beasts of No Nation* with the psychological nuances creating mental disorder in the life of child soldiers. It tries to do so through a spotlight on how the novel presents trauma as post-war life experience of children where the traumatic experience distorts life of children.

Keywords: Childhood Trauma, memory, psychological Trauma, poverty, war

Introduction

The main concern of trauma is the recurrence of an unexpected event that hinders proper learning or development in those who experience it. Even though the victim does not fully comprehend or experience the event at the time, it continuously



resurfaces in the form of nightmares, recurrent delirium, and fragmented memories. Caruth (1995) finds the trauma as “the individual is possessed by traumatic events and its belated repetitions resist being integrated into their consciousness” (pp. 4-5). This is what the pure human experience can be felt in any stage or time. People not only feel it repetitively, but also have some integrated notions haunting their consciousness *Beasts of No Nation* telling the story of Agu, a young boy from an unnamed country in West Africa, who has been involved forcefully into warfare. As war appears in his village, his mother and sisters are rescued by the United Nation Peace Keepers, leaving him and his father, who are later forced to join in the fight. His father asks him to run away but he is quickly rounded up by other soldiers who make him to join in their rebellion. To be properly initiated into the war, Agu is ordered by the commander to kill an ‘enemy’. In the beginning day of his joining, he feels ashamed of his action but later rationalizes it as something expected of a soldier. He would like to stop the unending chain of killings but he knows that if he stops, he will be killed by the commander. The subject matter of *Beasts of No Nation* (2005) by Iweala is of description of the life of Agu, the protagonist and other child soldiers evolved in the war. The narrative of the novel is an exploration of how guerrilla war violets the right of Agu and other children with traumatic effects in their life. Further, it deals with contrasts that the uses of children as soldier during the war in an unnamed African country show the traumatic effects on the life of people in future. In addition, in the novel *Beasts of No Nation* (2005), the first-person narrator Agu is careful to describe the rituals leading one from youth to manhood. In such ritual celebrations, the characteristics of the warrior identity are celebrated, not only strength and physical prowess, but also protectiveness of the community, generosity in victory, and respect for women and girls but lost of the childhood and manhood due to war intrudes the life of the narrator lifelong. From the beginning of his childhood the narrator Agu faced many challenges regarding war that interfere his life. But after the war ended he suffered from his past experiences of war in traumatic way, however this paper includes issues of human rights along with the child right violation that has links to the psychological implication of trauma on the life.

This is the general assumption that people have bitter experience in their lives but less than war experiences for children that outbreaks the trauma in their lives. This research seeks the discourse of trauma due to child right violations by the rebellious group that Iweala builds up in *Beasts of No Nation*. It tries to do so through a spotlight on how the novel presents trauma as post-life experience of Agu, the main character of novel. The period he was involved in the war was cruel and painful for a children in African territory. Fukunaga (2015) comments that, “The movie, an adaptation of the book *Beasts of No Nation* by Iweala, is a journey of a young boy, Agu, whose ill-fortune made him a child soldier. Agu was once a ‘good boy from a

good family', but war shattered his family and thereby his happiness" (Fukunaga, 2015). Many children during the war think that the war is their responsibility for freedom. But most of the cases are cruel in-terms of social condition because of the loss of life in early stage of their life. Most children have been fighting to save the life of their family members in general. It is worth considering that the child soldier has lost his childhood with bitter experiences of killing people and looting for survival but the most important side of his traumatic experience is his hellish life of having unnatural sexual relations with the troop commandant during war. As Caruth (2018) stated, "Agu's suspended traumatic effects return to him haunting his survival and dragging him to face an existential crisis" (p. 345). The children mobilized in the war are relatively innocent and the hasty crushing of their innocence through forced initiation into the violence traumatizes them. Iweala narrates the trauma by linking it to the discourse of child rights violations closely associate to the inborn rights of human being. Children in the West African countries have been fighters for so called freedom but Iweala shows the major cause of such involvement is hunger. This research paper is based on the library research. The working tool is from critical considerations of child soldiers in articles like Caruth's *Unclaimed Experience* (1996) and critical considerations of child soldier s in articles like Mackey's *Troubling Humanitarian Consumption: Reframing Relationality in African Child Soldier Narrative*, Abani's *Song for Night* (2007) and Kearney's *The Representation of Child Soldiers in Contemporary African Fiction*. Further, my focus is to the African fiction representing the child soldiers, *Beasts of No Nation* (2006) by Iweala, having child soldier narratives enthrone the long traumatic effects for life time.

Literature Review

The memoir of child soldier Agu, *Beasts of No Nation* by Iweala is a powerful narrative that equates all the Beasts in once place. There has been numerous scholarly works, criticism, movie and analysis on this novel. The review limits exploitation of children for military purpose and the traumatic impact upon the life of such children. Most of the child soldiers are adolescent but many are Ten years old and younger. According to the United Nation (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child, a child is "every human being below eighteen years" (Article.1). There are many children of under eighteen are involved in the war. Depicting such real condition of children many work of literature have been produced. The novel carries the theme of psychological trauma onto the life of children named Agu and his friends in the novel when they become adult. In this regard Kearney (2010) states that, "opportunity they offer to enter into individual consciousness and to be in touch with a distinct personality" (p. 70). This actual in case of Agu the protagonist to please others in a servile fashion and tried his best to understand what had happened

to him but is unable and finds himself helpless with his hand full of arms to kill others. This type of psychology of children to prepare themselves for war misguides them from the right path in their life. Vickroy (2002) in this context says, “I explore how Iweala’s novel uses the child narrator’s ungrammatical English, mixed-up imagery . . . vulnerability of the child soldier and how child protagonist adopts certain masks to insulate himself from the horrors of Civil War” (p. 23). However, the language matters to deliver the feelings and the narrator of the novel expresses his grief, critics always try to relate this notion to trauma. In this regard, Adesola (2022) claims that:

As against how some critics have interpreted it, I contend that the notion of the child in this novel is one rooted in assumptions about childhood innocence . . . I argue that what is depicted as recovery of innocence amounts mainly to the infantilization of young soldiers, as well as a de-contextualization and de-historization of what has made child soldiering possible. (p. 41)

This is not only the innocence or poverty that children join the army or rebel forces more important reason is to protect their whole family by becoming a soldier. Agu, the narrator of the novel is unwillingly becomes soldier to fight for freedom. He gives up the precious age and learning from family and culture. Moreover he has no any concern about the freedom or other political movement. The fear of loosing family compels him to become soldier as Beah (2007) says about the situation of Agu:

I first stab him in the stomach, then the neck, then his heart, and I will cut it out. show it to him. Then pluck his eyes out. Remember, he probably killed your parents . . . Visualize the enemy, the rebels who killed your family, and those who are responsible for everything that has happened to you. (p. 112)

On the one hand, this seems the fight to protect his parents but most significant fact is that unknowingly a child is captured and forced to become militia waiting for next action of unit-operation. The pleasure of a child soldier shows just the childish manner attempting to know about it. His involvement in army as child soldier for certain period of life time is an opportunity for him to become corrupted. But his fear of participation in battle with excitement makes him violent soldier fighting for nothing. Children as Kearney (2010) claimed are “physically and mentally immature” and think everything like game and they involved themselves more interestingly (p.9). They served in armed conflicts as combatants, spies, messengers, porters, sentries and sexual slaves brutally. Moreover, there is no any evidence of adequate rehabilitation in the case of those child soldiers and only the experience of the child soldiers is presented in the fictions of contemporary period. However,

their experience does not matter to the armed force in great deal it produces a type of feeling to take revenge against domination due to poverty.

The revenge taking is later transformed into the mind of child soldier and brain washed them for freedom. Many children who are enforced into the war do not know their role and they only fight to fulfill their revenge and desires. Critics Caruth (2018) tries her best to make thorough concept over the descriptions of traumatic experience viewing psychoanalytic theory, too. She says “Is trauma the encounter with death or the ongoing experience of having survived it” (p. 7)? She describes encounter with death merely is not a solution of way out from trauma rather the survival becomes difficult. Children think of their revenge against what has happened with them because of their psychological immaturity. Furthermore, some children think that the rebel force may guarantee of regular food and clothing as well as medical needs. As a human being people simply think of their survival and servitudes. Regarding the involvement of children into the arm force, below is the view of Faulkner (2001) that clearly shows consequences:

In areas of the world where famine and extreme deprivation are the norm during the conflict, armed forces can usually provide starving children with the surest method of obtaining food, shelter, and weapons for self protection, which is obviously the easy way to obtain other materials. Some children join so they will be able to send the money they earn support their families. (p.491)

The cause and consequence of conflict as well as being child soldier is the lack of basic needs as Faulkner suggests. To earn some money and to fulfill the basic needs children join the armed force but this unknown step of those children becomes problem later in their life when they become the victims of conflict. Armed militia, police, or army cadres arbitrarily seize young recruits from the streets, schools, and orphanages. Maureen (2011) reflects the trauma and its effect on the life of children, “One of the difficulties that child soldier narratives pose for sentimental social codes . . . Children forcibly recruited cannot exercise a choice or give their consent to serve in armed conflict (p.44). The recruiting children forcibly as soldier are injustice to them. This has been reflected in fictional work regarding lives of people in the community who faced the same problem in their childhood days. In such a ways the destroyed childhood and psychological state of mind of such people become traumatic in the later life.

Actual child soldiers sometimes resist the recruitment but defeated due to poverty, food and the force was used. Honwana (2006) says that, “in practice, the distinction between voluntary and force recruitment is blurred; in some circumstances, it is entirely absent” (p.37). One needs to remember that there is not

only the factor of intimidation involves, but that many of these children were in search of physical and social protection. This is the question of their live and thus becomes the cause of joining armed force. Wessells (2002) portrays poverty in the front as the reason of compulsion of being child soldier:

Exacerbating difficult life conditions, oppression can lead youth into seeing military activities as a path towards social change or as a way to achieve revenge. In West Africa, the oppressive system of apartheid leads to a struggle of liberation where many youth engaged in fighting and militarize activity. (p.237)

Armed conflict and militarization can also normalize violence. For instance, in Angola, many generations have grown up with war as a fixture in their lives, making it difficult to imagine living in any other circumstance. Children in many ways convinced to rise up their hand for war and conflict for that rebel uses hatred of children towards the social scenario in common and taught them what is right and wrong to build up their own anger. The sexual behavior of commandant in a force to Agu, the protagonist represents the animalistic life of children. Critic Nussbaum (1995) is conscious about such sexual exploitation:

The combination of a child-like idiom and register with images of fire and the pictorial representation allow Iweala not only to make his child loud and clear in his reflections on the pain of sexual violation, but also evoke readers' empathy as they perceive the child struggling to invent a vocabulary to depict his experiences of trauma. (p.5)

During the war with militant group children have to face these challenges as underlying factors for their survival. This is unwillingly their duty to satisfy their commandant. Martha (1995) in one hand tries to relate that trauma with the judgment of the readers through the representation and further to create the empathy for the children struggling for their lives and to escape from the trauma of their past lives. Killing is frantic in the troop as their specialty is to kill during that state of mind but later on, they suffer because of their killing. All moments of their misconduct and killing hunt them, it causes trauma on their lives. Agu is the victim of the same traumatic effects, he cannot easily escape from the his past experience, sometimes trauma appears in the form of stream of consciousness, the very moment Agu killed his father and mother for the single piece of bread. Rosen (2005) relates, "transition from the childhood takes place naturally determined, and fixed steps are based on belief that children are basically immature, incompetent and irrational . . . social order dynamically shapes world around them" (p.32). He attempts to show the negative change in the mind of children who are forced to kill other and compelled

to fight in the name of freedom. But in the novel the setting is called an unnamed country of West Africa from where the narrator belongs to. He does not know the geographical situation of the nation nor about the nationality is he fighting for. Schultheis describes narrator of the novel *Beasts of No Nation* Agu like this:

Agu, the narrator, speaks for child soldiers . . . postcolonial theory and human rights discourses in their ability to negotiate contenting claims of the represent ability of and political responsibility for African Child soldiers within a global marketplace. (p.37)

This is what articulation of the child soldier's lives inside the limited boundary of the geographic limit of the unnamed West African Country where they fought for the freedom. The freedom that is not known to them what it is for and against; but they just fought for the piece of the bread.

This question of survival is related to the very portion of the colonialist and human right perspective later on. The concern of the child soldiers during war is realized later on and they try to grasp the change and their feeling is accountable in which one can easily found sorrow and pain and a type of lamentation for their deeds. In the novel *Beasts of No Nation*, while Agu lives his life in a torturous situations; including killing other people even his own father, stealing goods specially food for survive, and being raped; now he becomes traumatic remembering those days of his schools where his father was teaching and he played with his friends in the fields, his sniffing game like dog, etc. His state of mind now has been changed and he found himself not that Agu who might be the noble adult but he has been changed. The change in the mind of Agu, where he lost his childhood, due to war demonstrates the effects of traumatic experience in the life of a person.

Methods and Procedures

This research paper aims to use the primary sources as a subject matter of analysis. In fact the text *Beasts of No Nation*, by American writer Uzodinma Iweala explores the disorders in the life of people in Africa during the war and its impacts on the lives of child soldier. The theoretical tool of this research is human right violation based on the conception of psychoanalysis as the vehicle of transferring the traumatic feeling of people due to war in African continent. Francis Deng, quoted in Rosen (2005) "reports that "traditionally among the Dinka of the Sudan, boys were initiated into adulthood between the ages of sixteen and eighteen, and they immediately received gifts of well-designed spears that symbolised the military function of youth" (p.4). Children who receives the gift thinks themselves as mature in the beginning. They do not know that their life is at risk in coming days.

The issue of trauma seeks on how the life of people has been affected in course of time through out the text. Children involved in the war may feel such traumatic experience in post war period of their life. Coundouriotis (2010) says:

Child soldiers are the victim perpetrators par excellence; although, the eyes of their communities, child soldiers are often not seen as victims at all. In real life, instead of storytelling, we find an insistence on rituals of purification . . . to make the point that narrative such as Iweala presents the whole life of them in a sort of post trauma. (p.193)

The literary text describing the traumatic effects on its character has come to closer to the narratives of child soldier concerning in great deal about child right and human right violation by war bursts in their life. In *Beasts of No Nation* Iweala attempts to show the life of child soldier that is represented by Agu, the main character of the novel. The methodology of this qualitative research is to use the secondary sources to analyze the text, such as use of library, journals, online-journals, etc.to relate the theories and review of literature.

Results and Discussion

The powerful memoir of a child-soldier *Beasts of No Nation*, is an African fiction Nigerian-American writer Uzodinma Iweala has written in 2005. The novel is about the disturbances in the life of people in Africa during war since 1990 and its impact on the lives of children. Iweala forms a protagonist, Agu who narrates almost all events of war and its challenges for the people living in the community. In the novel he used dialect Pidgin English under the influence of African variety to tell events. His experience is quite fearful, it is because Agu has faced several problems to live and he tries to express his ideas of pain to the reader. The narrative is about transfiguration of the life of school children into a war soldier. Thus the story of Agu is painful journey of his life and so is to for readers too because the traumatic experience of a child including the various incidents of child right violation compels readers to feel it. Denov (2010) writes that "...Childhood is indeed a contested concept, a social construction that varies in form and content across cultures and social groups, and is defined by localised understandings and values" (p. 2).

The soldier incorporates difficult trainings, physical strength but the children may not be able to be a soldier in army. They are immature by age. According to Honwana and Boeck (2005) "the term 'soldier' tends to conjure up archetypal symbols of uniformed men with extensive military training in combat. This image counters the realities . . . fill the ranks of rebel group in post-colonial wars" (p.3). In the novel, the children are abducted or forced to join the rebel army. However, they are not trained to fight and are only used as entertainment.

In the beginning of the story, the main character of the novel Agu who is wounded and hiding himself into the bushes feeling like itching his body. The rebels instantly captured the village and go into their houses to find people living inside and kill them. He thinks of his mother and sister who are missing since the attack. Rebel army stabbed his father. But Agu guessed that his father is coming with some medicine of itching because he heard some noises of step by step as if someone is walking through. All of sudden he come to know that his world has been permanently ruptured. He trembles in fear as he finds his life in the hand of rebel soldiers. The soldiers decide to recruit him in army and spare his life. He becomes hopeful again. Unexpectedly the commander beats him. This is his first experience of his life as a soldier. He says that “Again and again he is hitting me and each blow from his hand is feeling on my skin like the flat side of machete. I am tasting blood. I am feeling like vomiting” (p.3). A soldier beats him merely to death. This is generally the treatment for new comers in the troop for threatening to obey the order of the commandant. The moment is quite fearful and dangerous for Agu and now then he decides whatever goes further he will not let beat others and obey whatever they will tell him to do. Agu was grade (primary) student in the school when he was abducted from the village. He remembers the study of Bible with his mother in the beginning days. His father was good reader and there are several books with red, green, white, and yellow colors and his mother used to select the book for him. This multi color description of the book is to represent the views of his father. Probably his father was killed because of his rebellious nature. The hard beaten Agu has got recovered from the unconsciousness and looked around him. There was a man with moustache and commanding other. Even he is scolding a person who beat Agu. This is the sympathetic moment for Agu and he feels some relief. He sees other soldiers carrying gun and sword with them walking here and there, putting goods inside the truck. He remembers his song and his childhood game that he used to play with his friend by singing a song. This is his innocent mind thinking about the game but now he is no more children. Now a person who favors him known as commandant is in front of him asking him for water and showing his regard. Commandant has the policy of recruiting the children is first threaten them by using Lieutenant and then he console them, shows his love to children and wash their brain. He asked Agu his name. Fearful Agu forgets his name too, he becomes totally hopeless but when he sees another child soldier Strika there working and he listened some words of Commandant. He was telling his name “my name is Commandant” (p. 9) and asking for his name to call him. His condition of that time is really hopeless “I am whispering Agu, my name is Agu” (p.9) and full of innocence of children. In his broken English Agu tries his best to recall that moment that he first faced with his commandant of the troop. He asked for his name and shows his gun in the belt. Agu

wanted to cry but was unable because he was totally senseless and frightened. He felt to go to toilet but suddenly afraid of death. He whispered his name hardly as Agu and then he thanks to god for saving his life. The lines of Agu are the steps of brain washing of children to prepare them for soldiers during the war.

Once Agu was book lover and he loved to read much. His mother called him professor. His hobby is due to his school teacher, father. His favourite book was Bible with its magnificent stories about Cain and Abel, David and Goliath. This is his prior choice from the beginning. But unfortunately now he has to sustain brutal days and night under the supervision of cruel commandant of his troop. He becomes killer without paying particular attention to his choice because his refusal is the simple way to death. He knew the truth that he has either to kill or die. The first psychology is formed “Bloody fool, he is saying to me. Come here and bring that machete” (p.18) that he is born to kill others and born to follow the order of his commandant. Commandant convinces him to be soldier and to kill others while other soldiers laugh at him and threaten him to kill others. His first experience of killing “I am just fearing. I am not wanting to be killing anybody today. I am not ever wanting to be killing anybody” (p.19) makes him fearful. Agu describes his real plight and his psychology of killing others for the first time. The troop captured the group of enemy army. Among them the leader of enemy army requested commandant not to kill them but commandant ordered him to kill the soldier. Moreover the question of commandant is more important as he is asking him whether he wanted to be soldier or not. Agu was confused to identify the right thing at all. The little support of the commandant for him caused him loyal to him but commandant was playing with his emotion and made him killer. This is his first killing in his life that disturbed him for many days. He remembers his childhood song to sing:

Soldier Soldier, Kill Kill Kill.

That is how you live.

That is how you die. (p.23)

The song is his expression of inner soul that the killing is only the way of his life. The work of soldier is to kill and killing only saves the life. The statement seems paradox but this song in his childhood is for the sake of nation. Children in the school were learning some nationalistic quote but later on when he becomes a soldier the song is for his life.

The child soldiers suffered by hunger for long time and, they try to find their family to feel secure. Hunger is the cause that breaks their domain for life time and they begin to kill others just for food. Dallaire (2011) attempts to draw the picture of children:

They can be psychologically manipulated through a deliberate programme of starvation, thirst, fatigue, voodoo, indoctrinations, beatings, the use of drugs and alcohol and even sexual abuse to render them compliant to the new norms of child soldering. (p.14)

The novel presents the misfortune of children throughout African war continents. There are many instances of hunger in the novel. The children were kept away from the regular food they need. During one of the operations in the village Agu and Strika both were hungry since many days. They searched for the food in the houses of the village but they find shit and piss everywhere but nothing to eat and lick:

There is a woman and her daughter just hiding. She is smelling like goat and we are wanting to kill her so we are dragging her . . . out, I am knowing because I have been taking them from their mother's belly to be seeing who is girl and who is boy. Are you my mother, I am saying. Are you my sister? I am not Devil. I am not bad boy. I am not bad boy. Devil is not blessing me and I am not going to hell. (p. 48-49)

During the raid Agu didn't find any food to eat and nothing to lick to survive except broken glass and other rustic stuff inside the house. In the main house he found a woman with a girl under bed. He was surprised that the he has seen the woman before and he confirmed that they were his mother and sister but he killed them for a piece of bread. He thought that there is no sin and it is the rule of nature for survival killing is good and no sin. Iwok (2008) argues that "when a child experiences a warm, intimate and continuous relationship with his mother or other care-giver, that child would thrive" (p.48). Agu's heart beating faster with a kind that this is the love of a mother when she prayed to god to forgive his sin and not send him to hell. Still he felt care, love and warmth of his mother. This killing represents the nationalistic movement of the people in West Africa. Nebutanyi (2013) further explains that "The iconography of Strika's euphemistic drawing not only embodies the vulnerable child beneath the aforementioned manic laughter, but also indicts the predatory proclivities of militaristic masculinities" (p. 61). This is what the great horror for child soldiers.

And this motif carries underlying meaning with the title *Beasts of No Nation*, that the story is about the notion that people are helplessly and inexorably shaped by their circumstances. However, the African Civil War is monitored by many media with their access and they sought for the children as war victims but they fail to be evidence for their lives. They only report what happened to the people living there in terms of human rights but they are unable to touch the reality of war victims.

One day when Commandant summoned up Agu at night when he was dreaming of becoming doctor or engineer in his small hut. This call of commandant at night was most dreadful for him. Agu has experienced the anal and oral sexual orientation in the troop and thought that it was his hardship that is going to end soon, each time he suffered he remembered the work of commandant that a head of troop means to have right to touch others with finger for sexual relationship. The unnatural sexual relationship ruptured the psychology of child:

He is telling me, take off your clothe. I do not want to be taking off my clothe . . . He is taking off my clothe for me and then he is sitting down next to me and breathing hard Good soldier is following order anyway and it is order for you to let me touch you like this. I don't want it on my back and even on my leg. (pp.83-84)

The sexual harassment destructs the psychological development of children. He did not like to be such good soldier that commandant told him and more than that he did not like to be a soldier in anyway. He was sad when commandant touched him with this finger molesting his body and sleeping at his back breathing fast. This pain was really enough to break the psychology of a person while Agu was small child and he bore everything as he described that he did not like the smell of the commandant and he liked to vomit that is suddenly after the oral sex. Their lives is in danger and they have lost their self respect at all. Iweala presents his views through novel to the human right activists and the whole world regarding the war and its traumas on the lives of people living there. The issue of war is not as it is seen rather there are several incidents behind curtain affecting the lives of people.

Agu described his painful death and the mental disorder of commandant. Commandant himself shoot driver to death and two other soldier who tried to escape from the fighting during war. Most of the troop soldiers died and it was the reason that the commandant was afraid of and doing whatever he liked. His fearful decision and love to life made them to stay underground bankers.

Now we are just living underground in trench that we are digging in the red mud and just living inside it like one kind of snake or rat. When it is dry, we are happying because there is no water anywhere and we can just be fighting war. When it is raining, ah! It is so terrible. So terrible . . . I am tired and hungry and I am wanting to leave. (p.120)

The most powerful commandant was also compelled and tired to save his life; he felt sorry for Agu whatever he had done with him. But Agu felt nothing against or for him. He was indifferent about everything and wanted to escape from the war. He was hungry for many days and even he did not drink water since last day,

everywhere there was bombarding and noise of killing and screaming. He was really tired of the war and fighting with no meaning for the lives of people as claimed by the commandant. In this point commandant himself was frustrated with the war. The whole troop was under the supervision of government army and United Nations is expected to reach soon there.

Conclusion

The present research study arrives at the following conclusion which is drawn on the spot light of critical analysis of preceding chapters. The life of children in West African communities is ruined due to war. They have lost their childhood in the war and finally become traumatized. Their post war life becomes problematic. Iweala in his novel, *Beasts of No Nation* (2005) depicts various aspects of the lives of child soldiers evolved in the war. He explores the ravages of war on children from the perspective of child soldiers. The child soldiers as the citizen of the country have nothing in their post war life. The dream of freedom in their mind and the most of their productivity become worthless at last. In a way they are privileged from the main stream society and further the violation of their child right and destruction of childhood leads them to trauma in their life. In a nutshell, Iweala presents his characters being suffered by the sense of losing childhood and important productive time of their life.

The time when the advocacy for the child right is in its apt form the children in the West African countries have been engaged in the war consequences the violation of child right. This violation due to war destroyed many lives for no reason at all. The critics argued that the destruction of the childhood due to war left the trauma in the remained lives of the people.

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Reflecting on Online Learning Experiences of Secondary School Teachers and Students during COVID-19

Shunil Rayamajhi¹, Karna Rana (PhD)²

¹MPhil Scholar at Nepal Open University, Faculty of Social Sciences and Education

²Lincoln University, Canterbury, New Zealand

Corresponding Author: Karna Rana; Email: karna.rana@lincoln.ac.nz

Abstract

This paper examines the experiences of secondary-level students' learning and teachers' teaching strategies via Zoom during the COVID-19 pandemic in Nepal. The government formally announced the closure of physical classrooms to mitigate the outbreak of the coronavirus. This study utilised a qualitative interpretive research design and conducted online semi-structured interviews with the participants, observed their online classes and conducted documentary analysis. The findings of this study indicate that online learning in urban areas provided a flexible and alternative mode to physical classrooms. However, students and teachers faced challenges, such as irregular power supply, poor internet connection, expensive mobile data, lack of digital devices and limited ICT skills among teachers when it came to managing and delivering online classes. Additionally, the study highlights the inability of rural students to access online learning during lockdown. The efficacy of teachers in developing ICT and e-pedagogy skills played a crucial role in sustaining online learning. To ensure equal opportunities for quality education among students from marginalised and disadvantaged communities, it is recommended to equip schools, teachers, and students with the minimum ICT infrastructure and to provide subsidies on computers and internet access.

Keywords: Alternative learning, COVID-19 pandemic, flexibility, pedagogical shift, school transformation



Introduction

The novel coronavirus known as COVID-19 led to lockdowns in many countries around the world. These measures were put in place to prevent the spread of the virus, reduce its severity, and control death rates. Following the guidelines set by the World Health Organisation (WHO), Nepal implemented a full lockdown on March 24, 2020 (Mahato et al., 2020). As a result of lockdown, all sectors, including educational organisations, were affected and physical schools were closed. In response, some universities, colleges, and schools in Nepal started online classes using various ICT tools, such as Zoom, Google Meet, and MS Teams. Zoom, in particular, proved to be an effective tool for video conferencing and distance learning, and was widely used in Nepal after the government ordered school closures and the implementation of lockdown. During this time, we observed that some urban private schools successfully transitioned from physical classrooms to online classes.

The Zoom application, which can be accessed on various devices, such as laptops, smartphones, and tablets, allows presenters to share their screen in turn and can accommodate up to 300 participants within a 40-minute time frame (Dharma et al., 2017). During the lockdown, many school teachers utilised the free version of Zoom specifically for teaching and learning activities. The use of ICT and digital literacy are important factors in conducting online video classes. Tondeur et al. (2007) suggest that teachers need flexible and school-based training, follow-up activities, and support to successfully integrate ICT in school education. However, policies and actions need to be in order to enhance the digital learning environment, promote the number of digital-friendly schools, and produce digitally confident and supportive teachers and learners (Wastiau et al., 2013). Regarding teachers' motivation to use ICT in educational activities, Player-Koro (2012) reports that teachers' positive attitudes towards pedagogical work with students and colleagues facilitate their use of ICT in education, while general positive attitudes towards ICT in education do not seem to have much effect. Scagnoli et al. (2019) emphasise that video lectures increase students' participation with content, enhance their perception of better learning experiences through content interaction, and strengthen teaching presence in online courses. The effectiveness of online classes seems to be determined by the supportive environment of schools, teachers and students' ICT literacy, and the availability of digital devices (McFarland & Hamilton, 2005).

Different policies and strategies for ICT-mediated pedagogy have been developed in Nepal to enhance learning outcomes. The *ICT in Education Master Plan 2013-2017* suggests four key components: ICT infrastructure, connectivity, teaching-learning materials, and human resources. The plan aims to ensure equitable access to education, promote quality education, bridge the digital divide, and

improve service delivery in education (Ministry of Education, 2013). Similarly, the *IT Policy 2010* focuses on providing internet access to all schools, fostering coordination and collaboration with national and international organisations to strengthen human resources promoting industry-academia collaboration, and implementing special IT programmes that highlight competent human resources (Ministry of Education, 2010). Moreover, the *School Sector Reform Plan 2009-2015* proposes the integration of ICT-mediated teaching and learning activities in all schools by developing ICT infrastructure and offering distance and online learning as alternative schooling methods (Ministry of Education, 2009). However, the government documents clearly state that there is no budget allocated for ICT projects in education (Rana, 2018).

In an analysis of teachers' practice of ICT in rural schools in Nepal, Rana et al. (2019) report that NGO-funded digital technologies in some rural schools of Nepal, although nominal, have reduced teachers' traditional practice of textbook-based teaching and created a friendly relationship between students and teachers. Thapa and Sein (2018) argue that computer-mediated education needs to be a game-changer to increase student enrollment in Nepal, reduce students' learning stress, minimise dropouts, and strengthen relationships with key actors like governmental and non-governmental organisations. The use of digital media can help teacher educators change their teacher education practices in Nepal, understand students' course-related concerns, and break barriers related to the lack of resources or inability to interact with students (Laudari, 2019). However, the *2018 Digital Nepal Framework* endorsed some major challenges, such as the lack of ICT-trained teachers and infrastructure to adopt virtual learning as an alternative mode of pedagogy (Ministry of Communication and Information Technology, 2018). Although the majority of government schools were unable to switch their conventional physical classrooms to online, a few urban private schools and colleges attempted to continue their educational activities online using various ICT tools. This paper reports secondary students' experiences of learning in Zoom classes from their place and teachers' strategies for teaching them online. This study tries to answer the following research questions:

1. How was secondary level students' experience of learning in Zoom class?
2. In what ways did secondary teachers plan and deliver their lessons in Zoom class?

Literature Review

Access, Preparation and Practice of ICT

For the last three decades, both developed and developing countries have

been striving to adopt various approaches aimed at improving instruction and learning. These approaches include the development of technology infrastructure and the use of ICT-based tools (Gudmundsdottir et al., 2020). A study by Carrasco and Torrecilla (2012) reported that students who had access to computers and the internet at home performed better academically compared to those who did not have access to these technologies. However, in their analysis of students' experience with MOOCs, Hew and Cheung (2014) found mixed responses. While some students appreciated the availability of these courses, others criticised the potentially harmful and disruptive nature of the technology, highlighting the high cost of managing it in state schools. In a qualitative study, Tondeur et al. (2018) argued that pre-service student teachers' capacity-building programmes in ICT resulted in the development of skilled professionals capable of effectively integrating ICT into their teaching practice. Kalolo (2019) contended that even developing countries can benefit from the integration of ICT, provided there are proper government policies in place.

Developing countries with limited resources and infrastructures, such as a strong internet connection, reliable electricity, digital technology-friendly teachers, educational software, and adequate funds may not be able to experience a high level of ICT practice in education (Khan et al., 2012). Fu (2013) argued in his study in Singapore that the success or failure of ICT integration in teaching and learning is determined by teachers' attitudes, expertise, beliefs, and confidence. Moreover, Giri and Rana (2022) suggested that both pre-service and in-service training programmes should cover the use of ICT to improve the education system. However, Rana and Rana (2020) reported that sustainable mechanisms and proper funding are required for teachers' facilities and training in the incorporation of ICT in teaching activities.

Students' Perception of Online Learning

Various studies have reported the use of web-based platforms, such as Zoom, MS Teams, and Google Meet for pedagogical purposes. For example, Rose (2007) reported that teachers utilised advanced technologies in their educational practices, specifically in online teaching, to gradually eliminate the myths surrounding disadvantaged students. In Nepal, where there is a lack of ICT infrastructure in schools, students used their mobile phones to communicate with their teachers and receive distance learning support during the COVID-19 pandemic (Acharya & Rana, 2024; Rana, 2022). Many students relied on Facebook, the most popular social media platform in Nepal, for learning during the pandemic. Despite the limitations, both students and parents appreciated the efforts of teachers to engage students in learning activities (Giri & Rana, 2022). Despite the limitations, both students and parents appreciated the efforts of teachers to engage students in learning activities (Giri & Rana, 2022). However, Berridge et al. (2012) argued that students' knowledge of

technology can interfere with learning when students at home do not have immediate technological and learning support for computer and internet issues. A quantitative study in Turkey (Demir Kaymak & Horzum, 2013) found that students' readiness for online learning increased interaction but decreased readiness, leading to a failure in interaction.

A study by Platt et al. (2014) in the USA found that although students appreciated online classes as a flexible way of learning, they did not perceive it as equivalent to face-to-face classes. It is possible that students in developing countries have different perceptions of online learning compared to students in developed countries. For example, a study in Sri Lanka by Liyanagunawardena (2008) found that students who had internet access outside of their university had higher confidence in the e-learning management system than those who only used the internet at the university. However, Rana (2018) stated in his qualitative study that irregular power supply, lack of funding, poor internet facilities, teachers' unwillingness to use ICT, and students' poor digital literacy are barriers to online learning. Studies conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic (Kaphle & Rana, 2023; Magar & Rana, 2022), however, have found that teachers were enthusiastic about learning how to use ICT facilities to create online learning and provide learning support to their students from home.

Challenges of Virtual Class

Different studies have reported challenges despite the opportunities of virtual education. In an action research conducted in Cyprus, Zembylas et al. (2008) argued that learners feel isolated and lonely until they become accustomed to technology, and that they need to establish meaningful communication with peers and instructors in virtual learning environments. A qualitative study conducted in Sweden (Andersson & Grönlund, 2009) found that due to a lack of political support and bureaucratic hurdles, teachers and students sometimes question the credibility of e-learning courses compared to traditional courses. However, a study in Australia (Hockridge, 2013) indicated that distance and online learning may lack social activities, such as community prayer, chapel services on campus, shared meals, conferences, or small group meetings which are helpful for developing character, humility, and empathy.

In their qualitative case study in South Africa (Tshabalala et al., 2014), it was argued that external factors, such as a lack of policy, inadequate training for staff, and limited access to computer laboratories for students are the real challenges for the implementation of blended learning in online and offline modes. Similarly, Kaphle and Rana (2023) in their qualitative study stated that online learning as a unique medium requires different strategies different from traditional face-to-face

classrooms. However, Thapa and Sein (2018) argued that projects, for example, *one laptop per child* (OLPC) and donor-dependent programmes launched by NGOs at a limited number of schools cannot bridge the digital divide, especially in remote community schools of developing countries like Nepal, where trained teachers, course materials, and student enrollment have always been scarce. In their qualitative case study in South Africa (Tshabalala et al., 2014), it was argued that external factors, such as a lack of policy, inadequate training for staff, and limited access to computer laboratories for students are the real challenges for the implementation of blended learning in online and offline modes. Likewise, Kaphle and Rana (2023) in their qualitative study stated that online learning as a unique medium requires different strategies different from traditional face-to-face classrooms. However, Thapa and Sein (2018) argued that projects, for example, *one laptop per child* (OLPC) and, donor-dependent programmes launched by NGOs at a limited number of schools, cannot bridge the gap of digital divide, especially in remote community schools of developing countries like Nepal, where trained teachers, course materials, and students' enrollment have always been scarce.

Methods and Procedures

Research Design

As this study aimed to explore the experiences of teachers and students in Zoom classes during the COVID-19 pandemic, it utilised online semi-structured interviews (Salmons, 2010) and online class observations to collect qualitative information (Cohen et al., 2013). To protect confidentiality, pseudonyms were used for the participants in this paper. Documentary analysis was employed to identify research gaps, theorise ideas, and analyse the data. Following the approach proposed by Denzin and Lincoln (2011), participants were purposively selected from four urban private secondary schools. One teacher from each school and two students from each school totaling four teachers and eight students, were selected based on their voluntary participation. The data gathered through interviews and observations were analysed using thematic analysis.

Table 1

Participant Schools, Teachers and Students

School	Participant	Gender	Status
Birat School	Shyam	Male	Teacher
	Priyata	Female	Student
	Prem	Male	Student

Itahari Public School	Soniya	Female	Teacher
	Pabitra	Female	Student
	Sahil	Male	Student
	Raju	Male	Teacher
Siddartha School	Lata	Female	Student
	Hari	Male	Student
	Sunita	Female	Teacher
Sungabha School	Parbati	Female	Student
	Surendra	Male	Student

Data Collection Procedure

During the pandemic in 2020, secondary-level teachers and students were followed for their online classes. Online semi-structured interviews, based on the idea of Salmons (2010), were conducted to explore the teachers' online teaching strategies. Informed consent was obtained from the participants before conducting interviews, which were held multiple times using Zoom. The aim of these interviews was to understand the students' experiences of online learning during the pandemic. In addition to the interviews, the observation of teachers' online classes was also conducted to strengthen the data collected through interviews. Each teacher's online classes were observed at least five times. To supplement the interviews and observations, various archived documents, such as journal articles, theses, books, website information, and government policy documents were studied. All interviews and observations were recorded and archived on a laptop.

Data Analysis

The data gathered through interviews and observations were thematically analysed. The interviews were transcribed and organised into specific themes, which were then critically interpreted. In addition to the primary data, various archived documents were also examined. It is important to note that this study, which focused on four urban private secondary schools, cannot provide a comprehensive and generalisable understanding of online class practices in all schools in Nepal. However, by identifying the challenges and possibilities of online classes in those schools, it opens up avenues for investigating the use of online classes not only during the pandemic but also in other natural disasters, such as earthquakes and floods. This study also encourages further research in this area.

Results

Based on the research questions, the findings of this paper are categorised into three main themes: flexibility of online learning, teachers' preparedness, and challenges and opportunities of Zoom classes.

Flexibility of Online Learning

The observations and interviews conducted with teachers and students for this study have revealed that online learning via Zoom has emerged as flexible mode of teaching and learning, enabling students to learn from the comfort of their homes. The teachers expressed their belief that interactive and collaborative learning through virtual platforms, at a low cost, can greatly enhance the quality of education. Although online classes in Nepal, particularly in secondary schools, were primarily introduced due to the outbreak of COVID-19, the majority of teachers and students reported that they found it convenient to continue coursework even after the closure of physical school. During an interview, Raju, a teacher from Siddhartha School, expressed his thoughts by stating:

It is really a good experience for me. We have opportunity to learn something new using latest technological tools and devices. It has made our teaching and learning possible even in lockdown.

The use of ICT-enabled pedagogy, specifically Zoom, made learning possible even during the pandemic. Additionally, his statement indicated that both teachers and students adopted to new technologies and online learning methods. Hari, a student from the same school, said:

It is engaging and effective. We can learn staying at home when physical class is shut during the pandemic. Teachers are working harder than in physical class.

Although schools have managed to continue educational activities online, it may have placed an additional burden on teachers to learn new pedagogy and technologies in order to effectively manage online and distance learning. This is further compounded by the growing concern of the pandemic situation and the uncertainty surrounding the re-opening of physical schools. Hari's experience with virtual classes revealed that online learning provides flexibility in continuing educational activities. However, some participants reported facing a number of challenges, including irregular power-cuts, unstable internet connections, and a lack of supportive devices. For example, Sunita, a teacher from Sungabha School, mentioned:

Still some students are out of contact and missing in online class. We contact and ask them to join online classes. I think they have troubles like no internet connection or lack of supportive devices to join virtual class.

Her comment highlighted the challenges faced by community schools in transitioning to online learning during the pandemic. She emphasised that without

adequate infrastructure, online classes cannot reach the majority of students, especially those living in rural areas with no internet access or lacking digital devices. Sunita specifically mentioned the technical issues that hinder student participation in virtual classes, such as the lack of supportive devices, internet connectivity, and electricity supply. It was observed that many students attended classes using their mobile phones and expensive internet data, and that some of them experienced frequent disconnections due to power outages and unstable internet. Lata, a student from Siddartha School, shared:

Some of us take online class lightly and do not pay proper attention. Even teachers fail to supervise them while presenting slides but in physical class such things never happened.

Her complaint indicated that teachers needed to do more than just deliver lessons in virtual classes. They should have learned to use flipped classroom pedagogies, allowing students to work on projects and regularly present their work in online classes. This would require providing intensive ICT training for both novice and experienced teachers, updating their pedagogical knowledge, and helping them to changing environment of online and distance learning. It was observed that students, who attended Zoom classes without their video on were not necessarily paying attention to teachers' lessons. However, both teachers and students saw online learning as an alternative to traditional physical classroom learning during the pandemic, but were reluctant to accept it as a better way of teaching and learning. Shyam, a teacher from Birat School, said:

We don't have any other option as there is COVID-19 pandemic and physical classrooms are closed. Online class is the only option we have. Challenges to online class need to be fixed to promote learning.

He further suggested that government policy and strategies regarding online classes need to be clearly defined in order to implement the programme effectively. Additionally, he emphasised the importance of taking appropriate action to establish a supportive virtual learning environment.

Teachers' Preparedness

The majority of participants reported in their interviews that when teachers are well-prepared with ICT tools and digital devices, it brings about changes in traditional teaching methods. Both teachers and students echoed that the effectiveness of virtual learning is directly connected to how well teachers plan and deliver their lessons using ICT tools. It was observed that teachers who possess sufficient technological skills in using ICT tools and digital devices are more adapted than

those who have limited technological skills. For example, Soniya, a teacher from Itahari Public School, stated:

Traditionally physical class in Nepal is based on lecture method which is useless in online mode. Online class seems to be effective when teachers share PowerPoint slides, pictures, videos, and quizzes.

Her comment provided a picture of how teachers had been learning e-based pedagogies in order to adapt to online classes during the pandemic. Soniya's experience indicated that teachers' efforts in creating presentation slides that include pictures, videos, and quizzes have actively engaged students in their learning. Similarly, Sahil, a student from the same school, also shared:

Teachers with technological knowledge are conducting virtual class more interactively and effectively than those teachers who share only the pages of textbooks. Teachers need to develop technological skills to conduct online class more effectively.

Many schools in Nepal might not have ICT-skilled teachers who possessed the minimum knowledge and skills required for online learning pedagogy. Sahil's statement highlights the students' awareness of their teachers' presentation style and preparedness for delivering classes online. Students assess their teachers' ability to use digital devices and how effective their classes are as a result. His emphasis on teachers' teaching strategies underscores the importance of their preparedness for online teaching. Similarly, Pabitra, another student from the same school, stated:

We understand better when teachers put extra effort with PowerPoint slides for presentation. But teaching without presentation in online class is found quite boring.

However, some participants commented that while their online class was satisfactory, their teachers were unable to provide timely feedback and support for their learning. For example:

We submit homework and classwork in teachers' Facebook Messenger. They seldom check and provide us with feedback. Some teachers ask us to show homework in front of the camera during the class. (Parbati, student from Sungabha School)

Teachers ask us to submit homework and classwork in their personal Facebook Messenger. Most of us rarely submit homework. Although we submitted, teachers do not check and provide feedback. (Prem, student from Birat School)

It became evident from these comments that teachers' lack of knowledge and skills in using modern technologies for online learning can reduce students' motivation to learn. Additionally, their lack of support in students' learning, particularly in checking assignments and providing feedback, may lead to a decline in students' performance. It was observed that teachers were uncomfortable using ICT tools, which made it difficult for them to assess assignments and give feedback. Furthermore, the fact that teachers asked students to display their homework in front of a webcam demonstrated their limited digital literacy.

Challenges and Opportunities of Zoom Class

Observation of teachers' online classes revealed that most of them used the free basic version of the Zoom application, which allowed for a limited class time of forty minutes. However, the participants expressed a degree of satisfaction with Zoom classes due to their features, such as the ability to share PowerPoint slides, YouTube videos, pictures, and chats. Their comments indicated that both teachers and students considered Zoom classes as an alternative mode of continuous learning following the government's lockdown order. The majority of participants stated that they were initially confused about how to conduct and join Zoom classes, but they gradually developed their confidence through continuous practice. For example, Soniya, a teacher from Itahari Public School, said:

Online class in our school started after country-wide lockdown to control COVID-19. It has continuously been improving. I was confused at first whether we could conduct online class but now I feel confident enough.

It is a common problem for teachers who are new to online teaching and have limited experience with ICT facilities. However, Soniya's experience shows how teachers can gain confidence in using new technologies for online learning through consistent practice. Our interviews with teachers also revealed that they developed their confidence in online teaching through training programmes. During our observation, we noticed that Soniya effectively used PowerPoint slides with relevant hyperlinks and occasionally engaged students in quizzes and group work. Parbati, a student from Birat School, appreciated online learning as it allowed her to continue her coursework during the pandemic. She said:

I am happy that we are learning from home with the help of internet even in lockdown due to COVID-19 pandemic. I am learning in online class what I could not learn in real classroom.

She expressed her satisfaction with online learning and how it complemented her normal classroom learning during the pandemic. However, some participants

expressed their dissatisfaction with Zoom classes. For example, Surendra, a student from Sungabha School, said:

We can meet with each other and share emotions and feelings in physical class but online class lacks them all. Likewise, we face power cut and poor internet connection which affects our virtual learning.

Despite teachers' limited ICT skills, there were many other challenges, such as limited or no access to the internet, power cuts, and technological issues. He suggested that students, parents, and teachers need to maintain a positive attitude for effective e-learning. His suggestion reflected the fact that online learning was in its early stages in the context of Nepal.

We need to take virtual class seriously and take it regularly. We need to fix our personal problems such as supportive devices, internet connection and power supply so that virtual class will be more effective. (Priyata, student from Birat School)

We need to have positive attitude towards online class and government too needs to validate it especially when our physical classroom is closed due to pandemic. (Lata, student from Siddhartha School)

It is much clearer that limited administrative support for managing online learning can be a major barrier. Priyata and Lata's suggestions have pointed out several issues that affect the effectiveness of Zoom classes, such as the question of the validity of online classes, the attitudes of students and parents, and the availability of infrastructure. However, a new type of internet-based learning has caught the attention of students, teachers, and parents in Nepal, as it could serve as an alternative mode of education during and after the pandemic. Like Zoom, other ICT tools can also be used to alleviate the challenges posed by the pandemic and other complex situations.

Discussion

The findings revealed that urban schools employed Zoom as an alternative and flexible mode of distance education for online classes during school closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Both teachers and students reported becoming familiar with online learning and appreciated the new way of learning from home. However, teachers without intensive ICT training and limited knowledge of e-pedagogies (Rana & Rana, 2020) reported online teaching as an additional burden, as they struggled with computer and web tools for online delivery. Moreover, a number of challenges, such as lack of digital devices, unreliable internet, expensive mobile data, and irregular power supply (Adnan & Anwar, 2020) made it difficult for

teachers and students to continue their online learning. The participation of students without video on Zoom was doubtful, unlike a previous study (Alqurashi, 2019) that highlighted learner-content and learner-instructor interactions as major issues. However, flexibility, improved communication, self-motivation, course management, and independent work were identified as the strengths of Zoom classes, aligning with the findings of Davis et al. (2019). The findings of this study suggest that proper management of online learning can complement traditional physical schools and also serve as an alternative mode of learning. The findings revealed that Zoom was employed for online classes by urban schools as an alternative and flexible mode of distance education to continue educational activities during school closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Both teachers and students reported that they were getting familiarity with online mode of learning and appreciated the new way of learning from home. However, teachers with lack of intensive ICT training and limited knowledge of e-pedagogies (Rana & Rana, 2020) reported online teaching as an additional burden as they had to struggle with computer and web tools for online delivery. Moreover, a number of challenges, such as lack of digital devices, unreliable internet, expensive mobile data, and irregularity of power supply (Adnan & Anwar, 2020) challenged teachers and students to continue their online learning. Students' participation without video on Zoom was doubtful unlike a previous study (Alqurashi, 2019) highlighting learner-content and learner-instructor interactions as major issues. However, flexibility, improved communication, self-motivation, course management, and working independently were found as the strengths of Zoom class aligning with the findings of Davis et al. (2019).

It was found that teachers' efforts in creating PowerPoint slides that incorporated pictures, videos, and quizzes engaged students in learning activities. However, many schools in Nepal might not have teachers with the minimum ICT skills (Rana et al., 2020) required to manage online learning. Students, on the other hand, were aware of their teachers' presentation style and their level of preparation for online class delivery. Students assessed their teachers' ability to use digital technologies and how effectively they incorporated them into their classes. Teachers' teaching strategies also indicated the importance of being prepared for online teaching. Unfortunately, teachers were unable to provide timely feedback on students' work and support them with learning issues. It is evident that teachers' limited skills in using modern technologies for online learning can negatively impact students' motivation to learn, and their lack of support in students' online learning may lead to anxiety, as earlier studies have shown (Halverson & Graham, 2019; Scagnoli et al., 2019). Teachers were found to be uncomfortable providing feedback on student assignments due to their limited ICT skills in utilising available features.

It was revealed how teachers can develop their confidence in using new technologies in online and distance learning through consistent practice and training programmes. Similar to international literature (Starkey, 2020; Valencia-Arias et al., 2019), this study has investigated teachers' proactive engagement with new technologies and their progressive development of skills through continuous practice. Teachers extensively used PowerPoint slides with hyperlinks and sometimes engaged students in quizzes and group work. They expressed satisfaction with online learning and how it complemented traditional classroom learning during lockdown. However, some participants expressed dissatisfaction with Zoom classes. In addition to teachers' limited ICT skills, there are other challenges, such as limited internet access, power-cuts, and technological issues, which align with the findings of a case study in Ghana by Adarkwah (2020). This study suggests that students and parents' limited internet access, power-cut, and technological issues align with the findings of a case study in Ghana by Adarkwah (2020). This study suggests that students, parents, and teachers need to have a positive attitude for effective e-learning. It has revealed that online learning is in its early stages in the context of Nepal and that limited administrative support to manage online learning can be a major barrier. Other issues, such as the validity of online classes, students and parents' attitudes, and infrastructure also determine the efficacy of Zoom classes. However, a new kind of internet-based learning has drawn the attention of students, teachers, and parents in Nepal as a potential alternative mode of education during and post-pandemic situations similar to findings in an international context as reported by König et al. (2020). Online classes, although initiated and practised following school closures during COVID-19, have provided the possibility of flexible learning in terms of time and place in any situation like a pandemic or other calamities. Several studies during and after the pandemic in Nepal (Giri & Rana, 2022; Kaphle & Rana, 2023; Rana, 2022) have found that although online learning was initially intimidating to many teachers, students, administrators, and parents, this new learning practice was eventually accepted and appreciated for its effectiveness in providing both teachers and students with flexibility in managing learning activities from convenient locations. If an ICT-skilled workforce is provided for the management and delivery of online and distance learning, this new practice can be well-developed to promote opportunities for quality education for all, including marginalised and disadvantaged community children.

Conclusion

The online mode of learning is highly regarded for its flexibility in terms of time and place. It has become a viable alternative to traditional learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, which has led to the closure of schools in order to

prevent and control the spread of the coronavirus. Research based on urban online learning practices suggests that effective management of ICT infrastructure, access to internet facilities, and teachers with basic ICT skills can significantly promote online and distance learning. However, schools in rural areas have faced challenges in transitioning from physical classrooms to online learning due to the lack of ICT infrastructure, electricity, internet access, and trained ICT teachers. Issues, such as irregular power supply, poor internet connectivity, weak mobile data, and a lack of digital devices have prevented a large number of rural students from accessing online learning. While teachers in urban schools were able to conduct online learning using platforms like Zoom, the number of students in these classes fluctuated due to ineffective classroom management and teaching strategies on the part of the teachers. Teachers who possessed basic ICT skills and delivered lessons using PowerPoint slides with pictures, videos, hyperlinks, and quizzes had more students in their classes compared to those teachers with limited knowledge and skills in e-pedagogy.

The majority of teachers, who had limited ICT skills and were unable to utilise features, seemed to fail in providing feedback on students' work. However, consistent practice with technology and training programmes helped them develop the confidence to create and manage online classes. Limited administrative support in managing online learning was identified as a major barrier to teachers' progress in online teaching. Similarly, several issues, such as the question of the validity of online classes, students' and parents' attitudes towards online learning, and inadequate ICT infrastructure were found to be challenges to web-based learning. Online classes, although initiated and practised following school closures during the pandemic, can be further developed by equipping all schools and students, particularly those students from marginalised and disadvantaged communities, with equal opportunities for quality education.

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Causes of Abroad Study in Higher Education from Nepal

Tekendra Kumar Mahatara

Mid-West University, Nepal

Email: jeemahatara2041@gmail.com

Abstract

This study explores the factors that motivate Nepali students to study abroad as well as the obstacles they face in order to understand this phenomenon. Every year, the number of students going to study abroad from Nepal is increasing. Considering this situation, this study tries to find out why Nepali students choose to pursue their higher education overseas. A quantitative approach using surveys was used to acquire opinions from one hundred Nepali students. The findings indicate a significant propensity to study overseas in order to advance professionally, advance personally and obtain better employment prospects. Concerns regarding Nepal's political unrest and lack of employment opportunities also play a role in decision-making for abroad study. These results highlight the complex interplay between socio-political, economic and personal factors when influencing decisions about educational migration. In order to meet the various needs of Nepali students and improve the regional educational system, policymakers and educational institutions must have a thorough understanding of these dynamics. Considering all things, the study adds to the conversation about globalization, educational mobility and the goals of young people in Nepal in an increasingly interconnected world.

Keywords: Overseas, opportunity, globalization, motivational factor

Introduction

In a time of globalization and interconnectedness, students from all over the world are compelled to investigate opportunities outside their home countries as the pursuit of higher education crosses national borders (Killick, 2014). Situated in the center of Asia, Nepal has seen an increase in the number of its aspirational youth choosing to pursue their education overseas (Kölbel, 2015). This phenomenon



represents a paradigm shift in Nepal's traditional higher education system as students become more aware of the numerous advantages and opportunities provided by foreign universities.

Nepali students are increasingly opting to study abroad for various reasons. One significant factor is the desire for access to higher quality education and specialized programmes that may not be readily available in Nepal (Acharya, 2012). Rather than being based on any specific discipline, the various universities of Nepal are being operated based on the same nature. A study by Poudel and Gautam (2019) found that many Nepali students perceive foreign universities as offering superior academic opportunities, modern facilities and innovative teaching methods. Additionally, the allure of gaining international exposure and enhancing career prospects post-graduation motivates Nepali students to pursue education abroad (Dhungana & Neupane, 2018). The limited availability of certain fields of study and the perception of better employment opportunities overseas also contribute to this trend (Pokharel, 2016). Furthermore, the aspiration for cultural enrichment and personal growth through exposure to diverse societies and perspectives plays a significant role in Nepali students' decision to study abroad (Poudel & Gautam, 2019). Thus, the increasing number of Nepali students seeking education abroad reflects a complex interplay of academic, career and personal motivations.

This study explores the dynamic landscape the causes of study abroad for Nepali students. It is critical for educators, policymakers and stakeholders to comprehend the factors driving this migration as the demand for high-quality education rises and global competition intensifies.

Studying abroad is an experience with many facets, including intellectual, cultural and personal aspects (Immetman & Schneider, 1998). The number of Nepali students choosing to pursue higher education overseas has significantly increased recently, indicating a growing desire for international academic opportunities. This trend is influenced by a wide range of factors, such as the desire to experience different cultures, the availability of top-notch educational institutions and the pursuit of specialized programmes that might not be easily accessible in Nepal (Aveni, 2005). Nepali students who are looking for high-quality education and better career prospects are increasingly choosing to study in the US, the UK, Australia, Canada and European countries. The appeal of an international network, the availability of scholarships and welcoming immigration laws are all important factors in drawing in Nepali students.

Understanding the complex reasons underlying this trend is a research challenge pertaining to the reasons why Nepali students are choosing to pursue higher education overseas. Especially in Nepal, despite the fact that there are so

many universities that provide higher education, every day students go out for higher education (Joshi, 2018). This entails looking into the institutional, cultural and socioeconomic elements that influence people to look for educational opportunities outside Nepal. Investigating the factors that lead Nepali students to choose foreign universities requires looking at things like perceived educational quality, specialized programme availability, career opportunities, language ability, exposure to different cultures, political unpredictability and constraints in the home educational system (Acharya, 2012). Determining the root causes of these issues can help clarify the nuances affecting educational migration trends and provide guidance for policies intended to improve higher education accessibility and quality in Nepal.

For a number of reasons, the investigation into the factors that lead Nepali students to pursue higher education overseas is essential. The present time is the era of competition and quality education. Various studies have shown the fact that higher education in western countries is better than in Nepal (Witenstein & Palmer, 2013). In such a situation, Nepali students going abroad for higher education cannot be considered otherwise. But it may not be the only reason, it is also an important purpose of this study to find out what other reasons are causing this situation. First of all, it seeks to shed light on the socioeconomic, cultural and educational dynamics of Nepal by identifying the underlying motives and factors that push students to pursue education abroad (Thieme, 2017). In order to improve the local educational system, close gaps and keep talent in Nepal, policymakers, educational institutions and stakeholders can benefit greatly from an understanding of these causes. The research can also assist families and aspiring students in making well-informed decisions about their options for higher education, taking into account the advantages, difficulties and alternatives of studying overseas. The research adds to larger conversations on globalization, educational mobility, and the goals of Nepali youth in an increasingly globalized world by exploring the causes of this trend.

There is still a discernible lack of data about the complex incentives and decision-making processes underlying Nepali students' increasing interest in and participation in international higher education (Ra & Joshi, 2020). While numerous studies have examined general motivations like access to high-quality education, employment opportunities and international exposure, a thorough examination of the particular socioeconomic, cultural and individual elements that influence Nepali students' decision to pursue their academic goals abroad is lacking. Going out of Nepal, every year for higher education is a serious challenge to spend a lot of money outside the country. On the one hand, new universities are opening day by day in Nepal and on the other hand, students are leaving for higher education. This is the serious issue about the higher education of Nepal. The government is increasing

investment in higher education, but the problem is that a large number of students from Nepal are going abroad for higher education. The objectives of this study are to find out why Nepali students choose to pursue their higher education overseas, and to identify the underlying causes that impact their decision-making processes by comprehending these motivations.

The study of Nepali students pursuing higher education abroad provides valuable insights into international education and cross-cultural exchange. Factors such as limited opportunities, quality education, diverse perspectives and global career prospects drive this trend. This knowledge helps policymakers, educators and students make informed decisions about education and promotes cultural exchange, ultimately contributing to the advancement of global education systems.

Literature Review

Global Status of Higher Education in the 21st Century

In the 21st century, higher education has experienced significant global transformations, driven by technological advancements, economic shifts and evolving societal needs. This era has witnessed a remarkable expansion in access to higher education worldwide, with enrollment rates soaring across diverse regions. According to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), global enrollment in tertiary education reached 220 million in 2019, marking a substantial increase from previous decades (UIS, 2020). This surge in enrollment reflects the growing recognition of higher education as a vital driver of economic development, social mobility and innovation on a global scale.

Furthermore, the landscape of higher education in the 21st century is characterized by increasing internationalization and interconnectedness. Universities and colleges have become hubs of multiculturalism, attracting students, scholars and researchers from various parts of the world. The globalization of higher education is evident in the rise of international student mobility, collaborative research endeavors and the establishment of branch campuses and partnerships between institutions across borders (Altbach & Knight, 2007). This globalization trend has enriched academic discourse, fostered cross-cultural understanding and facilitated knowledge exchange on a global scale.

Moreover, the 21st century has witnessed a paradigm shift in the pedagogical approaches and learning methodologies within higher education. Digital technologies have revolutionized teaching and learning, enabling the proliferation of online education, blended learning models and the integration of immersive technologies such as virtual reality and augmented reality into curricula (Brown & Costanzo, 2018). The emergence of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) has democratized

access to high-quality educational content, offering learners around the world the opportunity to engage with top-notch faculty and prestigious institutions without geographical constraints.

Despite these advancements, challenges persist in the global higher education landscape, including issues of equity, affordability and quality assurance. Disparities in access to higher education persist across regions and socioeconomic backgrounds, with marginalized communities often facing barriers to entry due to financial constraints, inadequate infrastructure and systemic inequalities (UNESCO, 2020). Moreover, concerns about the commercialization and corporatization of higher education have raised questions about academic freedom, intellectual autonomy, and the commodification of knowledge in the contemporary university system (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004).

The global status of higher education in the 21st century is marked by unprecedented expansion, internationalization and technological innovation. While these developments have enhanced access to learning opportunities and fostered cross-cultural exchange, they have also brought forth challenges related to equity, quality and sustainability. Addressing these challenges requires concerted efforts from governments, educational institutions, and stakeholders to ensure that higher education remains a force for positive societal transformation and inclusive development in the 21st century.

Current Status of Higher Education in Nepal

Although there are still ongoing difficulties, Nepal's higher education system has seen substantial changes in recent years (Chauhan, 2008). The nation has made progress in increasing access to postsecondary education, as more and more universities offer a wide range of academic programmes. Nonetheless, problems in the higher education sector continue to exist, including inadequate funding, limited infrastructure and differences in accessibility and quality (Teferra & Altbachl, 2004). In an attempt to give students across the country fair opportunities, efforts are being made to decentralize education services to rural areas, even though Kathmandu continues to be the focal point for higher education institutions. Furthermore, collaborations with foreign colleges and organizations are growing more frequent, allowing for the sharing of information, resources and skills that raise the standard of higher education in Nepal as a whole (Adhikari & Shrestha, 2023).

Notwithstanding these developments, Nepal's higher education system continues to face numerous obstacles that prevent it from reaching its full potential (Ghimire & Kim, 2018). There are still gaps in quality assurance systems, which causes differences in credentials and educational requirements. Furthermore, the

curriculum frequently finds it difficult to adapt to the changing demands of society and industry, which hurts graduates' employability and competitiveness in the global labor market (Knight & Yorke, 2004). Furthermore, efforts to reform education continue to be hampered by bureaucratic inefficiencies and political unpredictability. In order to effectively address these problems, government organizations, academic institutions, and other stakeholders must work together to give infrastructure, curriculum development, faculty training, and regulatory frameworks top priority (Herbert et al., 2020). This will help to create a more robust and inclusive higher education environment that can better serve the diverse needs of Nepalese student body.

Issues of Higher Education in Nepal

Nepal's higher education system is beset by a number of serious issues that impede the country's overall growth and advancement. Lack of access to high-quality education, particularly in rural and isolated areas, is one of the main problems (Devkota, 2021). Due to inadequate infrastructure, a lack of resources and financial obstacles, many students especially those from marginalized communities find it difficult to pursue higher education. This difference hinders the nation's attempts to attain inclusive growth and development and maintains social inequality.

Furthermore, Nepal's higher education system frequently falls short of international standards in terms of quality (Kapur & Crowley, 2008). Colleges and universities have to deal with issues like out-of-date curricula, poor programmes for developing faculty, and few opportunities for research (Levine, 2006). This has an impact on graduates' employability as well as the country's ability to innovate and compete on a worldwide scale. To ensure that higher education in Nepal satisfies the needs of both students and the larger society, addressing these issues calls for extensive reforms that include investments in infrastructure, improvements to teaching standards, and the encouragement of research and innovation (Panth & Hinchliffe, 2001).

It is impossible to overestimate the extent to which the government has contributed to problems in Nepal's higher education system (Panth & Hinchliffe, 2001). A multitude of challenges has resulted from inadequate funding, ongoing political interference and a failure to prioritize education. Universities in Nepal suffer from antiquated facilities, a lack of funding and a faculty shortage (Chauhan, 2008). Furthermore, bureaucratic red tape stifles creativity and makes it more difficult to adapt to the changing needs of the labour market and students (Teofilovic, 2002). Because of this, many young people in Nepal have limited access to high-quality higher education, which exacerbates poverty cycles and impedes the socioeconomic

development of this nation (Joshee, 2016). To address these systemic problems and guarantee that education continues to be a driving force behind advancement rather than a hindrance, immediate reforms are necessary.

Methods and Procedures

Numerical data is gathered and analysed as part of the quantitative research in order to comprehend and explain phenomena (Williams, 2007). Survey research design was used for this study. To collect data from a representative sample of Nepali students who are studying abroad or who plan to study abroad, rating scale was used. One hundred students were selected in this study. Specifically, snowball sampling was used to exclude other respondents on the basis of person-to-person relationships. Among them, 30 students were selected from among the students who went to Japan for study and 70 students were selected from among the students who were in contact with the Consultancy of Kathmandu. This selection process was based on stratified and snowball sampling method.

I used rating scale for collecting the expected data. If one question is placed in the rating scale, then 10 statements are placed in it, among which the respondent has to give a rating on one statement. I gave the online and in-person rating scale to the selected students. Maintaining privacy and anonymity to promote truthful answers, I have used statistical techniques for analysis and interpretation of data. I got participants' informed consent by outlining the rights they have, the goal of the study, and how their data have been used. I made sure the information gathered is kept private and utilized exclusively for study. By excluding any personally identifiable information from the dataset or research findings, I could safeguard the identity of the participants. For the validity, I made sure the questionnaire measures the relevant constructs (e.g., reasons for studying abroad) accurately. I have used table to clearly and concisely present the results, utilizing the quantitative data to be illustrated. I have talked about the implications of the findings and how they connect to the goals and research questions.

Results and Discussion

Out of the rating scale form provided to 100 respondents, the responses received in the rating scale form were filled and returned by 70 people. The rating scale consisted of 10 statements in which the respondents had to assign a number from 1 to 10 based on their preference. In the rating scale, I asked what the reason was for going to study abroad.

Table 1*Rating Response from Students*

S.N.	Statement	Number of Rating Given Priority Number One	Percentage
1	Better employment opportunity in study abroad	20	28.57
2	Study abroad enhances career prospects	11	15.71
3	Personal growth and independence in study abroad	9	12.85
4	Employment problem in Nepal	8	11.42
5	Better quality life in study abroad	7	10
6	Challenge related to political instability in Nepal	7	10
7	Limitations in career growth in Nepal	4	5.71
8	Better academic opportunity in study abroad	2	2.85
9	Faced challenge in accessing quality education within Nepal	1	1.42
10	Lack of specialized course in Nepal	1	1.42

Based on the data presented, it seems that people have priorities or preferences when it comes to different aspects of education, work and overall well-being, especially when it comes to studying overseas as opposed to remaining in Nepal. This is one interpretation:

Better employment opportunity while studying abroad: Out of all the options, this one garnered the most ratings and was assigned priority number one. With 20 responses, or 28.57% of the total responses, this option was selected. This implies that a sizeable proportion of participants appreciate the possibility of enhanced career prospects that come with studying overseas.

Study abroad enhances career prospects: With 11 responses (15.71%), this option received fewer priority one ratings than the first option, despite still

being significant. It suggests that although career prospects are significant, actual employment opportunities may be viewed as being more important.

Studying abroad can lead to personal growth and independence: As evidenced by the nine priority one ratings this option received, a sizable percentage of respondents value these benefits. It received 12.85% of the answers.

Nepal's employment issues: Although this is a concern, this option received 8 priority one ratings, suggesting that although employment issues do exist in Nepal, they might not be the main reason to think about studying abroad. It makes up 11.42% of the answers.

Improved quality of life while studying abroad: This was rated as having seven priority one ratings, suggesting that some respondents placed a high value on the overall standard of living provided by studying abroad. It accounts for ten percent of the answers.

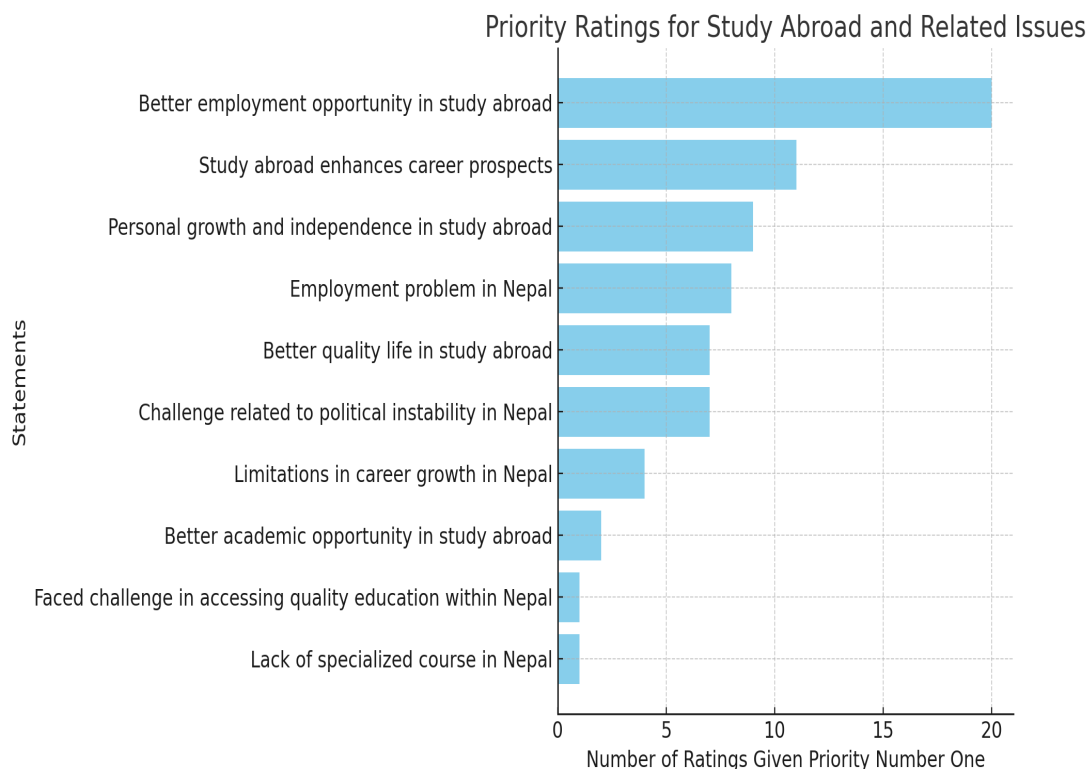
Problem relating to political unrest in Nepal: Similarly, this option was given top priority by 7 respondents, indicating that some people who are thinking about studying abroad are quite concerned about political unrest. Additionally, it accounts for 10% of the answers.

Career growth restrictions in Nepal: This option received four priority one ratings, suggesting that although these restrictions do exist, respondents may not be as concerned about them as they are about other factors. It makes up 5.71 percent of the answers.

Better academic opportunities through study abroad: Just two respondents gave this option top priority, indicating that factors related to employment may be more important motivators than academic opportunities. It accounts for 2.85% of the answers.

Challenges in obtaining high-quality education in Nepal: This option was rated as a priority one, meaning that, although access to high-quality education is a concern, it might not be the main factor in deciding whether to study abroad. It makes up 1.42% of the answers.

Absence of specialized courses in Nepal: As with the preceding option, this one also received a priority one rating, indicating that most respondents may not find the lack of specialized courses to be a compelling reason to study abroad. Furthermore, it accounts for 1.42% of the replies.

Table 2*Priority Rating for Study Abroad*

“Better employment opportunity abroad” is the study abroad and related issue statements’ top-rated priority, according to the bar graph. This indicates that the possibility of better employment opportunities in foreign country is highly valued by students and those thinking about studying abroad. The focus on overseas employment prospects is part of a larger trend in which employers place a high value on international work experience and view it as a competitive advantage in the labour market (Blackmore et al., 2017). This goal is in line with the expanding understanding of the need for a worldwide workforce skilled in intercultural communication and global business procedures.

“Personal growth and independence abroad” and “Study abroad enhances career prospects” are closely behind. The notion that career enhancement can result in better career opportunities both abroad and domestically is supported by the high priority placed on it. This may be brought about by the development of a variety of skills, exposure to various educational environments, and capacity for global networking (Wilson et al., 2009). In the meantime, the focus on individual

development and independence emphasizes how important it is for students to study overseas to have a well-rounded education. Living abroad can help develop independence, flexibility, and a more global perspective all of which are valued qualities in both personal and professional settings (Tadmor et al., 2012). Overall, these priorities show a thorough comprehension of the numerous advantages of abroad study.

Overall, the data indicates that the main reasons people think about studying abroad are greater job opportunities, career prospects, personal development, and independence; however, other important factors that influence their decision-making process include political unpredictability and general quality of life.

The information provided sheds important light on the preferences and priorities of those who are thinking about studying overseas vs staying in Nepal. The emphasis on greater employment opportunities that come with studying abroad is a recurring theme that shows up. The appeal of improved career prospects that come with international education is highlighted by the sizeable percentage of respondents who rated it as their top priority. The fact that the most people responded to this aspect indicates that a lot of people think studying abroad can help them land good jobs (Kinging, 2008). Studying abroad places a strong focus on personal development and independence, which is another noteworthy finding. Even though a small percentage of respondents gave this feature more weight than improved job prospects, it was still highly discussed. This shows that people recognize the opportunity for self-development and cultural immersion that studying abroad offers, and they value the all-encompassing advantages of international education beyond merely advancing their careers (Ikendi, 2022).

Interestingly, the decision to study abroad was also found to be significantly influenced by worries about political unrest and Nepal's job problems. Better job opportunities and personal development received higher priority ratings, but these aspects still attracted a lot of attention. This suggests that broader socio-political factors and worries about the general standard of living in Nepal may have an impact on the decision of some people to pursue education overseas (Acharya, 2012). All things considered; the information presents a complex picture of the reasons why people would want to think about studying abroad. While personal development and professional advancement are important motivators, other elements like political stability and standard of living also have a big impact on how decisions are made. In order to address the needs and aspirations of individuals in Nepal's education landscape, legislators and educational institutions must have a thorough understanding of these priorities (Carney & Bista, 2009).

The results of the data analysis indicate that people who are thinking about studying overseas as opposed to staying in Nepal have different priorities and preferences when it comes to work, education, and general well-being. The relationship between studying abroad and the alleged greater job prospects it provides is a recurring theme in the findings (Aveni, 2005). The greatest percentage of respondents gave this feature the highest priority one rating, demonstrating how highly they regard the possibility of improved career prospects that come with an international education. The data indicates a strong correlation between international education and future employability, highlighting a common participant belief that studying abroad can significantly improve their job prospects.

Furthermore, the results underscore the importance linked to individual development and self-reliance in relation to studying overseas. Even though a smaller percentage of respondents gave this factor more weight than improved job prospects, it still attracted a lot of attention, suggesting that people are generally aware of the comprehensive advantages of international education that go beyond simple career advancement. This supports a linkage theory in which people view studying overseas as a way to advance their personal and cultural development in addition to their employment prospects, strengthening the notion that international education has many benefits beyond advancement in the workplace (Stone & Petrick, 2013).

However, worries about political unrest and job prospects in Nepal also play a role in the decision-making process when it comes to studying overseas (Sunam & McCarthy, 2016). Even with the focus on increased career prospects and personal growth, a sizable percentage of respondents still give careful thought to these sociopolitical and economic factors. This implies that decisions about education and migration are shaped by a complex interaction between sociopolitical context, economic conditions, and individual goals (Syed & Özbilgin, 2009). The results highlight how crucial it is to comprehend these complex priorities and issues when developing programmes and policies meant to meet the various needs and goals of people within Nepal's educational system.

Conclusion

The data analysis reveals distinct priorities and preferences among individuals considering studying abroad compared to remaining in Nepal. The predominant emphasis on the perceived greater job opportunities available through international education emerges as a consistent theme throughout the findings. This is evident from the significant percentage of respondents who prioritize this aspect, indicating a widespread belief in the potential for enhanced career prospects associated with studying overseas. The findings underscore a strong association between

international education and future employability, suggesting that many participants perceive studying abroad as a pathway to significantly improving their job prospects.

Moreover, the results highlight the significance attributed to personal development and self-reliance in the context of studying abroad. Despite a smaller proportion of respondents assigning greater weight to this factor compared to improved job prospects, it still garners considerable attention. This suggests a broader recognition among participants of the multifaceted benefits of international education beyond mere career advancement. Such findings support a comprehensive perspective wherein studying abroad is perceived as facilitating not only professional growth but also personal and cultural development, underscoring the diverse advantages associated with international educational experiences.

However, the decision-making process regarding studying abroad is also influenced by concerns regarding political instability and job prospects within Nepal. Despite the predominant focus on increased career opportunities and personal growth, a notable percentage of respondents remain mindful of these socio-political and economic factors. This indicates that educational and migratory decisions are shaped by a nuanced interplay between individual aspirations, socio-political contexts, and economic conditions. The complexity of these priorities underscores the importance of understanding and addressing the diverse needs and goals of individuals within Nepal's educational landscape through informed policy-making and programme development.

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Customers' Perception on Banking Communication

Rheet Rijal

Mid-West University, School of Management, Surkhet, Nepal

Email: rijalrheet@gmail.com

Abstract

This study explored customers' perceptions of banking communication in "A" grade banks within Surkhet Valley, Nepal, aiming to fill a critical gap in understanding the dynamics of communication within the banking sector. Drawing upon existing literature and theoretical frameworks, the research investigated factors influencing customer awareness and satisfaction regarding banking communication. Through a quantitative approach involving 405 respondents, the study employed ordered logistic regression analysis to discern significant relationships between various demographic and experiential factors and banking communication awareness levels. Findings revealed that age, participation in common schemes, hassle with account updates, involvement with ASWA (Automated Settlement of Withdrawals and Advances), gender and work experience significantly impacted banking communication awareness levels among customers. Age, common scheme participation, hassle with account updates and ASWA involvement positively influence awareness and gender and work experience exhibited negative associations. These results underscored the importance of tailored communication strategies targeting diverse demographic groups to enhance overall banking communication effectiveness. The implications extend to managerial practices, suggesting the adoption of transparent and accessible communication channels, and policy recommendations aimed at promoting regulatory frameworks conducive to improved customer engagement. Furthermore, the study highlighted avenues for future research, including the exploration of cultural and regional influences on banking communication perceptions. By addressing the identified factors, banks can strengthen customer relationships, foster loyalty and enhance service quality, thereby contributing to the sustainable growth of the banking sector in Surkhet Valley.

Keywords: Managerial practices, digital age, communication quality, Surkhet Valley

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Introduction

In today's digital age, effective communication between banks and customers is crucial for satisfaction, loyalty and perception of the institution. Digital communication channels like mobile banking apps, social media and email have transformed the landscape, requiring banks to ensure clarity, relevance and security in their messages (Horowitz, 2023). Effective banking communication includes account notifications, customer service inquiries, marketing messages and personalized financial advice. Customers favor clear, timely and relevant messages, with personalized communications being more positively received than generic ones (Rana, 2024). Transparency and honesty are highly valued, as highlighted by a Deloitte survey where customers preferred proactive communication about important account changes and security issues. This approach shows a bank's commitment to their financial well-being (Horowitz, 2023). The mode of communication also shapes customer perception. While digital channels are convenient for some, others prefer personal interactions or phone calls. Thus, banks should adopt a multi-channel communication strategy to meet diverse customer preferences (Rana, 2024).

According to Cavallone and Modina (2014), communication is a critical factor for creating value and enhancing customer loyalty in the banking industry. They conducted a field research on two clusters of Italian banks and found that communication had a positive and tangible effect on customer satisfaction and bank image. They also suggested some strategies and tools for improving bank communication, such as developing a communication plan that is aligned with the bank's mission, vision, values, and objectives. They also recommend using a mix of communication channels and media, such as websites, social networks, newsletters, brochures, events, etc., to reach different segments of customers and stakeholders. Moreover, they emphasize the importance of enhancing the quality and frequency of communication with customers, especially during critical moments, such as service failures, complaints, or changes. These strategies and tools can help banks to build a positive brand image and a strong customer relationship (Cavallone & Modina, 2014).

Enhancing communication in Nepal's commercial banking involves integrating digital strategies, fostering transparency, and collaboration (Shrestha et al., 2019). Managers facilitate internal communication, emphasizing skills. Updating practices, ensuring security, and promoting stakeholder communication are crucial. Effective communication improves organizational effectiveness. Investing in training and knowledge management benefits. Encouraging employee expression, feedback channels, and clear customer communication fosters trust. Adopting a multifaceted approach enhances efficiency and satisfaction (Shrestha et al., 2019).

Paudel et al. (2020) examined the factors that influence customers' awareness and satisfaction with banking communication in Nepal. The authors use a survey of 384 customers from 10 commercial banks and apply descriptive statistics and ordered logit regression. They find that providing time to address customers' problems, DEMAT facility, and bank size are positively associated with banking communication awareness, while branch location, ATM facility, and bank age are negatively associated. They also find that customers' satisfaction with banking communication is influenced by their awareness level, bank size, and branch location. The authors suggest some implications for bank managers and policymakers to improve banking communication practices and customer loyalty. Parajuli et al. (2020) explored the customers' perception of banking communication in relation to customer relations in Nepal. The authors use a survey of 200 customers from four commercial banks and apply factor analysis and multiple regressions. They identify four dimensions of banking communication: information quality, service quality, responsiveness, and empathy. They find that information quality and service quality have a positive and significant impact on customer relations, while responsiveness and empathy have a positive but insignificant impact. The authors recommend some strategies for banks to enhance their communication quality and customer relations.

In the corporate banking sector, establishing effective communication systems is vital for facilitating understanding across different organizational levels. Additionally, improving management efficiency involves monitoring and supervising employees. The grounded theory model illustrates the complex relationships among managers, shareholders, employees, and customers, including causal factors, actions, and resulting consequences (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The Expectation Communication System model, applied in banking, helps regulate internal management through communication audits, organizational analysis, and individual and group development. Communication audits in banking provide valuable insights into personal behaviors, interpersonal relationships, and group dynamics, revealing employee satisfaction levels and expectations (Goldhaber & Rogers, 1979). The COSO framework strengthens internal controls in banking, preventing communication frauds and errors through efficient operations. Its components include risk assessment, control environment, activities, monitoring, and information dissemination (Committee of Sponsoring Organizations of the Treadway Commission, 2013). Similarly, the COBIT framework aims to address business requirements, IT processes, and resources (ISACA, 2019). Furthermore, contemporary business practices involve banks transitioning from traditional clerical methods to digital platforms through online services. Online services bridge the gap between banks and customers, utilizing digital signatures, encryption, virtual private networks, and security protocols. Douglas McGregor's Theory X and Theory Y highlight different assumptions about human behavior. Theory X relies on traditional methods,

while Theory Y emphasizes empowerment and continual organizational improvement. Banks embracing Theory Y principles encourage liberal and developmental approaches compared to Theory X-driven banks (McGregor, 1960).

The rationale for conducting the study on banking communication in Surkhet Valley, Nepal, draws heavily from existing research and theoretical frameworks emphasizing the critical role of effective communication in the banking industry. Cavallone and Modina (2014) highlighted that communication is pivotal for creating value and enhancing customer loyalty. Their findings underscore that well-planned communication strategies aligned with organizational goals can significantly improve customer satisfaction and bolster the bank's image. They advocate for a diverse mix of communication channels and emphasize the importance of timely and quality communication, especially during critical moments such as service failures or changes.

Effective communication plays a pivotal role in enhancing customer satisfaction, loyalty, and perception of banks in Surkhet Valley, Nepal. Despite the significant role of effective communication in the banking industry, there remains a gap in understanding customers' perceptions of banking communication in "A" grade banks of Surkhet Valley, Nepal. While existing literature provides insights into the factors influencing customer awareness and satisfaction with banking communication, there is limited research specifically focusing on the perceptions of customers in this region. Moreover, the banking landscape in Nepal has evolved considerably over the years, with the establishment of numerous commercial banks offering diverse financial services. However, the extent to which customers in Surkhet Valley perceive and engage with banking communication practices, particularly in "A" grade banks, remains understudied.

Therefore, research problem revolves around the need to comprehensively explore and understand customers' perceptions of banking communication in "A" grade banks of Surkhet Valley. Specifically, the study aimed

1. To identify customer's awareness of banking communication in "A" grade banks of Surkhet Valley.
2. To measure factors affecting customers' perception of banking communication in "A" grade banks of Surkhet Valley.
3. To recommend proper management strategies for effective banking communication in "A" grade banks of Surkhet Valley.

Based on the research problem and objectives outlined, the following alternative hypotheses have been developed for the study:

H1: There is a significant relationship between socio-demographic variables (age, level of education, gender and work experience) and awareness level of banking communication in “A” grade banks of Surkhet Valley.

H2: There is a significant relationship between perceived quality (loyalty, immediate messages, empathy, timely information, and responsiveness) and banking communication awareness level.

H3: There is a significant relationship between trust (Good working environment, language, satisfaction, and security) and banking communication awareness level.

H4: There is a significant relationship between service offered (credit card, visa debit card, mobile banking, DEMA, ASWA, use of communication system, and other) and banking communication awareness level.

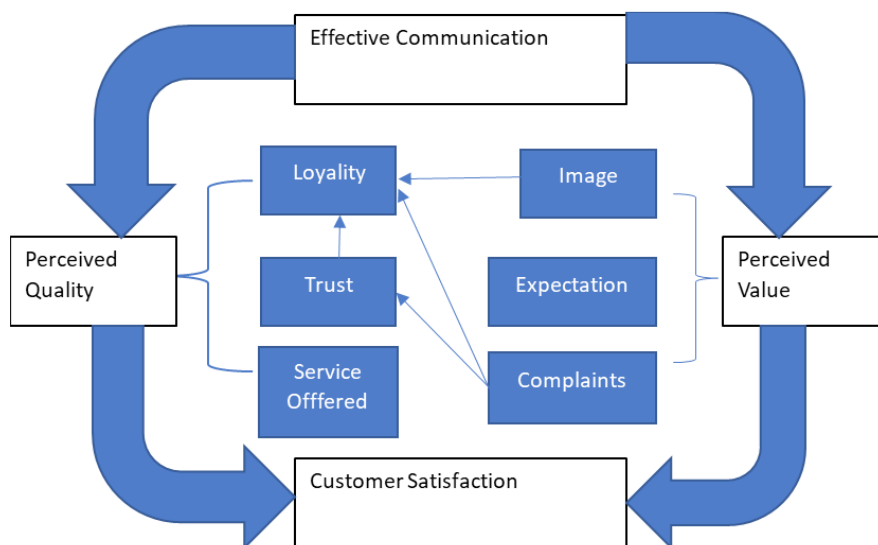
H5: There is a significant relationship between perceived value (positive image, process complexity, feeling hassle in account updates, and conflict) and banking communication awareness level.

H6: There is a significant relationship between expectation (Expected service and change) and banking communication awareness level.

H7: There is a significant relationship between complaints (Address complains, problem and listen problem) and banking communication awareness level.

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework



Modified from Ball et al. (2006), and adopted from Parajuli (2019)

Effective communication is the cornerstone of successful customer relationships and satisfaction (Cavallone & Modina, 2014). At the heart of this interaction lies a web of interconnected elements, each influencing the overall experience. Loyalty, the bedrock of enduring relationships, is nurtured through consistent, transparent communication. This fosters trust, a fragile yet essential element in any customer-business dynamic. Trust is further reinforced by perceived quality, which is shaped by the clarity and accuracy of communication regarding product or service attributes. The services offered by a banking institution, though integral, are only as valuable as the communication that surrounds them. Clear communication manages expectations, aligning them with the realities of the service provided. This alignment influences perceived value, a crucial factor in determining customer satisfaction. However, even in the most well-oiled systems, complaints may arise. Effective communication transforms complaints into opportunities for resolution, demonstrating responsiveness and care. Handling complaints with transparency and empathy not only resolves immediate issues but also strengthens customer relationships in the long term.

Methods and Procedures

The present study employs a quantitative research design with a positivist deductive approach, emphasizing numerical data and statistical analysis to investigate customer perceptions of banking communication in the Surkhet Valley banking sector. Using purposive sampling, the study collected 405 responses from customers holding accounts in commercial banks within the region. The sample size was determined to achieve a 5% margin of error with a 95% confidence level, initially aiming for 385 respondents but incorporating all 405 valid responses to enhance statistical power and comprehensiveness, as suggested by Cochrane (1963, as cited in Israel, 1992) and supported by Asiamah et al. (2017). Data collection relied on a structured questionnaire administered through interviews, with constructs and items based on existing literature, such as Parajuli (2019). The questionnaire was designed to measure customer awareness of banking communication, factors influencing comprehension, and perceived effectiveness of communication strategies. Analysis was conducted using Excel and STATA regression techniques, including the ordered logit model, for both descriptive and inferential purposes. This methodological approach aims to offer valuable insights into refining banking communication strategies, ultimately fostering heightened customer satisfaction and loyalty within Surkhet's banking sector.

Table 1*Variables Undertaken for the Present Study*

Variables	Description	Value	Expected Sign
Socio- Demographic			
		Years	
Age	Respondent's age	1 = Above SEE, 0 = otherwise	\pm
Education (Edu)	Formal education		$+$
Gender (gender)	Respondent's gender	1= male, 0 = otherwise	\pm
Experience(wrk_exp)	Work experience		$+$
		Years	
Perceived Quality			
Loyalty			
Immediate message (Imdt_msg)	You receive message immediately	1= yes, 0 = otherwise	$+$
Empathy (comm_scheme)	Bank communicate new scheme	1= yes, 0 = otherwise	$+$
Timely information (Info_time)	Provide information timely	1= yes, 0 = otherwise	$+$
Responsiveness (Time_prob)	Provide sufficient time to address problem	1= yes, 0 = otherwise	\pm
Trust			
		1= yes, 0 = otherwise	
Good working environment (Bank_co)	Bank co-operate you	1 = yes, 0 = otherwise	$+$
Language	Language used by employees		$+$
Satisfaction (Satisfied_comm)	Whether customers are satisfied or not	1 = yes, 0 = otherwise	\pm
Security (Secured)	You feel secured after receiving message	1 = yes, 0 = otherwise	$+$
Service Offered			

		You use Credit card	1= yes, 0= otherwise	
Credit card (Credit_c)	You use Visa Debit card		1= yes, 0= otherwise	±
Visa Debit card (visa_dc)	You use Mobile Banking		1= yes, 0= otherwise	±
Mobile Banking (Mob_Bnk)	You use DEMAT facility		1= yes, 0= otherwise	±
DEMAT ASWA	You use DEMAT facility		1= yes, 0= otherwise	±
Others Use of communication system (adv_comm)	You use other facilities Bank has used advance communication system		1= yes, 0= otherwise	±

Perceived Value

Image

	You faced communication problem	1 = yes, 0 = otherwise	±
Process Complexity (Prob_faced)	You feel hassle in account update	1 = yes, 0 = otherwise	+
Hassle (hassle_acc update)	There has been misunderstanding between you and banking staffs	1 = yes, 0 = otherwise	+

Expectation

	You expect bank will communicate in change	1 = yes, 0 = otherwise	±
Expected service (comm_change)	New changes fulfill your expectation	1 = yes, 0 = otherwise	±

Complaints

Address complaints (adrs_cmplain)	Bankers address your complaints as soon as you make it	1 = yes, 0 = otherwise	±
Problem (Prob_ATM)	You faced problem using ATM	1 = yes, 0 = otherwise	±
Listen problem (Lstn_ ATM prob)	They listen your ATM problem carefully	1 = yes, 0 = otherwise	±
Banking Awareness level	Out of 12 questions on banking awareness, if an individual receives more than/equal to 9 questions yes then they are highly aware.	Y=0, If Scale Score <50% -Less aware Y=1 50% <If Score <75%- Moderately Aware Y=2, If Scale Score >75%above-Highly Aware	

Source: Researcher’s calculation/ assumption

Results

Demographic Information

Table 2
Age Group and Gender Cross Tabulation

Demographic Information		Gender		Total
		Male	Female	
Age group	Below 25 years	78 49.40 percent	80 50.60 percent	158 100.00 percent
	26-35 years	37 50.00 percent	37 50.00 percent	74 100.00 percent
	36 to 45 years	44 56.40 percent	34 43.60 percent	78 100.00 percent
	46-55 years	23 39.00 percent	36 61.00 percent	59 100.00 percent
	56 and above years	14 48.30 percent	15 51.70 percent	29 100.00 percent

Total	196 49.20 percent	202 50.80 percent	398 100.00 percent
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The table provides a breakdown of age groups and Gender distribution within a sample of 405. Out of total sample, 398 respondents indicated their gender. It reveals a roughly equal split between males (49.20 percent) and females (50.80 percent). Across age groups, females slightly outnumber males in the younger and older categories, while males dominate in the 36-45 age bracket. Notably, the 26-35 age group shows an equal gender split. Overall, while the sample maintains a balanced Gender ratio, variations exist across different age brackets, indicating nuanced demographic patterns.

Table 3

Work Experience and Gender Cross Tabulation

		Gender		Total
		Female	Male	
Work_Exp	Less than 1 years	14	19	33
		42.40 percent	57.60 percent	100.00 percent
	2-5 years	43	43	86
		50.00 percent	50.00 percent	100.00 percent
	6 to 10 years	30	27	57
		52.60 percent	47.40 percent	100.00 percent
	11 to 15 years	10	16	26
		38.50 percent	61.50 percent	100.00 percent
	16 and above	23	58	81
		28.40 percent	71.60 percent	100.00 percent
	Total	120	163	283
		42.40 percent	57.60 percent	100.00 percent

The table provides breakdown years of work experience and Gender distribution within a sample of 405. Out of total sample, 283 respondents indicated their gender. It shows that males make up the majority of the sample, accounting for 57.60 percent, while females represent 42.40 percent. Across all experience categories, males outnumber females. Particularly, in the 11 to 15 years and 16 and above years experience brackets, males significantly surpass females. Conversely, in the less than 1 year and 2-5 years categories, males also dominate, albeit to a lesser extent. Overall, the data illustrates a gender disparity across various levels of work experience, with

males consistently comprising a larger proportion of the sample.

Table 4

Education and Gender Cross Tabulation

		Gender		Total
		0	1	
Edu	Less than SEE	30	28	58
		51.70 percent	48.30 percent	100.00 percent
	Above SEE	150	153	303
		49.50 percent	50.50 percent	100.00 percent
Total		180	181	361
		49.90 percent	50.10 percent	100.00 percent

The table provides a breakdown of level of education and Gender distribution within a sample of 405. Out of total sample, 361 respondents indicated their gender. It indicates that the majority of individuals fall into the “Above SEE” education category, comprising 303 individuals, while 58 individuals have an educational level categorized as “Less than SEE.” Despite slight variations, the gender distribution remains relatively balanced across both education categories. In the “Less than SEE” group, males slightly outnumber females by 51.70 percent to 48.30 percent, while in the “Above SEE” category, the split is nearly equal, with 49.50 percent males and 50.50 percent females.

Table 5

Banking Communication Awareness Level

Level of Awareness	Frequency	Percent
Less aware	88	21.7
Moderately Aware	204	50.4
Highly Aware	113	27.9
Total	405	100.0

The table illustrates the varying levels of awareness regarding banking communication among customers of “A” grade banks in Surkhet Valley. Nearly a quarter of the respondents (21.7 percent) are categorized as “Less Aware,” indicating a limited understanding of banking communication. The majority (50.4 percent) fall under the “Moderately Aware” group, suggesting a basic comprehension but room for improvement. On the other hand, about a third (27.9 percent) are classified as “Highly Aware,” signifying a strong understanding of banking communication practices. Overall, while a significant portion of customers exhibit moderate to high awareness, there remains a need for targeted efforts to enhance understanding among those less

familiar with banking communication concepts.

Pre and Post-estimation Tests

Multicollinearity Test

Table 6

VIF Table

Variable	VIF	1/VIF
Work_Exp	2.12	0.472188
Age	2.03	0.493312
Language	1.51	0.663727
Mob_bnk	1.44	0.694478
ASWA	1.42	0.701774
Edu	1.41	0.706836
DEMAT	1.41	0.707688
mis_und	1.40	0.711819
Bank_co	1.38	0.723259
Visa_dc	1.31	0.761283
hassle_acc~e	1.27	0.789898
time_pob	1.26	0.795781
others	1.23	0.813232
Credit_c	1.22	0.820225
Lstn_ATMProb	1.17	0.857385
comm_scheme	1.16	0.859102
Gender	1.16	0.865721
Prob_ATM	1.14	0.877475
imdt_msg	1.08	0.922030
Mean VIF	1.38	

The Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) is a statistical measure used to identify multicollinearity, a condition where independent variables in a regression model are

highly correlated. Williams (2015) suggests that if the VIF score is less than 10, it generally indicates the absence of severe multicollinearity issues. In summary, a mean VIF of 1.38 indicates a low level of multicollinearity on average, which is favorable for regression analysis.

Heteroscedasticity Test

Table 7

Heteroscedasticity Test

Model	Chi2	Prob> chi2
1	1.880	0.1799

From the test we observed there is no heteroscedastic problem in the data set as Chau (2017) specified if the value is greater than 0.05 the data can be said to be free from heteroscedastic problem. Hence, table is the final regression result for the present study.

Ordered Logit Regression Result

Logistic regression	Number of obs	=	184
	LR chi2(19)	=	41.69
	Prob > chi2	=	0.0020
Log likelihood = -74.196891	Pseudo R2	=	0.2193

Table 8

Ordered Logistic Regression

VARIABLES	Banking communication awareness level	Odds Ratio
	Coefficient	
age	.0389869	1.039757
	.0192313	
gender	-.5921835*	.5531182
	.326768	
work_exp	-.064373*	.9376552
	.0246556	
edu	-.5170886	.5962539
	.5438767	
imdt_msg	.0519097	1.053281
	.4462268	
comm_scheme	.7046136	2.023065

	.3293221	
time_prob	1.343999	3.834347
	.3597648	
bank_co	-.9327518	.3934695
	.6502643	
language	.8237735	2.279084
	.7553599	
hassle_accupdate	.6334696*	1.884136
	.3443888	
mis_und	.1044604	1.110111
	.3690477	
lstn_atmprob	.4242053	1.528375
	.3588749	
prob_atm	-.0866775	.9169728
	.3221496	
credit_c	.059577	1.061387
	.3997199	
visa_dc	-.6842322	.5044774
	.4636697	
mob_bnk	-.564735	.5685108
	.3944651	
demat	.2444415	1.276908
	.4362402	
aswa	1.238358*	3.449944
	.4645476	
others	-.070020	.9323749
	.4181599	
Constant cut1	-.7114268	-.7114268
	1.130657	
Constant cut2	2.308146	2.308146
	1.143793	
Observations	184	

Standard errors in parentheses

* p<0.01, p<0.05, * p<0.1

Result Interpretation

The ordered logistic regression analysis conducted to explore the awareness level of customers regarding banking communication in “A” grade banks in Surkhet valley yielded several notable findings.

The result generated from the table depicts that six independent variables were found to have significant relationship with banking communication awareness level. Four of the factors had positive relationship in a line with a priori expectation. At 5 percent level, age and common scheme had positive significant relationship. Similarly, hassle account update and aswa had positive significant relationship at 10 percent and 1 percent respectively. Likewise, gender factor work experience had negative significant relationship at 10 percent and 1 percent respectively. It indicates that, one unit change in age, common scheme, hassle account update, and aswa change by 0.39 units, 0.070 units, 0.63 units, and 1.24units in the log of odds respectively. Similarly, gender results in -0.59 units and work experience results -0.064 units change in the log of odds. Looking at their odds ratio, our result indicates that for one unit change in age, common scheme, hassle account update, and aswa in banking communication increases by 1.04 times, 2.02 times, 1.88 times, and 3.44 times respectively. Similarly, gender results in -0.59 units and work experience results -0.064 units change in the log of odds. Looking at their odds ratio, our result indicates that for one unit change in gender and work experience in banking communication decreases by 0.55 times and 0.98 times respectively. Hence, hypothesis is rejected as there is significant relationship/ association between banking communication awareness level and the given explanatory variables. Hence, it concludes that gender and work experience are inversely related with awareness level of banking communication and in age, common scheme, hassle account update, and aswa have positive association with awareness level.

Discussion

The present study’s findings on the awareness levels regarding banking communication among customers of “A” grade banks in Surkhet Valley are further substantiated by Parajuli (2019). These findings highlight the necessity for targeted interventions to enhance understanding, particularly among the segment categorized as “Less Aware.” While a substantial proportion of customers demonstrate moderate to high awareness, the presence of the less aware group underscores the importance of tailored initiatives aimed at bridging the gap in understanding banking communication concepts. The ordered logistic regression analysis revealed six independent variables that significantly influence the awareness level of customers regarding banking communication in “A” grade banks in Surkhet Valley. Age and participation in common schemes were positively and significantly related to banking communication awareness

at the 5 percent significance level. This suggests that as age increases and customers engage more in common schemes offered by banks, their awareness of banking communication also increases. A study by N.K.V and Harsolekar (2022) supports the positive relationship between participation in schemes and banking communication awareness, finding that awareness through branch/bank employees was effective in creating awareness about these schemes.

Additionally, hassle with account updates and involvement with ASWA (banking service) were positively and significantly related to banking communication awareness level at 10 percent and 1 percent significance levels, respectively. This indicates that customers who experience fewer hassles with account updates and are involved with ASWA have higher awareness levels of banking communication. The positive relationship between hassle with account updates and banking communication awareness is also supported. Jahan and Kim (2020) found that helping each other makes people share more knowledge online, which means that making things easier can increase awareness. However, they also found that gender and work experience negatively affect awareness of banking communication, with gender significant at 10 percent and work experience at 1 percent. This implies that being female and having more work experience are associated with lower levels of awareness regarding banking communication. Although not directly, studies like the one by Trachtman et al. (2021) focus on age-related factors and political participation, they indirectly suggest that demographic characteristics, including age and accumulated work experience, can shape individuals' awareness and behaviors across different domains. As individuals gain more experience in the workforce, they often develop a deeper understanding of their profession, industry, and organizational context, which can ultimately influence their levels of awareness and engagement in various aspects of life.

Conclusion

The study highlights the varying levels of awareness among customers of “A” grade banks in Surkhet Valley regarding banking communication. While many customers demonstrate good awareness, there is a notable group categorized as “Less Aware,” indicating the need for targeted efforts to bridge this gap. Factors like age and participation in common schemes positively influence awareness, suggesting that older customers and those engaged in bank schemes tend to have higher levels of understanding. Similarly, customers facing fewer hassles with account updates and involved with ASWA show heightened awareness. However, gender and work experience exhibit a negative relationship with awareness, implying that being female

or having more work experience may correlate with lower levels of understanding. Overall, the study underscores the importance of tailored interventions to enhance banking communication comprehension among all customer segments, ensuring a more inclusive and informed banking experience for everyone in Surkhet Valley.

Bank managers should focus on implementing communication strategies that target customers of all ages, especially those participating in common schemes and services like ASWA. Efforts to reduce hassle with account updates can also contribute to higher awareness levels. Additionally, understanding gender differences and tailoring communication efforts accordingly can improve overall awareness levels among customers.

Regulatory bodies and policymakers may consider mandating banks to enhance communication strategies to improve customer awareness levels. Policies could focus on promoting transparent and accessible communication channels, particularly for account updates and new services.

The study was conducted from December 1, 2023, to January 31, 2024, focusing on A-grade banking institutions located in Birendranagar, with a sample size of 405 respondents. However, there were some limitations in the demographic data collection. Out of the total respondents, only 398 indicated their gender, 283 provided information about their work experience, and 361 reported their age group. These discrepancies in data could introduce bias and limit the generalizability of the study's findings. Specifically, the missing work experience data might significantly affect the robustness of conclusions related to the impact of work experience on the studied variables.

Future research could delve deeper into the specific communication channels and strategies that effectively increase awareness levels among different demographic groups. Exploring the impact of cultural factors and regional differences on banking communication awareness could also provide valuable insights for designing targeted communication campaigns.

Overall, the study emphasize the importance of continuous monitoring and improvement of communication practices in the banking sector to ensure customers are well-informed and engaged with banking services and updates. By addressing the identified factors influencing awareness levels, banks can strengthen customer relationships and enhance overall service quality.

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Child Marriage Practices in Nepal: A Case of Kailali District

Padam Saud

PhD Scholar, Daito Bunka University, Tokyo, Japan

Email: saudpadam411@gmail.com

Abstract

Child marriage in Nepal, a practice deeply rooted in cultural traditions, poses significant barriers to education and has profound impacts on the health and well-being of young girls, highlighting the urgent need for educational interventions to break this cycle and promote healthier life. The objective of this study was to assess the role of education on child marriage and the impact of child marriage on health in the context of Nepal. Specifically, the research concentrates on gathering information on the health status, education status, perceptions and the role of influencing factors on early marriage. The study used a sequential mixed-method design, including questionnaires completed by 125 women married before 18, two focus group discussions with 20 students (10 boys and 10 girls), and quantitative surveys for statistical analysis. This research shows that the role of education plays an important role before and after child marriage and it shows that society functions as the primary agent of socialization for child marriage. Apart from that, poverty, education, gender discrimination, cultural practice and lack of awareness are some of the factors (preventive measures) of child marriage. This study, therefore, seeks to depict the main components of child marriage pointing out the effect on girls' health that increased risk for death during childbirth including obstetric fistulas, school dropout and domestic violence. This study concludes with possible strategies and programmes that must be implemented by all the representatives for education, raising awareness about women's health through government and non-government organizations.

Keywords: Women's education, women's health, child marriage

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Introduction

Marriage, typically regarded as the cornerstone of family and consequently, societal structure, holds significant significance in the life journey of individuals (Haas & Whitton, 2015). Nonetheless, the concept of marriage manifests differently across various cultural contexts, encompassing legal, religious, customary, traditional, or informal dimensions. These delineations are not mutually exclusive, often intertwining in practice. Even marriages lacking formal legal recognition may carry substantial social acknowledgment within their communities. Nepali cultural traditions exhibit a diverse array of rituals and norms, yielding both favourable and unfavourable outcomes. Within Nepal, marriage rituals are observed in accordance with socio-cultural mores and religious protocols, signifying the union of two individuals with familial and communal endorsement. However, practices such as early marriage exemplify detrimental ramifications within this cultural framework.

Child marriage is defined as an illegal or informal union of boys or girls before the age of 18. Historically, child marriage is a common practice, perhaps, since the beginning of the institution of marriage. It is driven or shaped by cultural traditions, religious beliefs and poverty exacerbated by vulnerability. Child marriage is regarded as a social and gender violence which refers to the practice of marrying individuals, typically girls, under the age of 18, which perpetuates gender inequality and subjects them to various forms of abuse and exploitation. It is a violation of children's rights, often leading to adverse physical, psychological and social consequences, including interrupted education, increased risk of domestic violence, and severe health risks associated with early pregnancies. The consequences of child marriage are felt at both the individual and societal levels while it hurts girls' maternal health, social-economic status and the future. In 2016, following numerous postponements, the governmental initiative titled the National Strategy to Eradicate Child Marriage was introduced (Human Rights Watch 2016). This strategy delineates six distinct elements: the empowerment of young girls, the enhancement of educational opportunities for girls, and the facilitation of services aimed at curtailing child marriage.

In Nepal, the Criminal Code Act (2017) has officially stipulated 20 years as the minimum age requirement for marriage. Consequently, any marriage involving one or both parties under the age of 20 is classified as early marriage. Nepal was ranked third in the prevalence of child marriage in South Asia by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in 2016, following Bangladesh and India. According to the Nepal Law Commission (NLC) Part-3 (2016), the Nepali constitution recognizes health and education as fundamental rights. The adverse effects of child marriage, particularly on health, contradict the principles enshrined in these rights.

Moreover, as evidenced in the most recent census data from 2011, a substantial portion of females in Nepal enter into marriage prior to reaching the age of 18, with 41% falling into this category, and a concerning 8.1% of these individuals becoming pregnant between the ages of 15 and 19 (CBS, 2012). The Ministry of Health and Population (2011) has noted that a significant majority, 55%, of these marriages occur at the age of 18, with 74% involving girls below the age of 20, underscoring the persistent prevalence of early marriage practices in Nepal. As outlined in a 2011 report by the Ministry of Health and Population (MOHP, 2012), the proportion of women married by the age of 15 demonstrates a decline from 24% among those aged 45-49 to 5% among those aged 15-19, mirroring a similar trend among men who typically marry four years later than women. The median age at first marriage among women aged 25-49 stands at 17.5 years, while for men, it is 21.6 years.

According to Nepal Census (2011), in Kailali district, 169,965 (21.92%) people got married when they were below age 10. Among them, the number of boys was 87,483 (23.12%) and the number of girls was 82,482 (20.76%). The number of people who got married between the ages of 10-14 years was 108,462 where the number of boys was 55,706 (14.72%) and girls were 52,756 (13.28%). The number of people who got married between the ages of 15-19 years was 93,690 (12.08%) whereas the number of boys was 45,078 (11.91%) and for girls was 48,612 (12.24%). Approximately 47.97% of girls were married before the legal age of 20 in Kailali.

Child marriage obstructs the educational and professional progression of young girls. The ramifications of such unions are substantial, predominantly manifesting as psychological and physical ailments. In accordance with data from the United Nations Population Fund in 2012, females lacking formal education face a threefold increased likelihood of marrying or entering a marital union before reaching the age of 18. Pandey (2017) contends that the prevalence of underage marriage is disproportionately higher among women residing in less educated rural areas, belonging to lower caste Hindu communities, and identified as Madhesi, as compared to their counterparts who are more educated, reside in urban locales, and belong to higher caste Hindu groups. Nonetheless, the enforcement of extant legal frameworks and prior commitments remains deficient, resulting in minimal advancements (Regmi et al., 2016).

According to King and Winthrop (2015), child marriage can function as both a catalyst and an outcome of inadequate educational achievement. It frequently occurs either prior to a girl's impending marriage or shortly thereafter, as her domestic responsibilities escalate, impeding her educational pursuits. This investigation delves into the determinants that potentially precipitate early marriage, examining the

viewpoints of young girls regarding their health during pregnancy and the legality of marrying at a non-conventional age.

This study makes a tangible empirical contribution toward addressing the issue of child marriage by furnishing benchmark data and information pertinent to the implementation and monitoring of initiatives targeting child marriage within the Godavari region. Despite its significant implications, child marriage in Nepal receives insufficient attention, despite being a pressing issue in various regions, notably rural areas such as Mugu, Doti, Kalikot, Morang, Bardiya, Kailali, and others. Studies consistently identify gender norms and societal expectations as the underlying drivers of this harmful practice. Whether rooted in cultural traditions or exacerbated by limited access to education, the subordinate status of girls and women within society remains a central factor. Moreover, certain ethnic communities in Nepal hold beliefs that marrying girls before puberty or their first menstruation leads to spiritual rewards, further perpetuating the practice of child marriage.

According to UNFPA 42.9% of women residing in rural areas married before reaching the age of 18 in comparison to 26.9% of those residing in urban areas. Girls with no education or from low-income families are at high risk. Child marriage is more prevalent among marginalized groups such as Janjatis and Dalits. The young females who are forced to enter into early marriage are not able to cope with married life and their children. That makes poor health for both mother and child. Child marriages not only deprive girls of educational and decision-making opportunities but also stem from socioeconomic pressures, wherein impoverished parents or guardians may feel compelled to marry off their daughters in exchange for a bride price, erroneously believing it will alleviate their financial struggles. However, such individuals often lack awareness of the detrimental effects of early marriage on the health and well-being of young females.

Taking concept of child marriage practices and its problems into account, the study primarily attempted to identify and explain the social determinants of early marriage in Nepal and specifically in Godawari Municipality of Kailali district. Specifically, this study attempted to:

1. Identify the girls' attitude towards child marriage in Godavari Municipality.
2. Investigate the relationship between the reproductive health condition of girls and early marriage in Godavari Municipality.
3. Identify causes of child marriage and its impact on the health and education of girls in Godavari Municipality.

Literature Review

Social Factors of Early Marriage

The educational attainment of parents significantly influences the occurrence of early marriage. Educated parents typically prioritize the importance of education in contrast to securing a career and contributing to society, while less educated parents often perceive their children, especially daughters, primarily in terms of household duties. Bhandari (2017) discerns distinctive cognitive approaches between educated and uneducated households regarding their offspring.

According to the United Nations Population Fund (2012), various factors contribute to and perpetuate the practice of early marriage, including economic hardship, familial reputation, religious doctrines, societal and cultural norms, educational opportunities, and conflict dynamics, all of which stem from gender disparities. The institution of dowry serves as a catalyst for early marriages, as families of girls often face reduced financial obligations when arranging marriages at a young age (Maharjan et al., 2012). This customary practice places a significant burden on impoverished families. In Nepal, parents are apprehensive about societal judgments if their daughters, who have reached adulthood (over 18 years old), remain unmarried. Concerns about tarnishing the family's reputation through elopement or engaging in illicit relationships contribute to this fear, making it challenging to find suitable matches for older daughters within their social circles. Additionally, economic constraints render daughters a financial strain on the family, leading to the perceived alleviation of this burden through their early marriages, which is perceived to be advantageous for both the family and the girl herself.

Child Marriage and Education

The constitution of Nepal (2015) enshrines education as a fundamental right for all Nepalese citizens. Nonetheless, entrenched cultural norms, particularly prevalent in Kailali, perpetuate the practice of early marriage, resulting in the deprivation of educational opportunities for many young girls. Societal conventions encourage parents to arrange marriages for their daughters prematurely, thereby impeding their access to schooling. This practice, compounded by traditional perceptions of girls as chattels, undermines familial prioritization of girls' educational pursuits (Bista, 2004). Previous scholarly inquiries have elucidated a notable association between early matrimony and educational attainment. Studies indicate a notably low rate of educational engagement among married adolescent girls, as evidenced by Sekine and Hodgkin (2014), who report a mere 31.2% attendance rate among girls aged 15-17. Conversely, early initiation of sexual activity has been linked to heightened risks of academic underperformance and premature withdrawal from schooling (Biddlecom

et al., 2008; Grant & Hallman, 2008; Hindin & Fatusi, 2009). Disparities in the mean age of marriage between individuals with secondary and primary educational backgrounds are pronounced, accentuating the importance of education in delaying marriage (Bongaarts et al., 2017). The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization underscores the pivotal role of secondary education in mitigating the prevalence of early marriage among girls (UNESCO, 2014).

Among school-aged girls, marriage followed by pregnancy is frequently cited as the primary cause for discontinuing education (Thapa et al., 1997). Sustaining girls' enrolment in schools stands out as a highly effective strategy in preventing child marriages (UNESCO, 2014). Barr (2017) contends that the likelihood of early marriage among girls coincides with their school-age years and escalates notably with each passing year post-primary education completion. Across various cultural contexts, attendance at school is often perceived as incongruent with the societal expectations and duties associated with marriage and parenthood (Bajracharya & Amin, 2012; Mensch et al., 2005; Schuler et al., 2006; UNESCO, 2014).

Child Marriage and Girls' Health

Based on prior investigations, it has been observed that women often encounter challenges when attempting to access healthcare services. In Nepal specifically, a significant proportion of women, approximately 83%, encounter at least one barrier in accessing healthcare for themselves. Concerns are prevalent among women, with around 68% expressing reluctance to visit health facilities unaccompanied and a similar percentage expressing apprehension regarding the unavailability of female healthcare providers. Financial constraints are a worry for 55% of women, while 53% cite distance to healthcare facilities as a concern. Additionally, less than 25% of women express concerns about obtaining permission for seeking medical treatment. (Nepal Demographic and Health Survey: NDHS, 2016). For example, in the case of childbirth: according to Nepal Demographic and Health Survey Key Finding (2016), more than 57% of Nepalese women give birth in health facilities, and 41% give birth at home. According to Nepal Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS, 2016), access to healthcare is correlated to the level of education: women having education above grade 10th, School Leaving Certificate (SLC) 85% deliver in health facilities, more than 57% receive a postnatal check in the first 2 days of the birth, with most check-up's occurring within 4 hours of delivery and 42% did not receive any postnatal check. But early married women also face specific problems.

According to UNICEF (cited in Brown, 2012), an estimated 150 out of every 1,000 births worldwide are to adolescent girls aged 15-18. For some adolescents, pregnancy and childbirth occur unexpectedly and against their wishes. In certain

societal contexts, there exists significant pressure for girls to marry, leading to early pregnancies within marriage (Franjic, 2018). The prevalence of early marriage is highlighted by Franjic's claim that approximately 15 million girls under 18 are married annually, with 90% of births to girls aged 15 to 19 occurring within marriage. In Nepal, 41% of girls are married before reaching 18 years of age. To address these challenges, there is a need for investments in girls' education, healthcare access, and the development of their social and economic capabilities to enable them to delay marriage until they are prepared. The Government of Nepal has recently endorsed a new National Strategy on Ending Child Marriage, setting the legal marriage age at 20 (UNFPA, Nepal, 2016). Regarding teenage pregnancies, data from the NDHS (2016) indicate that 17% of adolescent women aged 15-19 are either already mothers or pregnant with their first child. This phenomenon is more prevalent in rural areas (22%) compared to urban areas (13%). Of these pregnancies, 81% result in live births, 9% end in miscarriages, and 9% are terminated through abortions.

Similarly, Blanc et al. (2013) posit that adolescent mothers confront elevated risks of maternal mortality in comparison to their counterparts who give birth between the ages of 20 and 24. Early marriage, particularly before the age of 18, is associated with higher parity rates compared to later marriages. Moreover, according to Central Bureau Statistics (2015), fatalities linked to pregnancy are a significant contributor to mortality among both married and unmarried adolescents aged 15 to 19, particularly within the younger spectrum of this age bracket. Darroch et al. (2016) report that in 2016, approximately 21 million pregnancies occurred among adolescent girls, with roughly half culminating in childbirth.

In this existing literature, I found few explorations of the perception of women towards marriage. A lot has already been written about child marriage in Nepal by lots of organizations and scholars, for example, World Vision Nepal, UNICEF, and many more organizations. And scholars from Nepal, as well as other countries such as Bhandari (2017), wrote about Early marriage in Nepal: Prospects for Schoolgirls, and Barr (2017) wrote about child marriage many more have written. Along with the above-mentioned relationships between education, health, and marriage, and along with research that prompts a perception of free will towards the early marriage (love marriage, interest in sex), it appeared that an evaluation of girl's perceptions would be beneficial to understanding the consensually and interest in the marriage of this population. This research will specifically explore the perceptions of young girls on child marriage, causes of child marriage and relationship between child marriage and health of young girls of Godavari municipality.

Methods and Procedures

Research Design

The study has employed sequential mixed method design applying qualitative and quantitative tools. The key methods of the study include focus group discussions, key informant interviews, and case stories as qualitative data and surveys as quantitative methods.

Description of the Research Area

Based on the national statistics on marriage (Central Bureau Statistics, 2011), I selected Kailali district, Province no 7, which has 12 Wards, from it I selected Godavari municipality no.2. The total population of Godavari is 78,018 and the number of females is 41,376 (53.03%) and male is 36,642 (46.97%) in which the age group of 10-19 years old female numbers is 10,339 (13.25%) and age group of 10-19 years old male is 10,067 (12.90%). Being a resident of Kailali, (Godavari) it was not much difficult to convene the participants, stakeholders, and local representatives. The selection of my informants was guided by a need for a variety of opinions, by their expertise as well as by their accessibility.

Sampling

To understand the perspectives of early married girls and assemble a representative sample of the population of early married girls in the Godavari municipality, 125 women from 20 to 24 years old, who got married between 14 and 18 years old and had at least one child or became pregnant before 18 years old, were selected to complete this research between March 3rd and March 15th, 2020. All of them dropped school before 19. I contacted participants with the help of social mobilizers working for NGOs i.e., Nepal Jaycees (JCI), Youth Acting for Change-Nepal (YAC-Nepal), Women for Human Rights (WHR-Nepal), and many more, local representatives from different sectors like red cross, local women development cooperation and many more and local government agencies i.e., Municipality office, Health post, School and many more. In addition, through snowball sampling, I asked research participants to provide information about other women in the same category who could be willing to participate.

Focus Group Discussions

A total of 20 students from Durga Laxmi Higher Secondary School (DLHSS) (10 boys and 10 girls) participated in Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) which were organized in the same location on the issue of early marriage including status, causes, consequences, and possible interventions, on March 16th, 2019, in the Godavari, municipality, district of Kailali. Two FGDs (comprising 10 boys and

10 girls separately) I had taken help from school staff and administration for the sampling of the same school. All relevant structured and unstructured questionnaires were developed and administered. The questionnaires were developed in a written schedule which contained the early married women, their health problems, and their educational situation.

Variable Specification

Every researcher used the variables for determining their positions and justifies the relationship among the different concepts of the research topic and theories. The core concept is marriage practices and child marriage. Independent variables are social values and economic values. The dependent values are child marriage, age, education, occupation, health, gender, and income. Child marriage is a dependent variable because it can increase or decrease based on social and economic functions and values.

Data Processing and Analysis

A structured interview was directly administered to the respondents in which the predetermined questions were used. The interview involved the use of fixed, alternative questions to get the certification of the subject. An unstructured interview was administered to the FGD. Interviewees and FGD participants were selected purposely. The intentional selection of participants provided a basis for the collection of rich information related to the subject of the study and a maximum variation in research participants. The collected data were processed and analysed in descriptive as well as statistical table presentation. The quantitative data were analysed by tabulation, and percentages and conclusions were drawn.

Results and Discussion

Social Determinants of Early Marriage in Western Nepal

The phenomenon of school dropout is influenced by a variety of factors, each contributing to the overall rates observed within educational systems. The data highlight that the predominant reason for school dropout is marriage cases. This is followed by economic constraints and a lack of interest in studying. Additionally, parental disapproval of continuing education is a factor some dropouts, while the distance to school facilities also affects students. Physical disabilities, though less common, still impact the student population.

Table 1*Reason for School Dropping of Informants Aged 20-24 (n=125)*

Got married	49.6%
Did not like to study	12.8%
Economic reasons	22.4%
Parents did not allow	9.6%
School facility far away	4%
Physical disability	1.6%

(Source: Field Survey 2019)

In Kailali, Godavari the average literacy rate is 66.3% and for the women, the literacy rate is 21079 (27.01%) and 14765 (18.92%) women are illiterate (CBS. 2011). The dropout rate has been one of the cross-cutting issues which definitely will create obstacles to obtaining education for all. The above table shows the main reason for leaving school is child marriage with 49.6% and having economic problems 22.4% were unable to continue their study. The other reasons for school dropout were parents' decisions, physical accessibility, school facilities, socio-cultural values, and others. Women who were married at a young age were more likely to have dropped out of school, have no formal education, reside in a rural setting, live in poverty, or have an uneducated household head, and they tended to be older adolescents.

In our society, marriage is more socially acceptable than other possible reasons because of our social values and norms, it has been reported as the primary reason for leaving school, even if other factors are more attributable. Decisions about marriage and dropout are the result of a complex interplay of various factors. Even most of the girls cite marriage rather than other factors for child marriage because of positive social status. Social pressure to maintain family honour, household heads with less education, more children, and less income in the family are other factors as described by the informants.

Health and Early Marriage

Research shows that child marriage often leads to very early pregnancy and childbirth for girls, who often, at least initially, feel unable to negotiate to delay childbearing with their husbands. When girls get pulled out of school earlier, because of early marriage, they are often even less familiar with production health issues.

Much of the reason that health education is so important is that there are many health benefits and risks associated with premature pregnancy, and by association, premature marriage. Because many of the husband's families pressure girls to have babies immediately, early marriage also often leads to early childbirth and mothering.

Table 2 shows the women's health situation during pregnancy.

Table 2

Medical Check-up during Pregnancy and Delivery of Baby (n=125)

Regular medical check-up	17.6%
Check-up in case of a problem	59.2%
No check-up	23.2%
Delivery in hospital	51.2%
Delivery in home	48.8%
Complication during delivery	62.4%

(Source: Field Survey 2019)

The above table shows the health condition of women during their reproduction period. Girls who get married early have a higher probability of getting pregnant and having more children. This opens them up to risks related to reproductive health and unaware of risks to their health. The negative health impact as reported by the informants includes miscarriage, infanticide, uterus prolapse, maternity death, sexual disease, and infertility. Out of the one hundred and twenty-five women 62.4% face complicity during delivery because of their early age and were immature physically and physiologically. They also lack access to reproductive health information and services and lack parental care for them during pregnancy.

Similarly, 48.8% of women give birth in their homes. There are multiple variables for these reasons such as cultural rules and values, poverty, lack of health post, lack of knowledge about maternal health, and many more. 59.2% of them visit hospitals when needed. Having more or less information and education in the family members, and for the sake of their upcoming child, they visit the hospital. And some women regularly visit hospitals for a check-up. The reason for this is to educate family members on at least one, care and good economic status. Some of them didn't visit the hospital because of various reasons (culture, lack of money, hospital facilities, etc.). When this is combined with pregnancy at a young age with a lack

of power, information, and access to services, married girls experience much higher rates of maternal mortality and morbidity.

Adolescent childbirth is dangerous for the infant as well as the mother. Underdeveloped bodies of girls have led to complications during childbirth that causes infant death as well as maternal death. They are pressured to bear children as soon as they are married. Physical and emotional immaturity of the mothers, their malnutrition, and lack of access to social services and health care are also important concerns for child married women.

Influencing Factors for Early Marriage

Lack of access to education, poverty, child labour, social pressures, family planning information, contraceptive supplies, and harmful practices including dowry and beliefs about menstruation and virginity typically drive child marriage in Godavari, Kailali Nepal.

According to the respondents, school girls are fully conscious that marriage is associated with low education, socio-cultural norms, gender discrimination, and poverty which causes harm to their physical and mental health after early marriage. The practice of marriage with no parental involvement is also common in these societies. Neighbours, relatives, religion, and social culture also promote early marriage, by bringing marriage proposals and convincing or pressuring parents to marry daughters early. So, nobody thinks about their future, health complications, mental pressure, immaturity, etc. which happen after child marriage.

The respondent's view from their interview is that having less or no education from their parents is one of the main reasons to marry their daughter from the age of 12/13 years old. As a result, the girls left their school, and must bear a child at an early age which occurs lots of health complications during and after the pregnancy with physiological unstable. It can harm the newborn infant too.

Relation between Early Marriage and Education

As per the respondents in the study, furthering one's education enhances the likelihood of delaying marriage. Research indicates a link between early marriage and levels of educational achievement (Barr, 2017; Sekine & Hodgkin, 2014). Additionally, they contend that a significant proportion of female students dropping out of school is attributable to early marriage.

The participants indicated that marriage proposals began at the age of 12 for them. Should a girl cease attending school, whether due to financial constraints, geographical distance, familial issues, or employment, marriage becomes an

inevitable outcome. This perpetuates the trend of dwindling educational engagement, as married girls typically withdraw from or abandon their studies. Many of the respondents were wedded at the age of 12 for diverse reasons, consequently hindering their educational pursuits.

Relation between Early Marriage and Health Complications

Premature pregnancy poses significant health risks for both mothers and infants, leading to increased incidences of severe health complications and mortality. Pregnancy-related complications stand as the primary cause of mortality among adolescent females aged 14-19 in Kailali. Studies indicate that girls aged 10-14 face a fivefold higher risk of mortality during childbirth compared to mothers aged 20-24, while those aged 15-19 face double the risk of maternal mortality compared to women in the 20-24 age group.

Early pregnancy can have severe health consequences for both mothers and babies including elevated rates of serious health problems and death. Complications resulting from pregnancy are the most important causes of death in Kailali, among adolescent girls aged 14-19 years old. Research shows those girls aged 10-14 are 5 times more likely to die during delivery than mothers aged 20-24; girls aged 15-19 are twice as likely to die during delivery as women aged 20-24.

According to respondents due to immaturity, young girls are more susceptible to obstructed labour, which is the leading cause of maternal mortality among them. The data shows that most of these women face complications during pregnancy and are not able to get health access in the meantime of their delivery and during their difficulties. Lack of knowledge about reproductive health, health awareness, basic knowledge during pregnancy, and workload during pregnancy causes complications for both mother and child.

Opinion of Focus Group Discussion towards the Early Marriage

The participatory approach was used to gather in-depth information from key people, such as local boys and girls. It was used to extract key information on causes, patterns, and impact of child marriage, its initiatives, and recent practices and development-related issue in the locality. The views of young children towards early marriage were taken. They assisted the research team in identifying good, programmed designs, practices, and initiatives against child marriage and identifying the present programmed design and delivery, etc. The majority of the children have raised a similar opinion that they are having mental pressure from their parents for having early marriage which causes them physical abuse and mental distraction. Even if they do not want to have a marriage at an early age because they do not know the meaning of it and want to continue their life by studying and enjoying their

livelihood but being pressured by their parents. Most of them are conscious of the effect of early marriage on their upcoming future life because of education and wish they would be rescued or prevented from their secure life and good future.

The participants also express the belief that the enactment and enforcement of robust legislation against child marriage could instil fear of legal repercussions among their parents and members of society, potentially leading to a shift away from early marriage. Moreover, they suggest that parental education and warnings about early marriage and other detrimental social customs are necessary. Respondents attribute the prevalence of early marriage partly to parents' lack of awareness regarding its negative consequences. One participant recounted her unsuccessful attempts to dissuade her parents and relatives from proceeding with her marriage, despite employing emotional appeals. They acknowledge the difficulty in halting the process once parents have agreed to a proposal, largely due to familial pride. Educating neighbours and providing counselling to relatives are proposed strategies to diminish the incidence of early marriage, as parents may be swayed by these individuals to marry their children prematurely.

Conclusion

The issue of child marriage at the present is still one of the critical subjects in society. Though there is substantive work initiated to reduce the incidence of child marriage, there is a lot that remains to be done to reduce the lower point. The study finds some of the important issues that are intertwined with child marriage: discontinuation of education among the women, lack of education among the parents as well as society, lack of maternal health awareness and knowledge, economic instability, and influence of socio-cultural and religious aspects.

The overall educational status of disadvantaged groups has changed over time but they still lag in several instances. The commitment to the widespread and equitable provision of education is the basic requirement for child marriage control. Because of child marriage, girls are unable to continue their studies and fulfil their dreams. Most of them have to drop out of school because of early marriage.

Early marriage has detrimental effects on both adolescent girls and society. This research affirms its association with various factors, albeit on a limited scale, primarily focusing on health issues during pregnancy. Bearing children at a young age increases susceptibility to health complications and mortality. Young mothers often face pregnancy-related challenges without emotional, physical, and psychological readiness. This hinders their ability to pursue personal and professional aspirations, thus impeding career advancement. While attitudes towards marriage and pregnancy may be evolving positively among informants, the prevalence of child

marriage persists in contemporary society.

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Change in Mobility after Involvement in a Cooperative: An Indication of Women's Empowerment

Laxmi Bashyal¹, Bidhya Shrestha (PhD)², Rita Devi Karki³, Tek Mani Karki (PhD)⁴

¹Bhaktapur Multiple Campus, Bhaktapur, Tribhuvan University, Nepal

²Central Department of Population Studies, Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu, Nepal

³Ratna Rajyalaxmi Campus, Kathmandu, Tribhuvan University, Nepal

⁴Mahendra Ratna Campus, Kathmandu, Tribhuvan University, Nepal

Corresponding Author: Bidhya Shrestha; Email: bidhyasrestha@gmail.com

Abstract

Women's participation in cooperatives has emerged as a transformative force, significantly impacting their mobility and empowerment. This study explores the impact of women's involvement in cooperatives on their mobility, specifically focusing on the impact within the Parijat Saving and Credit Cooperative Limited in Bhaktapur District, which was purposively selected. The study focused on cooperative members who regularly saved and invested in income-generative activities through loans for at least a year. It employed the concurrent mixed methods research design. A systematic random sampling technique was employed for quantitative data collection, yielding a sample of 238 participants from various ethnic backgrounds, and the data were analyzed descriptively using cross-tabulation. Qualitative information was gathered through nine case studies, ensuring data saturation concerning changes in mobility following cooperative involvement, which were triangulated to derive findings. The findings revealed significant improvements in women's mobility following their participation in cooperatives. Notable increases were observed in visits to new religious places, which rose from 40% to 50%, and to health centers, which increased from 48% to 85%. Particularly noteworthy was the rise in the percentage of women utilizing their vehicles, which increased from 2% before joining to approximately 20% afterward. These findings imply that cooperative involvement significantly enhances women's mobility and independence, promoting greater access to religious and health facilities and increasing the use of personal vehicles.

Keywords: Women's mobility, women empowerment, cooperatives, Nepal

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Introduction

Mobility includes both physical movement and social mobility. Phogaat (2019) defines it as the ability to move easily and freely while Andari et al. (2023) further elaborate, describing it as the capacity to move or be moved freely and easily. In a socio-cultural context, Mehta and Sai (2021) highlight mobility as the degree of freedom of individuals, particularly women, to leave the household without permission for various activities such as visiting markets or relatives. It significantly impacts individuals' life chances, especially among women, including access to education, healthcare and economic opportunities.

Mobility is a crucial indicator of empowerment, as highlighted by Hashemi et al. (1996) and supported by Alkire (2007). In the context of women's empowerment, a significant factor is their ability to make decisions about visiting family and relatives (Ministry of Health and Population et al., 2017). This ability greatly impacts their decision-making power and socioeconomic status (Mahmud et al., 2012). The journey of women's empowerment is both dynamic and complex (Mahmud et al., 2012), and it varies across different contexts and over time (Karki & Thapa, 2022; Mahmud et al., 2012).

Empowerment, as defined by Kabeer (2005), encompasses resources, agency and achievements, enabling women to make strategic life choices and participate in decision-making processes. Mobility, therefore, can be seen as both a personal change and moving from one place to another and transforming oneself, adapting to new situations, and changing status, position and skills (Kaufmann, 2021). Similarly, Friedman (1992) delineates empowerment into three dimensions: social (access to resources such as information, knowledge, and skill), political (participation in decision-making processes), and psychological (an individual's sense of potency and self-esteem, which can positively influence their access to social and political power).

Mobility opportunities and group participation are known indicators of empowerment (Alkire, 2007). Collective organizations among women offer ways for upward mobility (Lake, 2019), with collective action being recognized as a remedy for women's disadvantages (Selhausen, 2016). Community-based programmes, including microcredit, self-help groups, and cooperatives, contribute to enhancing women's mobility and access to resources, promoting their social status and leadership roles (Dulhunty, 2022; Senarath & Gunawardena, 2009). Similarly, women who participate in Self-Help Groups increase their confidence and can make decisions about their own lives (Shrestha, 2022). Cooperatives, among various community-based programmes, serve as collective organizations that unite individuals to empower themselves collectively (Okem, 2016). These cooperatives

emphasize empowering and mobilizing each member to assert ownership and actively engage in democratic participation, thereby promoting socio-economic advancement (Yaebiyo & Teklehaimanot, 2012). Participation in cooperatives is associated with improved access to resources such as self-employment opportunities and healthcare visits, indicating a positive impact on empowerment conditions (Mahmud, 2003).

Cooperatives aim to enhance the social and economic status of women by providing services such as regular saving, credit facilities, training participation and skill enhancement opportunities. Their primary objective is to empower each member to take ownership and participate actively in their socio-economic development (Yaebiyo & Teklehaimanot, 2012). Economic empowerment automatically fosters women's empowerment positively (Karki & Thapa, 2022). Thus, this study explores the impact of cooperative involvement on women's mobility in Bhaktapur district of Nepal. It focuses on their ability to independently visit religious places, visit health centers and use personal vehicles. By examining these aspects, the study aims to analyze how involvement in cooperatives can enhance freedom of mobility that contributes to empowerment.

Methods and Procedures

The study conducted in the Bhaktapur district of Nepal in 2020 focused on examining changes in women's mobility following their involvement in cooperatives. It adopted a concurrent mixed methods design, blending quantitative and qualitative techniques to achieve a comprehensive understanding of this phenomenon. The researchers chose the Parijat Saving and Credit Cooperative Limited as their focal cooperative, aiming to capture the diversity of the ethnic community within the district as it covers all four municipalities. This cooperative boasted 1,668 members, predominantly comprising 934 females and 734 males, actively engaging in regular savings and investment activities through loans for income generation over at least a year.

Quantitative data collection involved a systematic random sampling technique, resulting in 238 participants from diverse ethnic backgrounds. Structured and semi-structured questionnaires were used to collect the quantitative data. At the same time, in-depth interviews were conducted to gather qualitative information from nine participants as cases considering the saturation of information related to mobility changes after cooperative involvement.

This dataset was subjected to descriptive analysis, primarily employing cross-tabulation to observe the patterns in women's mobility changes. Complementing the quantitative findings, qualitative insights were blended to triangulate and validate

the information, offering a more nuanced perspective on the impact of cooperative involvement on women’s mobility. The study prioritized ethical considerations by obtaining verbal informed consent from all participants before conducting interviews, ensuring voluntary participation. Additionally, the actual names of the respondents were anonymized during the interpretation of qualitative information.

Results

The data collected through both quantitative and qualitative methods were categorized into three themes: changes in visiting religious places, independent visits to health centers, and the use of transportation for visiting markets, banks, or health centers before and after joining the cooperative. The findings were then analyzed and interpreted as follows.

Changes in Visiting Religious Places

Table 1 presents the percentage distribution of respondents based on their visits to religious sites before and after joining the cooperative. The data highlight a positive link in respondents’ exploration of new religious sites following their involvement in the cooperative in terms of age, caste/ethnicity, and educational attainment. Notably, seniors aged 50–64 years exhibit the most significant percentage (22.7%) change compared to other age brackets. Within the caste/ethnicity, there is a substantial shift observed among the “Others group,” encompassing Sunar, Kami, Damai, and Madhesi castes, with a notable percentage change (i.e., 25%). Regarding education, the data suggest that the rate of increase in visits to new religious sites slows down as educational attainment rises. Specifically, women with no education experienced a substantial increase (36%) in post-cooperative involvement, while those with Bachelor’s degrees and higher observed a slow increase (5.2%), as presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Percent Distribution of Respondents Visiting Religious Places by Socio-Demographic Characteristics

Socio-demographic Characteristics	Before	After	Total Number	Change
Age				
18–34 years	26.2	35.7	42	9.5
35–49 years	45.4	51.3	152	5.9
50–64 years	34.1	56.8	44	22.7
Caste/ethnic group				
Brahmin/Chhetri	50.0	54.0	150	4.0
Janajati	26.3	44.7	76	18.4

Others (Sunar, Damai, Kami, Madhesi)	0.0	25.0	12	25.0
Women education				
No education	18.2	54.5	11	36.3
Basic (1–8)	17.4	30.4	46	13.0
Secondary (9–12)	44.8	52.4	143	7.6
Bachelor and above	55.3	60.5	38	5.2
Total	39.9	49.6	238	9.7

During the interview, one participant reported that being involved in a cooperative transformed her lifeline. She said:

I set up a cafeteria, which significantly boosted my financial situation thanks to a supportive loan from this cooperative. Taking part in the tour programs managed by the cooperative tailored for entrepreneurs and active members inspired me to engage in group activities. Despite encountering assistance, it has had a profound impact on my life. For me, the cooperative serves as a school, providing essential knowledge to navigate life and thrive as a human being. (Pinky Sah, 41 years, illiterate)

Relating to Pinky's point, another participant shared her transformative experience after joining the cooperative, highlighting a shift from fear to empowerment. She expressed how being part of the cooperative enabled her to overcome fears and embrace freedom. She said:

I participated in cooperative-organized travel events for the first time without my family's company. Convincing my husband was challenging, and I felt nervous about traveling alone. However, a neighbor advised me not to miss out on the opportunity. During the journey, I learned valuable skills like communication, bargaining, and showing respect to elders. Exploring new places and sharing experiences with friends boosted my confidence and self-reliance. Now, I feel empowered, free from fear and hesitation, and capable of making the decision to travel anywhere. Thanks to the cooperative. (Sangita Suwal, 57 years, illiterate)

Cooperatives organize people into groups and provide training for awareness, knowledge development, and skill enhancement, along with organizing picnics and travel trips to visit new places. Participation in various activities is not easy for individuals belonging to different caste/ethnic groups, primarily due to the low status assigned to certain castes by society. In this context, a Dalit respondent shared her experiences:

Before I joined the cooperative, and even in the early stages of my membership, I faced segregation and discrimination due to my Dalit caste.

Despite This, I continued to participate in all activities, never losing my courage. Over time, I integrated fully, moving freely like other members, and now I am respected as a bold cooperative member, with caste discrimination no longer affecting me. (Kanchhi Bishwokarma, 46 years, basic level education)

This respondent's experience highlights the transformative potential of cooperatives in promoting social integration and reducing caste-based discrimination. By providing opportunities for participation and skill development, cooperatives can empower individuals from marginalized communities to overcome societal barriers. The success of this Dalit member underscores the importance of inclusivity and persistence in achieving social equity within cooperative structures.

Changes in Visiting Independently at Health Centers

This study has sought information on women's mobility in terms of visiting health centers independently before and after involving the cooperative. Among respondents aged 50 to 64 years, the most significant change (40.9%) was observed after joining the cooperative. In contrast, the age group of 18 to 34 years had the highest percentage before joining compared to other age groups (Table 2).

Table 2

Percentage Distribution of Respondents Visiting alone at Health Centers by Socio-Demographic Characteristics

Socio-demographic characteristics	Before	After	Total Number	Change
Age				
18–34 years	47.6	83.3	42	35.7
35–49 years	49.3	86.2	152	36.9
50–64 years	40.9	81.8	44	40.9
Caste/ethnic group				
Brahmin/Chhetri	54.0	86.7	150	32.7
Janajati	38.2	81.6	76	43.4
Others (Sunar, Damai, Kami, Madhesi)	25.0	83.3	12	58.3
Women Education				
No education	9.1	72.7	11	63.6
Basic (1–8)	32.6	78.3	46	45.7
Secondary (9–12)	46.2	86.0	143	39.8
Bachelor and above	81.6	92.1	38	10.5
Total	47.5	84.9	238	37.4

One respondent expressed that joining the cooperative empowered her to become self-reliant and independent in her daily ventures. Her experience was:

After becoming a member of this cooperative, I participated in pickle-making training and eventually began managing a pickle industry. I personally delivered goods to customer's homes according to their orders using my own vehicle. It enhanced my independence, enabling me to visit markets, banks, health centers, and relatives myself. Before joining the cooperative, I relied on my husband's assistance to venture outside of my home. (Mina Karki, 38 years, SLC)

In a similar vein, before joining the cooperative, Brahmin/Chhetri caste members had the highest participation rate at 86.7%, with a change rate of 33%. However, after joining, other caste groups such as Sunar, Damai, Kami, and Madhesi experienced the most significant change at 58.3%, empowering them to access health centers independently without male assistance. Additionally, respondents with no education saw a substantial change of 63.6% following their involvement in the cooperative. One respondent shared that the cooperative transformed her from hesitancy to empowerment. She expressed:

Initially, my husband pressured me to join the cooperative for a loan. But, my involvement was merely to participate in activities as required. Later, my interest grew, and I became an active member of an organization, along with others. Thanks to the training and programs provided by the cooperative, my knowledge and skills regarding individual duties and responsibilities increased. This enabled me to become involved in the household decision-making process and effective utilization of economic resources. Now, I visit health centers according to my needs and those of my children. I feel empowered when I get involved in cooperative activities. (Dhana Sunar, 50 years, illiterate)

Similarly, another participant said that cooperation helped her boost her confidence in advocating for her health. She said:

Before joining the cooperative, I lacked the confidence to enter to the health center and express my health problems with health providers. I felt afraid and became unable to communicate effectively. However, at present, I have developed the ability to speak in front of groups of people through participation and practice in training and group activities after getting involved in cooperative activities. Now, I feel comfortable visiting the health center alone without relying on my husband's support. (Ganga Ghimire, 46 years, basic education)

These statements highlight the significant impact of the cooperative on participants' confidence and self-reliance in health matters. Through training and group activities, women like Ganga Ghimire have gained the skills and courage needed to access and communicate with health services independently.

Changes Using the Means of Transportation

Table 3 shows the means of transportation used by respondents when visiting markets, banks, and health centers before and after joining the cooperative. Respondents were asked about their means of transportation while visiting the market, bank, or health center before and after joining the cooperative.

Among women aged 35–49 years, there was a notable decline in the percentage of those who walked before joining the cooperative, which decreased by approximately 3% afterward. Apart from this age group, there were no changes in walking behavior among other age groups after joining the cooperative. Despite an initial increase in private vehicle usage after joining the cooperative, this decreased with age. Across all age groups, there was a decrease in the percentage of women using public vehicles, with a more pronounced decline among the older age group.

Respondents belonging to the Brahmin/Chhetri and Janajati communities exhibited a decrease in the percentage of women walking. In contrast, other caste/ethnic groups (Sunar, Damai, Kami, and Madhesi) did not report significant changes in walking habits before or after joining the cooperative. Before joining, only a tiny percentage (0.7%) of Brahmin/Chhetri women used private vehicles, but the figure increased across all caste groups after joining the cooperative decreased across all groups (Table 3).

Table 3

Percentage of Using the Means of Transportation by Socio-Demographic Characteristics

Characteristics	Before			After			Number	Change (After -Before)		
	Walking	Private Vehicle	Public Vehicle	Walking	Private Vehicle	Public Vehicle		Walking	Private Vehicle	Public Vehicle
Age										
18–34 years	4.8	2.4	92.9	4.8	19.3	76.0	42	0.0	16.9	-17.0
35–49 years	5.9	0.0	94.1	3.3	16.8	79.9	152	-2.6	16.8	-14.2
50– 64 years	2.3	0.0	97.7	2.3	9.6	88.2	44	0.0	9.5	-9.5
Caste/Ethnic Group										
Brahmin/Chhetri	5.3	0.7	94.0	4.7	18.3	77.0	150	-0.6	17.63	-17.0
Janajati,	5.3	0.0	94.7	1.3	12.9	85.8	76	-4.0	12.9	-8.9

Others (Sunar, Damai, Kami, Madhesi)	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	5.0	95.0	12	0.0	5.0	-5.0
Women Education										
No education	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	5.0	95.0	11	0.0	5.0	-5.0
Basic (1–8)	13.0	0.0	87.0	6.5	20.2	73.3	46	-6.5	20.2	-13.7
Secondary (9–12)	4.2	0.0	95.8	2.1	15.5	82.4	143	-2.1	15.5	-13.4
Bachelor and above	0.0	2.6	97.4	5.3	15.5	79.2	38	5.3	12.9	-18.2
Total	5.0	0.4	94.6	3.4	15.9	80.7	238	-1.6	15.5	-13.9

With regard to education, respondents with no education and those with the highest level of education did not engage in walking. There was a rise in private vehicle usage among respondents with Bachelor's and above degrees, showing a notable increase in private vehicle usage after joining. Across all educational backgrounds, there was a decline in the percentage of women using public vehicles. A respondent shared her experiences regarding the challenges women face while using public transportation.

During my journeys on public transportation, I frequently encounter harassment from male passengers and vehicle staff, which includes offensive language, attempted physical contact, invasion of personal space, and dispute change. As a result, acquiring a loan from the cooperative allowed me to establish a parlor and purchase a scooter. Now, I rely on my scooter for marketing, visiting banks or health centers, and relatives, which makes me comfortable and free from the tension of using it. (Sabina Sharma, 34 years, SLC)

There is another experience of another respondent whose life was raised to be an entrepreneur from a wage laborer with the financial support of this cooperative.

During the internal conflict in Nepal, I lost my husband, leaving me to care for three small children on my own. This marked the beginning of a challenging and uncertain period in my life. Ensuring that my children were fed and cared for became a daily struggle. Despite searching for employment opportunities, the only option available was labor work. I relied on my wages to support my children, and as they grew older, they began to assist me with their daily tasks. Eventually, I became a member of this cooperative and started saving a portion of my earnings regularly. With the help of a loan from the cooperative, I was able to start my own cow farm. This decision proved to be a turning point in my life. Now I proud owner of a van, which has contributed significantly to my livelihood. (Bina Thapa, 50 years, Basic education)

Particularly notable in private vehicles, none of them in before joining, but it reached about 13% among the Janajati respondents post-joining the cooperative. One of the Janajati respondents explains her opinion:

I operate my fruits and vegetables business with financial assistance from this cooperative. I own a scooter, which serves as a convenient mode of transportation for traveling between my shop and other locations. It enables me to manage my shop efficiently by facilitating the collection and delivery of goods to nearby customers. Additionally, I use it for personal mobility, such as visiting health center banks and visiting relatives. (Sita Tamang, 34 years, Ten Plus)

In conclusion, the cooperative's financial support has significantly impacted the lives of its members, particularly in terms of transportation and entrepreneurship. The stories of Sabina Sharma and Bina Thapa illustrate how access to loans enabled them to transition from relying on public transportation to owning private vehicles, enhancing their independence and safety. Additionally, the increase in private vehicle usage among educated respondents reflects a broader trend toward improved mobility and economic opportunities. This cooperative's role in transforming lives underscores the importance of financial inclusion in fostering socio-economic development.

Discussion

This study explored independent mobility behavior after involvement in the cooperative of women concerning their visits to religious sites and health centers and the use of personal vehicles independently, with a focus on their age, caste/ethnicity, and education level. Cooperatives, as collective organizations, aim to empower themselves through collective action, emphasizing inclusivity and active participation in socio-economic progress (Yaebiyo & Teklehaimanot, 2012). Kabeer (1999) informs that cooperative involvement can provide women with the necessary resources (like financial support and social networks) and enhance their agency (by increasing their confidence and decision-making abilities). This, in turn, leads to more remarkable achievements, such as the ability to use personal vehicles independently, visit religious sites, and access health facilities, thereby contributing to their overall empowerment. The qualitative information highlights the significant impact of cooperative involvement on women's mobility and empowerment. Sabina Sharma's experience exemplifies the broader theme of increased autonomy and reduced vulnerability among women in cooperatives. Her story supports existing literature on the positive effects of financial empowerment on women's mobility and safety. By integrating her narrative, we see a clear link between cooperative participation and enhanced freedom of movement, contributing

to overall empowerment. This aligns with Kabeer's (1999) model of empowerment, where resources (the loan), agency (the ability to purchase and use a scooter), and achievements (improved mobility and reduced harassment) collectively foster women's empowerment. Thus, cooperative involvement is crucial in addressing mobility challenges and promoting women's independence and well-being.

The result also revealed a change in mobility patterns among senior-aged women (50–64 years), with a notable increase of 22.7% in visits to new religious places compared to 9.5% for the 35–49 age group and 5.9% for the 18–35 age group. In Nepal, women often experience oppression within patriarchal structures (Karki & Thapa, 2021; UN, 2019), where age is crucial factor influencing mobility. Additionally, the unequal distribution of caregiving responsibilities between women and men in housework, childcare, and other families exacerbates the challenges faced by women in balancing their public and private lives (Mussideda & Patimo, 2020). Moreover, even after their children have grown, women may encounter their autonomy and freedom movement.

Likewise, changes in caste/ethnic groups, particularly among other groups (Sunar, Damai, Kami, and Madhesi) women, accounted for one-fourth (25%) of the total changes, surpassing other caste/ethnic groups. Similarly, illiterate women exhibited the highest rate of mobility compared to other education levels. Women's autonomy in decision-making regarding visits to health centers appears to align with Mahmud's (2003) findings on the positive impact of microcredit programs on women's agency and access to health care.

Overall, women are gradually shifting their mode of transportation after getting involved in cooperatives, with an increase observed in both public and private vehicle usage across all ages, caste/ethnic, and education groups. However, women continue to face the fear of harassment while using public transport, which limits their social and economic mobility (Kapoor, 2020), leading to a growing preference for private vehicles.

These findings also highlight the influence of age, caste/ethnicity, and education on women's choice of transportation. Younger women and those from supposedly higher castes exhibit higher rates of changes towards private vehicle usage. In comparison, the opposite trend is observed among older women and those from supposedly lower castes. Likewise, the rate of change in vehicle usage is lower among illiterate women compared to others. Notably, younger age groups show a higher shift towards private vehicle usage, while older, illiterate women from lower castes demonstrate the opposite pattern.

Hence, women's decision-making autonomy regarding visits to family and

relatives is identified as a crucial factor in empowerment (Ministry of Health and Population, 2017), with changes in educational levels and caste groups contributing to increasing rates of mobility. This study suggests that the shift in mobility following participation in cooperatives in Nepal serves as an indication of women's empowerment, particularly among those from illiterate and marginalized groups.

Conclusion

This study highlights the impact of cooperative engagement on women's mobility, reflecting broader empowerment processes within the Bhaktapur district of Nepal. The findings demonstrate that women's involvement in cooperatives is associated with transformative shifts in their ability to access and navigate public spaces, engage in economic activities, and make independent decisions about their mobility. The study reveals changes in women's mobility across various age groups, caste/ethnic backgrounds, and educational levels following cooperative participation. Senior-aged women (50–64 years), illiterate individuals, and members of marginalized caste/ethnic groups experienced substantial improvements in their mobility patterns, such as increased visits to religious sites and enhanced access to health centers without male accompaniment. These changes signify a significant expansion of women's agency and freedom of movement within their communities.

Furthermore, the shift in transportation preferences—from increased use of private vehicles to reduced reliance on walking and public transport—underlines the tangible benefits of cooperative support in overcoming mobility challenges faced by women, including safety concerns and social barriers. Younger women and those from supposedly higher castes demonstrated more pronounced shifts towards private vehicle usage. In contrast, older, illiterate women from marginalized groups exhibited slower but equally significant changes in their mobility behavior. This shift towards private vehicle usage particularly empowers women to engage more actively in economic and social activities outside their homes, contributing to their overall socio-economic empowerment.

This study places a strong foundation for future research by highlighting the transformative potential of cooperatives in empowering women. It opens avenues for exploring the long-term impacts of cooperative membership on women's socio-economic status and empowerment. Additionally, it suggests the need for comparative analyses between different community-based study to identify the most effective models to empower women. The research also points to the importance of examining barriers to participation in cooperatives, such as cultural and economic obstacles, and how these can be overcome. Furthermore, it underscores the role of education and training within cooperatives in enhancing women's skills and

leadership abilities. By addressing these areas, future research can be conducted and provide evidence-based recommendations for empowering women through cooperative.

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Assessing Noise Level near Educational Institutions of Dhangadhi Sub-Metropolitan City

Ashok Sodari¹, Prem Raj Joshi¹, Prakash Raj Pant¹

¹Department of Physics, Kailali Multiple Campus, Far Western University, Nepal

Corresponding Author: Prem Raj Joshi; Email: prem.joshi@fwu.edu.np

Abstract

Noise pollution is one of the major environmental threats that highly affects human livelihood. This study aims to assess the noise level near educational institutions located in Dhangadhi Sub-Metropolitan City. Eighteen schools were chosen for this study. The noise level was recorded in those schools in the school time (10:00-16:00). For measurement, time was categorized into three parts viz. 10:00-12:00; 12:00-14:00; and 14:00-16:00. The noise level was measured using a digital sound level meter in the month of February 2024. The result shows that the noise level (L_{eq}) measured at different locations is above the prescribed standard value of noise level. Among the selected institutions, the noise level was higher in those schools which are near the roads. The institutions that are little inside the road are less noisy. This study reveals that the noise pollution in the respective institutions is due to high traffic of vehicles, bad condition of road, human crowd, unnecessary use of horns, etc.

Keywords: Noise pollution, environmental pollution, traffic, human crowd

Introduction

Noise is considered as the undesirable and unwanted entity for human beings. Pollution because of abundant amount of noise is called noise pollution. A major cause behind noise pollution is due to the increase of population, industrialization and other technological advancements like speakers, sound boxes, etc. From road to home, there are many sources which produce a lot of sound leading to noise pollution. In contrast to other forms of pollution, noise pollution is a little bit different and least understood. However, its harmful effects can easily be observed. It



causes several side effects like decrease in efficiency, increase in blood pressure and other health related issues (Bhattarai, 2014). Noise is a common problem faced by many people in the world. With the increase in motor traffic, the noise level also goes on increasing (Baltrenas et al., 2010).

Noise pollution deteriorates the quality of life especially in urban areas across the world. Throughout the globe, urbanization is at the apex causing rapid road traffic, construction of roads and infrastructures which results the noise pollution. Among various forms of noise pollution, traffic pollution results due to continuous flow of vehicles, poor maintenance of the vehicles and unnecessary blowing of the horns (Singh et al., 2022).

A sound wave is a form of wave moving in air or in other media that causes hearing sensation. Noise is simply defined as unwanted sound which may be due to different natural and artificial means. According to World Health Organization (WHO), noise pollution falls in second rank among different environmental pollution (Chhetri et al., 2019). Rapid urbanization and industrialization are the significant causes of noise pollution. Noise pollution causes severe effect on human beings. WHO also highlighted noise pollution as one of the major environmental pollution. Apart from several other causes, noise coming from road traffic highly affects the quality of life especially in urban areas. Noise pollution causes several side effects like annoyance, sleep disturbance, hormonal disorder, hypertension and psychiatric disorder (Mishra et al., 2021).

High noise level in the background may cause side effects on auditory and nervous system (Chauhan et al., 2010). In the urban areas, traffic due to vehicles is the major source of noise pollution (Bhosale, 2010; Mavrin et al., 2018). Due to high population rise and several industrial activities, cities and towns are facing the big problem in the form of noise pollution (Datta et al., 2006). The noise pollution can cause several problems in human health like noise induced hearing impairment, disturbance of sleep and other mental side effects. High noise in the festival time is also being one of the sources of annoyance (Goswami et al., 2013).

Noise pollution has severe effect on physical and psychological aspects of human health. Noise also affects nervous and endocrine system. Aircrafts, vehicles and other transportation system are the major sources of noise pollution in urban cities (Geravandi et al., 2015). Due to the continuous exposure to high noise, the workers in the factory are suffering from various health effects. Directly or indirectly, noise pollution causes the adverse effects that impair the human health. Apart from human health, noise pollution possesses adverse effects on the resident, society and environment. Exposure to high level of noise increases the stress on human being which leads to increase in antisocial activity in them (Jariwala et al., 2017).

This study tries to explore the level of noise near educational institutions located in Dhangadhi Sub-Metropolitan City. This study shows the present status of noise in those areas and some recommendations to reduce noise pollution. This study deals with a basic research question: What is the current noise level near the educational institutions of Dhangadhi Sub-Metropolitan City?

Literature Review

There have been various studies in the past carried out to assess or measure the noise level in different locations. In national and international level, there has been a number of studies that explored the noise level. In this regard, Bhattarai (2014) has done a survey to measure the sound level at various places of Siddharthanagar Municipality by categorising selected locations into three zones viz. silent, residential and commercial zones. He used Dick Smith Digital Sound Level Meter Q 1362 to measure the sound level. He concluded that average noise level at all the selected regions was more than that prescribed by Government of Nepal and WHO. Furthermore, he mentioned the heavy noise pollution near road side area is due to bad condition of roads, vehicles and unnecessary use of horns.

Likewise, Whittaker et al. (2014) carried out a study to assess noise-induced hearing loss in small scale metal industry in Nepal. They took 115 metal workers and 123 hotel workers (control group) for the study. They found that noise induced hearing was 30.4 percent in metal workers and 4.1 percent in the hotel workers. They found that in the workplace, the noise level was 65.3-84.7 dB in metal workers sites and in hotel workers (control site) the noise level was 51.4-68.6 dB. They concluded that metal workers have greater possibility for the noise-induced hearing loss.

Singh et al. (2022) carried out a study to assess a traffic noise along the ring road side of Kathmandu Valley, Nepal. They recorded noise level data using sound-level meters. At all the junction points they had selected, Leq exceeded 70 dB which is more than the standard national and international noise level. They mentioned that if population rises in the same fashion, it may cause many adverse health effects in human beings.

Another study conducted by Chhetri et al. (2019) aimed to evaluate traffic noise levels in Kathmandu valley. They recorded intensities of noise level at 31 different places of Kathmandu valley. They have mentioned Satdobato and Putalisadak as a highly polluted area exceeding noise level beyond 80 dB. They concluded that in Kathmandu valley, the noise level was about 72 dB. They also recommended that policy need to be implemented perfectly and it is also needed to spread the awareness of adverse effects of noise pollution.

Likewise, Mishra et al. (2021) made a study to assess the effect of COVID-19 lockdown on noise pollution level of Lucknow city of India. They investigated the change in noise level at different areas of Lucknow city viz. residential, commercial, industrial and silent zones. They have compared and analysed the level of noise before, during and after the lockdown at the selected places. They have used portable environmental sensors to collect the data. They found that average noise levels before lockdown were 44.85 dB to 79.57 dB whereas the average noise levels after the lockdown found as 38.55 dB to 57.79 dB. They found significant decrease in the sound level during the lockdown time as compared to that of pre and post lockdown period. Their study observed significant decrease in annoyance and sleep disturbance level during lockdown period than pre- and post-lockdown period. They suggest to implementing strict noise control policies to reduce the adverse effects caused due to noise pollution.

Another study by Chauhan et al. (2021) assessed noise pollution level in Kathmandu valley and also investigated the effectiveness of implementation of noise standard. They concluded that there is significant amount of noise pollution and no horn regulation were not followed strictly. They recorded average noise level as 66.8 dB in Kathmandu valley. They mentioned that in about 65.2% of sample locations, the noise level was more than standard noise level. Likewise, Baltrenas et al. (2010) assessed noise level in the southern part of Panevezys. They took measurement during three periods of the day; daytime (6 a.m. to 6 p.m.), evening (6 p.m. to 10 p.m.) and at night (10 p.m. to 6 a.m.). They mentioned that noise generated by the car is the major source of noise pollution.

Chauhan et al. (2010) also mentioned that electricity generators and transportation are the major sources of noise pollution in Moradabad city of India. They found the noise level was above the prescribed standard noise level. They recommended that proper maintenance of vehicles and roads, planation of the trees may help in reducing the noise level. They also highlighted that awareness about the effects of noise pollution may help in controlling the noise pollution.

Bhosale et al. (2010) measured the traffic noise level in the Aurangabad city of India. They found maximum and minimum noise level in working day were 84 dB and 74 dB whereas in holidays maximum and minimum noise levels were 81 dB and 70 dB. They also pointed that as like other forms of pollution, noise pollution is also one of the emerging environmental pollution. Especially for the people of urban areas noise pollution is the subject of concern. Likewise, Datta et al. (2006) assessed the noise level in Burdwan town of West Bengal India using the sound level meter. They found noise level in the range of 64-85 dB. They also mentioned adverse effect of noise on human health. They pointed that different pathological and psychological

disorder can occur in human health because of noise pollution. They also argued the necessity of public awareness among the people to control the noise pollution.

Stansfeld and Matheson (2003) discussed about the effects of noise pollution on human health. Noise pollution causes sleep disturbance, modifies social behaviour, cause annoyance, hypertension and etc. Aircraft and traffic noise exposure causes psychological symptoms. Especially in children, aircraft noise may cause impairment in reading comprehension and long-term memory. Along with this, Singh and Davar (2004) performed a cross sectional survey in the Delhi state. They pointed that loudspeakers and automobiles were the major sources of noise pollution. Noise pollution effects are interference with communication, sleeplessness, and reduction in efficiency. Apart from this, noise pollution may cause extreme level of deafness and mental breakdown. They recommended reducing or stopping the noise produced in the party to control the noise pollution. Regardless of administrative kind of punishment to the people, the public awareness and public education about the noise pollution may help in reducing noise pollution.

Geravandi et al. (2015) conducted a study to evaluate the effect of noise pollution on human health. From the cross-sectional study, they found that equivalent sound level in all station were 76.28 ± 3.12 dB. They concluded that, to compensate the noise from road traffic, proper planning is necessary to prevent noise pollution and become safe from its effects.

Munzel et al. (2021) mentioned that with the increase in noise pollution there is high risk of happening heart related disease. The traffic noise disturbs the sleep, elevates the stress hormone levels. Noise-induced stress may deteriorate the learning and memory of the children when exposed to aircraft noise. Juang et al. (2010) conducted a study to assess the effect of noise pollution on medical care workers and patients in some hospitals of Taiwan. They found that daily average sound levels inside the hospitals in day time were between 52.6 dB and 64.6 dB. This noise level was more than standard noise level (50 dB) of Taiwan.

The literature discussed above implies that noise pollution is one of the major issues of the modern urban society. In the context of Nepal too, the urbanization is rapidly growing. Above discussion also shows, in Nepali cities, there is high level of noise pollution. This study mainly focuses to assess the noise level in Dhangadhi Sub-Metropolitan City, Kailali, Nepal.

Methods and Procedures

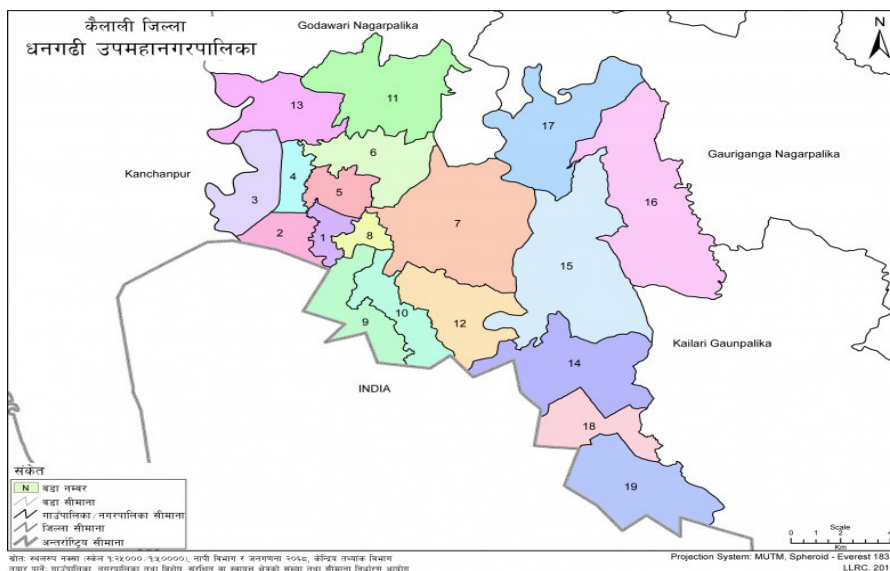
Study Area

Dhangadhi Sub-Metropolitan City is located in Kailali district of the Far

Western Province of Nepal. It is the district headquarters of Kailali. Dhangadhi is one of the major cities of the whole Far Western region. It is the centre of education, health, industries and commerce of this province. Dhangadhi Airport, a national airport, also lies in this Sub-Metropolitan City. Moreover, this Sub-Metropolitan City is adjacent to India-Nepal border. This is one of the gateways for entering into Nepal from India. It is located about 109 meters above the sea level and is about 750 km west from capital city Kathmandu. This Sub-Metropolitan City lies in plane region covering an area of about 271.74 sq. km.

Figure 1

Geographical Map of Dhangadhi Sub-Metropolitan City



Data Collection

This study is field based. For this study, we have chosen eighteen locations. The selected sites are near the educational institutions of Dhangadhi Sub-Metropolitan City. We have selected eighteen educational institutions namely; Aishwarya Vidya Niketan (AVN), Galaxy Secondary School, Kantipur Technical College, Panchodaya Secondary School, Axis Vidyashram, Balmiki, Jay Malika College, Hill World School, Jaycess English Secondary School, Steeping Stone English Boarding School, Himlal Secondary School, Saradha Secondary School, SPA Academy, Aristo English Boarding School, Three Star Secondary School, Apee Academy, Kailali Vidya Niketan and Kailali Multiple Campus (KMC).

The noise level was measured using a portable digital sound level meter. The

sound level meter has the range of 30-130 dB having an accuracy of 1.5 dB. The measurements were carried out in the day time from 10:00 to 16:00 in the month of February 2024. We categorized this time into three parts 10:00-12:00, 12:00-14:00, and 14:00-16:00. At each location the reading was recorded thrice a day as the above mentioned time range. All the readings were measured under normal atmospheric condition. The data recorded from the field are then refined and tabulated. For the analysis of the data, different bar diagrams are plotted which makes visualization clear and meaningful.

Features of Digital Sound Level Meter

Measuring range: 30~130 dBA

Accuracy: $\pm 1.5\text{dB}$

Frequency Response: 31.5Hz ~ 8 KHz

Resolution: 0.1dB

Working Temperature and Humidity: 10~ 60⁰ C, 0~90 % RH

Power source: 3* 1.5V AAA Batteries

Weight: 84.08g (excluding battery)



Sound Intensity Level

The rate of flow of sound energy through an area is the intensity of sound wave. The intensity level of sound is defined as $\beta = 10 \log_{10} \left(\frac{I}{I_0} \right)$

Where, I represents the intensity of sound and I_0 represents threshold of hearing, $I_0 = 10^{-12} \text{Wm}^{-2}$.

Results and Discussion

The data recorded from the field are arranged in tabulated form as shown below.

Table 1

Noise Level in dB at near Different Educational Institutions of Dhangadhi Sub-Metropolitan City

S.N	Name of place	Latitude	Longitude	10:00 - 12:00			12:00 - 14:00			14:00 - 16:00		
				Leq	Lmax	Lmin	Leq	Lmax	Lmin	Leq	Lmax	Lmin
1	A.V.N	28 42' N	80 35' E	71.47	74.16	58.35	62.88	72.54	56.63	57.49	67.07	55.76

2	Galaxy	28 42' N	80 35' E	68.5	77.76	60.6	67.61	73.5	60.64	62.75	70.43	54.58
3	Kantipur	28 42' N	80 35' E	57.07	63.15	48.32	51.65	57.32	42.74	49.41	57.52	43.7
4	Panchadaya	28 42' N	80 35' E	59.01	63.25	47.26	52.99	60.66	48.76	45.64	51.35	39.1
5	Axis	28 42' N	80 35' E	67.11	70.61	55.5	67.15	68.91	55.5	65.75	70.2	58.35
6	Balmiki	28 42' N	80 35' E	66.88	72.96	57.01	70.39	74.06	58.5	67.81	73.46	57.84
7	Jaya malika	28 42' N	80 35' E	62.02	63.9	48.18	61.34	58.18	45.34	61.79	62.51	50.9
8	Hill world	28 42' N	80 35' E	67.21	69.35	53.48	63.15	67.77	62.45	62.25	59.39	47.88
9	Jaycees E.S	28 42' N	80 34' E	62.15	67.18	53.95	64.36	62.81	49.53	57.69	61.43	48.92
10	Steeping	28 42' N	80 34' E	61.17	58.63	49.49	60.45	63.18	48.13	54.35	60.6	49.95
11	Himal school	28 42' N	80 34' E	61.08	67.97	52.18	62.07	63.53	51.65	63.95	65.39	52.31
12	Saradha	28 42' N	80 34' E	63.67	67.23	55.66	63.74	69.8	56.56	66.93	68.42	57.43
13	S.P.A	28 42' N	80 34' E	60.71	64.25	51.31	57.66	62.56	45.4	63.06	66.87	54.66
14	Aristo.E.S	28 42' N	80 36' E	65.26	69.64	57.71	65.19	69.37	57.99	67	72.11	59.11
15	Three Star S	28 42' N	80 36' E	61.9	67.34	56.27	67.63	71.08	61.7	60.6	70.8	53.77
16	Apee academy	28 42' N	80 36' E	56.24	64.62	49.15	59.12	67.37	46.84	59.84	67.5	46.12
17	Kailali V.N	28 42' N	80 36' E	53.94	59.94	39.39	52.71	64.52	40.08	58.75	65.21	42.39
18	K.M.C	28 42' N	80 36' E	49.08	61.11	42.18	57.48	58.97	44.93	58.13	66.76	45.45

Table 2

Noise Level Standard of Nepal (Bhattarai, 2014)

S.N.	Area	Noise level in dB (Day time)	Noise level in dB (Night time)
1	Silent Zone	50	40
2	Business Area	65	55
3	Urban Residential Area	55	45

WHO also indicates safe noise level for urban area as 45 dB. Table 2 shows the standard noise level of Nepal (Bhattarai, 2014).

Table 1 shows the noise level indices near various schools of Dhangadhi Sub-Metropolitan city. The results show that noise level at all locations is greater than the noise level as prescribed by government of Nepal and WHO. The maximum Leq 71.47 dB was observed near A.V.N school in the time zone of 10:00 – 12:00. However minimum noise level of Leq 45.64 dB was observed at Panchodaya Secondary School in the time zone of 14:00- 16:00. Table 1 also shows that the value of Leq in selected locations is around 60 dB which above the standard value of noise.

Figure 2

Representation of Noise level (Leq) in dB at various locations at time 10:00 – 12:00

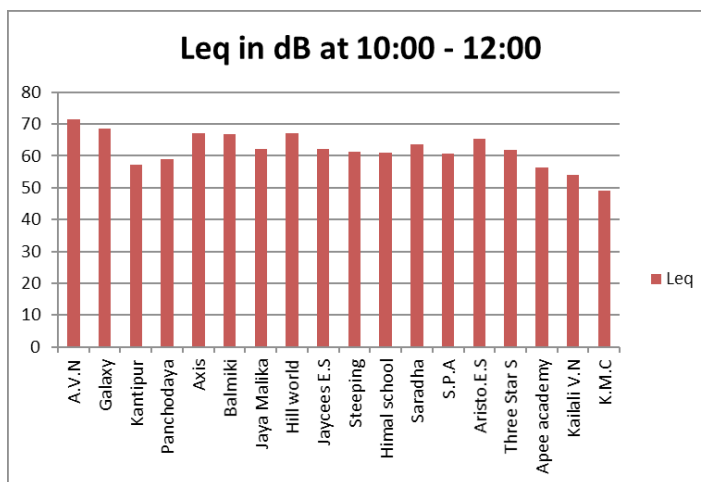


Figure 2 shows the noise level at various locations (Educational institutions) of Dhangadhi Sub-Metropolitan City at time between 10:00 – 12:00. Above figure shows that noise level is maximum (71.47 dB) near A.V.N. school Dhanagdhi. It is because of high traffic in the road and high crowd as this school is close to crowded road. Comparatively low noise level (51.65 dB) was found at Kantipur Technical College because it lies at low crowd region and also it lies little inside highway. This figure shows that in majority (around 72% of the total schools) noise level was beyond 60 dB in the time range of 10:00 – 12:00.

Figure 3

Representation of Noise level (Leq) in dB at Various Locations at Time 12:00 – 14:00

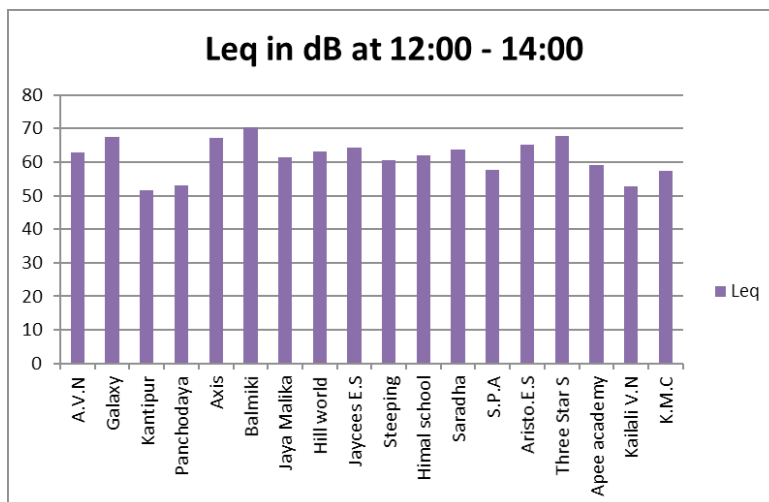


Figure 3 shows that the noise level is maximum (70.39 dB) at Balmiki school. This is because of high traffic in the road and bad condition of the road. Along with this, as the construction is going in the road, the chance of noise pollution is high. Likewise, the low noise level (51.65 dB) was observed in Kantipur Technical college which is because this college lies in low crowd area where road traffic is also low. In majority of the places, the noise level was greater than 60 dB. About 66% of the total schools have noise level higher than 60 dB.

Figure 4

Representation of Noise Level (Leq) in dB at Various Locations at Time 14:00 – 16:00

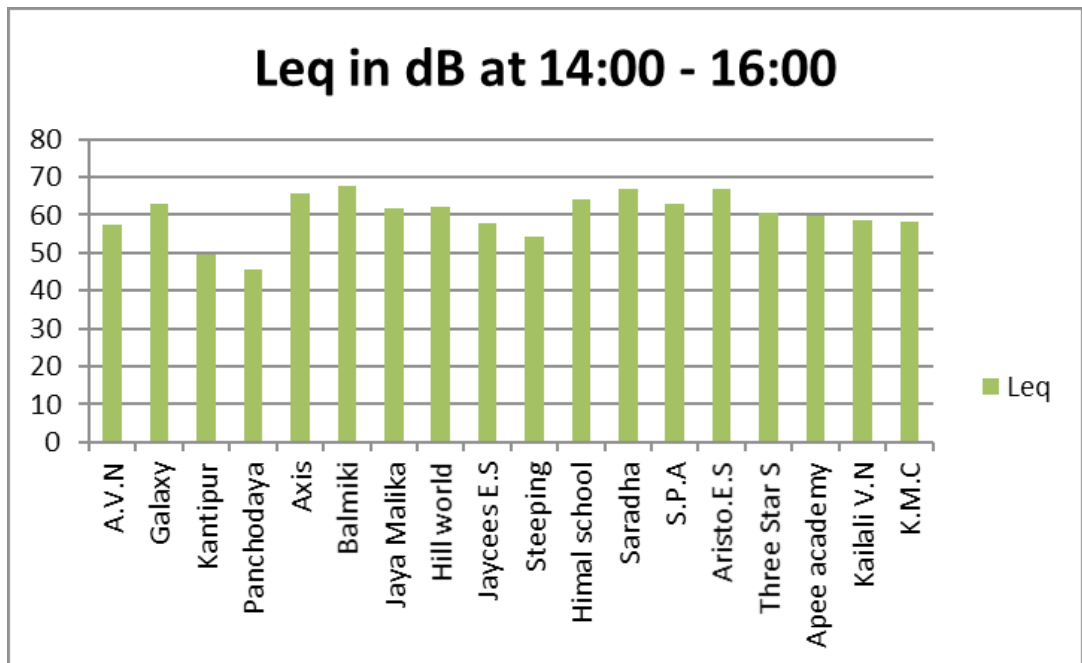


Figure 4 shows the noise level variation near different schools at time 14:00 – 16:00. In this time range too, the noise level was maximum (67.81 dB) near Balmiki school. The high noise level was due to high road traffic and bad condition of the road. Whereas, noise level was least (45.64 dB) near Panchodaya School which is because the school lies little inside the highway. Again in this time range too, the noise level in those schools was more than 60 dB. In this time range, the noise level was found as little less than that of 10:00- 14:00 range.

Figure 5

Representation of Variation of Lmax and Lmin in dB at Various Locations at Time 10:00 – 12:00

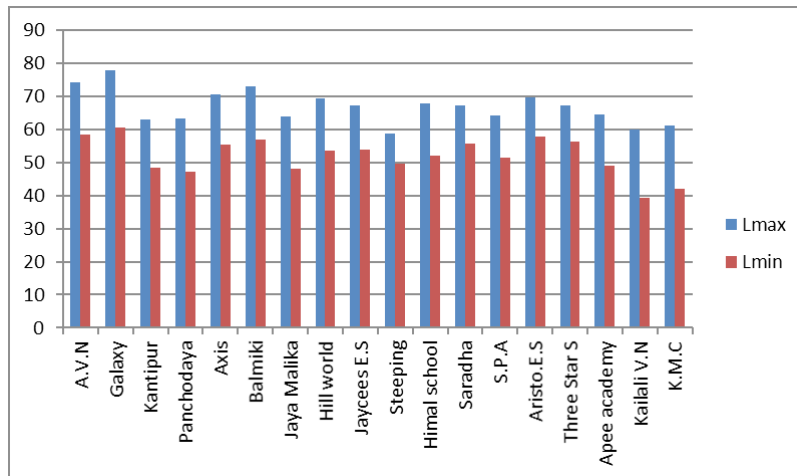


Figure 5 shows the comparison of Lmax and Lmin in the time range 10:00 – 12:00. In this time range Lmax has maximum value of 77.76 dB at Galaxy School whereas Lmin has minimum value of 39.39 dB at Kailali V.N. In majority of the schools Lmax has the noise level greater than 60 dB.

Figure 6

Representation of Variation of Lmax and Lmin in dB at Various Locations at Time 12:00 – 14:00

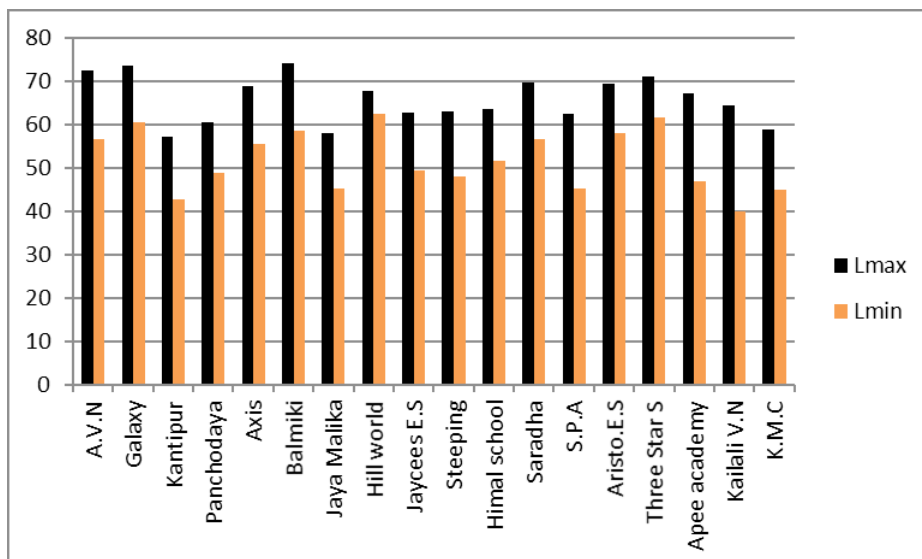


Figure 6 shows the comparison of Lmax and Lmin in the time range 12:00 – 14:00. In this time range Lmax has maximum value of 74.06 dB at Balmiki School whereas the Lmin has minimum value of 40.08 dB at Kailali V.N. In majority of the schools Lmax has the noise level greater than 60 dB.

Figure 7

Representation of Variation of Lmax and Lmin in dB of Various Locations at Time 14:00 – 16:00

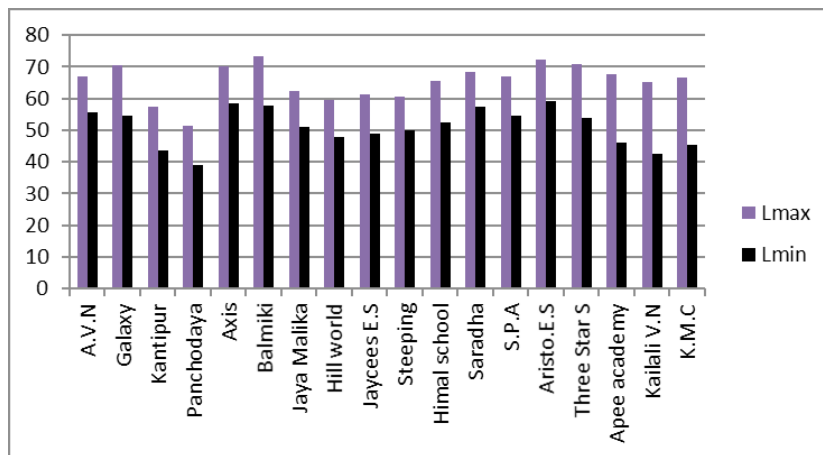


Figure 7 shows the comparison of Lmax and Lmin in the time range 14:00 – 16:00. In this time range Lmax has maximum value of 73.46 dB at Balmiki School whereas the Lmin has minimum value of 39.10 dB at Panchodaya school. In majority of the schools Lmax has the noise level greater than 60 dB.

Figure 8

Representation of Average of Leq in dB at Various Locations

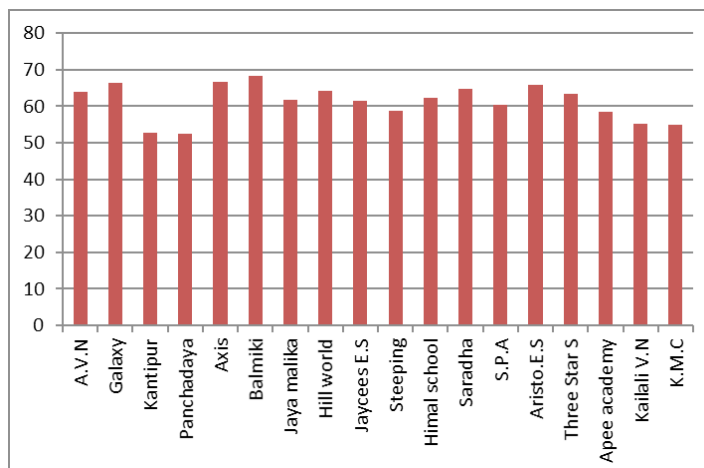


Figure 8 shows the comparison of average value of Leq at different locations. It can be seen that, Balmiki school has maximum noise level of 68.36 dB whereas Panchodaya school has minimum noise level of 52.54 dB. At majority of locations, average noise level was beyond 60 dB.

This study was limited to assess the noise level near educational institutions of Dhangadhi Sub-Metropolitan City. We found in majority of the locations value of Leq is more than 60 dB, which shows that the site was noise polluted area. We observed that near the chosen educational institutions the noise is due to vehicular traffic, which is in supportive with Baltrenas et al. (2010). Baltrenas et al. (2010) also argued that motor traffic causes noise pollution. Another important issue in Dhangadhi is that most of the roads are in construction and reconstruction phase by which condition of existing road is very worse. Because of bad condition of the road, the chance of noise pollution increases. As the chosen institutions are located in the city of Dhangadhi, there were many construction related work going on which also produces noise. This is also supported by Singh et al. (2022), as they mentioned construction of infrastructure and road cause the noise pollution. To reduce the noise level, the noise related policy have to be implemented strictly. The poor conditioned vehicles should not be allowed to ride in the road as they also cause noise pollution. Chhetri et al. (2019) also suggest to strictly regulate the noise policy to avoid or less the noise pollution. Unnecessary use of pressure horns also increased a noise level which is supported by Bhattacharai (2014).

Conclusion

This study aimed to measure the noise level in Dhangadhi Sub-Metropolitan City. This study showed that the educational institutions which were adjacent to crowded road were found to be noisier. In majority of the locations, the average noise level was found more than 60 dB. This study reveals that transportation is the major source of noise pollution. Apart from that, condition of road, bad condition of vehicle also causes noise pollution. It was also observed that people have lack of awareness about the harmful effects of noise pollution. To control the noise pollution, a noise control policy needs to be formulated for this Sub-Metropolitan City and it should be implemented strictly. More importantly, the public awareness needs to be spread to people so that they can also understand the adverse effects of noise pollution leading to reduce noise pollution by some amount.

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***In silico* Molecular Docking and Dynamic Study of MDM2-p53 Inhibitor Alkaloids Extracted from *Withania somnifera* Against Tumor Growth**

Shukra Raj Regmi, Narendra Prakash Sawd, Nurul Hoda Khan, Padam Raj Joshi

Central Department of Biological and Chemical Sciences, Graduate School of Science and Technology, Mid-West University, Surkhet, Nepal

Corresponding Author: Shukra Raj Regmi; Email: shukra.regmi@mu.edu.np

Abstract

In today's world, human tumor growth has become a critical health issue. Many patients experience ineffective chemotherapeutic treatments, prompting the need for alternative methods. Our recent research has explored active alkaloid extracts from *Withania somnifera* as potential inhibitors of the MDM2-p53 interaction, a key factor in tumor growth. Using *in silico* molecular docking and dynamic approaches, we identified eight effective alkaloids with high docking score are WithanolideD (−10.0Kcal/mol), Withanolide (−10.0Kcal/mol), WithaferinA (−9.9Kcal/mol), WithanolideB (−9.5Kcal/mol), WithalongolideA (−9.4Kcal/mol), WithanolideE (−9.4Kcal/mol), WithanolideA (−9.0Kcal/mol), Withanone (−8.9Kcal/mol). Among them, WithaferinA, WithanolideA, WithanolideD, WithanolideE, and Withanone demonstrated the most stable hydrogen bonding, stable RMSD, and RMSF. Lipinski's rule of five, which assesses drug-like qualities, confirmed their potential through canonical SMILES verification. Molecular dynamics of the protein-ligand complex revealed that these docked complexes remain thermally stable, with consistent bond energy, dihedral angles, and stereochemical conformation over a 100 ns time frame. Our findings suggest that these alkaloids from *Withania somnifera* hold promise as effective treatments against tumor growth. Further investigation and exploration are necessary to confirm their efficacy in clinical settings.

Keywords: *Withania somnifera*, alkaloids, tumor, drug design



Introduction

The application of the computational approach in drug design and discovery has changed the scenario in the last few decades (Ahmed et al., 2022). Molecular docking expands the dimension to understand protein-protein or protein-ligand interaction (Meng et al., 2011). The method of docking is carried out through server-based (Docking, Modelling, Prediction, Binding, Protein structure quality assessment, Molecular dynamic, Remote access or analysis) and programme-based (Docking, Dynamics, Visualization, Analysis, and interpretation) (Pagadala et al., 2017). Molecular docking is the ultimate tool for designing and simulation of drugs (Alonso et al., 2006). In the present research work, we have designed a noble and promising drug to inhibit MDM2-p53 interaction against tumor growth in *Homo sapiens*.

The p53 is an oncogene that has a significant role in cell cycle regulation. It is a tumor suppressor gene also known as the ‘guardian of the human genome’. Its activity shows numerous cellular signals including DNA repairing, cell cycle arrest, and maybe apoptosis (Efeyan & Serrano, 2007). Phosphorylation of p53 and MDM2-p53 linkage disturbance causes p53 abnormalities and then becomes wild-type (Brooks & Gu, 2003). Induced p53, possibly involved in cell cycle arrest for DNA repair to maintain and restart the cell cycle in a usual way, otherwise, apoptosis may cause death and damage the cell (Hanel & Moll, 2012). Such biological phenomenon conspicuously occurs in cells for genetic stability (Chen, 2016). Transcription in p53 is induced through radiation, oncogene abnormalities, DNA damage, nutrition, stress, and aging factors (Rufini et al., 2013). Defective p53 oncogene interacts with MDM2 and causes uncontrolled growth of the cell as the initiation of apoptosis (Ashcroft & Vousden, 1999). In the majority of clinical diagnoses, the p53 oncogene was found surprisingly mutant (Song et al., 2007). Normal cell cycle works with unstable p53 activity, whereas in DNA damage, its activity increases accordingly as a negative regulator (Hafner et al., 2019). While running the repair mechanism, deformities from DNA to the new replication trend stop (Torgovnick & Schumacher, 2015). The mechanism of p53 activity is maintained by stabilizing the binding affinity of MDM2 with p53 interaction at a normal autoregulatory function that suppresses the abnormal activity of p53 in transcription. Similarly, phosphorylation of p53 activity occurs as a usual oncogene phenomenon and MDM2 is solely responsible for the degradation of p53 (Michael & Oren, 2003). The p53 activity is controlled by MDM2 protein working as E3 ligase enhancing the degradation of p53 in proteasome degradation (Mihara et al., 2003). The p53 activity is persisted in the cell through the inhibitors for MDM2-p53 (Ahmed et al., 2022). The mechanism associated with p53 oncogene implies that its tumor suppressive function can be restored by inhibiting MDM2-

p53 interaction. In this present research work, we have selected *Withania somnifera* extract as a potential inhibitor in MDM2-p53 interaction through molecular docking.

Withania somnifera, also known as 'Ashwagandha,' a medicinal shrub, belongs to the Solanaceae family and has been in practice since ancient times in Nepal, India, and South Asia (Ven Murthy et al., 2010). In Nepal, it is distributed in the lower Himalayan range below 1500 meters of subtropical zone. In Ayurved practice, the plant extract is used to make brain tonic, stimulant, anti-rheumatic, peristaltic disorder, malignant growth, cardiovascular obstruction, atrophy, power buster, etc. (Duke, 2002). Clinical and pharmaceutical success has revealed that *Withania somnifera* extract can be used in a wide range of medicines effectively as an antidiabetic, neurogenic, immunoregulator, cancer, and parkinson (Kumar et al., 2015). Bioactive natural product contains a high amount of polyphenolic compounds as an antioxidant, metabolites, bioflavonoids, terpenes, sesquiterpenes, diterpene esters, triterpenes, etc (Sovrlić & Manojlović, 2017). Traditional medicinal practice has shown that its roots and leaves contain sufficient active alkaloids to show anticancer activity. The major alkaloids found in *Withania somnifera* are Withanolide, WithaferinA, Withanone, Anaferine, Withasomnine, Beta-sitosterol, Chlorogenic acid, Withanolides A-Y, Withanine, Withananine, Tropanol, Anahygrine, Somniferiene, Somniferinine, Cuscohygrine, Pseudotropine etc. (Bone, 1996; Elsakka et al., 1990). Withanoferin, Withanolides, and metabolites like Withanone and Withnosides are found effective against cancer growth (Rai et al., 2016). The prominent activity of the bioactive alkaloid Withaferin is highly used in cytotoxic activity as an anti-carcinogenic compound. The inhibitory activity of Withaferin is so remarkable that it is widely used against different types of cancer in the brain, lungs, colon, prostate, breast ovaries, etc. (Dutta et al., 2019). The biological activity of WithaferinaA with different concentrations of the main protease was found effective against breast cancer cells (Szarc vel Szic et al., 2014). The activity of Withanolide and Withaferin is found effective against prostate cancer cells in early treatment (Roy et al., 2013). The tumor growth in human beings can be suppressed by the biological activity of Withanolides (Jayaprakasam et al., 2003).

Oncogene p53 and MDM2 interaction inhibition is a prime concern to stop cancerous activity in the human body. Radiotherapy and Chemotherapeutic drugs fail to revive the cell in many cases and make the scenario more critical (Gewirtz et al., 2008). Studies from ancient therapeutic trials have shown that some specified *Withania somnifera* extracts are effective in avoiding tumor growth (Yin et al., 2013). These bioactive compounds have a strong tendency to bind MDM2 protein and p53 becomes free to perform usual cellular function. Strong and stable hydrogen bonding of these alkaloids may be the possible candidates against rampant tumor growth

in cells (De Mejía & Prisecaru, 2005). This research work focuses mainly on the interaction between MDM2 with different bioactive compounds present in *Withania somnifera* based on molecular docking and dynamics. The selection of bioactive alkaloids-drug-like features is based on Lipinski's rule of five (Lipinski, 2004) selection or rejection method.

Methods and Procedures

Docking and Dynamics Software

In-silico molecular docking and dynamic approach were applied in the present work. The experimental part of molecular docking is strictly based on computer-based and server-based programs. The server-based online programs were carried out by modern technological methods including Swiss dock (Swiss drug design, <https://www.swissdock.ch/>, based on attracting cavities with auto dock Vina docking engine), Homology modeling, ADMET prediction, Binding site prediction, protein structure quality assessment, and molecular dynamics. The computer-based programs involve docking, dynamics, visualization, and interpretation. The major software used in the research work is listed below. These software are modern *in-silico*, versatile, and precise tools widely used in molecular modeling, docking, and dynamic study.

Table 1

Different Softwares Used in the Experiment

Name of the Software	Version	Script	Operating System	Distributor/ Developer	Applications	Software link
PyMol	3.0	C, C++, Python	Cross-platform, Linux, Windows, MacOS, Unix	Schrödinger, Inc.	3D-Molecular visualization	https://pymol.org/2/#download
BIOVIA Discovery Studio Visualizer	21.1	Perl script	Linux, Windows, MacOS, Unix	Dassault Systemes BIOVIA	Interactive 2D and 3D visualization	https://discover.3ds.com/discovery-studio-visualizer-download
Avogadro	1.0	C++ (Qt)	Linux, Windows, MacOS, Unix	Wikimedia Foundation and contributors	Molecule editor	https://avogadro.cc/

VMD (Visual Molecular Dynamics)	1.9.4a53	C	Linux, Windows, MacOS, Unix	University of Illinois at Urbana–Champaign	Molecular modelling	https://www.ks.uiuc.edu/Development/Download/download.cgi?PackageName=VMD
ADFR	V2.7	C, C++	Linux, Windows, MacOS, Unix	Avada	Molecular docking	https://ccsb.scripps.edu/adfr/

Homology Modelling: Protein Preparation

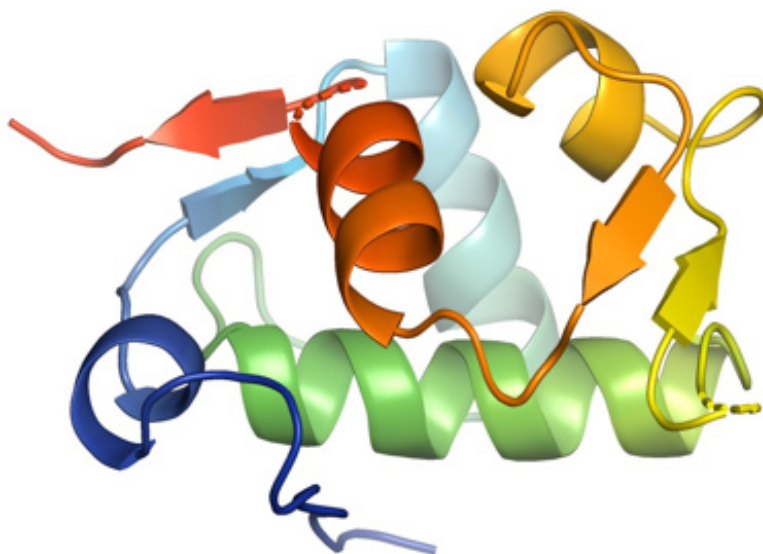
The Swiss modeler technique was used in this research study to curtail the gap between protein sequence and experimental structure (Waterhouse et al., 2018). Comparative modeling gives the nearest matching 3D geometry of the protein in SBDD format. Target identification, sequence alignment, model building, and model refinements are the principal features of this study. The backbone of the protein, loop, side chain creation of templet, and defect-free protein preparation are carried out through modern computational tools. Amino acid sequence (FASTA) and pbd format were downloaded from the Research Collaborator for Structural Bioinformatics (RCSB.org) as (PBD ID: 5TRF). Protein residue was observed in PyMol (TM) 2.5.5. The sequence identity was carried out by QMEANDisCO, GMQE. While preparation of protein, all the water molecules are removed first. The process is followed by Removing ligands, ions, or any other molecules and then adding polar hydrogens to the protein. The formed protein was represented by “5TRF_clean.pbd”. The ‘pbd’ file is further converted into ‘pddqt’ by issuing a command in Power Shell in the working directory. Following power shell command was issued.

prepare_receptor -r .\5TRF_clean.pdb -o .\5TRF_clean.pdbqt

X-ray diffraction technique has shown its resolution of 2.10Å, R-value free 0.208, R-value work 0.185, and observed R-value 0.186. The molecular weight of the protein is 11,140.088g/mol, dipole moment 648.433, number of atoms 960, bonds 974, and number of residues 98 in residue segment A. The energy was found 25850 KJ/Mol by Avogadro software.

Figure 1

3D Structure of 5TRF Protease from Homo Sapiens



Reference: RCSB, PDB, (Wang *et al.*, 2014)

Calculation Procedure: Avogadro Software

The “.sdf” file format was opened and hydrogen atoms and bonds were checked. Avogadro Software was used here as a cross-platform molecular editor 3D-visualization design. Which gave flexible, high-quality rendering and strong plugin architecture (Hanwell *et al.*, 2012). Water molecules were removed from the protein, ligands were removed, and ions or other molecules were eliminated from the structure. The pH was adjusted to 7.4. The software examined hydrogen atoms and bonds in protein structure. The energy of the protein and ligand was minimized through molecular mechanics DFT (Fonseca & Fleming, 1998). The target was prepared then the clean protein was exported as “5TRF_Clean.pbd”. The file was further saved as “5TRF_Clean.pbdqt”.

Preparation of ligands: PubChem

The literature review has shown that more than ten bioactive compounds from *Withania somnifera* have anti-carcinogenic properties. PubChem database

shows that the active compound in (Sdf) with their ID as WithaferinA (PubChem ID: 155887202), WithanolideA (PubChem ID: 11294368), Withasomnine (PubChem ID: 442877), WithanosideIV (PubChem ID: 71312551), WithanolideD (PubChem ID: 161671), WithalongolideA (PubChem ID: 56649343), WithanosideIV (PubChem ID: 91827019), Withanolide (PubChem ID: 53477765), Anaferine (PubChem ID: 443143), Tropanol (PubChem ID: 4824), Anahygrin (PubChem ID: 36762693), WithanolideE (PubChem ID: 301751), WithanolideB (PubChem ID: 14236711), Cuscohygrin (PubChem ID:1201543). A power shell command was issued to convert 'pdb' into 'pddqt' file format. In working directory following command was issued for the conversion of 'pdb' file format into 'pddqt'.

prepare_ligand -l .\Ligand.pdb -o .\Ligand.pdbqt

prepare_ligand -l .\WithaferinA.pdb -o .\WithaferinA.pdbqt

prepare_ligand -l .\WithanolideA.pdb -o .\WithanolideA.pdbqt

prepare_ligand -l .\Withasomnine.pdb -o .\Withasomnine.pdbqt

prepare_ligand -l .\WithanosideIV.pdb -o .\WithanosideIV.pdbqt

prepare_ligand -l .\Withanolide.pdb -o .\Withanolide.pdbqt

prepare_ligand -l .\WithanolideE.pdb -o .\WithanolideE.pdbqt

prepare_ligand -l .\WithanolideB.pdb -o .\WithanolideB.pdbqt

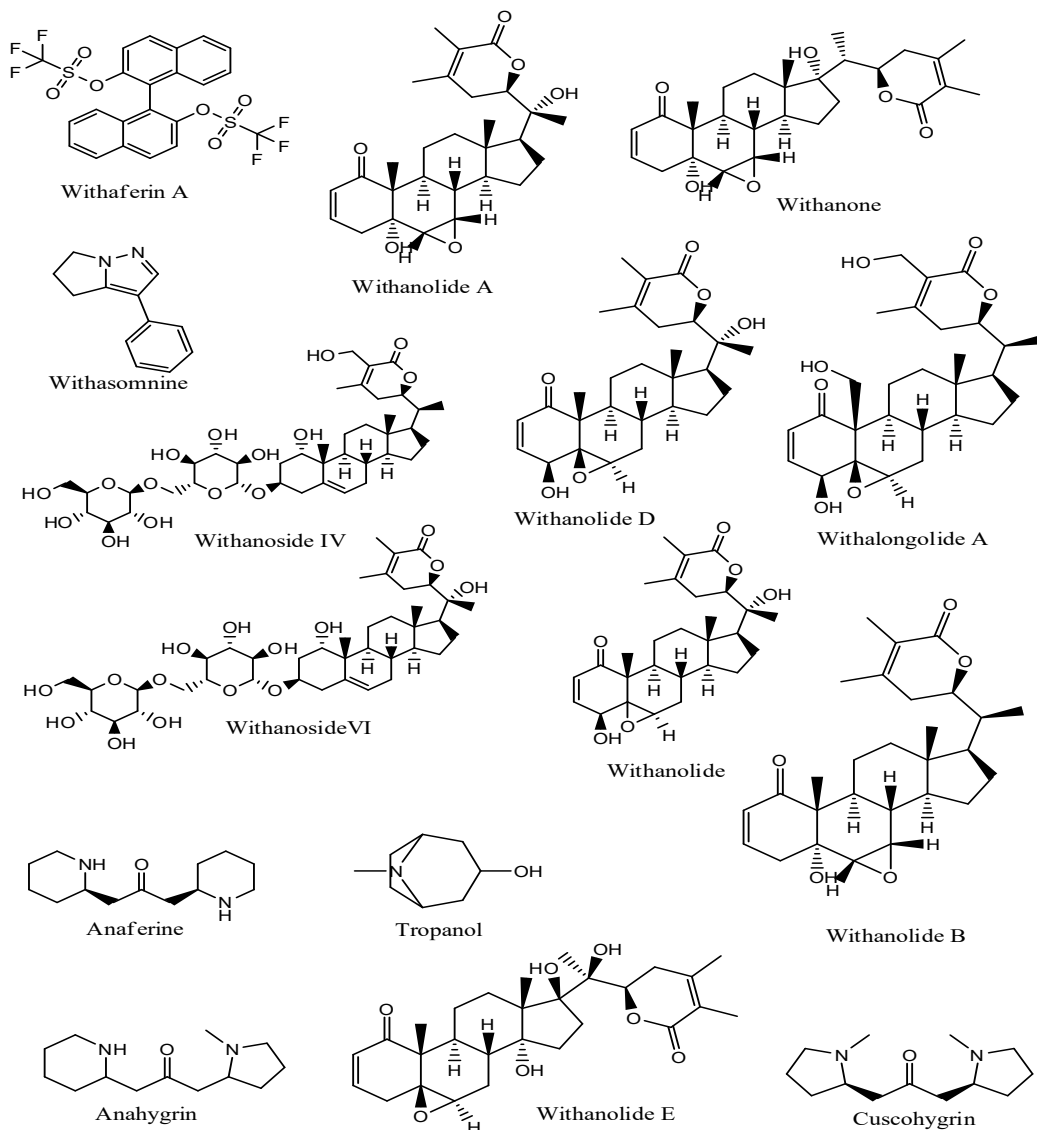
prepare_ligand -l .\Anaferin.pdb -o .\Anaferin.pdb

prepare_ligand -l .\Cuscohygrin.pdb -o .\Cuscohygrin.pdbqt

Withania somnifera is a vital traditional herbal plant. It contains many metabolites, phenols, and antioxidants. Reports have shown that *Withania somnifera* mainly contains bioflavonoids, terpenes, sesquiterpenes, diterpenes esters, triterpenes, steroids, and lignans. The ligands for the docking with 5TRF were chosen through their important anticancerous property. The selected ligands are: WithaferinA, WithanolideA, Withanone, Withasomnine, WithanosideIV, WithanolideD, WithalongolideA, WithanosideVI, WithanolideD, WithalongolideA, WithanosideVI, Withanolide, Anaferine, Tropanol, WithanolideB, Anahygrin, WithanolideE, Cuscohygrin etc.

Figure 2

Chemical Structure of Different Alkaloids and Compounds Found in Withania Somnifera



(Source: RCSB PDB, modified on ChemDraw Ultra 12.0)

ADMET lab 2.0

The toxicity and pharmacokinetics nature of bioactive compounds resists a possible candidacy of the drug. The major criteria like absorption, distribution, metabolism, excretion, and toxicity (ADMET) should be examined before docking

(Xiong et al., 2021). Lipinski's rule of five was tested by inserting canonical SMILES for each ligand and the BBB barrier was observed for all ligands.

Molecular Docking: AGFR 1.2

AGFR is a molecular docking program with flexible receptors and desolvation. Receptor and ligand were loaded on the software in pdbqt format and software was run for all atom types, the pocket was computed (Auto site 1.1). After identifying the active site with AS score, ligand position, and catalytic site were verified by CASTp. A grid box with proper dimension and centering was created by adjusting padding (2.0) and the water map was set with weight and entropy. The target file was generated by taking at least 30 flexible residues. After issuing a command in the power shell, flexible receptor molecular docking began in a hydrated environment. Binding affinity was calculated for each ligand-protein interaction. The command issue for the docking was operated as:

```
adfr -l Ligand.pdbqt -t Protein.trg --jobName flexRes --nbRuns 4 --maxEvals 5000 -O --seed 1
```

```
adfr -l Ligand.pdbqt -t Protein.trg --jobName flexRes --nbRuns 4 --maxEvals 50000 -O --seed 1
```

```
adfr -l WithferinA.pdbqt -t 5TRF_clean.trg --jobName flexRes --nbRuns 4 --maxEvals 50000 -O --seed 1
```

```
adfr -l WithanolideA.pdbqt -t 5TRF_clean.trg --jobName flexRes --nbRuns 4 --maxEvals 50000 -O --seed 1
```

```
adfr -l Withasomnine.pdbqt -t 5TRF_clean.trg --jobName flexRes --nbRuns 4 --maxEvals 50000 -O --seed 1
```

```
adfr -l WithanosideIV.pdbqt -t 5TRF_clean.trg --jobName flexRes --nbRuns 4 --maxEvals 50000 -O --seed 1
```

```
adfr -l Withanolide.pdbqt -t 5TRF_clean.trg --jobName flexRes --nbRuns 4 --maxEvals 50000 -O --seed 1
```

```
adfr -l WithanolideE.pdbqt -t 5TRF_clean.trg --jobName flexRes --nbRuns 4 --maxEvals 50000 -O --seed 1
```

```
adfr -l WithanolideB.pdbqt -t 5TRF_clean.trg --jobName flexRes --nbRuns 4 --maxEvals 50000 -O --seed 1
```

```
adfr -l Anaferin.pdbqt -t 5TRF_clean.trg --jobName flexRes --nbRuns 4 --maxEvals 50000 -O --seed 1
```

```
adfr -l Cuscohygrin.pdbqt -t 5TRF_clean.trg --jobName flexRes --nbRuns 4
--maxEvals 50000 -O --seed 1
```

The lowest possible binding affinities and clusters (DLG file) were chosen for the experiment. The file obtained as Poses “_flexRes_out.pdbqt”. Which was followed by opening PyMOL, the receptor 5TRF_clean.pdbqt and *flexRes_out.pdbqt together loaded, and the best pose as “.pdb” file was saved.

Biovia Discovery Studio 2021

The 2D and 3D protein-ligand interaction was observed in Biovia Discovery studio. The display had shown macromolecule setup, simulation, interaction, pharmacophores, X-ray, etc. The bond distance in each conventional hydrogen bonding and hydrophobic interaction including alkyl and pi-alkyl bonds were analyzed.

CABS-flex 2.0

Protein structure fluctuation was observed in CABS-flex 2.0. online server for 10ns. Larger and multimeric proteins 5TRF and heavy ligands distance restrain and simulation including contact maps were analyzed (Kuriata, 2018).

Results and Discussion

Active Site Prediction of Protein: CASTp 3.0 Server

The CASTp 3.0 server was used to predict active sites in the protein. It was found that after removing water molecules, ions, metals, and unnecessary residue proteins become free for docking with active alkaloids. The protein volume was found 1220.906 Å³ and its surface area was found to be 1785.909 Å² with a resolution of 2.10 Å. After removing B, C, and D residue from the main protease, chain A contains 109 residues and the predicted active site in protein was found to contain AA residue 22.

Table 2

Active Site Prediction for Targeted Protein 5TRF with CASTp 3.0 Server

Protein	Volume (SA) Å ³	Area (SA) Å ²	Resolution Å	Total AA residue in Chain A	AA residue at the predicted active site
5TRF	1220.906	1785.909	2.10	109	22

Lipinski's Rule of Five: Screening of drug-like properties in ADMET Lab 2.0

Physiochemical properties of ligands were studied through the selection and screening of active alkaloids in ADMET Lab 2.0. Only eleven bioactive compounds were selected. The properties of ligands like molecular weight, volume, and density are determined from the SMILES string. The number of Hydrogen bond acceptors (nHA), number of Hydrogen bond donors (nHD), number of rotatable bonds (nRot), Number of rings (nRing), MaxRing, number of heteroatom (nHet), fChar, Topological polar surface (TPSA), Logarithm of aqueous solubility value (LogS), Water distribution coefficient at 7.4 pH and Caco-2-permeability were determined before testing Lipinski's Rule of five.

Molecular Weight(MW) ≤ 500

LogP (n-Octanol/ water distribution coefficient) ≤ 5

Hacc ≤ 10 and Hdon ≤ 5

No. of Violation $< 2 \rightarrow \text{Green(Acceptable)}$, No. of Violation $\geq 2 \rightarrow \text{Red(Rejectable)}$
(Lipinski 2004)

Table 3

Physiochemical Properties of Bioactive Compounds from Withania Somnifera

Compound Name	M.Wt. < 500	nHD < 5	nHA < 10	Log P < 5	Max Ring	HIA	LogS > -5	Caco-2 (cm/m)	Carcinogenicity	Lipinski Rule	Violation
Withaferin A	470.27	2	6	3.190	18	---	4.204	-5.023	+	Accepted	No
Withanolide A	470.27	2	6	3.445	18	---	-4.475	-4.745	++	Accepted	No
Withasomnine	184.10	0	2	2.955	8	---	-2.965	-4.517	++	Accepted	No
Withanoside IV	782.41	9	15	1.345	17	+++	-3.361	-6.291	+	Rejected	Yes
Withanolide D	470.27	3	6	3.524	18	---	-4.440	-4.826	++	Accepted	No
Withalongolide A	470.27	2	6	3.198	18	-	-4.204	-	+	Accepted	No
Withanolide	470.27	2	6	3.620	18	---	-4.469	-4.846	++	Accepted	No
Anaferine	224.19	2	3	0.300	6	--	-0.491	-5.425	--	Accepted	No
Withanolide E	486.26	3	7	2.140	18	---	-4.479	-5.254	+++	Accepted	No
Withanolide B	454.27	1	5	5.100	18	-	4.642	-	-	Accepted	No
Cuscohygrin	508.04	0	3	-2.329	5	-	0.341	-5.818	++	Accepted	No

Lipinski's rule of five was applied to each alkaloid from *Withania somnifera*. For the analysis of drug-like properties, ligands should not violate more than five categories. The molecular weight of Cuscohygrin was 508.05 which is the highest of all alkaloids taken and a minimum molecular weight was found for Withasomnine. All the alkaloids were suitable for docking though they have high molecular weight and were found in the acceptable range between 100~600. The Number of Hydrogen bond acceptors should be in the range of 0~7 and all the chosen ligands have nHD

from 0~7 except WithanosideIV. The maximum ring for each alkaloid found in the range 5~18 that obeys the soft rule to be drunk-like properties. The logarithm of the aqueous solubility Log(S) value should be > -5. For the considerable dissolution of drugs in the solvent its value should be in the range of -4 to 0.5Log(Mol/L).

All the selected alkaloids except WithaferinA and WithanolideD do not show this property but the remaining criteria are sufficient for them to be considered as drug-like ligands. Out of eleven ligands screened from ADMET lab 2.0, eight ligands are selected for docking with the 5TRF database protein (Lipinski, 2004).

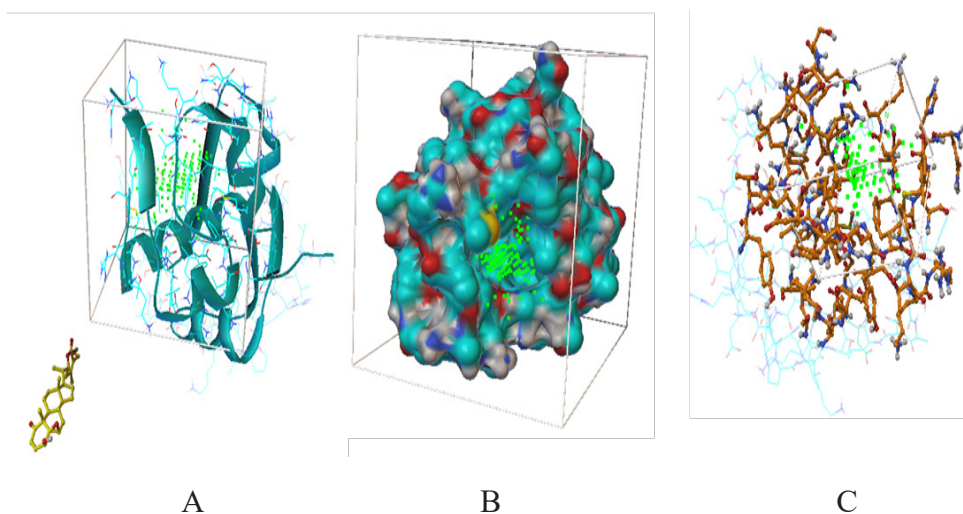
Molecular Docking

The scoring result has shown that the active alkaloid extracted from *Withania somnifera* has a strong binding affinity with significant scores. Table 3. Shows the different binding energy of protein-ligand complex. The binding affinity of 5TRF with WithanolideD (-10.1Kcal/mol), Withanolide (-10.0 Kcal/mol), WithaferinA (-9.9 Kcal/mol), WithalongolideA (-9.4Kcal/mol), WithanolideB (-9.4 Kcal/mol), WithanolideE (-9.4Kcal/mol), WithanolideA (-9.0 Kcal/mol), Withanone (-8.9 Kcal/mol). Performing search for all the scores were obtained at 12 GA evolutions with 500000 maxEvals each. The 5TRF-Withanolide has box parameter in AGFR1.1 shown for center X: -6.917, Y: 25.094, Z: 17.875 and Size X: 32.350, Y: 36.750, Z: 36.750, spacing 0.375, smoothing 0.500 and AS score point 122. Out of 50 flexible residues only 30 were selected in the docking box: A: VAL14, THR16, SER17, GLN18, ILE19, GLN24, LEU34, VAL41, GLU52, VAL53, LEU54, PHE55, LEU57, GLE59, ILE61, MET62, THR63, ARG65, TYR67, VAL57, PHE91, VAL93, LYS94, HIS96, AR97, ILE99, TYR100, MET102, ILE103. Figure 'A' shows the docking box and binding pockets fill points, 'B' shows 'trg map gui' with receptor surface, and 'C' shows receptors in padding 2.

Figure 3

trg for 5TRF-WithanolideA complex in AGFR 1.1

- A. Centre view of docking box showing possible active sites for the interaction with ligand in cartoon model.
- B. 3D box showing receptor surface in docking box
- X. Selected padding showing ligand binding pocket with ligand around the center of small docking box.

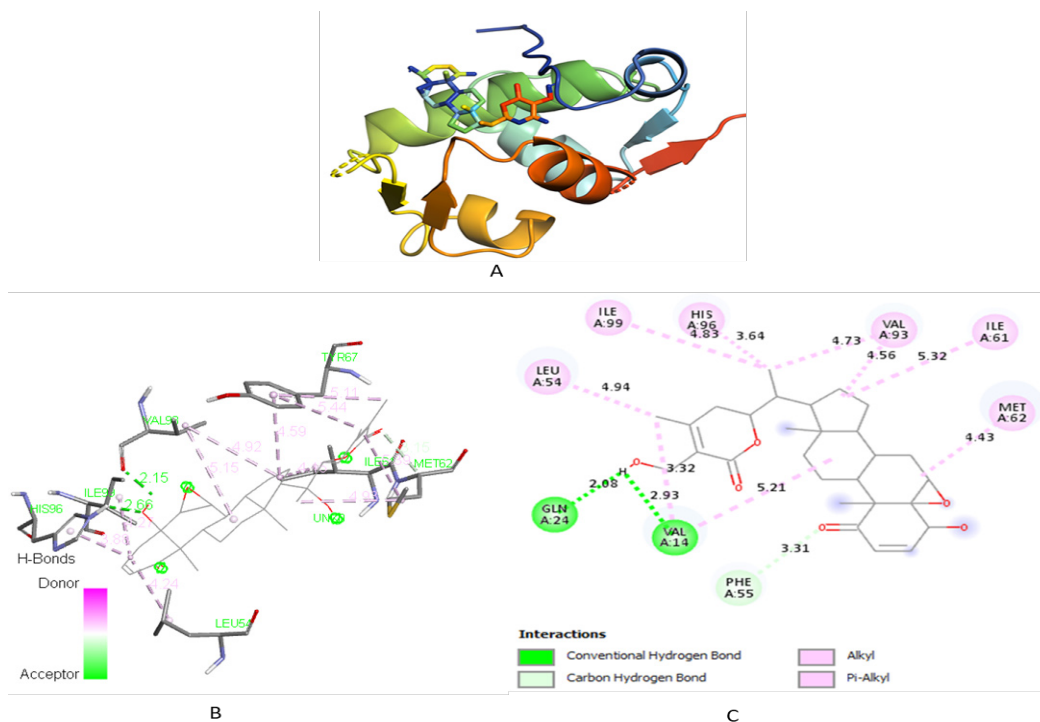


The 5TRF-WithaferinA has box parameters shown for center X: -9.917, Y: 17.597, Z: 21.875 and Size X: 32.350, Y: 23.250, Z: 22.500, spacing 0.375, smoothing 0.500 and AS score point 296.38, 72 points exactly. It has RadGyr 5.50 and buriedness 0.85 lies on the box. Out of 50 flexible residues, only 29 were selected in the box: A: THR10, ASP11, VAL14, THR15, THR16, SER17, GLN18, ILE19, GLN24, LEU34, LEU37, LEU38, VAL41, TYR48, THR49, MET50, LYS51, GLU52, VAL53, LEU54, PHE55, TYR56, LEU57, GLN59, TYR60, ILE61, MET62, THR63, LYS64, ARG65, TYR67, GLN72, HIS73, ILE74, VAL75, LEU82, LEU85, PHE86, PHE91, SER92, VAL93, LYS94, HIS96, ARG97, LYS98, ILE99, TYR100, MET102, ILE103, ASN106. The protein-ligand complex has a water map setting in weight 0.60 and entropy -0.20. The computational setup for AGFR 1.1 for all selected ligand-protein was the same.

Figure 4

Molecular docking of 5TRF protein with WithaferinA,

- A. 3D structure of 5TRF(MDM2) protease from *Homo sapiens* showing, C and N-terminal docked with WithaferinA.
- B. 2D interaction diagram of WithaferinA with 5TRF showing very strong hydrogen bonding 2.08\AA with GLN A:24 and 2.93\AA bond distance with VAL A:14 protein residue.
- X. Protein-ligand interaction and their distances showing hydrogen bonding.



2D and 3D representations of 5TRF-WithaferinA represent six conventional hydrogen bonds. Hydrogen bondings are formed in : UNK0:H - A: VAL14:O with bond distance 2.92672Å, DHL 103.08 and HAY 116.792, : UNK0:H - A: GLN24:OE1 with bond distance 2.084Å, DHA 130.088 and HAY 150.565, A: HIS96:HE2 - A: VAL93:O interaction forms conventional hydrogen bonding with bond distance 2.207Å, DHA 123.809 and HAY 151.54. Similarly, the A: ILE99:HN - A: HIS96:O interaction has a bond distance of 2.207Å, DHA 117.241 and HAY 90.126. :UNK0:H - A:VAL14:O interaction gives bond distance 2.926Å with DHA 103.08 and HAY 116.792. : UNK0:H - A: GLN24:OE1 interaction gives conventional hydrogen bonding with bond distance 2.084, DHA 130.088, and HAY 150.565. The hydrophobic alkyl and pi-alkyl bonds are also significantly interacted in A: VAL14 - : UNK0, A: VAL93 - : UNK0, : UNK0 - A: MET62, : UNK0:C - A: VAL93, : UNK0:C - A: ILE99, : UNK0:C - A: VAL14, : UNK0:C - A: LEU54, A: HIS96 - : UNK0:C. Similarly, the pi-Alkyl bond was seen in A: HIS96: UNK0:C with a bond distance of 3.64Å.

Figure 5

Molecular docking of 5TRF protein with WithanolideD,

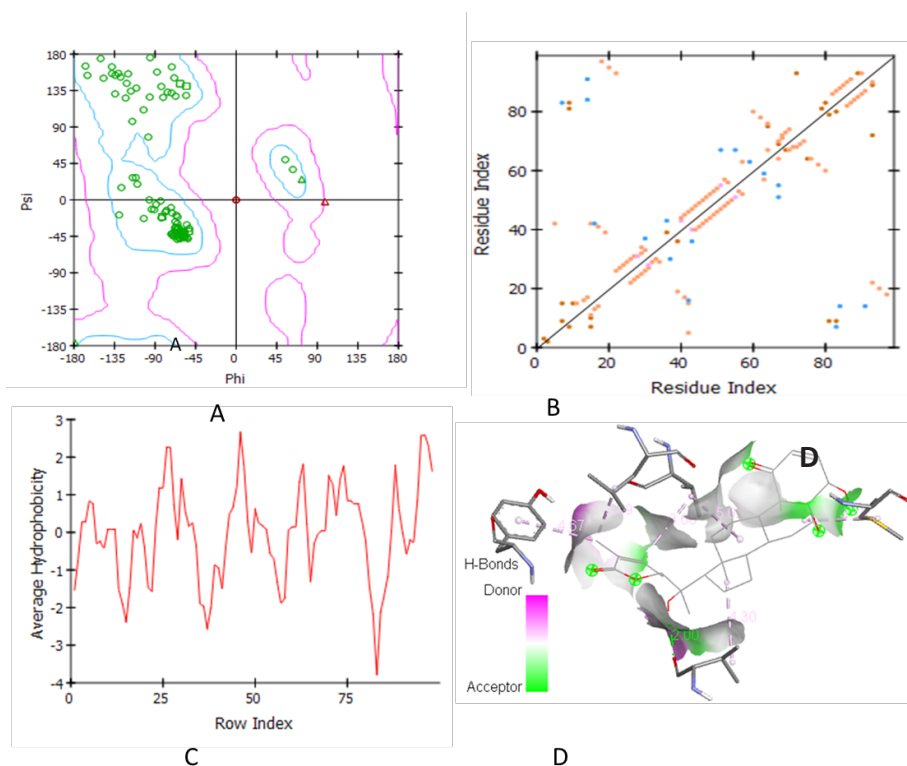
A. Ramachandran plot showing stereochemical property of 5TRF(MDM2)-

WithanolideD showing Phi(ϕ) vs Psi(ψ) in polypeptide linkage, the highest dot density shows allowed energy region

B. *Hydrogen bonding contact plot.*

X. *Five residue average running hydrophobicity vs residue index.*

Δ . *3D interaction diagram of WithanolideD with 5TRF showing very strong hydrogen bonding 2.0Å bond distance with protein.*



2D diagram for receptor-ligand for 5TRF-WithanolideD has shown single but stable hydrogen bonding UNK0:H - A:VAL93:O. The interaction has a distance of 2.0034Å. It is a conventional hydrogen bond with angle DHA 164.042 and angle HAY 117.08. Alkyl and pi-alkyl bonds are distinctly seen in A:VAL14 - :UNK0 with bond distance 5.02036Å, A:VAL93 - :UNK0 with bond distance 4.30426Å, :UNK0 - A:MET62 with bond distance 4.15207, A:UNK0:C - A:LEU54 with bond distance 3.89433, :UNK0:C - A:VAL14 with bond distance 3.59888Å and A:TYR100 - :UNK0:C with bond distance 4.66782.

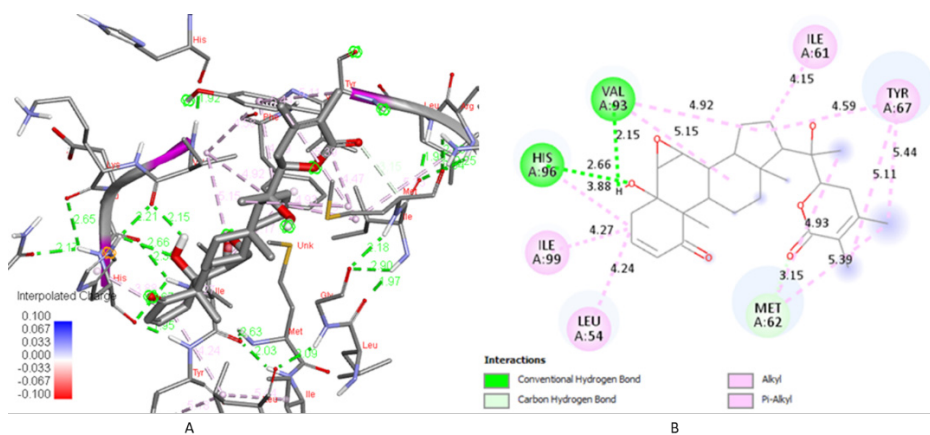
5TRF-WithanolideE interaction shows conventional single but very strong and stable hydrogen bonding. The interaction between UNK0:H1 - A: VAL93:O

shows a 1.774Å bond distance, DHA 178.456 and HAY 132.7. The hydrophobic interaction between protein and ligand is prominent in the 5TRF-WithanolideE complex. The alky bondings are: UNK0 - A:LEU54, UNK0:C14 - A:ILE61, :UNK0:C25 - A:LEU54, :UNK0:C27 - A:VAL14, and the least possible bond distance has shown by A:VAL14 - :UNK0 with distance 4.207Å. The pi-alkyl interaction was found in A:PHE55 - :UNK0, A:TYR100 - :UNK0:C25, and A:TYR100 - A:LEU54. The stable and strong interaction of protein-ligand interaction reveals the stability in the docked complex.

Figure 6

Molecular Docking of 5TRF Protein with WithanolideA

- A. 3D structure of 5TRF (MDM2) protease with WithanolideA, showing interpolated charge in the complex.
- B. 2D interaction diagram of Withanolide with 5TRF showing very strong hydrogen bonding 2.15Å and 2.66Å bond distance with protein, and Protein-ligand interaction and their bond distances with carbon hydrogen bond, alkyl and pi-alkyl bond



5TRF database protein was docked in AGFR 1.1 revealing the the highest docking score with WithanolideD and the free energy change was found to be -10.1 KCalMol⁻¹. The last docking score -6 KCalMol⁻¹ was obtained by Withasomnine. Similarly, the docking score for Withanolide (-10.0 KCalMol⁻¹), WithaferinA (-9.9 KCalMol⁻¹), WithanolideB (-9.5 KCalMol⁻¹), wwithalongolideA (-9.4 KCalMol⁻¹), WithanolideE (-9.4 KCalMol⁻¹), WithanolideA (-9.0 KCalMol⁻¹), and Withanone (-8.9 KCalMol⁻¹) with highest docking score and the most stable conventional hydrogen bonding. The WithanolideA, WithaferinA, and WithanolideE are possible inhibitors

in MDM2-p53 interaction against the mutant growth of cancerous tumors in *Homo sapiens*.

Table 4

List of Bioactive Chemicals with Binding Energy

Ligand	Withanolide D	Withanolide	Withaferin A	Withanolide B	Withalongoide A	Withanolide E	Withanolide A	Withanone	Withasomnine
Free energy (K Cal Mol ⁻¹)	-10.1	-10.0	-9.9	-9.5	-9.4	-9.4	-9.0	-8.9	-6.0

Targeted protein 5TRF(A) formed very stable and strong conventional hydrogen bonding. WithaferinA interacts with residue GLA A: 24 with a bond distance of 2.08Å and with residue VAL A: 14 with a bond distance of 2.92Å. Similarly, WithanolideA formed two hydrogen bonds with residue Val A: 93 having a bond distance of 2.15Å and HIS A: 96 forming a bond distance of 2.66Å. WithanolideD formed hydrogen bonding with residue VAL A: 93 with a bond distance of 2.15Å, and with HIS A: 96 with a bond distance of 2.66Å. WithanolideE also forms very stable hydrogen bonding with interactin residue VAL A: 93 having a bond distance of 1.77Å. High docking scores and strong hydrogen bonding of WithanolideA, WithanolideD, WithanolideE, and WithaferinA explore the possibility of the drug against the growth of the tumor.

Hydrogen bonding and its stability is a major parameter for the characterization of protein-ligand complex (Panigrahi et al., 2007). It affects the topological polar surface area (TPSA) of the complex, water distribution coefficient, LogS, and LogP (Ali et al., 2012). Their variation in the ligand/protein/complex significantly affects the hydrophobic binding of macromolecules, plasma protein, and enzyme activity. Maintaining hydrogen bonding in the long run of time is challenging and the fluctuation considerably reduces the chance of being selected as a drug. Table 4. Shows the stable hydrogen bonding of 5TRF targeted protein with Withanolide, WithanolideE, WithanolideD, WithanolideA, and WithafrinA.

Table 5

Interacting Amino Acid Residues of Targeted 5TRF Protein with Selected Bioactive Compounds

Targeted Protein	Bioactive compounds	Number of Hydrogen bonding	Interacting residue	Distance (Å)
5TRF(A)	Withaferin A	2	GLN A: 24	2.08,
			VAL A:14	2.93
	Withanolide A	2	VAL A: 93,	2.15,
			HIS A: 96	2.66
	Withasomnine	2	VAL A: 93,	2.15,
			HIS A: 96	2.66
	Withanolide D	2	VAL A: 93,	2.15,
			HIS A: 96	2.66
	Withalongolide A	2	MET A: 62,	2.75,
			VAL A: 14	2.05
	Withanolide	1	VAL A: 93	2.00
	Withanolide E	1	VAL A: 93	1.77
			VAL A: 93	1.91,
	Withanolide B	3	TYR A: 67	2.34,
			LEU A: 66	2.96
	Withasone	1	GLY A: 58	2.92

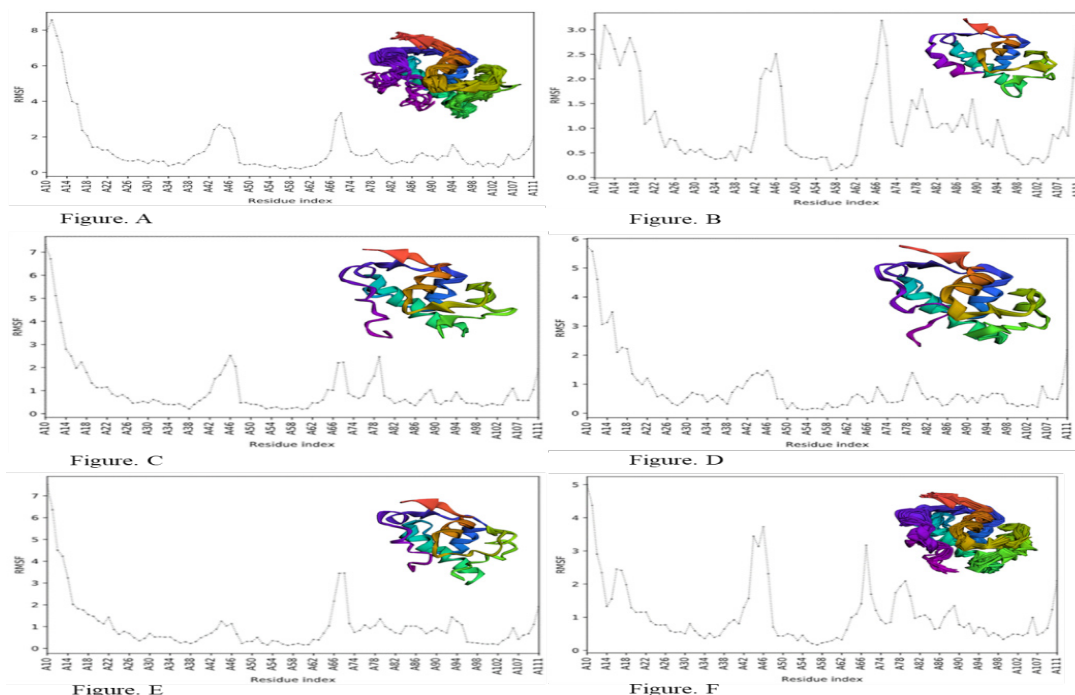
RMSF plots: CABS-flex 2.0

The flexibility of the protein-ligand structure is analyzed by the simulation modeling from the CABS-flex 2.0 online server. Protein dynamics obtained from the curve nearly correlate with high-resolution NMR. The aggregation propensity of protein is determined by the RMSF curve which shows the stable complex for all. Dynamic properties of the donor-acceptor complex were analyzed in RMSF in 10ns. RMSF values for all complexes were < 4Å which indicates the less flexible complex in the given circumstances. The RMSF values for the 5TRF-WithanolideA, 5TRF-Withasomnine, 5TRF-WithanolideA, 5TRF-Withanolide, 5TRF-Withalongolide, 5TRF-WithanolideE are 3.2, 3.1, 2.2, 1.3, 3.5, 3.7nm, respectively. The results reveal

that up to 10ns protein-ligand complex does not change its configuration and remains intact in structure and stability.

Figure 7

RMSF plot showing RMSF vs Residue index for 10ns obtained from CABS-flex 2.0 5TRF-WithanolideA B. 5TRF-Withasomnine C. 5TRF-WithanolideA D. 5TRF-WithanolideD E. 5TRF-Withalongolide F. 5TRF-WithanolideE

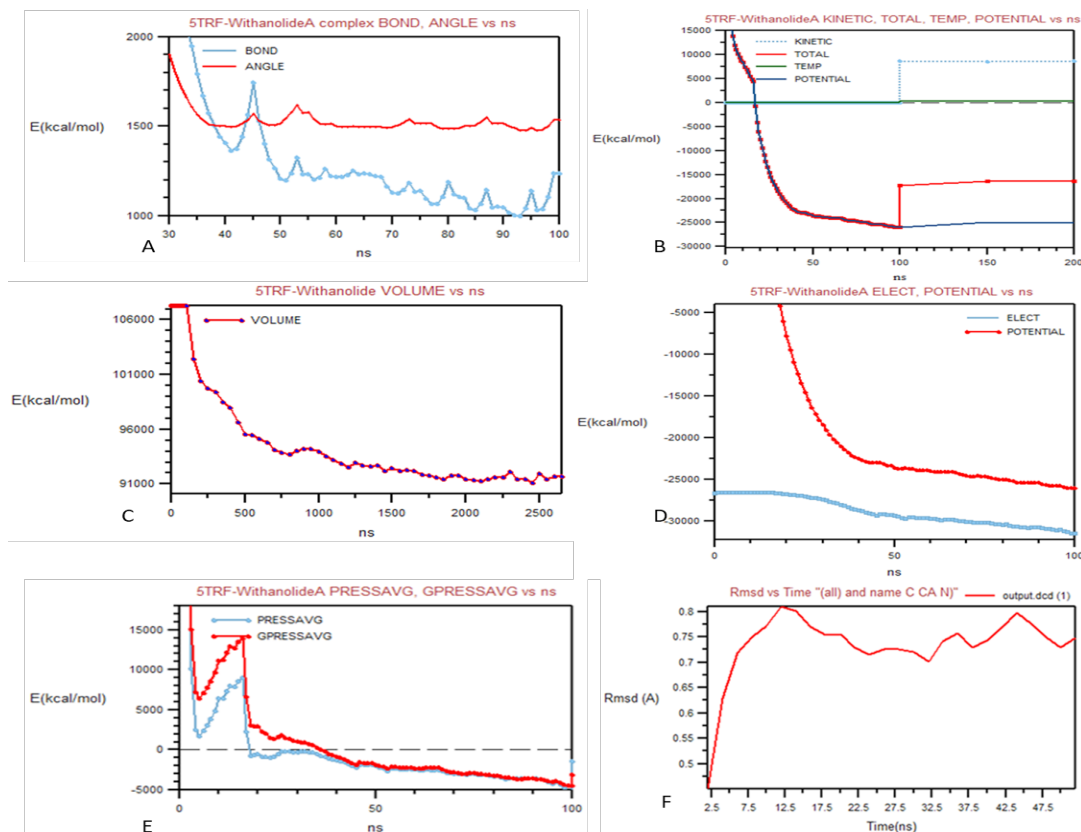


Molecular Dynamics: VMD 1.9.4a53

Figure 8(A) shows bond energy and bond angle vs TS(ns). At high temperatures, bonds are thermally stable which implies that the hydrogen bonds are not broken and possess energy around 1500Kcal/mol up to 100ns. Bond angles are stable with energy 1500Kcal/mol in the applied parameters. In 40ns, bond energy is abruptly increased but its effect is not seen in angle conformation. Bond angle calculation has shown that the 5TRF-WithanolideA complex possesses a bond distance of 2.149Å, angle DHA 105.202, and angle HAY 125.69 in UNK0 H-A: VAL93:O and interaction in A: HIS96:HE2-UNK0:O forms bond distance of 2.66Å, DHA 94.463 and HAY 92.783. Bond energy and bond length are unchanged which shows the formation of a stable complex conformation in a given time frame (Chang et al., 2007).

Figure 8

Molecular Dynamics for the 5TRF-WithanolideA complex(VMD 1.9.4a53, NAMD plots) generated by Dell i5-11th gen 16GB DDR4RAM, 512 NVME SSD, 2.90GHz, GSST, MU.



The thermal stability of the protein-ligand complex is analyzed from its kinetic, potential, and total energy variation in the time frame shown in Figure 8(B). The Kinetic, Potential energy, and total energy vs TS(ns) for 5TRF-WithanolideA complex shows high kinetic energy around 75000 -10000Kcal/mol at 100ns. The potential energy of the complex was obtained at around -375000 to - 42500Kcal/mol. The low potential energy minimizes total energy in the system as a result average or total energy for the complex becomes -18500Kcal/mol while operating the molecular dynamics up to 200ns. The molecular dynamics result reveals that kinetic energy increases in the complex for a given time frame but strong interaction stabilizes its energy as a result complex becomes intact.

Volume vs TS(ns) for 5TRF-WithanolideA, the entropy of the complex increased with increased energy continuously up to 2500TS frame, Figure 8(C).

Though the entropy of the docked complex was kept constant at around 0.2 in AGFR1.1, the volume of the complex decreased constantly within the given time frame with decreased temperature. Electrostatic, Potential vs TS(ns) shows that electrostatic and field potential dropped sharply up to 100 TS(ns), in Pressure, Gpressavg vs TS(ns), in Figure 8(E) Pressure increases abnormally at 10ns but continuously decreases in the shown time frame, gpressavg shows high fluctuation energy below zero at the given circumstances up to 100TS(ns). Figure 8(F) shows RMSD vs Time(ns), RMSD was found in the range 0.7-0.8Å

Conclusion

In the present research work, *in silico* approach is applied to search for potential inhibitors against the MDM2-P53 interaction. Bioactive alkaloids from *Withania somnifera* are screened from ADMET prediction following Lipinski's rule of five gave a successful result. Lipinski's rule of five confirms the nature of the promising drug-like quality of alkaloids through canonical SMILES verification for each ligand. Only drug-like candidates are selected for docking with the protein that gave the highest docking score. Molecular docking has shown that eight different active alkaloids are effective with the highest docking score, WithanolideD (−10.0 Kcal/mol), Withanolide (−10.0 Kcal/mol), WithaferinA (−9.9Kcal/mol), WithanolideB (−9.5 Kcal/mol), WithalongolideA (−9.4 Kcal/mol), WithanolideE (−9.4 Kcal/mol), WithanolideA (−9.0 Kcal/mol), Withanone (−8.9 Kcal/mol). The most stable hydrogen bonding is shown by WithalongolideA with VAL A:14 (2.05 Å bond distance), WithaferinA with GLN A:24(2.05 Å) and WithanolideE with VAL A:93 (1.77 Å). The strong and stable hydrogen bonding with bond distance < 2Å protein-ligand interaction is considered a potential inhibitor which is shown by Withaferin, WithanolideA, WithanolideD, WithanolideE, and Withanone. So, these alkaloids become the possible candidates to inhibit MDM2-P53 interaction. Molecular Dynamics of protein-ligand complex reveals that docked complexes are thermally stable. Their structural conformation has not changed up to 100ns time frame. 5TRF and WithanolideA complex shows stable bonds below 1500Kcal/mol and distinct bond angle below 1000Kcal/mol up to 100ns. RMSD, RMSF plot is used to analyze the stability of complex which shows that WithanolideA forms a very strong and stable hydrogen bonding without fluctuation in the given time frame. Molecular docking, simulation, and dynamic of different alkaloids from *Withania somnifera* are found to be potential inhibitors against MDM2-p53 interaction, which profounds the possibility of drug-like properties of the complex to expand further investigation in the direction against tumor growth.

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Performance of Wheat Genotypes under Irrigated Conditions in Far Western Terai of Nepal

Devraj Rajbanshi, Raksha Sharma, Binod Bohara, Sangita Gaha Magar, Ganesh Sharma

Faculty of Agriculture, Far Western University, Nepal

Corresponding Author: Raksha Sharma; **Email:** agr.fwu.2020@gmail.com

Abstract

Wheat, the most important food crop in terms of food and nutrition security in Nepal, production could not meet the demand of growing population due to limited use of high yielding variety and use of inappropriate variety in the context of increasing heat stress during ripening. For assessing the performance of different wheat genotypes, this study was carried out during November 2022 to April 2023 at Agronomy Farm of Far Western University, Kailali, Nepal. The study was designed in Randomized complete block design (RCBD) with three replications. Eleven genotypes with nine Nepal lines and two Bhairhawa lines were evaluated and compared with a popular variety, Vijay for their performance at Tikapur condition. The result revealed the highest grain yield from NL 1506, recording 3.36 t/ha, which was statistically at par with NL 1452, NL 1488 and BL 5116 at 5% level of significance. The popular variety Vijay yielded only 3.02 t/ha which was statistically at par with NL 1638, but was inferior to NL 1450. Statistically poor performance was observed in the genotypes NL 1445 and BL 4984.

Keywords: Effective tiller, grain diameter, phenology, yield attributes

Introduction

Wheat (*Triticum aestivum* L.), a major food crop belonging to Poaceae family provides sufficient calories as well as huge amount of protein to majority of people across the globe. It is the key staple food crop in more than 40 countries in the world (Shiferaw et al., 2013; Chaves et al., 2013), grown over 219153830 ha land,



which produced 808441568.18 tons in the year 2022 (FAOSTAT, 2024). This crop is important both in terms of food and nutrient security, as wheat grains contain 14.7% protein, 78.10% carbohydrates, 2.1% fat, sufficient amount of thiamine, vitamin B, zinc, iron, selenium and magnesium as well as dietary fibres (Kumar et al., 2011; Velu et al., 2015). In Nepal, it is third important cereal crop of Nepal after rice and maize in terms of area and production, occupying 20.56% of total area under cereals making 19.9% of the total cereal production. Wheat crop alone contributed 5.67% to the total AGDP of the country during the year 2022 (MoALD, 2023).

Despite significant contribution of wheat to Nepal and Nepali people, the production and productivity is low in most of the wheat growing districts. Wheat crop faces several issues like improper water and nutrient management, delayed sowing and increased insect-pest infestations with severe changes in weather pattern during the growing seasons as has been observed in Tikapur. Similarly, wheat varieties perform poorly in rain fed condition than irrigated, given the similar inputs (Sayar et al., 2005). Most of these issues could be addressed by replacing the current low yielding varieties with high yielding appropriate varieties (Prasai & Shrestha, 2015), and providing sufficient irrigation during the critical growth stages at different locations, as the water requirement of wheat crop is 266.9-500mm, which is higher than other crops including maize (Deo et al., 2017). Also, more than 75% of wheat growing area in the terai region is irrigated, and hence the evaluation of genotypes under irrigated environment is important to suggest the suitable high yielding varieties for improving production and productivity of wheat.

More than 60% of wheat in Nepal is produced from terai region (Subedi et al., 2020), and Kailali is one of the major wheat growing terai district, where it is grown in over 34944 ha land. Also considered as wheat super zone of Nepal, Kailali district produced 125252 mt in the year 2021/22 (MoALD, 2023) with the productivity of 3.58t/ha, which is quite higher than other districts of Far Western Province. Owing to the use of popular varieties like Vijay, NL971, Aaditya, Gautam and some other Indian varieties, this district performed better (Yadav et al., 2022). But in the context of increasing cold waves during winter and heat stress during the ripening period, there is still the room for improving the productivity of wheat through testing new varieties and evaluating the genotypes for their performance at different locations.

Methods and Procedures

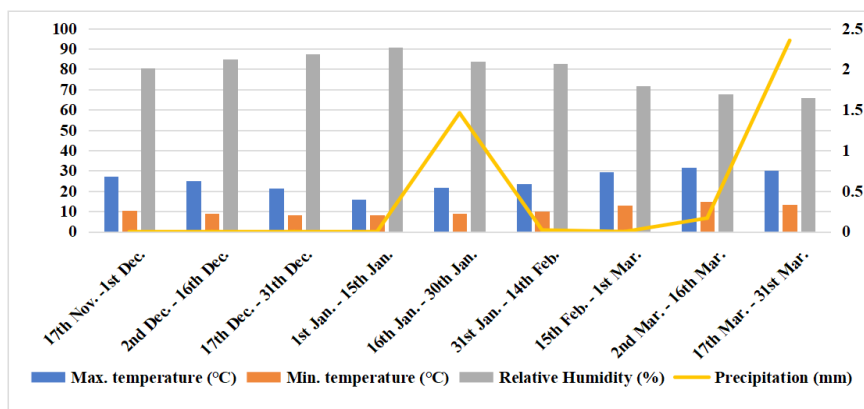
Experimental Site

The study was conducted at Agronomy farm of Far Western University, Faculty of Agriculture Science during the month of November 2022 to April 2023

in Tikapur, Kailali. This place is located in Sudurpaschim Province of Nepal at an elevation of 158 meter above sea level (masl), with geographical coordinates, 28°31'30" North and 81°07'15" East, which falls in the tropical zone. The site had sandy loam soil with pH 6.6 with 1.45 % organic matter content, 0.07 % nitrogen, 17.49 kg/ha phosphorous and 108 kg/ha potassium. The site received a total of 46.05 mm rainfall during the experimental period, with the highest precipitation of 23.1mm at maturity stage as shown in figure 1. The average maximum temperatures during the experimental period were 38.7°C and minimum was 23.11°C; experienced the lowest temperature of 16.5°C during germination stage and the highest reaching 40.51°C at maturity stage.

Figure 1

Weather Condition of the Study Site during the Experimental Period (November 2022 -March, 2023)



Planting Materials

For studying, eleven genotypes (nine NL line and two BL lines) of wheat and a popular variety among the farmers of Tikapur, i.e. Vijay was taken as check in the experiment. All the planting materials were obtained from Regional Agriculture Research Station, NARC, Khajura.

Experimental Design

All the planting materials (genotypes and check variety) were arranged randomly in each replication. The experiment was done in RCBD (Randomized Complete Block Design) with three replications. The total area of the experimental area was 504 m² with each plot size 8 m² and each replication was maintained at 1m. The distance between each plot was maintained at 0.5 m.

Cultural Practices

Seeds were sown continuously in rows spaced at 25 cm @ 120 kg/ha. The chemical fertilizers were applied @120:50:50 NPK kg/ha, one third nitrogen and full dose of phosphorus and potassium were used as basal application and remaining two third was applied during tillering and anthesis period. Irrigation was applied four times i.e., at tillering, booting, anthesis and grain filling stages.

Data Collection

Data pertaining plant height (PH) and tiller number were recorded at frequent interval and at harvest. Observations were also made on days to heading (DH), days to anthesis (DA), days to senescence (DS), and days to maturity (DM) for each of the genotypes and check variety of wheat. Plant heights were taken from randomly selected 10 plants, days to heading was recorded when 50 percent of the plant population showed visible spikes whereas days to anthesis was recorded when 50 percent plant spikes showed yellow flower. and days to senescence was recorded when 50 percent plant populations' flag leaf dried up. Similarly, days to maturity was recorded, when the seeds produced cracking sound when placed between the teeth. The distance between flag leaf and the base of the spike was considered as peduncle length and length of the spike was measured from base of the spike to the tip of the spike. Yield attributing traits like spike length, grains per spike, and 1000 grain weight were recorded from randomly selected plants, at the time of harvest whereas grain yield and straw yield were taken from 1 m² area for each of the genotypes and check variety of wheat.

Statistical Analysis

MS Excel 2007 was used for Data entry, processing, correlation and regression analysis. Software R studio version 4.3.0., package "doe bioresearch" was used for Analysis of variance (ANOVA) and mean estimation.

Results and Discussion

The results obtained for all the growth and yield parameters are tabulated and discussed under different sections.

Plant Stand

Among the genotypes, NL 1437 showed significantly highest plant stand compared to all the genotypes followed by NL 1638, NL 1503 and Vijay. Plant stand was the lowest in NL 1506, which was only 151.33 per square meter. This indicates the use of higher seed rates for the genotypes, which performed poorly over Vijay.

Table 1

Plantstand and Tiller Count Per Square Meter of Wheat Genotypes at Tikapur, Kailali, 2023

Genotypes	Number of plants	Tillers (60 DAS)	Tillers (80 DAS)	Effective tillers	Tiller sterility %
NL 1638	215.00 ^{ab}	302.66 ^{a-c}	297.00 ^{a-d}	245.33 ^{ab}	17.44 ^{c-e}
NL 1437	219.66 ^a	318.66 ^{ab}	310.00 ^{a-c}	237.66 ^{a-c}	23.29 ^{a-c}
NL 1509	188.66 ^{cd}	283.66 ^{b-d}	273.66 ^{c-e}	214.00 ^{b-e}	21.62 ^{a-d}
NL 1503	200.66 ^{a-c}	295.00 ^{a-c}	316.33 ^{ab}	231.66 ^{bc}	26.13 ^a
NL 1506	151.33 ^g	242.66 ^{de}	228.66 ^f	193.33 ^{de}	15.42 ^{de}
BL 5116	165.33 ^{c-g}	341.66 ^a	325.00 ^a	265.33 ^a	18.14 ^{b-e}
NL 1488	153.66 ^{fg}	234.66 ^{de}	247.33 ^{ef}	187.33 ^e	24.15 ^{ab}
BL 4984	187.00 ^{c-e}	255.66 ^{c-e}	265.00 ^{d-f}	209.00 ^{c-e}	20.67 ^{a-d}
NL 1445	179.66 ^{c-e}	316.00 ^{ab}	309.33 ^{a-c}	238.00 ^{a-c}	23.09 ^{a-c}
NL 1452	178.33 ^{c-e}	283.00 ^{b-d}	270.66 ^{c-f}	224.00 ^{b-d}	17.22 ^{c-e}
NL 1450	176.66 ^{d-f}	271.66 ^{b-e}	275.66 ^{b-e}	220.00 ^{b-d}	20.20 ^{a-e}
Vijay	194.33 ^{b-d}	228.33 ^e	245.33 ^{ef}	210.33 ^{c-e}	14.24 ^e
SEm (\pm)	7.94	17.16	14.50	10.93	2.12
F-test (0.05)	***	**	**	**	*
LSD value	23.29	50.34	42.53	32.06	6.24
CV	7.46	10.57	8.96	8.49	18.31
Grand mean	184.19	281.13	280.33	223	20.13

LSD: Least Significant Difference; CV: Coefficient of Variation; SEm: Standard Error of Mean; *: significant at ≤ 0.05 level of significance; **: significant at ≤ 0.01 level of significance; ***: significant at ≤ 0.001 level of significance; DAS: Days after sowing

Tiller Count

Most of the genotypes tested in the study were quick in showing up the tillers i.e. they formed maximum tillers at 60 DAS, as is observed from the decline in number of tillers during 80 DAS (Table 1). But the genotypes like NL1503, NL1450, BL4984, NL1488 were found to develop the tillers until 80 DAS, similar to the check variety Vijay. The result showed significant increase in number of tillers at both 60 and 80 DAS, with the highest obtained from BL 5116. This genotype (BL 5116) was prolific in bearing both the effective tillers and total number of

tillers, where only 18% tillers were ineffective. The lowest number of tillers was obtained from NL 1506, which also had statistically lesser number of effective tillers. Similarly, the genotypes NL 1506, NL 1488, BL 4958 showed significantly lesser number of effective tillers, when compared with the check variety Vijay. Considering the effective tillers, all the genotypes performed equally or better than Vijay. NL 1503 and BL 1488 had the highest tiller sterility i.e., spike bearing tillers where the lowest. But the check variety Vijay had the highest number of spikes bearing tillers, as is observed from the tiller sterility percentage. NL 1638 had comparatively higher number of effective tillers and relatively lower sterility percentage. Variation in total number of tillers and effective tillers among the genotypes were also reported in several researches (Khan et al., 2021; Siyal et al., 2021), which might be due to the differences in environmental response among the varieties (Rahman et al., 2009). Variation in root architecture and hormonal balances among the genotypes might have impacted the tiller number differently (Nagel et al., 2015; Hodgkinson, 2017)). During tiller formation, the temperature reached 24.98°C, and genotypes might have responded differently to this low temperature. Bos and Neuteboom (1998) reported the effect of temperature and light responses on variation in tiller count.

Table 2

Plant Height of Wheat Genotypes at Tikapur, Kailali, 2023

Genotypes	Plant height (cm)			
	PH (40 DAS)	PH (60 DAS)	PH (80 DAS)	PH FINAL
NL 1638	20.16 ^f	32.66 ^g	64.16 ^f	82.83 ^d
NL 1437	23.90 ^{c-e}	44.00 ^{de}	75.90 ^{b-d}	86.66 ^{b-d}
NL 1509	25.96 ^{a-c}	48.80 ^{bc}	78.53 ^{a-c}	86.43 ^{b-d}
NL 1503	24.40 ^{b-d}	41.00 ^{ef}	70.20 ^c	83.13 ^{cd}
NL 1506	23.13 ^{de}	38.00 ^f	75.26 ^{cd}	86.53 ^{b-d}
BL 5116	21.56 ^{ef}	33.23 ^g	65.50 ^f	90.36 ^{ab}
NL 1488	25.70 ^{a-d}	47.83 ^{b-d}	79.96 ^{ab}	94.26 ^a
BL 4984	26.53 ^{a-c}	50.46 ^{ab}	80.80 ^a	88.23 ^{bc}
NL 1445	26.66 ^{ab}	43.13 ^{de}	72.73 ^{de}	88.80 ^b
NL 1452	26.40 ^{a-c}	45.83 ^{b-d}	77.53 ^{a-c}	86.16 ^{b-d}
NL 1450	24.23 ^{b-e}	45.56 ^{c-e}	78.83 ^{a-c}	87.50 ^{b-d}
Vijay	28.13 ^a	54.06 ^a	79.80 ^{ab}	94.40 ^a

SEm (\pm)	0.93	1.62	1.41	1.82
F-test (0.05)	***	***	***	**
LSD value	2.73	4.76	4.15	5.34
CV	6.54	6.43	3.27	3.58
Grand mean	24.73	43.71	74.93	87.94

LSD: Least Significant Difference; CV: Coefficient of Variation; SEm: Standard Error of Mean; *: significant at ≤ 0.05 level of significance; **: significant at ≤ 0.01 level of significance; ***: significant at ≤ 0.001 level of significance; DAS: Days after sowing

Plant Height

The results showed that plant height increased rapidly in BL 5116 at later growth stages (80DAS), when compared with other genotypes and had significantly taller plants, though smaller than the check variety Vijay, in table 2. Similarly, the genotype NL 1488 was statistically at par with Vijay in showing plant height, which was 94cm at the time of harvest. Significant variation in plant heights were observed among the genotypes tested with the genotype NL 1638 having statistically smallest plant height. Apart from these, BL 5116 performed statistically better than others in plant height, indicating its comparable performance at Tikapur condition. These results are in line with several findings (Poudel et al., 2020; Prasai & Shrestha, 2015), where variation in plant heights were observed among genotypes and varieties. Parents of these genotypes might differ greatly and hence variation in plant heights was observed, which could be used for improving these traits in breeding programs (Ljubicic et al., 2013). Wang et al. (2019) have reported apical dominance in certain wheat genotypes to be responsible for their increased plant heights.

Days to Heading

The study revealed highly significant differences in days to heading among different wheat genotypes, where the check variety Vijay was quick to show heads taking only 77.33 days followed by NL-1509 (80.33 days), NL 1488 (81.33 days) and NL 1450 (81.6 days), as observed in table 3. Similarly, the genotype NL 1638 took higher number of days for heading i.e., 91.00 days. Between Bhairahawa lines used in the study, BL 4984 was quick in heading taking 82.66 days, whereas BL 5116 took nearly 90 days to reach the same stage. The development of grain production per plant was also directly influenced by plant height and days to 50% heading (Anwar et al., 2009). Early maturity varieties are bred to yield optimum during short life cycle (Aljazairi et al., 2014), whereas some varieties extend their vegetative growth for performing better. Stresses related to temperature, nutrient availability, moisture conditions also shorten the time to reach heading and maturity in some varieties (Ihsan et al., 2016), whereas others may be able to tolerate drought

condition (Ali, 2019; Farooq et al., 2011). Garg et al. (2013) has reported cooler temperature increases the grain filling and maturity period.

Days to Anthesis

The days to anthesis in wheat genotypes varied from 82 days to 94.33 days, with a mean of 87.77 days, according to the study, which were statistically significant. Similar to heading, Vijay took statistically lesser number of days to flowering and pollination followed by NL1509 and NL1488 respectively. But the genotype NL-1638 took longer time to reach the anthesis, which was statistically at par with BL5116 followed by NL 1452. But when compared with check variety Vijay, NL 1509 took 2 days more to reach anthesis stage though the difference was 3 days for heading. The days to anthesis varied in line with heading as observed in table 3. The genotypes having longer duration for heading shows delayed anthesis as compared to those with earlier heading, which is in line with research finding (Upadhyaya & Bhandari, 2022).

Table 3

Phenology of Wheat Genotypes at Tikapur, Kailali, 2023

Genotypes	Days to 50% heading	Days to 50% anthesis	Days to 50% senescence	Grain filling period	Days to maturity
NL 1638	91.00 ^a	94.33 ^a	121.33 ^a	27.00 ^g	134.00 ^{ab}
NL 1437	84.00 ^c	87.00 ^{cd}	117.33 ^{d-f}	30.33 ^{de}	130.33 ^{d-f}
NL 1509	80.33 ^f	84.00 ^f	115.66 ^f	31.66 ^{b-c}	128.33 ^{fg}
NL 1503	84.66 ^c	88.00 ^c	121.33 ^a	33.33 ^{a-c}	134.33 ^a
NL 1506	86.66 ^b	89.66 ^b	119.33 ^{bc}	29.66 ^{ef}	129.66 ^{ef}
BL 5116	90.00 ^a	93.66 ^a	121.00 ^{ab}	27.33 ^{fg}	133.00 ^{a-c}
NL 1488	81.33 ^{ef}	85.00 ^{ef}	118.66 ^{cd}	33.66 ^{ab}	129.33 ^{c-g}
BL 4984	82.66 ^d	86.33 ^{de}	117.33 ^{d-f}	31.00 ^{c-e}	129.66 ^{ef}
NL 1445	86.00 ^b	88.00 ^c	120.66 ^{ab}	32.66 ^{a-d}	131.33 ^{c-e}
NL 1452	86.33 ^b	90.00 ^b	121.33 ^a	31.33 ^{b-c}	132.00 ^{b-d}
NL 1450	81.66 ^{de}	85.33 ^{ef}	118.00 ^{c-e}	32.66 ^{a-d}	129.33 ^{c-g}
Vijay	77.33 ^g	82.00 ^g	116.33 ^{ef}	34.33 ^a	127.33 ^g
SEm (±)	0.44	0.53	0.63	0.80	0.69
F-test (0.05)	***	***	***	***	***

LSD value	1.30	1.55	1.85	2.35	2.03
CV	0.91	1.04	0.91	4.45	0.91
Grand mean	84.33	87.77	119.02	31.25	130.72

LSD: Least Significant Difference; CV: Coefficient of Variation; SEm: Standard Error of Mean; *: significant at ≤ 0.05 level of significance; **: significant at ≤ 0.01 level of significance; ***: significant at ≤ 0.001 level of significance; DAS: Days after sowing

Days to Senescence

The days to senescence in wheat genotypes varied from 115.66 days to 121.33 days, with a mean of 119.02 days. The result showed highly significant variances in the days to senescence among the wheat genotypes. Among them, NL 1638, NL 1503 and NL 1452 took longest days to reach senescence followed by BL 5116 and NL 1445. But the genotype NL 1509 took only 115.66 days to reach senescence, which was 1 day lesser than the check variety Vijay. Some genotypes matured quickly and on time but some genotypes matured forcefully due to higher temperature during grain filling, and hence difference in days to senescence was observed. Higher temperature during flowering, grain filling and ripening might prepone or postpone the days to senescence (Farooq et al., 2014; Hill & Li, 2022).

Grain Filling Period

Photosynthesis period showed statistically significant differences among treatments, where the longest grain filling period was observed in Vijay taking more than 34 days followed by NL1488 and NL 1503 requiring 1 day lesser than the check variety Vijay. However, the genotype NL1638 took only 27.00 days for filling up the grains. The genotype BL 5116 required only 27.33 days for grain filling, which was nearly a week lesser than the check variety Vijay. Varieties adapted to certain environment with optimal growing conditions might require certain grain filling period for optimum yield, but it might not be the case with other genotypes compared in this study. In contradictory to our findings, Jocković et al. (2014) reported that grain filling period was not significantly correlated with grain yield, and hence could be concluded that the extension of the period of grain filling is not a simple strategy that can be used to increase the yield.

Days to Maturity

The study revealed that the genotype NL 1509 and NL 1488 matured 1 day and 2 day later than the check variety Vijay. Wheat genotypes varied greatly in reaching the maturity stages as is observed in Table 3. But delay in maturity was

observed in the genotype NL-1503 and NL 1638, which took additional one week than Vijay. Again, between the Bhairawa lines, BL 4984 matured 4 days earlier than BL 5116. There was a positive genotypic connection between days to maturity and plant⁻¹ grain yield, plant⁻¹ number of tillers, and plant⁻¹ 1000-grain weight (Anwar et al., 2009). So, the varieties having long days to maturity have more grain yield due to more nutrient uptake, more growth, more energy conversion, extended photosynthesis period. Maurya et al. (2020) also reported positive and significant association between the grain yield and the days to maturity.

Spike Length

Significant variations in spike lengths were observed across the genotypes used in the study, as is observed in Table 4. The result showed that spike length was statistically highest in NL 1506 followed by NL 1452 and NL 1488, which were more than 10 cm. The smallest NL 1503 had the smallest length of spike followed by NL 1638, which were less than 9 cm. In the study, average spike length of wheat was 9.58. But when compared to the check variety, Vijay had smaller spikes than both the Bhairawa lines. These results were in line with the findings by Bhattarai et al. (2017) who reported that the spike length differs between genotypes.

Peduncle Length

Effect of wheat genotypes on peduncle length were found to be highly significant. The longest length of peduncle was recorded in Vijay i.e. 26.66 cm, followed by BL 4984 i.e. 21.10 cm and the least in NL-1506 i.e. 13.46 cm. The average peduncle length recorded in the study was 18.55 cm. When compared between the Nepal lines, NL 1488 (19.88 cm), had the longest peduncle whereas NL 1506 (13.46 cm), had the smallest. According to Rebetzke et al. (2011), increased crop radiation usage efficiency and grain yield has been reported to increase due to shorter peduncle length.

Table 4

Yield Attributing Traits of Wheat Genotypes at Tikapur, Kailali, 2023

Genotypes	Spike length (cm)	Peduncle length (cm)	Grain per spike (no.)	Seed length (mm)	Seed diameter (cm)	Thousand grain weight (g)
NL 1638	8.80 ^{de}	16.93 ^f	40.55 ^{cd}	6.31 ^d	3.62 ^{b-d}	48.66 ^d
NL 1437	9.50 ^{cd}	18.03 ^{d-f}	40.55 ^{c-g}	6.74 ^{bc}	3.54 ^{de}	50.33 ^{cd}
NL 1509	9.26 ^{c-e}	17.16 ^{ef}	40.88 ^{b-d}	6.35 ^d	3.52 ^{de}	52.00 ^{bc}
NL 1503	8.66 ^e	17.16 ^{ef}	31.22 ^g	6.51 ^{cd}	3.72 ^{a-c}	50.00 ^{cd}

NL 1506	10.43 ^a	13.46 ^g	43.38 ^{a-c}	6.28 ^d	3.80 ^a	54.00 ^{ab}
BL 5116	9.80 ^{a-c}	19.23 ^{cd}	37.61 ^{d-f}	6.78 ^{bc}	3.48 ^c	45.00 ^c
NL 1488	10.30 ^{ab}	19.80 ^{bc}	46.88 ^a	6.84 ^{ab}	3.76 ^{ab}	55.33 ^a
BL 4984	9.63 ^{bc}	21.10 ^b	38.55 ^{de}	6.73 ^{bc}	3.49 ^{de}	50.66 ^{cd}
NL 1445	9.56 ^{b-d}	18.66 ^{c-e}	33.11 ^g	7.01 ^{ab}	3.70 ^{a-c}	55.00 ^a
NL 1452	10.30 ^{ab}	16.50 ^f	39.50 ^{cd}	6.89 ^{ab}	3.68 ^{a-c}	52.00 ^{bc}
NL 1450	9.63 ^{bc}	17.96 ^{d-f}	44.72 ^{ab}	6.39 ^d	3.62 ^{c-e}	49.66 ^{cd}
Vijay	9.16 ^{c-e}	26.66 ^a	34.38 ^{fg}	7.14 ^a	3.80 ^a	54.33 ^{ab}
SEm (\pm)	0.26	0.57	1.39	0.11	0.04	0.98
F-test (0.05)	**	***	***	***	***	***
LSD value	0.77	1.68	4.08	0.32	0.13	2.88
CV	4.76	5.36	6.21	2.91	2.23	3.31
Grand mean	9.58	18.55	38.81	6.66	3.64	51.41

LSD: Least Significant Difference; CV: Coefficient of Variation; SEm: Standard Error of Mean; *: significant at ≤ 0.05 level of significance; **: significant at ≤ 0.01 level of significance; ***: significant at ≤ 0.001 level of significance; DAS: Days after sowing

Grains Per Spike

The number of grains per spike varied significantly across the genotypes in the study, which ranged from 31.22 to 46.88. The highest number of grains per spike was observed in NL 1488 i.e., 46.88, followed by NL 1450 i.e., 44.72, NL 1506 i.e., 43.38, which were far more than the check variety Vijay. The genotypes NL 1503 produced significantly lowest number of grains per spike, among all the genotypes compared in the study. Only NL 1503 and NL 1445 produced statistically lowest number of grains per spike, which were even lower than the local check Vijay. Some varieties have shown higher number of grains per spike where as some show lesser number of grains per spike. Regmi et al. (2021) also reported significant correlation between grain yield and number of grains per spike, indicating its important contribution. The number of spikes per plant is closely linked to the tillering ability, with higher number of spikes per plant correlating with higher yield potential due to certain number of grains being produced by each spike (Frantová et al., 2022).

Seed Size

The effects of genotypes were observed in both the seed length and diameter. The genotype NL 1445 was found to be slightly inferior to local check Vijay in the

length of seed, which recorded more than 7 cm. Statistically smallest seed length was observed in NL 1638, which was only 6.31 cm. But, when compared among the genotypes for the seed diameter, NL 1506 and Vijay were statistically superior over all the genotypes compared in the study. The seed diameter of Bhairahawa lines were found to be lower than the Nepal lines with BL 5116 having the smallest diameter. Both the seed diameter and lengths were statistically the highest in the local check, Vijay.

Table 5

Grain Yield, Straw Yield and Harvest Index of Wheat Genotypes at Tikapur, Kailali, 2023

Genotypes	Grain yield (t/ha)	Straw yield (t/ha)	Harvest Index
NL 1638	3.07 ^{a-c}	7.31 ^a	0.29 ^f
NL 1437	2.81 ^{bc}	6.29 ^b	0.31 ^f
NL 1509	2.84 ^{bc}	4.52 ^d	0.38 ^{ab}
NL 1503	2.97 ^{a-c}	5.79 ^b	0.33 ^{de}
NL 1506	3.36 ^a	5.85 ^b	0.36 ^{bc}
BL 5116	3.25 ^a	4.89 ^{cd}	0.39 ^a
NL 1488	3.26 ^a	4.95 ^{cd}	0.39 ^a
BL 4984	2.70 ^c	5.82 ^b	0.31 ^{ef}
NL 1445	2.69 ^c	6.34 ^b	0.29 ^f
NL 1452	3.30 ^a	5.93 ^b	0.35 ^{cd}
NL 1450	3.18 ^{ab}	5.71 ^{bc}	0.35 ^{cd}
Vijay	3.02 ^{a-c}	4.74 ^d	0.38 ^a
SEm (±)	0.13	0.28	0.007
F-test (0.05)	*	***	***
LSD value	0.40	0.83	0.02
CV	7.83	8.71	3.89
Grand mean	3.04	5.68	0.35

LSD: Least Significant Difference; CV: Coefficient of Variation; SEm: Standard Error of Mean; *: significant at ≤ 0.05 level of significance; **: significant at ≤ 0.01 level of significance; ***: significant at ≤ 0.001 level of significance; DAS: Days after sowing

Thousand Grain Weight

The results showed significant variation in thousand grain weight among the genotypes tested in the study. NL 1488 had the plumpest seed weighing 55.33 grams for thousand grains, which was statistically superior over all genotypes. Similarly, the thousand grain weight of NL 1445 was also found to be higher than Vijay weighing 55 grams. The genotype BL 5116 had the lightest seed measuring only 45.00 gram owing to smaller diameter of the seed. Shorter grain filling period and high temperature build up, during ripening and maturity, were observed in wheat, which are sown late, as in our condition. This has also been reported by Poudel et al. (2020).

Grain Yield

The grain yield was found to be significantly highest in NL 1506, which was statistically at par with NL 1452, NL 1488 and BL 5116 at 5% level of significance, table 5. Similarly, the genotypes NL 1450 and NL 1638 were statistically superior over the local check Vijay in yielding the total amount of grains per ha. The local check variety, Vijay yielded lesser than Bhairawa line 5116 but higher than BL4984. Poudel et al. (2021) also reported that variation of yield is due to genotypes. In the similar locations like Tikapur, all these lines whose performance were superior to Vijay in grain yield could be suggested for further trials, considering participatory varietal selection, based on the qualities preferred by farmers.

Harvest Index

The result showed significant variations in the harvest index with the highest obtained for the genotype BL 5116 and NL 1488, with the value 0.39 indicating the efficiency in accumulation of dry matters in grains. The harvest index obtained from Vijay was statistically at par with these genotypes. The NL 1638 was found to be inferior (i.e., 0.29) in yielding harvest index, among all the genotypes tested in the study.

Correlation and Regression Study

The study showed significant positive correlation between spike length and grain yield with correlation coefficient, $r=0.43$; grains per spike and grain yield ($r=0.33$); harvest index and plant height ($r=0.44$),) whereas non-significant but negative correlation was observed between grain yield and peduncle length ($r=-0.25$).

Figure 2

Relationship between Grain Yield and Spike Length (left) and Grain Yield and Grains Per Spike (right) at Kailali, Nepal 2023

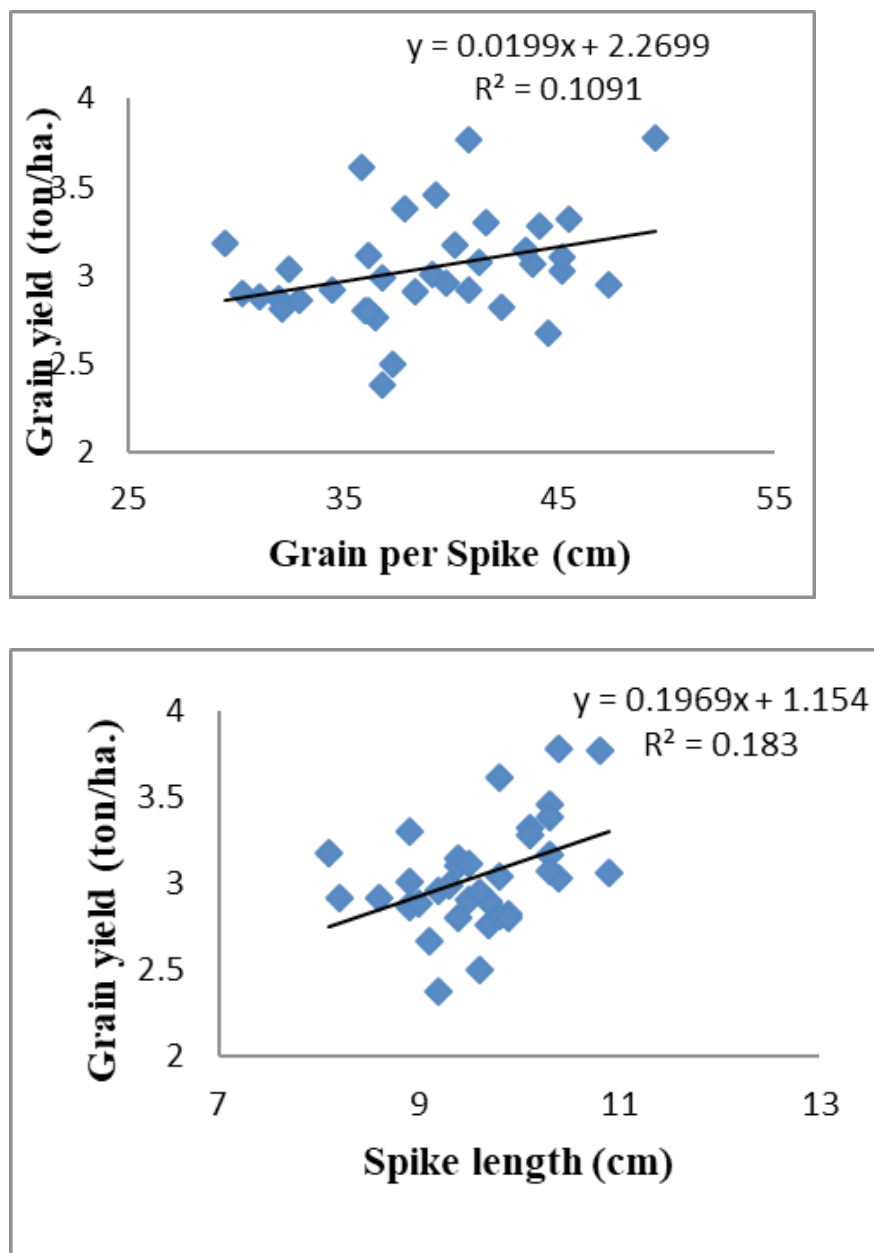
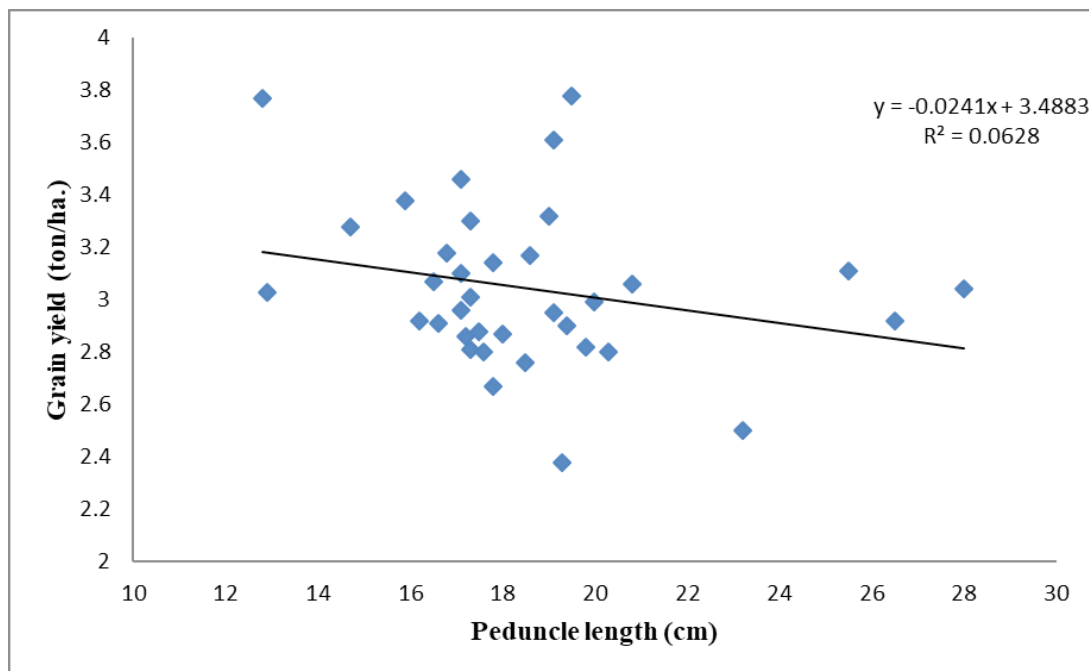


Figure 3

Correlation between Grain Yield and Peduncle Length at Kailali, Nepal 2023



Conclusion

The performance of few wheat genotypes belonging to Nepal lines were superior in grain yield over the popular variety Vijay. Some of the superior performing genotypes had higher number of grains per spike, whereas some had the heavier seeds, and others possessed higher number of effective tillers than Vijay variety of wheat. Considering the traits like effective number of tillers in BL 5116, bold grains in NL 1488 and higher number of grains per spikes in NL1506, these genotypes could be suggested for evaluations at different locations after harvest of paddy in far western province.

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Madheshi Women's Struggles against Discrimination in Nepal

Ranju Kumari Yadav

PhD Scholar, Department of Gender Studies, Tribhuvan University, Nepal

Email: ranjuyd22@gmail.com

Abstract

Madheshi women experience various ways of discrimination in Nepali society. They suffer from race, caste, class and gender-based discrimination in society. In this context, this study explores the experiences and perceptions of Madheshi women about discrimination based on race, gender, class, caste/ethnicity, age and education through qualitative research. Eighteen participants were selected through purposive sampling. An in-depth interview was conducted with fourteen Madheshi women from various backgrounds and four Madheshi males were the key information participants. The Madheshi women from various backgrounds experienced discrimination and marginalization based on caste/ethnicity, class, race, gender, age and education. Madheshi women are not a homogeneous group, as they experience different kinds of exclusion in diverse settings. This study suggests enhancing the respect and recognition of Madheshi women in society. Furthermore, it suggests implementing and formulating relevant policies and legislation for Madheshi women, considering the prevalence of discrimination faced by Madheshi women in Nepal.

Keywords: Gender, intersectionality, inequalities, exclusion

Introduction

The majority of Madheshi women primarily live in the Madhesh region of Nepal, which spans across the southern plains of the country. Madheshi is a citizen of Nepal, a non-hill origin, and a non-native speaker of the Nepali language living in the plain of Terai. The Terai area shares borders with India (Hachhethu, 2007; Lal, 2018; Nayak, 2011; Shah, 2006; Tiwari, 2013) with eight districts in Madhesh Province. The Madheshis claim that the upper caste of the Terai, Terai Dalits, Tharus



and Terai Muslims all fall under the Madheshi category. However, the Tharus refute this assertion, stating that they do not want to be identified as Madheshi. Similarly, certain Terai Muslims and Dalits reject their Madheshi identity although a majority feel comfortable with the Madheshi definition (Mathema, 2011, pp. 2-3).

Despite being a multicultural society, Nepal has historically been governed predominantly by rulers of hill origin. Madheshi women are backward compared to Pahadi women. The nationality of Madheshi is always questioned because of their proximity and close relation to the Indians. They have always been neglected and discriminated against by the state in various ways over the past years. Discrimination led exclusion of marginalized communities in the state which perpetuated cycles of poverty. They are less represented in Nepali politics, bureaucracy, planning process and administration sectors (Shah, 2006). This type of exclusion creates many forms of discrimination against Madheshi women. Discrimination impacts various dimensions including mental health.

Madheshi women face disadvantages across various social and regional activities, impacting their overall status. They often have minimal influence in household decisions concerning both domestic and organizational matters. They may have less autonomy in decision-making due to less education and access to power and resources. This situation is the same as politics where only a few Madheshi women secured a higher position (Tiwari, 2013). So, they are unable to contribute to policy-making for marginalized people.

Madheshi women encompass diverse identities determined by various factors such as caste/ethnicity, class, place of origin, marital status, ability and more (Lal, 2018). Among Madheshi, most Dalits are landless at Madhesh and living in *ailani jagg*a. They are backward even in their community, and most of them do not have citizenship (Tiwari, 2014). Further, poverty remains high among Muslims who are living in rural areas and have below-average literacy rates (Shah, 2006). Poverty creates complex challenges as poor people cannot afford the quality of education and health facilities. They may not be assigned well-paying jobs, perpetuating the cycle of poverty. Madheshi women faces greater challenges than the Pahadi women and men from their community. Academic writing on discrimination against Madheshi's women is rare. The discrimination faced by Madheshi women based on gender, caste/ethnicity, class and race is considered insignificant. However, gender, caste/ethnicity, class and race-based inequality are still practised in society which contributes to the further marginalizing of Madheshi women.

The women's experience of inequality differs from one to another based on race, sexual orientation, identity, class, history and political orientation

(Collins, 2000; Crenshaw, 1991). The intersecting factors create a wide range of discrimination. For instance, Madheshi *Jha* women may not face the discrimination faced by the Madheshi *Mushar* women belonging to the Dalit communities.

There is some literature on discrimination in Madheshi men, particularly highlighting the racial discrimination by the state mechanism. However, there is a dearth of empirical studies exploring various forms of discrimination faced by diverse Madheshi women in their daily life. Therefore, this study focuses on the Madheshi women's experiences of discrimination in public life where power dynamics are often controlled by men, Pahadi individuals and higher castes. This study will broaden the understanding of Madheshi women's marginalization, fostering respect and equitable treatment for them. Furthermore, it will also contribute to maintaining harmony in the multicultural society.

Marginalization of Madheshi Community

The Muluki Ain (General Code) of 1854 was the first law of Nepal which categorized all Nepali into five major hierarchical ranks without considering cultural diversity. These ranks were *tagadhari*, *namasine matwali*, *masine matwali*, *touchable castes* and *untouchable castes*. The code was rigid and hierarchical (Höfer, 2004) introduced by Prime Minister Jung Bahadur and institutionalized by other Rana prime ministers.

In 1854, the *Muluki Ain* in Nepal ranked Parbatiya Brahmans higher than Madheshi Brahmans, since the people from the hills shared a sentiment of distinctiveness with the people from the plains. Madheshi were consequently perceived as outsiders (Whelpton, 2005, p.58). Their culture, dress and languages have not been recognized by the nation. They are often regarded as Indian due to the Madheshi community's shared culture and language with India, for instance, until 1958, Madheshi needed a visa issued by a Gurkha officer to enter the Kathmandu Valley from the plains (Chamlagai, 2020; Hachhethu, 2007; Sah, 2017, p.208). This statement is also supported by Gaige (1975). Terai residents and Indians were required to stop at the border town of Birgunj to get a passport before proceeding to Kathmandu, except during Shiva Ratri, when Indians were allowed to make pilgrimages to the Pashupatinath temple in Kathmandu. Passports were then checked at Chispani Garhi on the way to Kathmandu. However, they can travel to India without restrictions which was the boundary of the British East India Company (Raut, 2018, p.26).

Programmes and policies have often been designed to favour hilly people. A large population of Madheshi finds themselves excluded from the policies and programmes of the state (Ghimire, 2013). They've faced marginalization and been

excluded not only from political, administrative and judicial bodies but also from development partners. Tamang (2009) argues that Madhesi women were absent from development programmes which was targeted towards Nepali women. She observed that in contrast to Janajati and Dalit women, Madhesi women have faced challenges in pushing their agendas through NGOs. The interest and activities of NGOs and civil society in the Madhesh are limited due to historical neglect by the state and foreign aid organizations. This is illustrated by the absence of a dedicated chapter on Madhesh in the draft report of the World Bank on social exclusion in Nepal, completed in June 2005. High-caste Bahun women are working as gatekeepers for non-speaking Nepali donors.

There is not an established system for documenting cross-border marriages. However, it has been frequently reported that a large number of Madheshi males marry Indian women each year and are brought to Nepal. It is observed that Madheshi men are not the only ones who tie with Indian women, but non-Madheshi, including some men from Kathmandu's elite families also marry Indian noblewomen, as well as non-Madheshi from the far-eastern districts, marry with ethnic Nepalis from Northeast India, have such relationships for a long time (Pandey, 2022). In the case of cross border marriage, women faced various challenges. They had to justify that they surrendered the Indian citizenship certificate, whereas there is no provision for a citizenship card in India. They do not have citizenship cards similar to Nepali citizenship until today. Instead, they have other types of certifications such as birth registration certificates, passport, aadhar cards, rashon cards, PAN cards, driving licenses, voter cards and land registration for their national identification. Therefore, it was difficult for women to prove their surrender certificate to Nepal which was a provision in the 1962 constitution (Sah, 2017, p.219). In the absence of citizenship, they are facing problems in opening bank account, starting business, apply government jobs and so on.

The constitution of Nepal fails to reflect the language, religion and culture of marginalized groups such as Madheshi, Janjati, Dalit and others which make them invisible in their nation. The elites who hold power in Nepal since its inception in the eighteenth century, have deliberately ignored the ethnic/minority language issues for socio-political reasons (Giri, 2009). There was a domination of the Nepali language in the state to serve the interest of dominant groups. For instance, there was a provision in the 1962 constitution that one could read and write the Nepali language at the time of acquiring citizenship (Gaige, 1975; Sah, 2017). Learning the Nepali language for Madheshi's illiterate women was a big challenge because most of the Madheshi women were primarily homemakers and peasants. Plain people have controlled and prospered the Nepali plain land for thousands of years, and are well

recorded in ancient epics of Ramayana and Mahabharata. In the recorded history since Budhha time too, plain people have controlled the land, and have been recorded as Vriji Republic, Tirhut, Videha, Kapilvastu, or Mithila civilization (Sah, 2017, p.219).

Madheshi has never experienced full integration into the Nepali socio-economic framework, national politics and human resource development agenda. They have faced exclusion from the state, resulting in inadequate participation in employment opportunities, educational facilities and development activities (Shah, 2006). They were not allowed to work in military service and only a limited number of Madheshi were able to hold major positions in political parties. Decision-making positions remain largely dominated by the higher caste *Bahun* and *Chhetri* communities. People of every community have the right to revitalize, utilize, cultivate and promote their language. Since 1990, the language issue has gained momentum and enthusiasts are highly motivated to develop and promote their mother tongues. However, some government employees pose obstacles to implementing plans and policies for preservation and development of minority languages (Tumbahang, 2009). Consequently, the curriculum that could enhance confidence and creativity at the primary level has yet to be developed in different languages.

Gender Inequality in Madhesh

Women are excluded in society due to gender discrimination which is the most universal form of social exclusion (Sah, 2021). Boundaries between public and private are sharp where women's responsibility is associated with household activities and men's for public politics (Acharya & Bennett, 1983). Men are generally expected to work as breadwinners whereas women are in the caring and nursing roles. Household chores performed by women are not calculated in monetary value and are not included in the national income.

Education is a major component of human rights. But most of the schools have no gender-friendly environment. Gupta et al. (2021) found that education is the major tool for fighting against gender inequality. It also helps to eliminate patriarchy which is deeply rooted in Nepali society. However, even a well-educated person does not want to send their daughter outside of the city to get a higher education or to do a job. The women of the Madheshi community are considered as the *ijjat* of the family. The prestige of the family (*ijjat*) is attached to the daughter's behaviour in a patriarchal society. Women of the family are controlled in the family. They are suffering from socially ill practices such as witchcraft, polygamy, dowry, etc. The Nepali policy is inadequate and fails to address the issues of Madheshi women uniformly. Major decisions have not been made with the advice or input of women.

Traditionally, women's decisions were not accepted and acknowledged within the family. However, the trend is changing as some women are now making decisions on their own due to male migration to a foreign country. The practice of dowry exists in Nepali society and is considered as the prestige of the family. Unfortunately, in some cases, daughters-in-law commit suicide due to the mental torture inflicted by the family. Tragically, they are also killed by the family due to the insufficient dowry (Tiwari, 2019). They are physically and mentally tortured in the family. Parents of the daughter's family experience pain and psychological shock.

Untouchability and Caste-based Discrimination in Nepal

Untouchability and discrimination based on caste persist in South Asian countries including Nepal. Dalit women face discrimination based on caste, class, gender and education. They suffer a higher degree of violence and exploitation by the upper-caste Hindu people in rural areas of India which is legitimized in the society (Kumar, 2021; Valarmathi et. al, 2017). Most Dalits are working as wage laborers and are exploited by their honor. Historically Dalit women were considered as *achhut* (untouchable) in Madhesh. They significantly lag in political, social and economic matters. Untouchability has been practised in Nepali society. However, it has been declared illegal and prohibits caste-based discrimination by the constitution of Nepal. They are also discriminated against among the same caste. Dalit women experienced discrimination compared to other women, not only people from the upper caste but also among their communities because of Dalit patriarchies (Arya, 2020). Dalit women face physical violence and abuse by the men within their families. Similarly, an earlier study conducted in India by Kumar (2009) stated that Dalit women in India are oppressed based on class, caste and gender. They are separated from general women based on their unique location, and occupation in caste-ridden society. Likewise, Madheshi Dalit women are exploited and excluded not only based on gender, caste and class but also because of their race in Nepal. Intersectionality believes that all women do not face the same level and kind of discrimination and oppression. They might suffer multiple forms of discrimination.

Dalit women experienced discrimination under the *Manusmriti* which was a social and religious code rooted in Brahminical Hinduism. According to this code, higher-caste men were permitted to engage in sexual intercourse with lower-caste women, with or without their consent, and could undergo purification by chanting a mantra (Höfer, 2004). Most of the Dalit girls are the victim of sexual violence in Nepal. In Madhesh, most of the higher caste individuals refuse to eat meals at the feast hosted by the Dalits. Incidents of untouchability are frequently reported in daily newspapers. For instance, a higher caste man was excluded from his community

because he attended the feast hosted by the Dalit (Mahato, 2023). Such kind of activity promotes untouchability in society.

Dalit women have been energetically participating in various social and political movements, fostering optimism for increased tolerance and reducing discrimination in society (Poudel, 2007). As a result of the movements, some changes have been seen in the average Nepali behaviour. Anti-caste discrimination programmes are inclusive and extended to non-Dalits as well. The major achievement is implementing a quota for Dalit women at the ward level. However, these women faced lots of challenges in the execution of their responsibilities (Kharel & Suji, 2019). The suggestions provided by the Dalit women members are often not considered seriously and most of them encounter challenges in playing an effective role in local-level planning and budgeting.

Methods and Procedures

I have applied the qualitative approach in this study as it gives detailed information about individuals' experiences and their ideas. This study applied the intersectionality theory which believes people are marginalized by various sources of oppression including race, class, gender identity, sexual orientation and religion.

Purposive sampling was used to select the participants from Madhesh Province. The study incorporated participants to reflect diversity in terms of castes, education, political affiliation, districts and age. I conducted in-depth interviews with fourteen Madheshi women and four Madheshi males were selected for key informants' interviews.

I conducted in-depth interviews with the participants. I started by asking them for their demographic information. After that, I went with some general questions on their involvement in politics, journalism, and activism. The second round delved into their personal experience regarding discrimination. A checklist for interviews was developed and used to maintain focus on the objectives of the research.

The informed consent form was provided to participants to get permission to record the interview before the commencement of the interviews. The consent form was handed to the educated participants to read, the researcher read it loudly and translated it into their mother tongue for those who were uneducated such as Maithili, Hindi and Bhojpuri since the form was developed only in Nepali and English languages. Most participants gave the verbal consent to an audio recording. The researcher made notes during the recording, and pseudonyms were used for ethical considerations.

The researcher recorded and transcribed all interviews. The collected data were analyzed using NVivo software.

Results and Discussion

Gender Discrimination within the Family

Gender discrimination is universal and people in developing countries experience gender discrimination in everyday life (Wadesango, 2011). Nepali women also experience more or less gender-based discrimination in their lives which varies based on age, education, economy and social condition of the community (Gupta et al., 2021). Further, they are subjugated based on their gender. It is an unfair treatment between the sexes. Many informants faced gender discrimination in their lives. Najbullah (pseudonym), the leader of Loktantrik Samajwadi Party Nepal, said:

More girls study in government schools whereas boys are sent to private schools. Parents tend to send their daughters to government schools whereas boys are at private schools because they are reluctant to invest in girls. They think that they will earn for others.

A study conducted by Barcellos et al. (2014) in India found that parents tend to invest less in girls due to the perception that investments have a lower return. Boys and girls are not treated equally especially in rural areas of India. Most of the women faced gender discrimination because of traditional social and cultural practices of the society which expanded male domination. Rural women experience more gender discrimination than urban women because patriarchal ideology is deeply rooted in rural areas (Gupta et al., 2021). A large number of people in rural areas are poor and uneducated and believe in the traditional value system.

Gupta et al. (2021) have a similar view that rich people suffer a lot more gender discrimination than poor and middle-class families. Another participant Naina who has two brothers and two sisters said that I experienced more gender discrimination than my friend who was from the Dalit community. She shared her experience:

I wanted to go to study India where my brother was sent but my father did not allow me. He insisted me on studying humanities and social science at the government college of Nepal. He went abroad, and then I appeared in the entrance examination for forestry and secured a good rank. I asked money for my mom to get admission but she told me if Papa knew then he would be angry. She was compelled to give me money because I did not eat for two days. We did not inform my father about my admission. After some time, he came to Nepal and got

informed. Then he became angry and did not speak with me for some weeks.

Gender Disparity in Politics

Women's representation in politics is very low which is not satisfactory even though women's population is higher than that of men. Further, the study conducted by Kabeer (1999) stated that women's participation in politics is miserable even in developed countries. Women politicians are not appointed to major positions. Most decisions are made by the higher caste males in the political parties. Those women are given space in the political institutions who are close to the men's leaders (Manandhar, 2021). According to Lal (2013), due to the absence of internal democracy and structural participation, political parties in Nepal have been unable to gain true national status.

Deo (2009) noted that the Madheshi women's representation in higher positions is negligible even in major political parties. Regarding women's representation, most of the women leaders said that the women who have been actively involved in various movements were not given tickets to the election. Only a few women are provided the tickets who are closer to the top leaders, and family relations and able to influence financially. Furthermore, Muni, a leader, shared her experience:

I was ready to contest the election but the party denied the ticket to me.

However, I participated in the movements. Women are not being trusted by the party. There are not enough women in the decision-making positions in any party. Each party uses women to show mass in the movements.

A political analyst Tulanarayan also holds similar views that it is difficult for women, Muslims, and Dalits to contest elections through first-past-the-post (FPTP). Not any party is trying to give them tickets. The party gives the tickets to women candidates where they will lose. One of the participants Sakina who was from the Muslim community was very frustrated with the politics and shared her story:

Top leaders said you should not go to the local election this time and come to the state assembly. I thought it was better to go to the province rather than the local's election. A large amount of money is also needed to fight the election. Then I did not give a nomination in the local-level election. My name was sent in the first number in the proportional representation (PR) list from the district. I had worked as hard as I could in the election as well. In the last hour, my name was put in second numbers due to some personal conflict and interest. However, I am

working for the party. The top male leaders of the party said you are too young and you will have an opportunity in the next election.

Lotter (2017) stated that women political leaders are always criticized for being excessively strong and dominant, or too traditional and submissive. Additionally, they are also accused of no decision of their own due to lack of education or being highly well educated but suspected of following the advice of their male relatives. Sometimes people even those who are well-educated attempt to disqualify women based on their dress such as the veil which is their identity marker and ignore their performance. These biases appear due to gender inequality in the political landscape.

Socio-cultural Bias

Sanskrit Pathshala and University is funded by the government where most of the students are Hindu males. The state is imposing Hindu norms and culture on those who are non-Hindus. The state does not want to spend more on *Madrasas* and *Buddhist* monasteries. Hindu religious books are published by the Royal Nepal Academy (Lawoti, 2001). However, Nepal is a secular nation. So, everyone's culture and religion should be respected equally. One of the Muslim women's rights activists Mohana, a Muslim women right activist, shared her experience regarding the nature of the state.

The state's investment in the empowerment of Muslim women is less. A community in which the state does not invest then such kind of community could not be developed. Madrassas education exists in Nepal, but even within that, the segregation of males and females is another separation of the people in the education system. But going to the Madrasa is their obligation. They do not feel safe in mainstream schools. For example, some schools have a mandatory dress code, which causes them to drop out.

I talked to one of the Muslim former members of parliament. She shared her views as below:

I told Chief Minister Lal Babu Raut several times to form a Muslim Madrasa Board, but it was not formed. No one wants the Madrasa Board to be established. Everyone thinks that after the formation of the Muslim Madrasa Board, only the children of Muslims would study and they wanted to make Pakistan.

Discrimination in Formal Institutions

Most of the participants reported they experienced bullying by their friends

due to their skin colour, tone and culture. It is common for Madheshi to face verbal and physical bullying. The students and teachers bully Madheshi students. Sometimes students in the school mimic Madheshi's accent and tone. Some teachers do not respond to the discrimination in the classroom. Bipana narrated her story as follows:

I studied at one of the recognized and most prestigious schools in Kathmandu. I was randomly questioned by my friends and teachers, "You must be visiting India during your vacation. Right?". I now think that it was not their fault. Society has enabled them to ask that type of question.

Bullying does not create a conducive environment for study. It promotes disrespect among the students. There are several consequences of bullying in students. It can have psychological and mental health. The research conducted by Eslea and Mukhtar (2000) explored that bullying among the same ethnicity was comparatively rare although several Hindu children said they experienced humiliation related to the caste system.

MP (Member of Parliament) of the Madhesh Province from FPTP states:

Lawmakers elected through the PR system often make a minimal commitment to the populace, so ordinary people do not expect much from them. Consequently, these lawmakers have relatively easier to win in the elections. However, ordinary people expect much from the MPs like us.

One of the former Dalit lawmakers shared her experience:

I served as a lawmaker elected through the PR system under the Dalit quota. However, I received significantly fewer funds for development programs than the lawmakers elected via the FPTP system. Moreover, they were unwilling to collaborate and work together. They even did not want to sit with us. They had their groups.

Another MP who was elected for the first time also shared her experience:

I have a problem in comprehending the rules, regulations, and procedures of the parliament because I am new in this field. Unfortunately, some highly educated women MPs from different parties who had extensive experience in politics, seem hesitant to share their knowledge with me. So, I seek assistance from a male colleague.

Yadav (2016) notes that during breaks at the CA (Constituent Assembly) divisions were easily observed. Women from Terai/Madhesh were seated on one

side, while women from the Pahadi community chose to sit separately (p. 70). The Nepal government has adopted policies and legal measures to prevent discrimination and promote equality. However, individuals still face discrimination in the workplace.

Discrimination against Women with Disabilities

Persons with disabilities are marginalized, excluded, deprived and isolated groups of society and women who are disabled are the components of it (Timilsana, 2018). Madheshi women with disabilities are one of the most vulnerable and unrecognized groups in the society. A study conducted by Vidhya (2016) observed that women with disability face triple jeopardy in India. The disabled boy is generally acceptable in the family whereas the birth of a disabled daughter is viewed as a curse. They are considered a burden on the family. Their discrimination starts with the family. They are not allowed to take part in social gatherings or ceremonies (*Subh Karya*) at home. They could not get easily married.

Women are treated as second-class citizens in society. They are rejected by the family as well as the government institution. Disabled men are more privileged than disabled women. Their representation is disproportionate including education and other major sectors (Dhungana, 2006). They are not easily getting admission to the school. However, inclusive education is a process of responding to the various needs of students so that schools can promote inclusion (Poudel, 2007). They are deprived of education because the schools do not have disability-friendly physical infrastructure. One of the disabled staff of the disabled organization shared her experience:

Even parents of disabled children also argue about what they will do after studying. If the child is a girl, then they said no I do not want to send her to a school because who will take responsibility for gender-based violence? Teachers treat them differently in the school as well. Students were not enrolled in the school because they would hamper other students. Despite this, they faced racial discrimination as well.

Another female member of the disabled organization shared her experience. She said:

There is only one Madheshi woman and man on the board members of the National Federation of Disabled Nepal (NFDN) out of 41 members. A federation is also dominated by the Pahadi. In the last election of NFDN one Madheshi man and a woman gave the candidacy but both of them lost in the election.

I got Meera's (pseudo name) number from NFDN and called her. She asked me to come to her at noon. The next day I went to meet her. After informal communication, she shared her experience:

I have no siblings. I am the only child in my family. My father passed away when I was two years old. My relatives once suggested my mother that she could not do anything and should kill her. My mother has always been my unwavering support. With her encouragement, I have been able to study up to a bachelor's degree in Janakpur.

After her interview, she asked me, "Would you like to meet another girl with disabilities?" I replied yes, and she said, "Okay, come tomorrow. I will introduce and her home is very close to me." The next day we went to her house together. She requested me not to disclose her name and began to share her story.

I have two brothers and one sister. My siblings are about to finish their master's, bachelor and SEE respectively. I have never been to school. My mom used to tell me I would not carry you to school because of your weight. I could not walk because I had a problem with my legs.

Madheshi Dalit Women's Oppression

Dalits are oppressed and marginalized in Nepal. Their basic human rights are denied. They suffer humiliation, harassment and structural domination including psychological as well as physiological violence. However, the experience of social exclusion is varied among Dalits, but Madheshi Dalits are more marginalized than the Hill Dalits (Pariyar & Lovett, 2016). Madheshi Dalits are one of the major marginalized groups and are socially and economically excluded in Madhesh. Dalit women are not allowed to enter the temple along with the upper caste due to caste-based discrimination and untouchability (Tiwari, 2014). However, caste-based discrimination has been prohibited and considered illegal in Nepal. It has been practised in the country (Bhattachan, 2001). This resulted in poor mental health, economic status and unemployment within their community. The working environment is not conducive and they feel discrimination where they work. One of the well-known journalists Roshan Janakpuri said:

Untouchability has been reduced in public places somehow but has continued in private places. Such as Dalit women are not allowed to enter the kitchen and puja kotha of higher caste. However, higher castes use the materials in puja made by the Dalit. Such as Daura, Dala, Koniya, etc.

Caste-based Discrimination at Work

Madheshi Dalit women suffer from caste-based discrimination in the workplace, public places, schools and more from the dominant caste. They faced discrimination within their caste because of their gender. Dalit women's rights activists said:

Now we are interviewing in this hotel freely and if the hotel's owner is from a lower caste, people might avoid having food. However, most of the Dalit women are working as dishwashing staff to sustain their livelihood in this hotel due to their poor economic condition. They are illiterate so they are working in low-paid jobs. Some of them are very good at cooking. Despite being skilled in cooking, they are not assigned as cooks.

Sunaina has a series of discriminatory experiences even after being involved in politics. She was elected as a ward member in 2074 B.S. Now she has been involved in various Dalit organizations including central-level politics. She shared her experience:

I was elected as a ward member and a member of the Municipal Executive Committee. There was a man who was from a higher caste and was also an elected representative in the municipality. He was older and more educated than me. He did not have tea with me for about six months in the office. Once, there was a sanitation campaign and lots of people were having tea after the programme. A tea vendor came and served tea to everyone. But his wife grabbed the glass of the tea and said that her husband would not drink this tea because a Dalit ward member (I) was sitting very close to him. After that, the man also refused to have tea. Then, the mayor told them, they could not do such behaviour because we are leaders working as a change agent in society. Then, the man agreed to have the tea because it was a public place. But he said he would refuse to have tea or food in his house with anyone belonging to the Dalit Community.

Madheshi women are discriminated against based on their caste, race, age and education in the workplace. Yadav (2016) stated that women are excluded based on their education, class, caste, region, political affiliation and age in a patriarchal structure. Similarly, Walby (1990) observed that patriarchy diminishes the agency of women, placing it in an inferior position.

Gender discrimination persists in Nepali society particularly in Madhesh Province. Most of the women faced gender discrimination because of traditional social and cultural practices of the society. The women who are very close to the party get tickets only in subordinate positions. Only a minimal number of women

get tickets for the major positions. A study conducted by Begum (2015) holds the similar view that Indian politics remains a male bastion. Only a minimal number of women have prominent positions of power, primarily due to their close relations with male leaders. It seems that women are portrayed as less competent. Sometimes people even those who are well-educated attempt to disqualify women based on several unnecessary factors. People with disabilities are often ignored by the family as well as the society. Disabled women face greater discrimination in life compared to disabled men because women's role is not recognized by the society as a breadwinner. Women with disability get less support in comparison with the other family members and their presence in any ceremony is considered as bad fortune and brings bad luck in the family. This is very similar to Dhungana's (2006) statement that a person with disability lacks their family support in terms of food, education, rehabilitation, love and more than other members of the family.

Conclusion

This study found that Madheshi women faced multiple discriminations based on gender, caste, race, education and age discrimination in Nepali society. Madheshi women are not homogeneous groups. They are not treated equally in the country. There are lots of provisions to eliminate all forms of discrimination. The constitution of Nepal guarantees equal rights and eliminates all forms of discrimination based on class, gender, religion, language, ethnicity and or any other ground. However, marginalized communities including Madheshi women are excluded from male-dominated politics. Dalit Madheshi women faced untouchability and caste penalty in society. Untouchability has been diminished to some extent in public domains but still exists in private places. Madheshi women face discrimination and harassment in formal and informal institutions. They are discriminated against because of gendered roles and patriarchies of society. Women with disabilities are more vulnerable or burdensome because of gender stereotypes. They have the right to live free from humiliation and stress and get justice in society. Discrimination positions women socially, politically and economically in low status. They should also raise their voices and unite against discrimination reactively and proactively. Various kinds of discrimination are a major issue of justice in Nepal for Madheshi women. There needs to be more research on how discrimination affects Madheshi women and why discrimination still exists in Nepal. Future studies focusing on Madheshi women need to be conducted and should include the voices of more Madheshi women from ordinary backgrounds.

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सरकारी निकायका सार्वजनिक सूचनामा प्रयुक्त भाषिक त्रुटि र त्यसको शैक्षणिक उपादेयता

वासुदेव बिष्ट

सुदूरपश्चिम विश्वविद्यालय, कैलाली बहुमुखी क्याम्पस, धनगढी, नेपाल

Email: basudevbi50@gmail.com

लेखसार

नेपालका सरकारी निकायहरूले सार्वजनिक सरोकारका सूचनाहरू प्रकाशित, प्रसारित गर्दछन्। सूचनाको माध्यम भाषा नेपाली रहेको छ। नेपाली भाषा राष्ट्रिय कामकाजको भाषा हो। प्रस्तुत अध्ययन सरकारी निकायका सार्वजनिक सूचनामा प्रयुक्त भाषिक त्रुटि र त्यसको शैक्षणिक उपादेयता खोजी गर्ने विषयमा केन्द्रित रहेको छ। सार्वजनिक सूचनामा मानक नेपाली भाषा प्रयोगको अवस्था, सरकारी निकायका सार्वजनिक सूचनामा प्रयुक्त भाषिक त्रुटिहरू, भाषिक त्रुटिहरूलाई सुधार गर्नका लागि अवलम्बन गर्न सकिने उपाय र सुभावहरू प्रस्तुत गर्न र भाषिक त्रुटिहरूको शैक्षणिक उपादेयताको प्रभावलाई समस्याका रूपमा लिई लेख तयार गरिएको हो। यसमा गुणात्मक विधिअन्तर्गत रही सार्वजनिक सूचनाको अवस्थाको अध्ययन विश्लेषण गरिएको छ। सार्वजनिक निकायबाट सम्पादन हुने वा भएको र तत्सम्बन्धी कारवाही वा निर्णयसँग सम्बन्धित लिखित जानकारीमूलक सूचना सङ्कलनगरी नेपाली भाषाको मानक प्रयोगको अवस्थाको अध्ययन गरिएको छ। यस अध्ययनका लागि प्रायोगिक भाषाविज्ञान अन्तर्गत रहेको त्रुटि विश्लेषणलाई सैद्धान्तिक आधार बनाइएको छ। भाषाको प्रयोग शिक्षा, सञ्चार, साहित्य, कानून, प्रशासन आदि विविध क्षेत्रमा गरिएको हुन्छ। भाषाको शुद्ध प्रयोगका लागि कोश, व्याकरण, शैली पुस्तिकाको प्रयोग आवश्यक मानिएको छ। सार्वजनिक सूचना शुद्ध र मानक हुनुपर्छ। सूचना आमनागरिकले बुझ्न सक्ने सरल, सहज र सम्प्रेष्य भाषामा हुनुपर्छ। सार्वजनिक सूचनामा वर्णविन्यासगत, वाक्यगत र कारकीय त्रुटिहरू प्रशस्त मात्रामा भएका पाइन्छन्। सबैभन्दा बढी त्रुटि द्वस्व र दीर्घमा रहेको पाइन्छ। 'ब'- 'व', 'श' - 'ष' - 'स', 'पदयोग' - 'पदवियोग', 'चन्द्रविन्दु' - 'शरविन्दु' को प्रयोग सम्बन्धी त्रुटिहरू भएको पाइन्छ। टङ्कण, मुद्रणमा समेत समस्या देखिएको छ भने पाण्डुलिपि संशोधन गरी सार्वजनिक सूचना प्रकाशित गर्ने, प्राविधिक धार पढेका सूचना अधिकारी वा कर्मचारीले नेपाली भाषाको मानक प्रयोगमा सचेतता अपनाउन नसकेको पाइन्छ। एउटै सार्वजनिक सूचनामा ४/५ देखि १५/२० ओटासम्म त्रुटिहरू रहेको पाइन्छ। सरकारी निकायका सार्वजनिक सूचना शुद्ध र मानक नेपाली भाषाको प्रयोगका लागि दृष्टान्तका रूपमा प्रयोग हुनुपर्नेमा त्यसो हुन सकेका छैनन्; जसका कारण शैक्षणिक गतिविधिका दृष्टिमा सिकाइको गलत सामान्यीकरण हुने डर रहेको पाइन्छ। शुद्ध र मानक नेपाली भाषाको प्रयोगका लागि सूचनाको व्यावहारिक कार्यसम्पादनसँगै शब्दकोश, व्याकरण र शैली पुस्तिकाको प्रयोग गर्नुपर्ने र तालिम, सेमिनार, प्रशिक्षणको अभियान नै सञ्चालन गरी भाषिक एकरूपता कायम गर्नु आवश्यक रहेको निष्कर्ष प्रस्तुत गरिएको छ।

शब्दकुञ्जी: मानक, वर्णविन्यास, एकरूपता, निकाय, सूचना

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परिचय

नेपाली भाषा नेपालको सरकारी कामकाजको माध्यम भाषा हो । नेपाली भाषा नेपालभरी बोलिन्छ । विचारको प्रकटीकरण भाषाको माध्यमबाट सम्भव भएको हो । नेपाली भाषाको क्षमता विस्तार र मानकीकरणका लागि व्याकरण लेखनले महत्त्वपूर्ण भूमिका खेलेको पाइन्छ । व्याकरण प्रस्तावित र वर्णनात्मक प्रकृतिका रहेका छन् । नेपाली भाषाका प्राथमिक कालीन व्याकरणहरू प्रस्तावित प्रकृतिका थिए भने हाल वर्णनात्मक व्याकरण लेखनको सुरु भएको छ । भाषाको स्तरीकरणमा शब्दकोशको महत्त्वपूर्ण भूमिका रहेको पाइन्छ । भाषिक एकाइका हिज्जे, शब्दवर्ग, स्रोत अर्थ आदि सूचना दिएर शब्दकोशले भाषाको मानकीकरणमा महत्त्वपूर्ण भूमिका निर्वाह गर्छ । भाषाको स्तरीकरणका निमित्त पत्र पत्रिकाको पनि महत्त्वपूर्ण भूमिका रहेको पाइन्छ । भाषाको मानकीकरणका प्रक्रियामा वर्ण विन्यासमा सुधार, शब्दकोशको सम्पादन, व्याकरण लेखन, प्रचार प्रसार, स्वीकरण जस्ता कुरा पर्दछन् । नेपाली भाषाको मानकीकरणका लागि व्याकरण, शब्दकोश र पत्रपत्रिकाको भूमिका उल्लेखनीय रहेको पाइन्छ । नेपाली भाषाको व्याकरण, शब्दकोश र पत्रपत्रिकाको कारणले नेपाली भाषाले राज्यभाषाको रूपमा संवैधानिक मान्यता पाएको हो । सरकारी निकायका सार्वजनिक सूचनामा भाषिक शुद्धता र मानक नेपाली भाषाको प्रयोगमा एकरूपता भएको पाइँदैन । व्याकरण, शब्दकोश, शैली पुस्तिका जस्ता आधिकारिक नेपाली भाषाका मानकीकरणका सामग्री हुँदा हुँदै पनि छुट्टा छुट्टै प्रयोग गरी भाषिक त्रुटि गरिएको पाइन्छ ।

भाषा सम्प्रेषणको महत्त्वपूर्ण साधन हो । “वागीश्वरी, वाणीकी देवी सरस्वतीको ठूलो महिमा छ । वाणीको महत्त्वले गर्दा नै उनलाई समादरणीय स्थान मिलेको हो । भाषाविना समाजको अस्तित्व सम्भव छैन । दुईजना मानिस भेट भए भने भाषा आवश्यक परिहाल्छ । विचार र भावना व्यक्त गर्न भाषा चाहिन्छ । भाषा सामान्यतः लिखित र मौखिक दुईप्रकारले व्यक्त हुने गर्दछ । भाषिक सम्प्रेषणीयताको अभावमा वाङ्मय, धर्म, दर्शन, विज्ञान, वाणिज्य, कला, संस्कृति, राज्यव्यवस्था आदि साराका सारा मानवीय क्रियाकलापहरू अवरुद्ध हुने थिए । भाषाको वरद शक्तिले गर्दा नै मानव सभ्यताको विकास आजको रूपमा आइपुगेको हो (अधिकारी, २०७५ पृ.१) ।” भाषाको शुद्ध, स्तरीय र मानक प्रयोगका साथै भाषिक एरूपता कायम गर्न नेपाली भाषाका प्रयोगकर्ताहरूले सचेतता अपनाउनु आवश्यक हुन्छ ।

सार्वजनिक सूचनामा भाषाको महत्त्वको विषयलाई प्रस्तुत गरेको हुन्छ । भाषा विचार विनिमयको सशक्त माध्यम भएकोले सम्प्रेषित हुने सूचनाको भाषा शुद्ध, स्पष्ट हुनु आवश्यक हुन्छ । सार्वजनिक निकायका सूचना भन्नाले सरकारद्वारा मान्यता प्राप्त, सार्वजनिक रूपमा सेवा प्रवाह गर्ने, रकम प्राप्त गरेर सेवा दिने, सरकारी र गैरसरकारी संघ संस्थालाई लिइएको छ । यी संस्थाहरूले सूचना प्रसारण, सम्प्रेषण गर्ने भाषामा रहेका भाषिक कमी कमजोरीलाई नै त्रुटिका रूपमा लिइएको छ । यी त्रुटिहरूका कारण सिकाइमा कस्तो खालको प्रभाव पर्छ भन्ने विषयलाई अनुसन्धानको मुख्य विषय बनाइएको छ । सार्वजनिक निकायका सूचनामा प्रयुक्त भाषिक त्रुटि र त्यसको शैक्षिक उपादेयता शीर्षकमा अनुसन्धानात्मक कार्य गरिएको नभेटिएकाले यो विषय नवीन, मौलिक र व्यावहारिक भएकाले अनुसन्धानको विषयको रूपमा लिइएको हो । राष्ट्रिय सूचना आयोगले सूचनाको हक कार्यान्वयन निर्देशिका (२०६४, पृ. ५) मा सार्वजनिक निकाय भन्नाले “संवैधान अन्तर्गतका रहेका नेपाल सरकार, प्रदेश सरकारद्वारा ऐन, कानूनबमोजिम स्थापित, गठित सेवाप्रदायक गैरसरकारी, सरकारी, सरकारबाट रकम प्राप्त गरी सञ्चालन हुने र राजपत्रमा सूचना प्रकाशित हुने संघ संस्थालाई सार्वजनिक निकायका रूपमा परिभाषित गरेको पाइन्छ ।” यसरी परिभाषित गरिएका सार्वजनिक निकायहरूबाट सूचना सङ्कलन गरिएको छ ।

सूचना प्राप्त गर्नु नागरिकको नैसर्गिक अधिकार हो । सूचना विश्वसनीय र वैध हुनु आवश्यक हुन्छ । “सरोकारवाला सबैलाई जानकारी दिन लिखित रूपमा प्रकाशित गरिएको पत्र सूचना हो । (सूचनाको हक कार्यान्वयन निर्देशिका, २०६४ पृ. ६) ।” सार्वजनिक सरोकारका सूचनाहरू सत्य, तथ्य रूपमा छिटो छरितो तरिकाले पाउनु पर्छ । “सम्बन्धित सबैलाई जानकारी दिनका लागि लेखिएको वा प्रकाशित गरिएको पत्रलाई सूचना भनिन्छ (शर्मा, ज्ञवाली र ज्ञवाली, २०७३ पृ.१७१) ।” सूचनाका माध्यमले सुसूचित भई आफ्ना प्रयोजनलाई समयमै सम्पादन गर्न सूचनाको आवश्यकता पर्दछ । “कुनै विषयका बारेमा जानकारी दिनका लागि लेखिएको, छापिएको, टाँसिएको विज्ञापन आदि सूचना हो (अधिकारी र भट्टराई २०६३ पृ.१०२८) ।” कुनै विषयको बारेमा जानकारी दिने कार्य सूचना हो ।

भाषाका कथ्य र लेख्य गरी दुई रूप हुन्छन्। कथ्य रूप उच्चारणसँग सम्बन्धित हुन्छ भने लेख्य रूप लिपिचिह्नद्वारा व्यक्त हुन्छ, “कथ्य भाषामा उच्चारणगत त्रुटि देखापर्दछ। लिखित अभिव्यक्तिमा कथ्य भाषाका ध्वनिहरूलाई खासखास लिपिचिह्नद्वारा व्यक्त गर्नु पर्छ। जस्तो प्रयोग गर्ने प्रचलित परम्परा छ, त्यसभन्दा भिन्न रूपमा प्रयोग गर्नु सामयिक हुँदैन। औपचारिक, शिष्ट र स्तरीय भाषिक प्रयोगमा ती भिन्न स्वरूपको विन्यासीय प्रयोग चामलमा बियाँजस्ता अनुभव हुन्छन् (ढकाल र खतिवडा, २०६९ पृ.१५९)।” भाषा मानवीय र सामाजिक वस्तु हो। यो समाजद्वारा पिँढी दरपिँढी हुँदै प्राप्त हुने वस्तु हो। विचार विनिमयको सरल र सुगम माध्यम भाषा हो। मौखिक भाषा ध्वन्यात्मक माध्यम भएकाले विचार विनिमयको लागि सरल, सुगम र प्रभावकारी हुन्छ। भाषाको वास्तविक रूप पनि मौखिक नै हो तर विभिन्न कारणले गर्दा मानवीय समाजमा लिखित भाषाको पनि प्रयोग हुने गर्दछ। भाषाको लिखित माध्यम मौखिक भाषाकै प्रतिरूप हो। यसलाई कागज र कलमको सहायताले मूर्तरूप दिइन्छ। लेख्य भाषा श्रव्यात्मक नभई दृश्यात्मक किसिमको हुन्छ।

लिखित भाषालाई मानवले ज्ञानविज्ञानका क्षेत्रमा उपलब्ध गरेको प्राप्ति र उपादेयतालाई सुरक्षित गरेर राख्न सकिन्छ, र तिनको अध्ययन र प्रयोग गरेर युगयुगान्तरसम्म मानवीय सभ्यताको विकासमा ठूलो टेवा पुर्‍याउन सकिन्छ। “नेपालको सन्दर्भमा विविध ज्ञानको प्रभावकारी सञ्चार गर्नका लागि पनि नेपाली भाषाको प्रयोग गरिन्छ। सञ्चार प्रणालीमा नेपाली भाषाभन्दा पनि अङ्ग्रेजी भाषाको व्यापक प्रयोग गरिएको पाइन्छ। नेपाली भाषाको भूमिका सूचना प्रवाहका रूपमा, सम्प्रेषणका रूपमा, प्रविधिको रूपमा, सूचना ग्रहणका रूपमा गरिनुपर्छ (पौडेल, र धामी, २०७५)।” त्यसैले भाषाको लेख्य रूप जान्नु र मानक रूपको प्रयोग गर्नु अतिआवश्यक हुन्छ। भाषाले विचार, भावना, घटना, परिस्थिति र अवस्थालाई जनाउँछ। गहन र परिष्कृत विचार त्रुटिपूर्ण हुनु राम्रो हुँदैन। विषयको गम्भीरता, गहनता र स्तरीयतालाई भाषाले वहन गर्नुपर्छ। भाषालाई शुद्ध, एकरूपतापूर्ण ढङ्गले व्यावहारिक बनाउने काम व्याकरणले गर्दछ। व्याकरणभित्र वर्णविन्यास पर्दछ। वर्णविन्यास भाषाको एकरूपताका लागि महत्त्वपूर्ण पक्ष हो।

वर्णविन्यास लिखित अभिव्यक्तिसित सम्बन्धित हुन्छ। वर्णहरूको समुचित प्रयोग नै वर्णविन्यास हो। वर्णविन्यासको जथाभावी प्रयोगले अर्थको अनर्थ हुन्छ भने अर्कातिर भाषिक सम्प्रेषणमा समस्या उत्पन्न हुन्छ। भाषा र लिपि राष्ट्रियता र सांस्कृतिक पहिचानका आधार हुन्। अतः भाषाको शुद्ध प्रयोगमा सचेत हुनुपर्छ। नेपाली भाषामा पनि भाषिक अशुद्धिका विषयमा प्रश्न उठ्ने गरेका छन्। नेपाली भाषाको शुद्ध प्रयोगमा अज्ञानता, असावधानी र बेवास्ताजस्ता समस्याहरूका कारण मानक नेपाली भाषाको प्रयोगमा सार्वजनिक गर्ने सूचनामा व्यापक त्रुटि हुने गरेको पाइन्छ। यी त्रुटिहरूले भाषिक अर्थगत त्रुटिका साथै सिकाइमा समेत असर गरेको हुन्छ। त्यसैले यी विविध समस्याहरूका कारण सार्वजनिक सूचनामा प्रयोग भएका भाषिक त्रुटिलाई अध्ययन विश्लेषण गरी भाषा सिकाइमा पारेको प्रभावको खोजी गरी समाधानका उपायहरू पत्ता लगाउनु आवश्यक देखिएकोले सार्वजनिक सूचनामा प्रयोग गरिने भाषाको त्रुटिविश्लेषण र त्यसको शैक्षणिक उपयोगितालाई अनुसन्धानको विषय बनाइएको छ।

यस अनुसन्धान कार्यका लागि मानक नेपाली भाषा प्रयोगको अवस्था कस्तो छ ? सरकारी निकायका सार्वजनिक सूचनामा प्रयुक्त भाषिक त्रुटिहरू के-कस्ता रहेका छन् ? भाषिक त्रुटिहरूमा सुधार ल्याउन के-कस्ता सुझावहरू प्रस्तुत गर्न सकिन्छ ? भाषिक त्रुटिहरूको शैक्षणिक उपादेयताको प्रभाव के कस्तो रहेको छ ? भन्ने समस्यामा आधारित रही अनुसन्धान सरकारी निकायका सार्वजनिक सूचनामा प्रयुक्त भाषिक त्रुटिको पहिचान गर्ने, सरकारी निकायका सार्वजनिक सूचनामा प्रयुक्त भाषिक त्रुटिको तुलनात्मक विश्लेषण गर्ने र त्रुटिहरूको शैक्षणिक उपादेयताको प्रभाव निराकरणका लागि उपायहरू पत्ता लगाई सुझाव प्रस्तुत गर्ने मुख्य समस्यामा केन्द्रित रहेको छ।

अध्ययनविधि

सरकारी निकायका सार्वजनिक सूचनामा प्रयुक्त भाषाको त्रुटि र त्यसको शैक्षिक उपादेयता शीर्षकको अनुसन्धान कार्यलाई मूर्त रूप दिन निम्नानुसारको अध्ययन विधि र प्रक्रियालाई अवलम्बन गरिएको छ।

अनुसन्धान ढाँचा

यस अनुसन्धानमा गुणात्मक ढाँचाको प्रयोग गरिएको छ। यसमा क्षेत्रीय अध्ययन विधिबाट प्राप्त तथ्याङ्कको वर्णन र विश्लेषणबाट निष्कर्ष निकालिएको छ।

नमुना छनोट

प्रस्तुत अध्ययनमा नेपाली भाषाका विभिन्न पक्षमध्ये सोद्देश्यमूलक नमुना छनोट पद्धतिका आधारमा कैलाली जिल्लाको धनगढी उपनगरपालिकाभित्र रहेका सरकारी निकायहरूबाट सामग्री छनोट गरिएको छ।

अध्ययनको क्षेत्र

प्रस्तुत अध्ययनको क्षेत्र सुदूरपश्चिम प्रदेशको कैलाली जिल्लाको धनगढी उपमहानगरपालिका रहेको छ। सरकारी निकायहरूले विभिन्न माध्यमबाट सार्वजनिक सूचना प्रवाह गर्दा गर्ने भाषिक त्रुटिलाई मात्र अध्ययनको क्षेत्रभित्र समावेश गरिएको छ।

तथ्याङ्क सङ्कलनका स्रोतहरू

प्रस्तुत अध्ययनमा नेपाली भाषाको प्रयोग गरी जारी भएका सूचनाहरू र सूचना प्रयोगावस्थाको सूक्ष्म अवलोकनलाई आधार बनाएर प्राथमिक स्रोतको सामग्री सङ्कलन गरिएको छ। सूचना सङ्कलनका लागि वि.सं. २०८० मङ्सिर १ गते देखि २०८१ वैशाख ३० गतेसम्मका सूचनाहरू सङ्कलन गरिएको छ।

अनुसन्धानलाई व्यवस्थित र निर्धारित समयभित्र सम्पन्न गर्नु पर्ने भएकोले विश्वसनीय र वैध सूचना प्राप्तिका लागि मिति २०८० मङ्सिर ०१ गते देखि २०८१ वैशाख ३० गतेसम्मका सूचनालाई लिइएको हो। सूचना सम्बन्धी प्रकाशित, लेख, पत्रिका र विद्युतीय माध्यमलाई द्वितीयक स्रोतका रूपमा लिई व्यावहारिक पक्षको अध्ययन विश्लेषण गरिएको छ। तथ्याङ्क सङ्कलन, सत्यापन र विश्लेषणका लागि तीन जनाको अन्तर्वार्ता समेत लिइएको छ। अन्तर्वार्तामा एकजना निम्न माध्यमिक शिक्षक, एकजना सम्बन्धित कार्यालयको सूचना अधिकारी र एकजना विश्वविद्यालयका प्राध्यापक रहेका छन्।

तथ्य विश्लेषण प्रक्रिया

प्रस्तुत अध्ययनका लागि प्राप्त तथ्यको वर्णन, त्यसको पुष्टिका लागि प्रकाशन शैली (२०७६), स्थानीय तहका लागि तयार पारिएको प्रशिक्षण सामग्रीका रूपमा रहेको नेपाली भाषा शुद्ध लेखन (२०७८), पञ्जा नेपाली बृहत शब्दकोश (२०७९), व्याकरणका पुस्तक, प्रायोगिक भाषाविज्ञानअन्तर्गत गरिने त्रुटि विश्लेषणको सैद्धान्तिक मान्यतामा रही अवलोकन, उदाहरण र प्रयोगबाट निष्कर्ष निकाली निगमन विधिबाट निष्कर्ष प्रस्तुत गरिएको छ।

सैद्धान्तिक पर्याधार

प्रस्तुत लेखमा प्रायोगिक भाषाविज्ञानअन्तर्गतको भाषा योजनामा समेटिने भाषाको मानकीकरणका लागि त्रुटिविश्लेषणलाई सैद्धान्तिक पर्याधार बनाइएको छ। सार्वजनिक सेवा प्रवाहलाई चुस्त र दुरुस्त बनाउन सूचनाको प्रयोग गरिएको हुन्छ। “कुनै पनि व्यक्ति संस्था, कार्यालय, उद्योगधन्दा, व्यवसाय आदि निकायबाट जनता वा सर्वसाधारणका लागि दिने अभिलेखगत जानकारीलाई सूचना भनिन्छ। सूचना कार्यालय वा सङ्गठित संस्थाहरूले आफ्नो सूचना पाटीमा टाँस गर्दछन् तर आम जनताको सरोकारको विषय छ भने विभिन्न पत्रपत्रिका, रेडियो, टेलिभिजन, फेसबुक आदिबाट प्रकाशन र प्रसारण गरिन्छ (भट्टराई, पृ. ४४)।” कुनै पनि सार्वजनिक निकायले सूचनालाई प्रकाशित र सम्प्रेषण गर्दा वर्णविन्यास, भाषा र टङ्कन जस्ता भाषिक अशुद्धिका विषयमा सचेत हुनु आवश्यक हुन्छ।

“वर्णहरूको उचित रखाइलाई वर्णविन्यास भनिन्छ। वर्णहरूको उपयुक्त र स्पष्ट लेखन तथा मिल्दो प्रयोग नै

वर्णविन्यास हो । भाषामा उच्चार्य र लेख्य दुई भेद हुन्छन् । वर्णविन्यासको नियम यी दुवैमा लागु हुनुपर्ने हो तर संसारका धेरै भाषाहरूमा उच्चार्य वर्ण र लेख्य वर्णमा एकता पाइदैन । नेपाली भाषा पनि त्यस परम्पराबाट मुक्त छैन । सामान्यतः वर्णविन्यासभन्दा ह्रस्व र दीर्घका नियमलाई मात्र बुझ्ने गरिन्छ तर त्यति मात्र नभएर सबै खाले वर्णहरूको समुचित विन्यास हुनुपर्छ (नेपाल, २०७८ पृ.६८) ।” लेख्य भाषामा एकरूपता, व्यवस्थितता र नियमितताका लागि वर्ण, अङ्क, लेख्यचिह्नको शुद्ध र क्रमिक विन्यास वर्णविन्यास हो ।

“नेपाली वर्णविन्यास नेपाली नियमको व्यवस्था र तत्सम नियमको व्यवस्था गरी दुई भिन्न व्यवस्थाबाट निर्देशित छ । सामान्यतः ह्रस्व, दीर्घ, श-ष-स, व-व, य-ए, शिरबिन्दु-चन्द्रबिन्दु, अजन्त-हलन्त र पदयोग-पदवियोग आदिसँग सम्बन्धित नियमलाई वर्णविन्यासअन्तर्गत राखिन्छ” (जोशी, २०७९ पृ.९) ।” यी वर्णविन्यासका त्रुटि क्षेत्र हुन् । “विश्वका प्राचीन भाषाहरू संस्कृत, ल्याटिनदेखि बाहेक पछि विकसित भएका अन्य जुनसुकै भाषामा पनि पूर्ववर्ति भाषाका शब्दहरूको आगमन भएको हुन्छ” (नेपाल, २०७८ पृ.६८) । नेपाली भाषामा पनि तत्सम, तद्भव, आगन्तुक र भर्रा नेपाली शब्दहरूको प्रयोग हुन्छ ।

नेपाली भाषा संस्कृत, प्राकृत र अपभ्रंश भई विकसित भएको भाषा हो । नेपाली भाषाको जननी भाषा संस्कृत भाषा हो । “संस्कृत भाषाबाट नेपालीमा आउने क्रममा रूप नबदलिई जस्ताको त्यस्तै आएका शब्दलाई तत्सम भनिन्छ । संस्कृत भाषाबाट नेपालीमा आउँदा रूप परिवर्तन भएर आउने शब्दलाई तद्भव भनिन्छ । संस्कृत भाषाबाहेक अन्य भाषाबाट आएका शब्दलाई आगन्तुक शब्द भनिन्छ । नेपाली भाषाको मौलिक चिनारी बनेर बसेका अनुकरणात्मक, विस्मयादिबोधक, निपात र केही ठेट नेपाली शब्दहरूलाई भर्रा शब्द भनिन्छ” (नेपाल, २०७८ पृ. ६८-७०) ।

सार्वजनिक सूचनामा तत्सम, तद्भव, आगन्तुक शब्दको प्रयोग गरिएको हुन्छ । कुनै खास विषयको सूचना दिनका लागि पठाइएको टाँसिएको, पत्रपत्रिकामा प्रकाशित गरिएको लेखनलाई सूचना भनिन्छ । विद्युतीय सञ्चार माध्यमबाट प्रसारित सूचनाहरू, दैनिक पत्रपत्रिकामा प्रकाशित, प्रसारित सूचनाहरू, घर र टोलमा टाँस गरिएको सरकारी कार्यालयको सूचना वा पाटीमा टाँसिएको पत्राचारबाट जानकारी गराइएका सबै सूचनाहरू हुन् । यस अध्ययनमा पत्र पत्रिकामा प्रयुक्त भाषिक त्रुटि, कार्यालयीय चिठी, विज्ञापन, सूचना, होलिड बोर्ड, नागरिक वडापत्र, निमन्त्रणा, निवेदन एवम् सरकारी कार्यालयहरूले जारी गरेको सूचनामा भाषिक त्रुटिको पहिचान, तुलनात्मक विश्लेषण गरी शैक्षणिक उपादेयताको पक्षलाई उजागर गर्ने कार्य गरिएको छ । हेमाङ्गराज अधिकारी (२०७६) ले ‘नेपाली लेखनमा पदयोग र पद वियोगका समस्या र समाधानका उपाय’ शीर्षकमा लेख प्रस्तुत गरेको पाइन्छ । “पदयोगले एउटा पदका रूपमा आउने एकाइ वा त्यसका अंशलाई एउटा डिकोमा लेखिनु र पद वियोगले एकभन्दा बढी पदलाई भिन्न भिन्न डिकोमा लेखिनुलाई जनाएको छ । एउटै पदका अंश वा खण्डलाई एकल डिकोमा लेख्ने कि भिन्न डिकोमा भन्ने कुरा नै नेपाली लेखनमा पदयोग र पदवियोगको समस्याको समाधानको विभिन्न प्रयासहरूको समीक्षा गरिएको छ” । यसले सूचनामा भाषिक त्रुटि र शैक्षणिक उपयोगिताको अध्ययनका लागि मद्दत गरेको छ ।

भाषामा त्रुटिहरू हुने गर्दछन् । भाषिक त्रुटिको विश्लेषण गर्ने सैद्धान्तिक आधारका रूपमा त्रुटि विश्लेषणलाई लिइन्छ । “त्रुटिहरूलाई विकासशीलता, भाषाकोटि, स्रोत, गम्भीरता, व्यापकता, स्वरूप र अनौचित्यका आधारमा वर्गीकरण गर्न सकिन्छ (ढकाल, २०७८ पृ. १६४) ।” सरकारी निकायका सार्वजनिक सूचनामा प्रयुक्त भाषिक त्रुटि र त्यसको शैक्षणिक उपयोगिताको अध्ययनका लागि सहयोगी सामग्री बनेको छ । भाषा शिक्षण प्रायोगिक भाषाविज्ञानको एउटा प्रमुख पक्ष हो । नेपालमा बालबालिकाका लागि लेखिएका पाठ्यसामग्रीहरूमा वर्णविन्यासमा एकरूपता देखिदैन । त्यसले बालबालिकाको पढाइ र लेखाइमा मनोवैज्ञानिक रूपले ठुलो असर गरेको पाइन्छ । मातृभाषी तथा विमातृभाषी दुवै खालका बालबालिकाहरूलाई पढाइ र लेखाइमा एकरूपता र सरलता कायम गरी गुणस्तरीय शिक्षा प्रदान गर्नका लागि विशुद्ध बाल उपयोगी शैक्षणिक प्रयोजनका लागि पनि लेखाइमा मानकीकरण गरिएका प्रशस्त उदाहरणहरू भेटिन्छन् । नेपाली जस्तो सरकारी कामकाज र शिक्षणको माध्यम भाषाको रूपमा प्रयुक्त भाषामा यसका भाषावैज्ञानिक विशेषताहरू केलार्दै लेखाइलाई पनि कम भन्दा कम नियमहरूका आधारमा सरलीकृत

गर्दै जानुपर्दछ । यो आजको आवश्यकता हो । यस प्रयोजनबाट गरिएका प्रयाहरूले औचित्यलाई राम्रोसँग पुष्टि भने गर्नुपर्दछ । शैक्षणिक प्रयोजनका लागि गरिने वर्णविन्यास सुधारलाई मलोन (२००४) ले पुष्टि गरेकी छन् ।

लुइटेल (२०७३) ले नेपाली भाषामा बल्काइएका समस्या र समाधानका उपायहरू नामक कार्यपत्रमा दिइएको प्रहरीले हिजो सातजना चोर समात्यो र भोलिपल्ट 'तिनलाई छोडिदियो' भन्ने वाक्यलाई भट्ट हेर्दा 'तिन' शब्दले दुई अर्थ दिन सक्ने देखिन्छ । यस वाक्यमा 'तिन' को पछाडि मानव जनाउने कोटिकार 'जना' जोडिएको छैन । तैपनि धेरै मातृभाषाले यो वाक्यको 'तिन' ले सङ्ख्या नबुझाई पहिलो पढाइमा सार्वनामिक विशेषण 'सबै' भन्ने बुझाएको पाइन्छ । दोस्रो वा तेस्रो पढाइमा मात्र सङ्ख्या बुझाउने देखिन्छ भनेर उल्लेख गरेको पाइन्छ । नेपाली भाषामा श्रुतिसमभिन्नार्थक अर्थ दिने शब्दहरू छन् । श्रुतिसमभिन्नार्थक शब्दहरूको उचित प्रयोग नभएमा अर्थको अनर्थ हुने कुराको पुष्टि गरेको पाइन्छ । सूचनामा शुद्धता, शिष्टता, सन्तुलन, विश्वसनीयता, स्वच्छता जस्ता गुण हुनु आवश्यक हुन्छ । हरेक सरकारी निकायले आम सरोकारवाला पक्षहरूलाई सुसूचित गर्न विभिन्न माध्यमबाट सूचना जारी गर्दछन् । ती जारी गरिएका सूचनामा भाषिक त्रुटिहरू हुने गरेको पाइन्छ । सरकारी निकायहरूले सूचना जारी गर्दा मानक नेपाली भाषाको शुद्ध र शिष्ट प्रयोगमा शब्द चयनगत, व्याकरणिक, वर्ण विन्यासगत, व्याकरणिक त्रुटिहरू हुने गरेको पाइन्छ । सरकारी कार्यालयहरूले सार्वजनिक सूचना जारी गर्दा हुने त्रुटिहरूको पहिचान गरी शैक्षणिक क्षेत्रमा पठनपाठनका निम्ति शैक्षिक सामग्री निर्माण तथा अभ्यास निर्माण गर्ने कार्यमा यसले मद्दत गर्दछ । व्यक्तिको सूचना प्रवाह गर्ने क्षमताको पहिचान गरी सुधार गर्न, सूचना प्रवाह गर्ने व्यक्तिले आत्मआलोचना गरी सूचना प्रवाहमा चुस्तता, दुरुस्तता, शुद्धता, शिष्टता कायम गर्नका लागि अनुसन्धानमा सार्वजनिक सूचनामा भएका त्रुटिको र शुद्ध रूपको तुलना गरी देखाइएको छ ।

नतिजा

प्रस्तुत अध्ययनको क्षेत्र सुदूरपश्चिम प्रदेशको कैलाली जिल्लाको धनगढी उपमहानगरपालिका रहेको छ । सरकारी निकायहरूले विभिन्न माध्यमबाट सार्वजनिक सूचना प्रवाह गर्दा गर्ने भाषिक त्रुटिलाई मात्र अध्ययनको क्षेत्रभित्र समावेश गरिएको छ । सार्वजनिक निकायका भाषिक त्रुटिले शैक्षिक उपादेयताको पक्षलाई कसरी लिएको छ भन्ने पक्षलाई अनुसन्धानको क्षेत्रभित्र समेटिएको छ । सार्वजनिक सूचना सम्बन्धी भाषिक त्रुटि र त्यसको शैक्षणिक उपादेयताका विषयमा सूचना अधिकारी, निम्नमाध्यमिक नेपाली विषय शिक्षक र क्याम्पसमा अध्यापनरत नेपाली विषय शिक्षकको अन्तर्वार्तालाई निम्नानुसार उल्लेख गरिएको छ :

सरकारी कार्यालयका सूचना अधिकारीका अनुसार “भाषागत नवीन प्रयोगको ज्ञानको अभाव, कतिपय ठाउँमा प्राविधिक विषय पढेकाहरूलाई सूचना अधिकारीको जिम्मेवारी दिँइनु, भाषाको नवीनतम प्रयोगका बारेमा सेमिनार, गोष्ठी, तालिम केही नहुनु, मुद्रण, टङ्कण र प्रिन्ट गर्दा फन्टहरूको असर पर्नु, प्रिन्ट गरिएका सूचनाहरू सच्याएर सार्वजनिक गर्ने कार्य नहुनु, काम चलेपछि भइहाल्यो भन्ने सोच र प्रवृत्तिका कारण नै सूचनामा भाषिक त्रुटिहरू हुने कुरा” अन्तर्वार्तामा उल्लेख गरेका छन् । त्रुटिहरू वर्ण विन्यासीय, शब्द चयनगत, व्याकरणिक, अर्थतात्त्विक विभिन्न किसिमका हुने बताएका छन् ।

निम्न माध्यमिक तहमा अध्यापनरत नेपाली भाषा विषयका शिक्षकका अनुसार “सरकारी निकायका सूचना अधिकारी भाषाको प्रयोगमा जिम्मेवार बन्नु पर्ने, बौद्धिक व्यक्तिले भाषाको प्रयोगमा सच्चिपर सक्षम हुनुपर्ने, ज्ञानको कुरा संशय भएकाले आलोचना भएपछि मात्र अँ हो भन्नुभन्दा पनि नेपाली भाषाको मानक प्रयोगका लागि प्रकाशित प्रज्ञा नेपाली बृहत शब्दकोश, शैली पुस्तिकाको प्रयोग गर्नुपर्ने र भाषामा भइरहेको खेलवाड र बेवास्ताप्रति समयमै सच्चिपर सावधानी अपनाउनु पर्ने, नेपाली भाषा विषयका शिक्षकहरूको मात्र नेपाली शुद्ध लेखनको ठेक्का नभएर इतर नेपाली विषयका शिक्षक एवम् नेपाली भाषाका प्रयोक्ता जो कसैले पनि नेपाली भाषा आउँदैन, जान्दैन भन्न नपाउने, सरकारले सार्वजनिक सूचनाको अनुगमन र निगरानी गर्नुपर्ने” कुरालाई अन्तर्वार्तामा उल्लेख गरेका छन् ।

क्याम्पसमा अध्यापनरत नेपाली भाषा विषयका शिक्षकका अनुसार “संविधानतः ऐन, नियम बमोजिम खोलिएका,

सार्वजनिक सूचना प्रवाह गर्ने निकाय नै सार्वजनिक निकाय हुन् भने ती निकायहरूले आम जनसरोकारका विषयहरूलाई सुसूचित गराउन प्रयोगमा आउने सूचना नै सार्वजनिक सूचना हुन् । सार्वजनिक सूचना सरल, सहज, शुद्ध र स्पष्ट रूपमा पाउनु नागरिकको अधिकारको विषय पनि हो । सूचनाहरू अहिले मनलाग्दो तरिकाले मानक नेपाली भाषाको विपरित दिशातिर उन्मुख भई प्रकाशित, प्रसारित भएको पाइन्छ । यो भाषाप्रतिको बेवास्ता हो । एउटै सार्वजनिक सूचनामा १०/१५ देखि २०/२५ ओटा सम्म विविध प्रकृतिका भाषिक त्रुटिहरू देखिन्छन् । सूचनामा देखिने यस्तो त्रुटि लज्जास्पद मानिन्छ । मानक नेपाली भाषाको प्रयोग गरी सूचना सम्प्रेषण भएको पाइँदैन । नेपाली पढेकाले वा नेपाली विषय शिक्षकको मात्र नेपाली भाषा शुद्ध लेखन र प्रयोग गर्ने ठेक्का हो भन्ने मानसिकताले ग्रसित, अंग्रेजी भाषाप्रतिको लगाव, टङ्कण, मुद्रणमा समस्या, नियमन, निगरानीको समस्या, तालिम, सेमिनार, गोष्ठी नहुनु र प्रज्ञा नेपाली बृहत शब्दकोशको प्रयोग नगरिनु, मानक भाषा प्रयोगका लागि प्रशिक्षण नहुने समस्याले सूचनामा त्रुटि हुने गरेको पाइन्छ । सूचनामा हुने यही गल्तीको अन्धानुकरण सिकारूले गर्ने भएकाले सिकाइमा नकारात्मक प्रभाव पर्दछ । भाषाको प्रयोगमा सचेतता अपनाई प्रयोग व्यवहार गर्नु ” आवश्यक रहेको कुरा अन्तर्वार्तामा उल्लेख गरेका छन् । सार्वजनिक सूचनामा प्रयुक्त भाषाको त्रुटि विश्लेषण र त्यसको शैक्षणिक उपादेयतालाई निम्नानुसार अध्ययन विश्लेषण गरिएको छ ।

मानक नेपाली भाषा र सरकारी कार्यालयमा हुने भाषिक प्रयोगगत त्रुटि

मानक नेपाली भाषा सरकारी कामकाजको भाषा हो । साभ्ना सम्पर्कको भाषा, आमसञ्चार, पत्रपत्रिका, पठनपाठनको भाषाका साथै विश्वव्यापीकरणको दिशातर्फ अग्रसर भइरहेको भाषाको रूपमा नेपाली भाषा रहेको छ । मानक नेपाली भाषा र सरकारी कार्यालयका सार्वजनिक सूचनामा हुने भाषिक प्रयोगगत त्रुटिहरूलाई निम्नानुसार उल्लेख गरिएको छ ।

वर्णविन्यासगत त्रुटि

वर्णविन्यास सम्बन्धी त्रुटिलाई निम्नानुसार उल्लेख गर्न सकिन्छ:

ह्रस्व - दीर्घ सम्बन्धी त्रुटि

नेपालीका इ, उ, र ऋ ह्रस्व वर्ण हुन् । यी स्वरवर्णहरू स्वतन्त्र रूपमा प्रयोग हुँदा यस रूपमा आए पनि व्यञ्जनसँग मिल्नासाथ कि, कु, रु, कृ बन्दछन् । दीर्घ स्वर मानिने ई र ऊ पनि व्यञ्जनका साथ आउँदा की, कू बनेर आउँछन् (नेपाल, २०७८, पृ. ७१) । ह्रस्व वा दीर्घ इकार उकारको प्रयोग निम्नानुसार हुन्छ ।

ह्रस्व सम्बन्धी त्रुटि

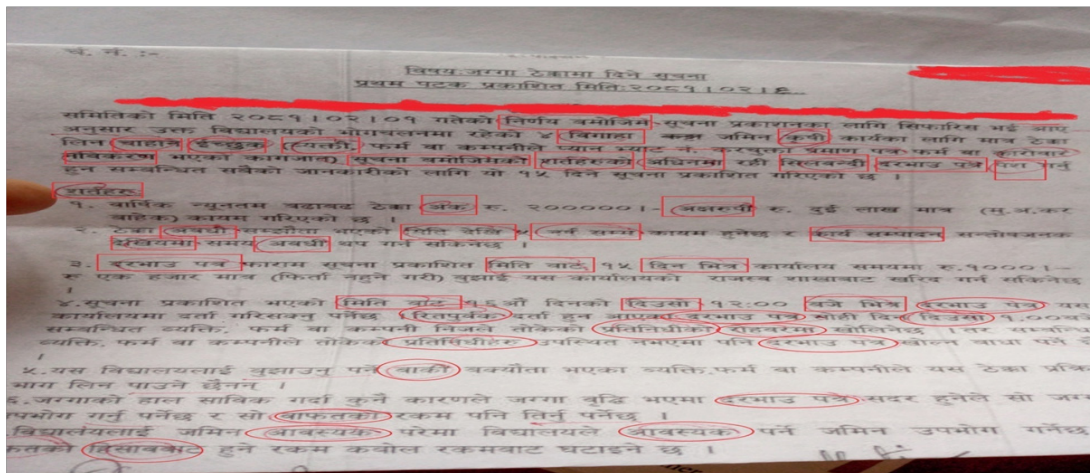
शब्दका सुरुमा ह्रस्व इकार र उकारको प्रयोग हुन्छ । उपसर्ग लागेर बनेका शब्दहरू, द्वि, त्रि सुरुमा आउने सङ्ख्यावाचक शब्दहरू, अव्युत्पन्न नामहरू, आगन्तुक नाम, एकाक्षरीवाहेकका सबै सर्वनाम, विशेषण शब्द, धातु, क्रियापद, अव्यय, अनुकरणात्मक शब्द, तत्सम शब्दमा नेपाली इकार, उकार लागेका शब्दहरू पदादिमा ह्रस्व हुन्छन् । पदमध्यमा अनु, अभि, अति, प्रति, परि उपसर्ग लागेका शब्दहरू ह्रस्व हुन्छन् । व्युत्पन्न नाम, अव्युत्पन्न नाम, आगन्तुक नाम, सबै विशेषण, क्रियापद, कर्म र भाव वाच्यका क्रियापद र अनुकरणात्मक शब्दहरू पदमध्यमा ह्रस्व हुन्छन् । पदान्तमा सबै पुलिङ्गी नाम ह्रस्व हुन्छन् । अपवादमा परेका खसी, सम्धी, हात्ती र स्वामी दीर्घ हुन्छ । स्थानवाचक र निर्जीव नाम, आइ, आई, याइ, याई, आउ, नु, प्रत्यय लागेर बनेका शब्द, आरू, आलु, उ, एलु, तु प्रत्यय लागेका विशेषण शब्द, सबै मूल अवयवहरू, लाई, की, री नी वाहेकका अन्य विभक्तिहरू ह्रस्व हुन्छन् (नेपाल, २०७८ पृ. ७२-७३) । ह्रस्व लेखनसम्बन्धी स्पष्ट नियम भए तापनि सरकारी निकायका सार्वजनिक सूचनामा शुद्ध र मानक नेपाली सम्बन्धी निम्नानुसारका त्रुटिहरू गरेका पाइन्छन् ।

तालिका नं. १

ह्रस्व सम्बन्धी त्रुटि

अशुद्ध रूप	शुद्ध रूप
लागी	लागि
उल्लेखित	उल्लिखित
देखी	देखि
ईच्छुक	इच्छुक
फूलवारी	फुलवारी

चित्र नं. १



माथिको तालिका नं. १ मा ह्रस्व सम्बन्धी त्रुटि प्रस्तुत गरिएको छ । सरकारी निकायका सार्वजनिक सूचनामा ह्रस्व सम्बन्धी त्रुटि कम हुने गरेको पाइन्छ । माथि प्रस्तुत भएका लागी, देखी, ईच्छुक शब्दहरू क्रमशः लागि, देखि, इच्छुक भएर सूचनामा प्रयोग हुनुपर्ने देखिन्छ । ह्रस्व र दीर्घको प्रयोगले भाषिक अभिव्यक्ति र अर्थबोधमा फरक पर्ने भएकोले मानक नेपाली भाषाको नियमानुसार प्रयोग गर्नु आवश्यक हुन्छ ।

दीर्घ सम्बन्धी त्रुटि

संस्कृतबाट नेपालीमा जस्ताको तस्तै आएका यी शब्दहरू मूल, जीवन, दीपक, कूप, शूल, भीषण, भूगोल, भूमि, सूचना, उकार आदिमा भएका शब्दमा 'सु' उपसर्ग लागेर बनेका अन्त्यमा दीर्घ हुने 'सूक्त', 'सूक्ति' आदि शब्दहरू दीर्घ हुन्छन् । अनीय, ईय, ईन, प्रत्यय लागेका शब्दहरू दीर्घ हुन्छन् । करण, कृत, कार, भवन, भावसँग जोडिने शब्दहरू दीर्घ हुन्छन् । शब्दका अन्त्यमा 'ई' प्रत्यय आउने शब्द, वती, वी, प्रत्यय लागेर बनेका शब्द, सबै स्त्रीलिङ्गी नामपद, विशेषण, पेसा, थर, जाति बुझाउने शब्द, ईकारान्त निर्जीव नाम, सबै सर्वनाम, सबै ईकारान्त विशेषणहरू दीर्घ हुन्छन् (नेपाल, २०७८ पृ. ७४)। सरकारी निकायका सार्वजनिक सूचनामा देहाय बमोजिमका दीर्घ सम्बन्धी भाषिक त्रुटिहरू हुने गरेका पाइन्छन् ।

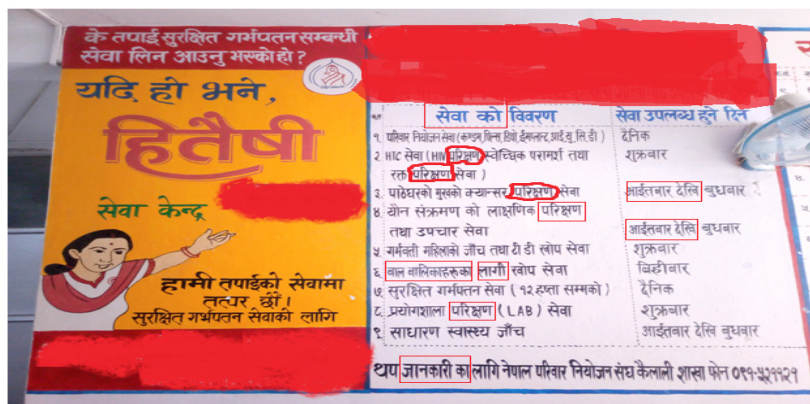
तालिका नं. २

दीर्घ सम्बन्धी त्रुटि

अशुद्ध रूप	शुद्ध रूप
परिक्षण	परीक्षण
सूचना	सूचना
समूह	समूह
तपशील	तपसील
हरु	हरू
सुदुरपश्चिम	सुदूरपश्चिम
स्थानिय	स्थानीय
नवीकरण	नवीकरण
पशुपंक्षी	पशुपन्क्षी
सम्बन्धि	सम्बन्धी
गर्नेलाइ	गर्नेलाई
माननिय	माननीय
उद्यमशिलता	उद्यमशीलता
विविधिकरण	विविधीकरण
आपूर्ति	आपूर्ति
एकिकृत	एकीकृत
पञ्जिकरण	पञ्जीकरण

चित्र नं. २

दीर्घ प्रयोग सम्बन्धी त्रुटि



माथिको तालिकामा नं. २ मा दीर्घ प्रयोग सम्बन्धी त्रुटि प्रयोग गरिएको छ । उच्चारणमा लामो समय लिनै वर्ण नै दीर्घ वर्ण हुन् । प्रस्तुत परिक्षण, सूचना, समूह, तपशील, हरु, सुदुरपश्चिम, स्थानिय, नवीकरण, पशुपंक्षी, सम्बन्धि, गर्नेलाइ, माननिय, उद्यमशिलता, विविधिकरण, आपूर्ति, एकिकृत, पञ्जिकरण शब्दहरूको प्रयोग दीर्घ हुनुपर्ने ठाउँमा ढस्व भएको छ । प्रस्तुत शब्दहरू क्रमशः 'परीक्षण', 'सूचना', 'समूह', 'तपसील', 'हरू', 'सुदूरपश्चिम', 'स्थानीय', 'नवीकरण', 'पशुपन्क्षी', 'सम्बन्धी', 'गर्नेलाई', 'माननीय', 'उद्यमशीलता', 'विविधीकरण', 'आपूर्ति', 'एकीकृत',

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‘पञ्जीकरण’ को प्रयोग भई लेखिनु पर्छ । शब्दकोशमा यी शब्दहरूको शुद्ध प्रयोग दिइएको छ । त्यसैगरी व्याकरणिक नियम पनि दीर्घ रहेको अवस्थामा व्यावहारिक कार्य सम्पादनका क्रममा शुद्ध प्रयोग भएको पाइँदैन । शब्दकोश, शैली पुस्तिका र व्याकरणको प्रयोग गरी सूचना सार्वजनिक गर्नपर्ने देखिन्छ ।

श- ष- स सम्बन्धी त्रुटि

नेपालीमा एउटा मात्र ‘स’ को प्रयोग हुन्छ । तत्सम शब्दमा शास्त्र, कृषक, सुत जस्ता शब्दमा तीनओटै ‘श’ ‘ष’ ‘स’ को प्रयोग भए पनि आगन्तुक र तद्भव शब्दमा भने सबैतिर ‘स’ को मात्र प्रयोग गर्नुपर्छ । ‘श’ को प्रयोग तत्सम शब्दमा हुन्छ । ‘श’, ‘ष’ ‘स’ तीनओटामा कुनै पनि दुईओटा आएमा अगाडिको ‘श’ हुन्छ । ‘चवर्ग’ र ‘ल’ का अघि ‘श’ हुन्छ । ‘ऋ’ र ‘र’ का साथमा ‘श’ हुन्छ । विसर्गका अगाडि ‘श’ हुन्छ । ‘ष’ को प्रयोग ट, ठ, ड, ढ, ण र केही ‘प’ का अगाडि ‘ष’ हुन्छ । ‘इ’ र ‘उ’ का अघि ‘क’ र ‘प’ छन् भने ‘ष’ को प्रयोग हुन्छ । ‘स’ को प्रयोग स, सत, सम, सु, स्व, स्वयम् आदि जोडिएका शब्दका सुरुमा हुन्छ । शब्दका मध्यमा प्रायः ‘स’ हुन्छ । ‘स’ को प्रयोग हुने नामपद, सर्वनाम, विशेषण, धातु र क्रियापद, अव्ययमा हुन्छ । तत्समबाट तद्भव हुँदा ‘श’, ‘ष’ परिवर्तन भएर ‘स’ हुन्छ । सबै आगन्तुक शब्दहरूमा ‘स’ को प्रयोग हुन्छ । (नेपाल, २०७८ पृ. ७७) । सरकारी निकायका सार्वजनिक सूचनामा निम्नानुसारका भाषिक त्रुटिहरू हुने गरेका पाइन्छन् ।

तालिका नं. ३

‘श’ सम्बन्धी त्रुटि

अशुद्ध रूप	शुद्ध रूप
विश्लेषण	विश्लेषण
सासन	शासन
शुसासन	सुशासन
प्रसासन	प्रशासन
आवश्यक	आवश्यक

माथिको तालिका नं. ३ मा ‘श’ सम्बन्धी त्रुटिहरू दिइएका छन् । तत्सम शब्दमा ‘श’ को प्रयोग गरिन्छ । मानक नेपालीमा संस्कृतबाट नेपालीमा जस्ताको त्यस्तै रूपमा आएर प्रयोग व्यवहारमा व्यवहृत भएका शब्दलाई तत्सम शब्दका रूपमा लिइन्छ । प्रस्तुत ‘विश्लेषण’, ‘सासन’, ‘शुसासन’, ‘प्रसासन’, ‘आवश्यक’ शब्दहरूको प्रयोग सार्वजनिक सूचनामा त्रुटि भई प्रकाशित भएका पाइन्छन् । प्रस्तुत शब्दहरूलाई क्रमशः ‘विश्लेषण’, ‘शासन’, ‘सुशासन’, ‘प्रशासन’, ‘आवश्यक’ को मानक प्रयोगमा लेख्नु पर्ने देखिन्छ ।

तालिका नं. ४

‘ष’ सम्बन्धी त्रुटि

अशुद्ध	शुद्ध रूप
कृषि	कृषि
वरिस्ट	वरिष्ठ
पुष्प	पुष्प
मस्तिस्क	मस्तिष्क

प्रस्तुत तालिका नं. ४ मा ‘ष’ को प्रयोग गरिएका शब्दहरू उल्लेख गरिएका छन् । ‘श’ र ‘ष’ संस्कृतका वर्ण हुन् । ‘ष’ को प्रयोग पनि तत्सम शब्दमा नै बढी हुन्छ । संस्कृत भाषालाई नेपाली भाषाको जननी भाषाका रूपमा लिने मान्यता भएकोले मानक भाषाको प्रयोगमा ‘ष’ को समीचीन प्रयोग हुनु आवश्यक मानिन्छ । सार्वजनिक सूचनामा प्रस्तुत

‘कृषि’, ‘वरिस्ट’, ‘पुस्प’, ‘मस्तिष्क’ जस्ता शब्दहरूको प्रयोग त्रुटिपूर्ण रहेको पाइन्छ। यी शब्दहरूलाई मानक नेपाली भाषामा प्रयोग गर्दा क्रमशः ‘कृषि’, ‘वरिष्ठ’, ‘पुष्प’, ‘मस्तिष्क’ का रूपमा प्रयोग गरिनु पर्छ।

तालिका नं. ५

‘स’ सम्बन्धी त्रुटि

अशुद्ध रूप	शुद्ध रूप
सेमेष्टर	सेमेस्टर
कोर्ष करार	कोर्स करार
शर्त	सर्त
पेश	पेस
पोष्ट	पोस्ट

चित्र नं. ३

माथिको तालिका नं. ५ मा ‘स’ को प्रयोग गरिएका शब्दहरू उल्लेख गरिएका छन्। ‘श’ र ‘ष’ संस्कृत वर्ण हुन भने ‘स’ नेपालीको वर्ण हो। आगन्तुक शब्द, नेपालीका मौलिक शब्दहरूमा ‘स’ को प्रयोग गरिन्छ। प्रस्तुत ‘सेमेष्टर’, ‘कोर्ष’, ‘शर्त’, ‘पेश’, ‘पोष्ट’ शब्दहरूको क्रमशः शुद्ध मानक रूप ‘आवश्यक’, ‘सेमेस्टर’, ‘सर्त’, ‘पेस’, ‘पोस्ट’ को रूपमा प्रयोग हुनु पर्ने देखिन्छ।

ब- व सम्बन्धी त्रुटि

‘व’ र ‘व’ को प्रयोग हुने कतिपय शब्दमा कथ्य र लेख्य रूप फरक फरक देखिने हुनाले वर्णविन्यासमा अन्योल देखापरेको छ। तत्सम शब्दमा चाहिँ उच्चारण र लेखनमा भिन्नाभिन्नै रूप देखिन्छ। कवि, वन, रवि जस्ता तत्सम शब्दको लेखनमा ‘व’ भए पनि उच्चारण ‘ब’ हुन्छ तर तद्भव र आगन्तुक शब्दमा भने जस्तो उच्चारण गरिन्छ त्यस्तो लेख्नुपर्छ (नेपाल, २०७८ पृ. ७८)। ‘व’ र ‘व’ को प्रयोगलाई निम्नानुसार उल्लेख गर्न सकिन्छ।

नेपाली भाषाको शुद्ध लेखनमा द, ध, ल, ह, हम्का अगाडि प्रायः ‘व’ हुन्छ। आधा ‘प’ का पछि ‘व’ हुन्छ। बकुल्लो बख्खु, बचत, बच्चा जस्ता स्पष्ट ‘व’ उच्चारण हुने शब्दहरू, अब, तब, जब, बजे, बरु ‘व’ उच्चारण हुने अवयवहरू, बाँच्, बेच्, बस्, बेर्, बग्छ, बर्सिन्छ, बास्यो, बाँध्छे, बिभायो, बारेछ जस्ता धातु र क्रियापदहरूमा ‘व’ को प्रयोग गरिन्छ। बे, बद, बि उपसर्ग लागेका शब्दहरू जस्तै: बेकाम, बेमेल, बदनाम, बदनियत आदिमा पनि ‘व’ को प्रयोग हुन्छ (नेपाल, २०७८ पृ. ७८) सरकारी निकायका सार्वजनिक सूचनामा ‘व’ सम्बन्धी त्रुटिहरू निम्नानुसार रहेका पाइन्छन्।

‘ब’ सम्बन्धी त्रुटि

अशुद्ध रूप	शुद्ध रूप
वाँभो	वाँभो
विफर	बिफर
वोक्रो	बोक्रो
वुद्धि	बुद्धि
वकस	बकस
बदनाम	बदनाम
तलव	तलब
तलवी	तलबी
कार्यालयवाट	कार्यालयवाट

विषय: सविस्तर खोरादीरीका नामि खाचनुति सत्यसधाम ।
 बी कैलाशी जिल्ला स्थित विद्यालयहरू ।
 उपरिले सत्यसधाम खाचु अर्थिक वर्ष २०२०/२०२१ को खरीदुत सार्विकमा अनुसार
 जोडिएर सब २५६० भा यस उपरिमात्र विवरण हुने सारिकमा अनुसार खाचुत नामि यस जिल्ला स्थित विद्यालयमा अध्ययनरत बालबालिकाहरू र
 विद्यालयहरूलाई मिति २०२०/२१ २५/०७/२०२०/२१/२१ मिति तैयार गरिने गरिने इन्डियामा
 सम्बिलित कराजात समेत बल्लेको सारिकमा नामि यस जिल्ला स्थित विद्यालयमा अध्ययनरत बालबालिकाहरू र
 विद्यालयहरूलाई सत्यसधाम प्राप्त बजारको र कराजात अनुसार भएका विवरण उपर कुनै खाचुत
 नहुने जस्तोमा र खाचुति खाचुत उपरमात्र नहुने समेत जानकारी भएतामात्र ।

तपस्विलः

- विद्यालयको सत्यसधामको नाममात्र सार्विकमा अनुसार सत्यसधाम उपरमात्र उपरमात्र उपरमात्र ।
- सत्यसधाम उपरमात्र नहुने सत्यसधामका सत्यसधाम उपरमात्र उपरमात्र उपरमात्र उपरमात्र उपरमात्र ।
- सत्यसधाम उपरमात्र उपरमात्र उपरमात्र उपरमात्र उपरमात्र उपरमात्र उपरमात्र उपरमात्र उपरमात्र उपरमात्र ।
- विद्यालयमा उपरमात्र उपरमात्र उपरमात्र उपरमात्र उपरमात्र उपरमात्र उपरमात्र उपरमात्र उपरमात्र उपरमात्र ।
- सत्यसधाम उपरमात्र उपरमात्र उपरमात्र उपरमात्र उपरमात्र उपरमात्र उपरमात्र उपरमात्र उपरमात्र उपरमात्र ।
- विद्यालयको नाममात्र खाचुत खाचुत उपरमात्र उपरमात्र उपरमात्र उपरमात्र उपरमात्र उपरमात्र उपरमात्र उपरमात्र उपरमात्र उपरमात्र ।
- सत्यसधामका सत्यसधाम उपरमात्र उपरमात्र उपरमात्र उपरमात्र उपरमात्र उपरमात्र उपरमात्र उपरमात्र उपरमात्र उपरमात्र ।

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‘व’ सम्बन्धी

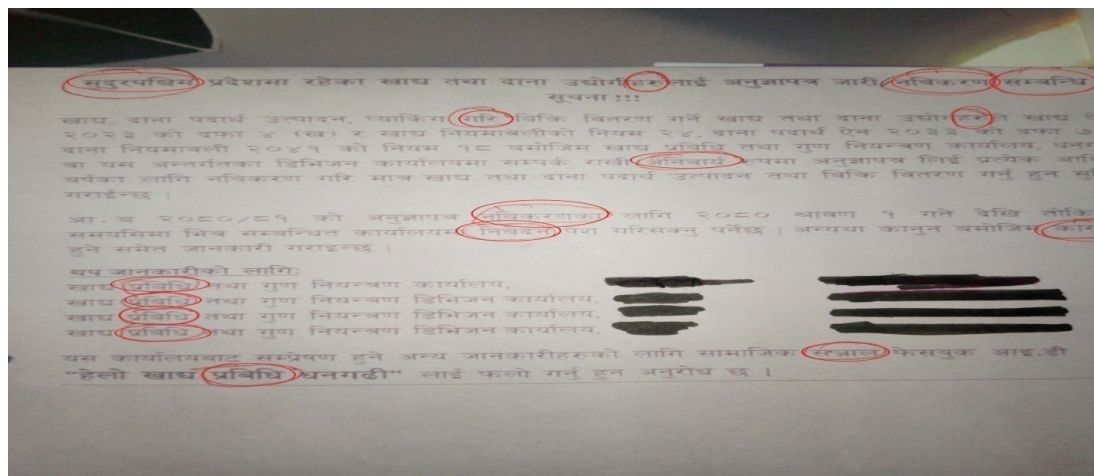
‘वि’ उपसर्ग लागेका शब्दहरू, वै, रेफ, ऋ भएका शब्दहरू, वर, तव्य, त्व, वत्, वान्, वती प्रत्यय लागेका शब्दहरू, ‘सम्’ उपसर्गपछिका शब्दहरू, सन्तानवाचक शब्दका अन्त्यमा र कुवा, कौवा, खुवा, गँवार, जुवाँड, तावा, देवर, वैदिक, पुवा, पालुवा, पावर जस्ता शब्दहरूमा ‘व’ लेखिन्छ (नेपाल, २०७८ पृ. ७८) । सरकारी निकायका सार्वजनिक सूचनामा निम्नानुसारका त्रुटिहरू रहेका पाइन्छन् ।

तालिका नं. ७

‘व’ सम्बन्धी त्रुटि

अशुद्ध रूप	शुद्ध रूप
आवेदन	आवेदन
अनिवार्य	अनिवार्य
निवेदन	निवेदन
प्रविधि	प्रविधि
द्वै	द्वै
विषय	विषय
द्वारा	द्वारा
विस्तृत	विस्तृत
प्रस्ताव	प्रस्ताव
विवरण	विवरण
वार्षिक	वार्षिक

चित्र नं. ५



तालिका नं. ७ मा 'व' सम्बन्धी त्रुटि प्रस्तुत गरिएको छ। 'व' को प्रयोगमा सचेतता र सावधानी प्रयोग कम भएको पाइन्छ। आवेदन, अनिवार्य, निवेदन, प्रविधि, दुवै, विषय, द्वारा, विस्तृत, प्रस्ताव, विवरण, वार्षिक जस्ता शब्दमा 'व' को प्रयोग हुनुपर्नेमा 'ब' को प्रयोग गरिएकोले असावधानीको प्रयोगले अत्यधिक मात्रामा भएको पाइन्छ। माथि दिइएका शब्दहरू क्रमशः 'आवेदन', 'अनिवार्य', 'निवेदन', 'प्रविधि', 'दुवै', 'विषय', 'द्वारा', 'विस्तृत', 'प्रस्ताव', 'विवरण'

‘को’ शुद्ध प्रयोग हुनुपर्ने देखिन्छ। ‘व’ र ‘व’ को प्रयोगमा अन्योल देखिनुको मुख्य कारण कथ्य र लेख्य रूप फरक फरक हुनु हो।

क्ष- छ सम्बन्धी त्रुटि

यी वर्णमा पनि लेखन र उच्चारण दुवैमा स्पष्ट भिन्नता छ तर कतिपय अवस्थामा यिनले पनि लेख्य रूपमा प्रभाव पार्ने गरेका छन्। क्ष, क्षे र क्ष्यको प्रयोग क्षण, क्षति, क्षमा, अक्षर, नक्षत्र, भक्षण, कक्ष, अध्यक्ष, लक्ष्य, परिप्रेक्ष्य आरक्ष्य, क्षेत्र, क्षेत्रीय तत्सम शब्दमा हुन्छ। छ, छे, छ्यको प्रयोग तत्सम, तद्भव र आगन्तुक शब्दमा हुन्छ। छेक, छेकारो, छेपारो, छेस्को जस्ता शब्दमा ‘छे’ को प्रयोग हुन्छ। ओछ्यान, छ्याप्प, छ्यास्स जस्ता शब्दहरूमा ‘छ’ को प्रयोग हुन्छ (नेपाल, २०७८ पृ. ८०)। सार्वजनिक निकायका सूचनाहरूमा निम्नानुसारका त्रुटिहरू हुने गरेका पाइन्छन्।

क्ष- छ

यी वर्णमा पनि लेखन र उच्चारण दुवैमा स्पष्ट भिन्नता छ तर कतिपय अवस्थामा यिनले पनि लेख्य रूपमा प्रभाव रूपमा पार्ने गरेका छन् (नेपाल, २०७८ पृ. ८०)। सरकारी निकायका सार्वजनिक सूचनामा निम्नानुसार ‘क्ष’ र ‘छ’ सम्बन्धी त्रुटि हुने गरेको पाइन्छ।

तालिका नं. ८

‘क्ष’, ‘क्षे’, ‘क्ष्य’ सम्बन्धी त्रुटि

अशुद्ध रूप	शुद्ध रूप
आरछ्य	आरक्ष
छेत्र	क्षेत्र
परिप्रेछ्य	परिप्रेक्ष्य
नछ्यत्र	नक्षत्र
छीण	क्षीण

तालिका नं. ८ मा ‘क्ष’, ‘क्षे’, ‘क्ष्य’ को प्रयोग सम्बन्धी सूचनाहरूमा उल्लिखित शब्दहरूलाई प्रस्तुत गरिएको छ। प्रस्तुत ‘आरछ्य’, ‘छेत्र’, ‘परिप्रेक्ष्य’, ‘नछ्यत्र’, ‘छीण’ शब्दहरूको प्रयोग त्रुटिपूर्ण रहेको छ। तत्सम शब्दमा ‘क्ष’ को प्रयोग हुन्छ। मानक नेपालीअनुसार क्रमशः ‘आरक्ष’, ‘क्षेत्र’, ‘परिप्रेक्ष्य’, ‘नक्षत्र’, ‘क्षीण’ को शुद्ध रूपमा लेख्नु पर्ने हुन्छ। सूचनामा देखिने यस्ता त्रुटिहरूले भाषिक अभिव्यक्ति र बोधमा प्रभाव पारेको पाइन्छ।

तालिका नं. ९

‘छ’, ‘छे’, ‘छ्य’ सम्बन्धी त्रुटि

अशुद्ध रूप	शुद्ध रूप
क्ष्यास्स	छ्यास्स
क्ष्यालब्याल्ल	छ्यालब्याल्ल
इच्छा	इच्छा
तुच्छ	तुच्छ
स्वच्छ्य	स्वच्छ

तालिकामा नं. ९ मा प्रस्तुत ‘क्ष्यास्स’, ‘क्ष्यालब्याल्ल’, ‘इच्छा’, ‘तुच्छ’, ‘स्वच्छ्य’ शब्दहरूको प्रयोग त्रुटिपूर्ण रहेको छ। प्रस्तुत शब्दहरूको शुद्ध क्रमशः ‘छ्यास्स’, ‘छ्यालब्याल्ल’, ‘इच्छा’, ‘तुच्छ’, ‘स्वच्छ’ को रूपमा प्रयोग हुनु

पर्ने देखिन्छ। केही तत्सम, तद्भव र आगन्तुक शब्दमा 'छ' र 'छ्या' को प्रयोग हुन्छ। 'क्ष' र 'छ', 'छे', 'छ्य' सम्बन्धी त्रुटिहरू द्वस्व र दीर्घ भन्दा कम भए पनि केही त्रुटिहरू हुने गरेका पाइन्छन्।

शिरविन्दु - चन्द्रविन्दु सम्बन्धी त्रुटि

शिरविन्दु पञ्चम वर्ण हो भने चन्द्रविन्दु नासिक्य ध्वनि हो। शिरविन्दु छुट्टै उच्चारण हुन सक्छ भने चन्द्रविन्दु छुट्टै उच्चारण हुन सक्दैन। यसका साथै तत्सम शब्दमा पछिल्लो वर्णअनुसार शिरविन्दुका ठाउँमा पञ्चम वर्णकै प्रयोग गर्नुपर्छ। अहिले इ, ई, ए, ओ, औ आदि स्वरमा व्यञ्जन वर्ण जोडिँदा शिरविन्दु दिने चलन छ तर त्यो गलत प्रयोग हो। शिरविन्दुका ठाउँमा चन्द्रविन्दु र चन्द्रविन्दुका ठाउँमा शिरविन्दुको प्रयोग गर्नु हुँदैन। कुनै पनि तत्सम शब्दमा चन्द्रविन्दुको प्रयोग हुँदैन र कुनै पनि तद्भव र आगन्तुक शब्दमा शिरविन्दुको प्रयोग हुँदैन (नेपाल, २०७८ पृ. ७५)। सरकारी निकायका सार्वजनिक सूचनामा निम्नानुसारका शिरविन्दु तथा पञ्चम वर्ण र चन्द्रविन्दु सम्बन्धी त्रुटिहरू रहेका छन्।

शिरविन्दु तथा पञ्चम वर्ण सम्बन्धी त्रुटि

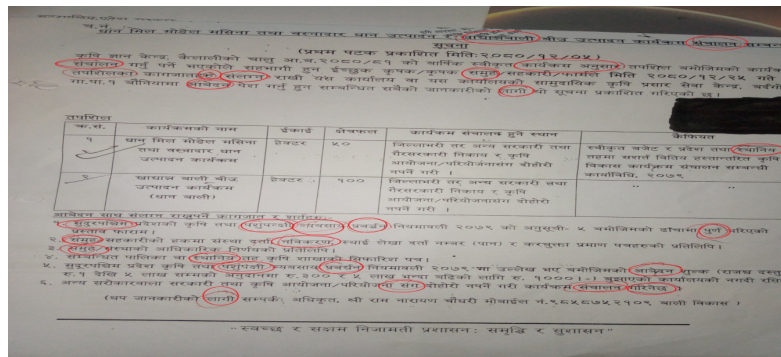
नेपाली तद्भव र आगन्तुक शब्दमा शिरविन्दुको प्रयोग हुँदैन। संस्कृतमा शिरविन्दु भएका शब्द तद्भव भएर आउँदा हंस-हाँस, वंश-बाँस मा परिवर्तन हुन्छन्। तत्सम शब्दमा य, र, ल, व, श, ष, स, ह, ज वर्णका अगाडि शिरविन्दुको प्रयोग गर्नुपर्छ र अरू ठाउँमा पञ्चम वर्णको प्रयोग गर्नुपर्छ। तत्सम शब्दमा 'क' देखि 'म' सम्मका वर्णका अगाडि शिरविन्दु प्रयोग गर्नुपर्ने अवस्था आयो भने त्यहाँ पञ्चम वर्णको प्रयोग हुन्छ। क, ख, ग, घ र क्षभन्दा अगाडि इ, च, छ, ज, झभन्दा अगाडि ञ, ट, ठ, ड, ढ, णभन्दा अगाडि ण, त, थ, द, ध, न र ब्रभन्दा अगाडि न, प, फ, ब, भ, मभन्दा अगाडि म हुन्छ। (नेपाल, २०७८ पृ. ७५)। सरकारी निकायका सार्वजनिक निकायमा देहाय बमोजिमका शिरविन्दु तथा पञ्चम वर्ण सम्बन्धी त्रुटि रहेका पाइन्छन्।

तालिका नं. १०

शिरविन्दु र पञ्चम वर्ण सम्बन्धी त्रुटि

अशुद्ध रूप	शुद्ध रूप
संचालन	सञ्चालन
संक्रमण	सङ्क्रमण
मंजुरीनामा	मञ्जुरीनामा
कंचन	कञ्चन
मंत्री	मन्त्री

चित्र नं. ६



माथिको तालिका नं. १० मा पञ्चम वर्णको प्रयोग हुनुपर्ने ठाउँमा शिरविन्दुको प्रयोग भएको छ । 'क' देखि 'म' सम्मका वर्णका अगाडि शिरविन्दु प्रयोग गर्नुपर्ने अवस्था आयो भने त्यहाँ पञ्चम वर्णको प्रयोग हुन्छ । प्रस्तुत 'संचालन', 'संक्रमण', 'मंजुरीनामा', 'कंचन', 'मन्त्री' शब्दहरू क्रमशः 'सञ्चालन', 'सङ्क्रमण', 'मञ्जुरीनामा', 'कञ्चन', 'मन्त्री' को मानक प्रयोगमा आउनु पर्ने देखिन्छ । 'य', 'र', 'ल', 'व', 'श', 'ष', 'स', 'ह', 'ज्ञ' भन्दा अगाडि शिरविन्दुको प्रयोग हुन्छ । संविधान, संयोजक, संरक्षण, संवाद, प्रशंसा आदि शब्दको प्रयोगमा शिरविन्दुको प्रयोग समुचित भएको पाइन्छ ।

चन्द्रविन्दु सम्बन्धी

चन्द्रविन्दुको प्रयोग तत्सम शब्दमा हुँदैन, तद्भव र आगन्तुक शब्दमा मात्र हुन्छ । तद्भव र आगन्तुक शब्दमा नाके उच्चारण हुने जस्तै: अंगार, अँजुली, आप, खाँबो, घाँस, काको जस्ता ठाउँमा चन्द्रविन्दुको प्रयोग गर्नुपर्छ । प्रथम पुरुषवाचक क्रियापदमा जस्तै: खाएँ, गएँ, गरूँला, हेरौँला मा चन्द्रविन्दुको प्रयोग हुन्छ । स्वरान्त र द्विस्वरान्त धातुमा दा / दे जोडिँदा जस्तै: जाँदा, खाँदा, पिउँदै, हुँदै जस्ता शब्दमा चन्द्रविन्दुको प्रयोग हुन्छ । द्विस्वरान्त धातुमा 'छ' र 'थ' आएमा जस्तै: आउँछ, देखाउँछ, खुवाउँछ, गाउँथ्यो, देखाउँथी जस्ता शब्दमा चन्द्रविन्दुको प्रयोग हुन्छ (नेपाल, २०७८ पृ.७६) । सरकारी निकायका सार्वजनिक सूचनामा निम्नानुसारका चन्द्रविन्दु सम्बन्धी त्रुटि रहेका पाइन्छन् ।

तालिका नं. ११

चन्द्रविन्दु सम्बन्धी त्रुटि

अशुद्ध रूप	शुद्ध रूप
ढाँचा	ढाँचा
दिउँसो	दिउँसो
बास	बाँस
भैसी	भैंसी
दिदै	दिदै
साँस्कृतिक	सांस्कृतिक

चित्र नं. ७

अशुद्ध रूप	शुद्ध रूप	विवरण	संशोधक
ढाँचा	ढाँचा	चन्द्रविन्दुको प्रयोग गर्नुपर्ने ठाउँमा अशुद्ध रूप प्रयोग भएको छ ।	संशोधक
दिउँसो	दिउँसो	चन्द्रविन्दुको प्रयोग गर्नुपर्ने ठाउँमा अशुद्ध रूप प्रयोग भएको छ ।	संशोधक
बास	बाँस	चन्द्रविन्दुको प्रयोग गर्नुपर्ने ठाउँमा अशुद्ध रूप प्रयोग भएको छ ।	संशोधक
भैसी	भैंसी	चन्द्रविन्दुको प्रयोग गर्नुपर्ने ठाउँमा अशुद्ध रूप प्रयोग भएको छ ।	संशोधक
दिदै	दिदै	चन्द्रविन्दुको प्रयोग गर्नुपर्ने ठाउँमा अशुद्ध रूप प्रयोग भएको छ ।	संशोधक
साँस्कृतिक	सांस्कृतिक	चन्द्रविन्दुको प्रयोग गर्नुपर्ने ठाउँमा अशुद्ध रूप प्रयोग भएको छ ।	संशोधक

माथिको तालिका नं. ११ मा चन्द्रविन्दु सम्बन्धी सार्वजनिक सूचनामा गरिएका त्रुटिहरू हुन् । चन्द्रविन्दु दिनुपर्ने ठाउँमा शिरविन्दुको प्रयोग भएको पाइन्छ । प्रस्तुत ढाँचा, दिउँसो, बास, भैसी, दिदै, साँस्कृतिक शब्दहरू क्रमशः 'ढाँचा', 'दिउँसो', 'बाँस', 'भैंसी', 'दिदै', 'सांस्कृतिक' को शुद्ध प्रयोगमा आउनु पर्ने हुन्छ । भाषाप्रतिको बेवास्ताका कारण शब्दकोश वा शुद्ध प्रयोगको स्थितिलाई नहर्ने प्रवृत्तिका कारण यी समस्याहरू देखिएका पाइन्छन् ।

पदयोग - पदवियोग सम्बन्धी त्रुटि

भाषिक प्रयोगमा जोडेर लेख्ने प्रक्रियालाई पदयोग र छुट्याएर लेख्ने प्रक्रियालाई पदवियोग भनिन्छ । अन्य वर्णविन्यासको प्रयोग शुद्ध भए पनि पदयोग र पदवियोग मिलेको छैन भने त्यसलाई पनि अशुद्ध मानिने हुनाले लेख्य भाषामा यसलाई ध्यान दिनु आवश्यक हुन्छ (नेपाल, २०७८ पृ. ८१) । एक श्वास प्रवाहमा बोलिने वर्ण वा वर्णसमूहलाई एक डिकामा लेख्नु पदयोग हो भने प्रत्येक श्वास प्रवाहमा बोलिने वर्ण वा वर्णसमूहलाई अलग अलग डिकामा लेख्नु पदवियोग हो । सरकारी निकायका सार्वजनिक सूचनामा प्रयुक्त पदयोग र पदवियोग सम्बन्धी भाषिक त्रुटिहरू निम्नानुसार हुने गरेका पाइन्छन् ।

पदयोग सम्बन्धी

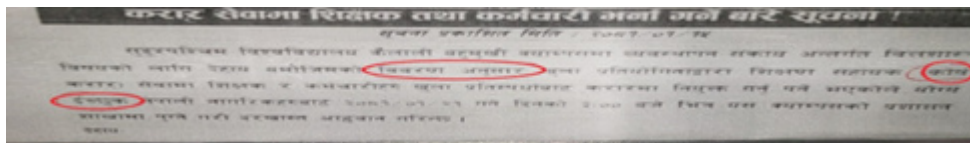
पदयोगमा उपसर्ग, प्रत्यय, विभक्ति, नामयोगी, समस्त शब्द र आआफ्नो, भैंभगडा जस्ता निरर्थक द्वित्वलाई जोडेर लेखिन्छ । मिलित क्रियापद जस्तै: गइसक्यो, कुटिदिउँ, लेखिदिनुपर्थ्यो जस्ता शब्दहरू पदयोग भएर लेख्नुपर्छ । किनभने, किनकि, तापनि, यद्यपि, तथापि आदि संयोजकहरू जोडेर लेखिन्छन् । ओटा, वर्ग सम्बन्धी तीनओटा, शिक्षकवर्ग, ज्ञानसम्बन्धी आदि पदहरू जोडेर लेख्नुपर्छ । तुलनावाची जस्तै, भैं, सरह जोडिएर आउने चन्द्रजस्तै मुख, प्राणभैं प्यारो आदि शब्दहरू पदयोग भएर लेखिन्छन् (नेपाल, २०७८ पृ. ८१) । सरकारी निकायका सार्वजनिक सूचनामा देहायअनुसारका त्रुटिहरू पदयोगमा हुने गरेका पाइन्छन् ।

तालिका नं. १२

पदयोग सम्बन्धी त्रुटि

अशुद्ध रूप	शुद्ध रूप
शाखा बाट	शाखाबाट
संक्रमण को	सङ्क्रमणको
कार्यक्रम अनुसार	कार्यक्रमअनुसार
बाल बालिकाहरू	बालबालिकाहरू
निर्णय अनुसार	निर्णयअनुसार
सूचना अनुसार	सूचनाअनुसार
कागजात सहित	कागजातसहित
परिपत्र अनुसार	परिपत्रअनुसार
कागज को प्रतिलिपि	कागजको प्रतिलिपि
नामावली अनुसार	नामावलीअनुसार
निवेदन सहित	निवेदनसहित
संक्रमण को	सङ्क्रमणको
सूचना को	सूचनाको
प्रमाण पत्र	प्रमाणपत्र

चित्र नं. ८



तालिका नं. १२ मा पदयोग सम्बन्धी भाषिक त्रुटिहरू प्रस्तुत गरिएका छन् । सरकारी निकायका सार्वजनिक सूचनामा प्रयुक्त भएका पदयोग सम्बन्धी त्रुटिहरू प्रशस्त भेटिएका छन् । 'शाखा बाट' मा आएको विभक्तिलाई जोडेर 'शाखाबाट', संक्रमण को मा आएको षष्ठी विभक्तिलाई पदयोग गरी 'सङ्क्रमणको' को पदयोग गरी लेख्नुपर्ने देखिन्छ ।

त्यसैगरी 'बाल बालिकाहरू', 'जानकारी का', 'कार्यक्रम अनुसार', निवेदन सहित, 'सूचना को', प्रमाण पत्र जस्ता शब्दहरू क्रमशः पदवियोग गरी लेखिएका पाइन्छन् । यी शब्दहरू क्रमशः 'बालबालिकाहरू', 'जानकारीका', 'कार्यक्रमअनुसार', 'निवेदनसहित' र 'सूचनाको' पदयोग भई सूचना प्रसारित हुनुपर्ने देखिन्छ । सूचना टङ्गन र मुद्रण भईसकेपछि सम्पादन नगरी टाँस गर्नुको कारणले पनि यो समस्या देखिएको पाइन्छ । प्राविधिक धारतर्फका सरकारी निकायहरूमा अर्थबोध भए भइहाल्यो भन्ने मानसिकता बनेको कारणले पनि मानक नेपाली भाषाको प्रयोगमा समस्या देखिएको पाइन्छ ।

पदवियोग सम्बन्धी

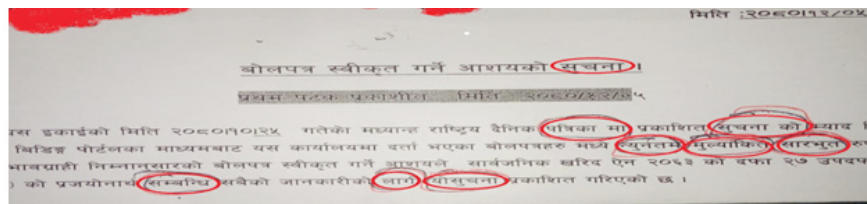
वाक्यमा प्रयोग हुने प्रत्येक शब्द छुट्याएर लेख्नुपर्छ । विभक्तिका पछाडि आउने नामयोगी छुट्याएर लेखिन्छ । लागि, निम्ति र दुईओटा विभक्ति एकै ठाउँमा आएर छुट्याएर लेख्नुपर्छ । सबै निपातहरू छुट्याएर लेखिन्छ । 'न' संयोजक बनेर आएमा छुट्याएर लेख्नुपर्छ । अपूर्ण र पूर्ण पक्ष जनाउने क्रियापदहरू छुट्याएर लेख्नुपर्छ । 'ने छ' जोडिएर बनेको भविष्यत् कालबोधक क्रियापद छुट्याएर लेख्नुपर्छ । संयुक्त क्रियापदका विचमा जस्तै: 'पढ्नु नै पर्छ', 'जानु त पर्ने हो' जस्ता निपात आएमा छुट्याएर लेख्नुपर्छ । 'नु' र 'न' पछि आउने क्रियापद जस्तै: जानु छ, हेर्ने छ, भन्न सक्छ आदिलाई अलग लेख्नुपर्छ । जना, थरी जस्ता कोटिकर पदहरू जस्तै: चार जना, सय थरी, एक किलो, पाँच मुठा आदि छुट्याएर लेख्नुपर्छ । सार्थक द्वित्व (पूर्ण द्वित्व) लाई छुट्याएर लेख्नुपर्छ । व्यक्ति, जाति, स्थान आदि बुझाउने जस्तै: कास्की जिल्ला, कोसी नदी, शिक्षक समाज आदि शीर्ष नामहरू छुट्याएर लेख्नुपर्छ । विशेषण र नाम सँगसँगै आएमा जस्तै: खाने पानी, भित्ते पात्रो, नगदे बाली आदि छुट्याएर लेख्नुपर्छ (नेपाल, २०७८ पृ. ८२) । सरकारी निकायका सार्वजनिक सूचनामा पदवियोग सम्बन्धी त्रुटिहरू निम्नानुसार हुने गरेका पाइन्छन् ।

तालिका नं. १३

पदवियोग सम्बन्धी त्रुटि

अशुद्ध रूप (पदयोग)	शुद्ध रूप (पदवियोग)
समाजकार्निम्ति	समाजका निम्ति
जाँदैछ	जाँदै छ
भित्तेपात्रो	भित्ते पात्रो
नगदेबाली	नगदे बाली
आउनसक्छ	आउन सक्छ
भन्नसक्छ	भन्न सक्छ
योसूचना	यो सूचना
गरिनेछ	गरिने छ
खानेपानी	खाने पानी
वनस्पतिसम्बन्धी	वनस्पति सम्बन्धी

चित्र नं. ९



तालिका १३ मा पदवियोग सम्बन्धी त्रुटिहरू प्रस्तुत गरिएका छन् । सरकारी निकायका सूचनाहरूमा पदयोग हुनुपर्ने शब्दलाई पदवियोग र पदवियोग गरी लेख्नुपर्ने शब्दहरूको स्पष्ट प्रावधान हुँदाहुँदै पनि प्रयोग गरिएको पाइँदैन । विभक्ति चिह्नसँगै जोडिएर आएको अर्को विभक्ति जस्तै: 'समाजकानिमित्त' लाई समाजका निमित्त, भविष्यत् कालिक क्रिया 'गरिनेछ' लाई 'गरिने छ' गरी लेख्नु पदवियोगको शुद्ध प्रयोग हो । 'आउन सक्छ', 'भन्नु सक्छ' मा 'आउन' र 'भन्नु' मा 'न' को प्रयोग भएकाले त्यसपछि आउने क्रियापद 'सक्छ' लाई अलग्याएर लेख्नुपर्ने देखिन्छ । सरकारी निकायका सार्वजनिक सूचनामा पदयोग र पदवियोग सम्बन्धी नियमको प्रयोगको बेवास्ता गरिएको पाइन्छ । मुद्रण गरिसकेपछि पुनः पाण्डुलिपिलाई सम्पादन नगरी सूचना प्रसारित गर्ने समस्याले पनि भाषिक शुद्धताको प्रयोगमा समस्या देखिएको पाइन्छ ।

‘ए’ र ‘य’ को प्रयोग

‘ए’ र ‘य’ फरक हुन् तर कतै कतै लेखनमा यिनले एकअर्कालाई प्रभाव पारेको देखिन्छ । सचेततापूर्वक उच्चारण गर्ने हो भने यिनमा स्पष्ट भिन्नता पाइन्छ । ‘ए’ को प्रयोग भूत कालको प्रथम पुरुषको एकवचन र तृतीय पुरुषको बहुवचनका क्रियापदहरू जस्तै: भएँ, लिएँ, पढाएँ, खाए, दिए को स्वरूपमा लेखिन्छन् । ‘एर’ र ‘एको’, ‘एका’, ‘एकी’ प्रत्यय लागेका कृदन्त शब्दहरू गएर, आएर, पाएको गरी लेखिन्छन् । अज्ञात भूतका करण र अकरण दुवै क्रियापदहरू आएछ, पाएछौ, आएनछौ, पाएनछु भएर लेखिन्छन् । इच्छार्थक क्रियापदहरू गए, गएस्, लिए र एक शब्दबाट बनेका शब्दहरू एक, एघार, एक्काइस, एकचारिसमा ‘ए’ को प्रयोग हुन्छ । केही आगन्तुक शब्दहरू ‘एकड’, ‘एक्सरे’, ‘एजेन्ट’ जस्ता शब्दमा पनि ‘ए’ को प्रयोग हुन्छ (नेपाल, २०७८ पृ. ७९) । सार्वजनिक निकायबाट सम्प्रेषण हुने भाषिक सूचनामा ‘ए’ सम्बन्धी प्रयोगका निम्नानुसारका त्रुटिहरू हुने गरेका पाइन्छन् ।

तालिका नं. १४

‘ए’ को प्रयोग सम्बन्धी त्रुटि

अशुद्ध रूप	शुद्ध रूप
देखियमा	देखिएमा
गय	गए
गरियको	गरिएको
आयको	आएको
यक्सप्रेस	एक्सप्रेस

चित्र नं. १०

प्रथम पटक प्रकाशित सूचना: २०८१/०९/१८

विध्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिको मिति २०८१/०९/१८ गतेको निर्णयानुसार यस विध्यालयका रिक्त रहेको शिक्षण सिकाई अनुदान कोटामा स्थानिक शिक्षण सिकाई अनुदान व्यवस्थापन कार्यविधि २०७९ बमोजिम गर्ने दैतयबमोजिम पद/तह र संख्यामा सेवा गर्ने इच्छुक व्यक्तिहरूलाई आवेदन आह्वान गरिएको छ । योग्यता पुगेका इच्छुक नेपाली नागरिकहरूले यो सूचना प्रकाशित भएको ७ दिनभित्र कार्यलय समयमा लोकिएका सम्पूर्ण कागजात संलग्न राखि दरखास्त दिनुहुन सबैका लागि यो सूचना प्रकाशित गरिएको छ ।

तपश्चि

विज्ञापन नं	पद/तह	श्रेणी	विषय	संख्या	संयुक्तमा शैक्षिक योग्यता
०१/२०८१	शिक्षक/माध्यामिक	तृतीय	अङ्ग्रेजी	१ जना	B.ed.
०२/२०८१	शिक्षक/आधारभूत	तृतीय	विज्ञान	१ जना	I.ed.

२ आवेदन साथ संलग्न राख्नुपर्ने कागजातहरू: व्यतिगत विवरण, शैक्षिक योग्यताका प्रतिलिपि, चारित्रिक प्रमाणपत्र, नेपाली नागरिकताको प्रमाणपत्रको प्रतिलिपि, अध्यापन अनुमति पत्रको प्रतिलिपि ।

३ दरखास्त दिने अन्तिम मिति: २०८१/०९/२४ गते कार्यलय समय भित्र ।

४ उमेर: आधारभूत तहको लागि १८ वर्ष पुरा भई ४० ननाघेको र माध्यामिक तहको लागि २१ वर्ष पुरा भई ४० वर्ष ननाघेको ।

५ सुविधा: स्थानिय शिक्षण सिकाई अनुदान कार्यविधि २०७९ बमोजिम ।

६ छनोटको क्रिसिम: लिखित परिक्षा र अन्तरवार्ता आवश्यकता अनुसार प्रयोगात्मक ।

तालिका नं. १४ मा 'ए' सम्बन्धी त्रुटिहरू प्रस्तुत गरिएका छन् । प्रस्तुत 'देखिएमा', 'गय', 'गरिएको', 'आएको', 'यक्सप्रेस' शब्दहरू त्रुटिपूर्ण रहेका छन् । यी शब्दहरूको प्रयोग क्रमशः 'देखिएमा', 'गए', 'गरिएको', 'आएको', 'एक्सप्रेस' को प्रयोगमा एकरूपता कायम भई प्रयोगमा आउनुपर्ने देखिन्छ । कुनैमा शुद्ध मानक र कुनैमा अशुद्ध भाषिक रूपको प्रयोग हुने गरिएकोले भाषामा एकरूपता कायम गर्न सकिदैन । यी त्रुटिहरू भाषिक सचेतताको अभाव र बेवास्तापूर्ण प्रवृत्ति बढेको पाइन्छ ।

'य' को प्रयोग

सर्वनाम र सर्वनामबाट बनेका शब्दहरू जस्तै: यो, त्यो, त्यति, केही सामान्य भूत कालीन क्रियापदहरू जस्तै: भयो, गयो, दियो, खायो, थियो जस्ता शब्दहरूमा 'य' को प्रयोग हुन्छ । केही व्युत्पन्न शब्द जस्तै: जहानियाँ, कमैया, भरिया, करिया, ठट्यौली, केही तत्सम शब्दहरू जस्तै: यज्ञ, यक्ष, यत्न, यथेष्ट र केही आगन्तुक शब्द एयर, सजाय, टायर आदि शब्दमा 'य' को प्रयोग गरिन्छ (नेपाल, २०७८ पृ. ८०) । नेपाली भाषा शुद्ध लेखन पुस्तिकामा नेपाली भाषाको मानक लेखन सम्बन्धी स्पष्ट नियम हुँदाहुँदै पनि सरकारी निकायका सार्वजनिक सूचनामा निम्नानुसारका त्रुटिहरू हुने गरेका पाइन्छन् ।

तालिका नं. १५

'य' को प्रयोग सम्बन्धी त्रुटि

अशुद्ध रूप	शुद्ध रूप
एत्रतत्र	यत्रतत्र
प्रत्तेक	प्रत्येक
फाएर	फायर
गएल	गयल
दाएरा	दायरा

तालिका नं. १५ मा आएका 'य' सम्बन्धी त्रुटिहरू प्रस्तुत गरिएका छन् । प्रस्तुत 'एत्रतत्र', 'प्रत्तेक', 'फाएर', 'गएल', 'दाएरा' शब्दहरूको शुद्ध प्रयोग क्रमशः 'यत्रतत्र', 'प्रत्येक', 'फायर', 'गयल', 'दायरा' का रूपमा हुनुपर्ने देखिन्छ । यी वर्णहरूउच्चारणमा समान रहेका वर्ण हुन् । 'ए', 'य' वर्णको छनौटको सन्देहका कारण पनि लेखाइमा एकरूपता र शुद्धता हुन नसकेको पाइन्छ ।

लेख्य चिह्नको प्रयोग सम्बन्धी त्रुटि

भाषिक अभिव्यक्तिमा चिह्नले ठुलो भूमिका खेलेको हुन्छ । नेपाली भाषामा अल्पविराम (,), अर्धविराम (;), प्रश्नवाचक (?), पूर्णविराम (!), विस्मयादिवोधक (!), निर्देशक (:), कोष्ठक (), उद्धरण (" , "), योजक (-), तिर्यक् विराम (/), संक्षेप (.), ऐजन (.), आदि चिह्नको प्रयोग भएको पाइन्छ (नेपाल, २०७८ पृ. ८८) । अल्पविराम, अर्धविराम, पूर्णविराम, प्रश्नचिह्न, विस्मयादिवोधक, निर्देशक र योजक चिह्ननले अर्थमा फरक पार्दछन् भने कोष्ठक, उद्धरण, तिर्यक्, संक्षेप र ऐजन चिह्न अर्थमा फरक नपार्ने चिह्न हुन् । सरकारी कार्यालयका सार्वजनिक सूचनामा देहाय बमोजिमका भाषिक त्रुटिहरू हुने गरेका पाइन्छन् ।

अल्पविराम, अर्धविराम र पूर्ण विराम सम्बन्धी त्रुटि

वाक्यमा लघुविश्रामलाई जनाउने चिह्न अल्पविराम हो । यो पद, पदावली, उपवाक्य आदिलाई छुट्टयाउनु पर्दा

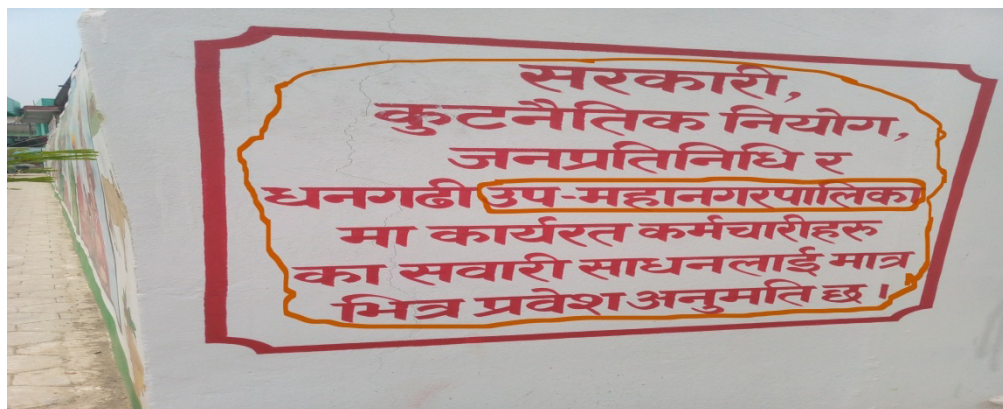
प्रयोग हुन्छ (नेपाल, २०७८ पृ. ८८) । पद, पदावली, उपवाक्य आदिलाई छुट्याउँदा अल्पविरामको प्रयोग गरिन्छ । सरकारी निकायमा देहाय बमोजिमका त्रुटिहरू रहेका पाइन्छन् ।

तालिका नं. १६

अल्पविराम, अर्धविराम, पूर्णविराम सम्बन्धी त्रुटि

अशुद्ध रूप	शुद्ध रूप
विषयः निःशुल्क हाते कडाई र पोते बुल्ने तालिमका लागि आवेदन पेश गर्ने सम्बन्धी सूचना	विषयः निःशुल्क हाते कडाई र पोते बुल्ने । तालिमका लागि आवेदन पेश गर्ने सम्बन्धिको सूचना ।
बढागत कार्यक्रम अन्तर्गत एकल महिला, दलित महिला, मुस्लिम महिलाहरूका लागि निःशुल्क ३० दिने तालिम	बढागत कार्यक्रम अन्तर्गत एकल महिला, दलित महिला, महिला, महिला र मुस्लिम महिलाहरूका लागि ३० दिने निःशुल्क तालिम ।
सरकारी, कुटनैतिक नियोग, जनप्रतिनिधि र धनगढी उप-महानगरपालिका मा कार्यरत कर्मचारीहरू का सवारी साधनलाई मात्र भित्र प्रवेश अनुमति छ ।	सरकारी, कुटनैतिक नियोग, जनप्रतिनिधि र उपमहानगरपालिकामा कार्यरत कर्मचारीहरूका सवारी साधनलाई मात्र भित्र प्रवेश अनुमति छ ।
तालिममा सहभागी हुनका लागी दलित, अपाङ्ग, सहिद परिवार, पिछडीएको क्षेत्र, विपन्न र एकल महिला तथा प्रवेशिका अनुत्तिर्णहरूलाई प्राथमिकता दिईनेछ ।	तालिममा सहभागी हुनका लागि, दलित, अपाङ्ग, सहिद परिवार, पिछडीएको क्षेत्र, विपन्न र एकल महिला तथा प्रवेशिका अनुत्तिर्णहरूलाई प्राथमिकता दिइने छ ।

चित्र नं. ११



माथिको तालिका नं. १६ मा अल्प विराम, अर्धविराम, पूर्णविरामसँग सम्बन्धित त्रुटिहरू दिइएका छन् । पहिलो वाक्यमा पूर्णविराम चिह्नको प्रयोगमा त्रुटि भएको छ । दोस्रो वाक्यमा अल्प विराम, अर्धविराम र पूर्णविराम चिह्नको प्रयोगमा त्रुटि भएको छ । तेस्रो वाक्यमा अल्पविराम र अर्धविरामको त्रुटि भएको छ । अन्तिम वाक्यमा अल्पविरामको मात्र प्रयोग गरिएको छ । यस वाक्यमा शब्दगत रूपमा रहेका ‘लागि’, ‘सहिद’, ‘पिछडीएको’, ‘अनुत्तिर्ण’, ‘दिईनेछ’ शब्दहरूको प्रयोग क्रमशः ‘लागि’, ‘सहिद’, ‘पिछडीएको’, ‘अनुत्तीर्ण’, ‘दिइने छ’ का रूपमा हुनुपर्ने देखिन्छ । सरकारी निकायका सूचनामा हुने यस किसिमका त्रुटिले भाषिक एकरूपता कायम गर्न नसकिने हुन्छ । यस किसिमको सूचनाको शैलीले भाषाप्रतिको बेवास्ता र जिम्मेवार बन्न नसकेको कुरालाई देखाएको पाइन्छ ।

उपसर्ग जोडिँदाको त्रुटि

शब्दका अगाडि जोडिने व्युत्पादक भाषिक एकाइलाई उपसर्ग भनिन्छ (भट्टराई र दुङ्गेल, पृ. १०३) । शब्दका

अगाडि जोडिएर आउने शब्द उपसर्ग हो । मूल शब्दसँग जोडिएर आउने शब्दहरू एकै ङिकामा लेखिन्छन् । सार्वजनिक सूचनामा भेटिएका उपसर्ग सम्बन्धी प्रयोगमा त्रुटि भएका शब्दहरूलाई निम्नानुसार उल्लेख गरिएको छ;

तालिका नं. १७

उपसर्ग जोडिँदाको त्रुटि

अशुद्ध रूप	शुद्ध रूप
उप - महानगरपालिका	उपमहानगरपालिका (उप + महानगरपालिका)
उल्लेखित	उल्लिखित (उत् + लिखित)
परिक्षा	परीक्षा (परि + ईक्षा)
परिक्षण	परीक्षण (परि + ईक्षण)
निरिक्षण	निरीक्षण (निरि + ईक्षण)
पुनरवलोकन	पुनरावलोकन (पुन + अवलोकन)

माथि तालिका नं. १७ मा प्रस्तुत गरिएका 'उप -महानगरपालिका', 'उल्लेखित', 'परिक्षा', 'परिक्षण', 'निरिक्षण', 'पुनरवलोकन' शब्दको प्रयोगमा त्रुटि रहेको छ । प्रस्तुत शब्दहरू क्रमशः 'उपमहानगरपालिका', 'उल्लिखित', 'परीक्षा', 'परीक्षण', 'निरीक्षण', 'पुनरावलोकन' को शुद्ध प्रयोग भई मानक प्रयोगमा आउनु पर्नेमा; त्यसो हुन सकेको पाइँदैन । उपमहानगरपालिकालाई जोड्न योजक (-) चिह्नको प्रयोग गरिएको छ । 'महानगरपालिका' मूल शब्दमा 'उप' उपसर्ग लागेको हुनाले यसमा योजक चिह्नको प्रयोग गरी लेख्ने प्रचलन त्रुटिपूर्ण रहेको छ । उपमहानगरपालिका लेख्नु भाषाको शुद्ध रूप भएकाले प्रयोगमा ल्याउनु पर्ने देखिएको छ ।

प्रत्यय जोडिँदाको त्रुटि

मूल शब्दका पछाडि जोडिने व्युत्पादक प्रत्ययलाई परसर्ग भनिन्छ (भट्टराई र ढुङ्गेल, पृ.१०८) । मूल शब्दमा पछाडि फुँदा जोडेर शब्द निर्माण गर्ने प्रक्रिया प्रत्यय हो । सार्वजनिक सूचनामा प्रयुक्त प्रत्यय सम्बन्धी त्रुटिहरूलाई निम्नानुसार उल्लेख गर्न सकिन्छ;

तालिका नं. १८

प्रत्यय जोडिँदाको त्रुटि

अशुद्ध रूप	शुद्ध रूप
आधिकारीक	आधिकारिक (अधिकार + इक)
शारीरिक	शारीरिक (शरीर + इक)
ऐतिहासिक	ऐतिहासिक (इतिहास + इक)
स्थानिय	स्थानीय (स्थान + ईय)
माननिय	माननीय (मान् + अनीय)

माथिको तालिका नं. १८ मा प्रत्यय जोडिएर बनेका शब्दहरूको लेखनमा वर्णविन्यासगत दीर्घ लेखनको त्रुटि भएको पाइन्छ । प्रस्तुत आधिकारीक, शारीरिक, ऐतिहासिक, स्थानिय, माननिय शब्दहरू क्रमशः 'आधिकारिक', 'शारीरिक', 'ऐतिहासिक', 'स्थानीय', 'माननीय' को शुद्ध प्रयोग हुनुपर्ने देखिन्छ । 'इक' प्रत्यय जोडिएका शब्द ढस्व हुने र 'ईय', 'अनीय' प्रत्ययहरू जोडिदा दीर्घ हुन्छ भन्ने ज्ञानको अभावका कारण त्रुटिहरू हुने गरेको पाइन्छ । परम्परागत प्रयोगप्रति ढक्क हुनाले र आफूले लेख्ने गरेको वर्णविन्यासमा विश्वास गर्नाले गल्तीहरू हुने गरेको पाइन्छ ।

वाक्यात्मक, कारकीय प्रयोगगत त्रुटि

नामिक पद र क्रियाका बिचको सम्बन्ध जनाउने व्याकरणिक कोटिलाई कारक भनिन्छ । “कारक व्यवस्था भन्नाले वाक्यमा क्रियासँग नामिक पद वा पदावलीका बिचको आर्थी सम्बन्ध वा भूमिका सम्बन्धी व्यवस्थालाई मानिएको पाइन्छ (अधिकारी, पृ. १)।” सरकारी निकायका सार्वजनिक सूचनामा प्रयुक्त वाक्यात्मक र कारकीय भाषिक त्रुटिहरूलाई निम्नानुसार उल्लेख गर्न सकिन्छ ;

तालिका नं. १९

वाक्यात्मक र कारकीय प्रयोगगत त्रुटि

अशुद्ध रूप	शुद्ध रूप
सार्वजनिक विदाका दिनहरूमा समेत कार्यालयबाट पूर्ण रूपमा अन्य दिनसरह नै सेवाहरू सुचारू रहने व्यहोरा सम्बन्धित सबैको जानकारीको लागि अनुरोध छ ।	सार्वजनिक विदाका दिनहरूमा समेत कार्यालयबाट पूर्ण रूपमा अन्य दिनसरह नै सेवा सुचारू रहने व्यहोरा सम्बन्धित सबैलाई सूचित गरिएको छ ।
यस कार्यालयमा पेश हुन आएका आवेदनहरूमध्ये तपशिल अनुसारका आवेदनहरू छनौट हुनु भएकोले छनौट भएका आवेदकहरूले तपशिल अनुसारका कागजातहरू सम्बन्धित राखि यस कार्यालयमा सम्पर्क गर्न आउन हुन सम्बन्धित सबैको जानकारीका लागि यो सूचना प्रकाशित गरिएको छ ।	यस कार्यालयमा पेश भएका आवेदनहरू मध्ये तपशिलअनुसारका आवेदकहरू छनौट भएकाले आवश्यक कागजातहरू सट्टालग राखी सम्पर्कमा आउन सम्बन्धित सबैको जानकारीका लागि यो सूचना प्रकाशित गरिएको छ ।
जग्गाधनीको निजी प्रयोजन तथा बैक तथा वित्तीय संस्थाहरूको वित्तीय प्रयोजनका लागि नक्सा प्रिन्ट माग गर्दा प्रति सिट नक्साको रु १००/- राजस्व लिइदै आएकोमा निवेदकले माग गरे बमोजिम प्रति किता रु १०० /- राजस्व निर्धारण गर्ने निर्णय भएकोले अब उपरान्त नक्सा नक्सा प्रिन्ट उपलब्ध गराउँदा प्रति किता रु १०० /- कायम गर्ने गराउन हुन भनी परिपत्र भए अनुसार अब उपरान्त प्रति किताको राजस्व रु १०० /- लाग्ने व्यहोरा सम्बन्धित सरोकारवाला तथा सम्पूर्ण सेवाग्राहीहरूको जानकारीका लागि यो सूचना प्रकाशन गरिएको छ ।	जग्गाधनीको निजी तथा वित्तीय प्रयोजनका लागि नक्सा प्रिन्ट माग गर्दा सेवा शुल्क बापत रु. १००/- लिइदै आएकोमा प्रति २०८०/९/१७ गतेको भूमि व्यवस्था, सहकारी तथा गरिवी निवारण मन्त्रालयको मन्त्री स्तरीय निर्णयअनुसारको प्राप्त परिपत्रअनुसार अब उपरान्त प्रति किता रु. १०० /- लाग्ने व्यहोरा सम्बन्धित सरोकारवाला सेवाग्राहीहरूलाई जानकारीका लागि सूचना प्रकाशित गराइएको छ ।
यस केन्द्रमा आ. व. २०८०/०८१ मा तपशिल अनुसारका सीप विकास तालिमहरू संचालन हुनेभएकोले व्यक्तिगत आवेदकहरूले आवेदन फारम भर्ने यो सूचना प्रकाशित भएको मितिले सात दिन भित्रमा पेश गर्नु हुन यो सूचना प्रकाशित गरिएको छ ।	यस केन्द्रद्वारा आ. व. २०८०/०८१ मा सञ्चालित हुने तपशिलअनुसारका सीप विकास तालिमहरूमा सहभागी हुने इच्छुक व्यक्तिले सूचना प्रकाशित भएको मितिले सात दिन भित्र फारम भरी पेश गर्न हुन यो सूचना प्रकाशित गरिएको छ ।

चित्र नं. १२

[illegible]

तालिका नं. १९ मा वाक्यात्मक र कारकीय प्रयोगगत त्रुटिको अध्ययन गरिएको छ । प्रस्तुत अध्ययनमा ‘जानकारीको लागि अनुरोध छ’, ‘छनौट हुनु भएकोले’, वाक्य ‘सम्बन्धित सबैको जानकारीको लागि’, ‘गर्ने निर्णय भएकोले’, ‘यस केन्द्रमा’ का रूपमा प्रयोगमा आएका वाक्यहरू क्रमशः जानकारीका लागि अनुरोध गरिएको छ’, ‘छनौट हुन सफल भएकाले’, ‘सम्बन्धित सबैको जानकारीका लागि’, ‘गर्ने निर्णय भएकाले’, ‘यस केन्द्रद्वारा’ को वाक्यात्मक र कारकीय प्रयोगमा आउनु पर्ने देखिन्छ । नेपाली भाषामा कारकीय सम्बन्ध व्यक्त गर्न वाक्यमा विभक्ति, नामयोगी र पदक्रमको प्रयोग गरिन्छ । प्रस्तुत सूचनामा उक्त नियमको पालना भएको पाइँदैन । कारक बुझाउन एकभन्दा बढी विभक्ति प्रयुक्त हुन्छन् । एउटै विभक्ति एकभन्दा बढी कारकका लागि आउँछन् । नेपालीमा कारकलाई संरचना वा रूपात्मक आधारमा सरल र तिर्यक् हुन्छन् भने अर्थ, प्रकार्य वा प्रकार्यका आधारमा कर्ता, कर्म, करण, सम्प्रदान, अपादान, अधिकरण, सम्बन्ध र सम्बोधन कारक रहेका छन् । वाक्यात्मक रूपमा प्रयुक्त कारकहरूले आर्थी सम्बन्ध प्रकटन गरी प्रसङ्गपूर्ण बनाउन महत्त्वपूर्ण भूमिका खेलेको हुन्छ । सूचनामा प्रयुक्त हुने ‘भन्नुभएको कुरा’, ‘अपहरित भएको’, ‘देशको निम्ति’, ‘सूचनाको आधारमा’ आदि पदावलीहरूको प्रयोगलाई क्रमशः ‘भनेको कुरा’, अपहरण भएको, ‘देशका निम्ति’, सूचनाका आधारमा पदावलीको प्रयोग गरेर सूचना सम्प्रेषण गर्नुपर्ने देखिन्छ ।

सरकारी निकायका सार्वजनिक सूचनामा प्रयुक्त भाषिक त्रुटिहरू तथा निराकरणका लागि सुझावहरू

सरकारी निकायका सार्वजनिक सूचनामा प्रयुक्त भाषिक त्रुटिहरू वर्णविन्यासगत, लेख्यचिह्नगत, वाक्यगत र कारकीय भाषिक त्रुटिहरू रहेका छन् । सार्वजनिक सूचनामा वर्णविन्यासगत त्रुटिमा ह्रस्व र दीर्घ सम्बन्धी त्रुटि, पदयोग- पदवियोग सम्बन्धी त्रुटि, ‘श-ष-स’, सम्बन्धी त्रुटि, शिर्षविन्दु, चन्द्रविन्दु सम्बन्धी त्रुटि, ‘ब-व’ सम्बन्धी त्रुटिहरू प्रशस्त मात्रामा रहेका पाइन्छन् । सार्वजनिक सूचनामा प्रयुक्त भाषिक त्रुटिहरू तथा सुझावहरूलाई निम्नानुसार प्रस्तुत गरिएको छ :

तालिका नं. २०

अन्य भाषिक त्रुटि

वशुद रूप	शुद रूप
सुदूरपश्चिम प्रदेशमा रहेका खाद्य तथा दाना उद्योगीहरूलाई अनुज्ञापत्र जारी नविकरण सम्बन्धि ।	सुदूरपश्चिम प्रदेशमा रहेका खाद्य तथा दाना उद्योगीहरूलाई अनुज्ञापत्र जारी नवीकरण सम्बन्धी ।
पाठेघरको मुखको क्यान्सर परिक्षण सेवा ।	पाठेघर को मुखको क्यान्सर परीक्षण सेवा ।
बाल बालिकाहरूका लागि खोप सेवा ।	बालबालिकाहरूका लागि खोप सेवा ।
नाता प्रमाण पत्रको प्रमाणित प्रतिलिपि ।	नाता प्रमाणपत्रको प्रमाणित प्रतिलिपि ।
धान मिल मोडेल मसिना तथा बस्नादार धान उत्पादन र खाद्यान्नवाली वीउ उत्पादन कार्यक्रम सञ्चालन सम्बन्धी सूचना ।	धान मिल मोडेल मसिना तथा बास्नादार धान उत्पादन र खाद्यान्नवाली वीउ उत्सूपादन कार्यक्रम सम्बन्धी सूचना ।
आवश्यक प्रमाण पुगेकाहरूको हकमा उक्त कागजातहरू सलसन् राखी समय भित्र निवेदन पेश गर्नका लागि सम्बन्धित सधै सरोकारवालाहरूमा जानकारी गराइन्छ ।	आवश्यक प्रमाण पुगेकाहरूको हकमा उक्त कागजातहरू सटलसन् राखी समयभित्र निवेदन पेश गर्नका लागि सम्बन्धित सधै सरोकारवालाहरूमा जानकारी गराइन्छ ।
सरकारी, कुटनैतिक नियोग, जनप्रतिनिधि र धनगश्री उप-महानगरपालिका मा कार्यरत कर्मचारीहरू का सवारी साधनलाई मात्र भित्र प्रवेश अनुमति छ ।	सरकारी, कुटनैतिक नियोग, जनप्रतिनिधि र उपमहानगरपालिकामा कार्यरत कर्मचारीहरूका सवारी साधनलाई मात्र भित्र प्रवेश अनुमति छ ।
परियोजनासँग दोहोरो नपर्ने गरी कार्यक्रम सञ्चालन गरिनेछ ।	परियोजनासँग दोहोरो नपर्ने गरी कार्यक्रम सञ्चालन गरिने छ ।
आवेदन पेश गर्नु हुन सम्बन्धित सबैको जानकारीको लागि यो सूचना प्रकाशित गरिएको छ ।	आवेदन पेश गर्नु हुन सम्बन्धित सबैको जानकारीका लागि सूचना प्रकाशित गरिएको छ ।

प्रस्तुत तालिका नं. २० मा सार्वजनिक निकायका सूचनामा भएका त्रुटिका उद्घरणहरू प्रस्तुत गरिएको छ । सूचनामा वर्णविन्यासगत, वाक्यगत र कारकीय प्रयोगगत त्रुटिहरू रहेका छन् । वर्णविन्यासअन्तर्गत ह्रस्व र दीर्घको

प्रयोग सम्बन्धी त्रुटि, पदयोग, पदवियोग सम्बन्धी त्रुटि मुख्य रहेका छन् । वाक्यगत, कारकीय प्रयोगगत त्रुटिहरूले अर्थबोधमा बाधा उत्पन्न गरेको पाइन्छ । सार्वजनिक सूचनामा हुने त्रुटिहरूमा मुख्यतया शुद्धीकरण नगर्ने समस्या रहेको पाइन्छ । भाषिक शुद्धीकरण सम्बन्धी तालिम प्रभावकारी रूपमा सञ्चालन भएको पाइँदैन ।

नेपाल सरकारका औपचारिक निकायहरूमा प्रयोग गरिने भाषा, विश्वविद्यालय र विश्वविद्यालयका पठन पाठनका सामग्रीमा प्रयोग गरिने भाषा, संविधान, ऐन, कानून, अदालत, विद्युतीय वा छापाखाना, सञ्चारमाध्यमबाट प्रकाशित हुने भाषामा मानक नेपाली भाषाको प्रयोग हुनु आवश्यक छ । यी सामग्रीहरूमा औपचारिक भाषाको प्रयोग अपरिहार्य रहेको हुन्छ । सूचना, विज्ञप्ति, समाचार, पत्र, परिपत्र जस्ता भाषिक सम्प्रेषण र सूचनाका साधनहरूमा हुने भाषिक अशुद्धता अक्षम्य अपराधका रूपमा लिइएको पाइन्छ । नेपाली भाषाको मानक प्रयोग हुन नसक्नुका मुख्य कारणका रूपमा असावधानी, बेवास्ता, अज्ञानता, अंग्रेजी भाषाप्रतिको मोह, मातृभाषाको प्रभाव रहेका छन् । सार्वजनिक सूचनामा प्रयुक्त भाषिक त्रुटिको निराकरणका लागि निम्नलिखित सुझावहरू पेस गर्न सकिन्छ;

१. असावधानी, बेवास्ता, अंग्रेजी भाषाप्रतिको मोह र मातृभाषाको प्रभावलाई न्यूनीकरण गर्नुपर्ने,
२. मानक नेपाली भाषा शुद्ध लेखन र प्रयोग अभियानलाई सञ्चालन गर्नु पर्ने,
३. नेपाल सरकारका मन्त्रालयदेखि स्थानीय निकायसम्म रहेका साइनबोर्ड, होलिड बोर्ड, सूचना पार्टी, सार्वजनिक विज्ञापनका निमित्त प्रयोग भएका सामग्रीहरूमा शुद्धीकरण गर्नु पर्ने,
४. मानक नेपाली भाषाको प्रयोगका लागि भाषिक सचेतताको पक्षलाई उजागर गरी जागरूक बन्नु पर्ने,
५. मानक भाषाको प्रयोगका लागि सुझाइएका शब्दकोश, मानक व्याकरण, शैली पुस्तिकाको प्रयोगलाई अनिवार्य र अविलम्ब प्रयोग गर्न कार्यालयहरूमा नीति निर्माण गरी निर्देशन जारी गर्नु पर्ने,
६. सूचना प्रकाशन, प्रसारित हुनुभन्दा पूर्व विज्ञहरूबाट भाषा सम्पादन गरेर मात्र सम्प्रेषण गरी प्रयोगमा ल्याउनु पर्ने,
७. भाषिक शुद्धीकरणका लागि कार्यालय प्रमुख, सूचना अधिकारी, सरोकारवाला व्यक्तिहरूलाई तालिम, प्रशिक्षण दिनु पर्ने,
८. मानक नेपाली भाषाको प्रयोग गरी सूचना प्रकाशन, सम्प्रेषण भए नभएको कुरालाई कडाइकासाथ अनुगमन गरी मूल्याङ्कन गर्ने व्यवस्था कार्यान्वयनमा ल्याउनु पर्ने,
९. मानक नेपाली भाषाको प्रयोग गर्नु प्रत्येक नेपाली नागरिकको दायित्व सम्भरेर राष्ट्रिय गौरव, अस्तित्व र आत्मस्वाभिमानको विषयको रूपमा सूचनालाई लिनु पर्ने,

भाषिक त्रुटिहरूको शैक्षणिक उपादेयता

भाषा विचार विनिमयको सशक्त माध्यम हो । विद्यालय, विश्वविद्यालयमा नेपाली भाषालाई माध्यम भाषा बनाइएको छ । सवैधानिक मान्यता प्राप्त भाषा, भारतको संविधानमा आठौँ अनुसूचीमा रहेको भाषा नेपाली भाषा हो । साहित्य, व्याकरण, शब्दकोशले सम्पन्न भाषा नेपाली भाषा हो । शैक्षणिक गतिविधि सञ्चालनको भाषा, पत्रपत्रिकाको भाषा, साभ्ता सम्पर्क भाषाको रूपमा नेपाली भाषा रहेको छ । नेपाली भाषाको शुद्ध, स्तरीय र मानक प्रयोगका लागि भाषिक त्रुटिको अध्ययन विश्लेषण र प्रभावकारिताको अध्ययन गर्न सार्वजनिक सूचनामा हुने भाषिक त्रुटिको शैक्षणिक उपायोगिता रहेको पाइन्छ ।

भाषा शिक्षण भाषिक सिपको शिक्षण हो । सिकारुमा भाषिक सिपको विकासका लागि भाषा शिक्षण प्राथमिक तहदेखि विद्यावारिधि तहसम्म गरिएको छ, तर भाषिक एकरूपता र मानकीकरणको पाटोमा नेपाली भाषामा समस्या

देखापरेको छ । सरकारी निकायका सार्वजनिक सूचनामा हुने भाषिक त्रुटिहरू विविध प्रकारका छन् । वर्णविन्यासगत, वाक्यगत र कारकीय त्रुटिहरू सूचनामा प्रयुक्त छन् । भाषा शिक्षणमा भाषाका आदानात्मक र प्रदानात्मक सिपहरूको शिक्षण हुन्छ । भाषाका सुनाइ, बोलाइ, पढाइ र लेखाइ चारओटा सिपहरू बोध र अभिव्यक्तिसँग सम्बन्धित छन् । सुनाइ र पढाइ आदानात्मक सिप हुन भने बोलाइ र लेखाइ प्रदानात्मक सिप हुन् । भाषाका चारओटै सिपहरूको समानुपातिक विकासले भाषाको सम्प्रेषण र प्रयोग क्षमतामा सक्षमता प्रदान गर्न, भाषिक त्रुटिहरूको विश्लेषण गर्नका लागि सार्वजनिक सूचनामा प्रयुक्त त्रुटिहरूलाई उपयोग गर्न सकिन्छ । सिकारुको सिकाइ अभ्यासलाई प्रायोगिक र व्यावहारिक बनाउन त्रुटिहरूको उपयोग गरिए पनि अनुकरण र वैद्यताका दृष्टिले आधिकारिक निकायबाट प्रसारण, प्रकाशित हुने सूचनाहरूको प्रभाव नकारात्मक पर्न जान्छ । सिकारुमा भाषिक त्रुटिहरूको गलत सिकाइको सामान्यीकरण भई भाषाको अशुद्ध, अमानक प्रयोग बढिरहेको पाइन्छ । नेपाली वर्ण विन्यासलाई शुद्ध रूपमा प्रयोग गर्न सकिएको पाइँदैन । भाषाको कथ्य रूपबाट अर्थबोध भएपछि, लेख्य रूपमा शुद्ध लेख्ने र प्रयोग गर्ने प्रवृत्तिमा ध्यान नदिनाले भाषिक अशुद्धिहरू हुने गरेका छन् । नेपाल सरकारका औपचारिक निकायहरूमा प्रयोग गरिने भाषा विश्वविद्यालय र विद्यालयका पाठ्यसामग्रीमा, कक्षाकोठामा प्रयोग गरिने भाषा, संविधान, ऐन, कानून, अदालत आदिमा प्रयोग गरिने भाषा, विद्युतीय, छपा, सञ्चार माध्यममा प्रयोग गरिने भाषामा मानक नेपालीको प्रयोग अनिवार्य मानिएको छ । सार्वजनिक निकायमा प्रयोग गरिने भाषा औपचारिक र लेख्य भाषाकै रूपमा प्रयोग गरिएको पाइन्छ । सार्वजनिक निकायबाट अशुद्ध भई प्रकाशित र प्रसारण हुने सूचनाले सिकारुमा काम चलिहाल्यो, मेरो एउटा मात्र गल्ती हो र, अर्थ बुझे त भइहाल्यो भन्ने लापर्वाही र गलत अनुकरण र अभ्यासका कारणले सिकारुको शैक्षणिक गतिविधिमा नकारात्मक असर परेको पाइन्छ ।

भाषिक रूपमा अशुद्ध सूचनाबाट सिकारुमा नकारात्मक असर पर्ने भएकोले शैक्षणिक उपादेयता शून्य हुन पुग्छ । सिकारुमा त जस्तो लेखे पनि हुन्छ भन्ने प्रभाव पर्छ । फरक पर्ने भए त सरकारी निकायका सूचना प्रभावित हुन्थे त त्यसो त भएको छैन । यो विषय व्यक्ति, संस्था र सरकारसँग जोडिएको पाइन्छ । सरकारले गल्ती गरेको कुरामा मतलब छैन । व्यक्तिले गरेको त्रुटिको के अर्थ छ र ? माथिल्लो निकायबाट त्रुटि ग्रहणका रूपमा लिइरहेको छ भने त्यो नकारात्मक प्रभाव पर्दछ । भाषिक शुद्धता कायम भएका सूचना सरकारी निकायका भइदिएका भए सिकाइका लागि प्रेरणाका स्रोत हुन्थे । सूचनाहरू त त्रुटिका लागि प्रेरणाका स्रोत बनेका पाइन्छन् । गल्ती हुँदाहुँदै पनि शैक्षणिक स्रोतका लागि गल्ती कहाँ कहाँ हुन्छन् भनी अध्ययन अनुसन्धान गर्ने पाटोबाट हेर्ने हो भने शोधार्थी, सिकारु, भाषिक अध्येताका लागि शैक्षणिक उपादेयताका रूपमा लिइएको पाइन्छ, तर यसो हुनु नेपाली मानक भाषाका लागि घातक हुन्छ । भाषाको स्तरीकृत रूपको प्रयोग सरकारी निकायका सार्वजनिक सूचनामा हुनु आवश्यक भएको छ ।

शैक्षणिक गतिविधिमा शुद्ध भाषिक प्रयोगका लागि सार्वजनिक सूचनाहरूलाई दृष्टान्तका रूपमा ग्रहण गर्न नसकिने किसिमका पाइन्छन् । भाषिक त्रुटिको प्रकार, वर्गीकरण र भाषाको वर्तमान प्रयोगको अवस्थाको अवलोकन गरी सुधारात्मक दिशातर्फ उन्मुख हुनका लागि सार्वजनिक सूचनाको शैक्षणिक उपादेयता रहेको पाइन्छ । नपढेका व्यक्तिहरूभन्दा पनि पढेलेखेका व्यक्तिहरूबाट भाषिक अशुद्धता बढी भएको पाइन्छ । लिखित अभिव्यक्तिमा विचार सम्प्रेषण गर्ने व्यक्तिहरूबाट नै भाषिक त्रुटि भएको पाइन्छ । यी सूचनाहरू सरल, सहज रूपमा सरोकारवाला पक्षहरू समक्ष प्रवाहित हुनु आवश्यक हुन्छ । सूचनामा देखिने अस्पष्टता, द्वैध अर्थ, वर्ण विन्यासगत, अर्थगत, स्रोतगत त्रुटिहरूले सरोकारवाला पक्षका साथै भाषाका विद्यार्थी, शिक्षक, भाषाविज्ञ वा मानक नेपाली भाषाको प्रयोग गर्ने भाषिक वक्ताहरूमा नकारात्मक प्रभाव पारेको पाइन्छ । भाषाको अशुद्ध प्रयोगले भाषिक स्थिति नै ध्रमरको अवस्थामा परेको हुन्छ । भाषाको शुद्ध प्रयोग के हो ? भन्ने विषय नै अन्योलमा परेको हुन्छ । सिकारुको शैक्षणिक गतिविधिमा सकारात्मक प्रभाव पार्न, नेपाली भाषालाई आत्मगौरव र राष्ट्रिय पहिचान एवम् विश्वव्यापीकरणको दिशातर्फ अगाडि बढाउन सार्वजनिक सूचनाहरूमा शुद्ध, स्तरीय र मानक नेपाली भाषाको प्रयोग अनिवार्य भएको छ । शैक्षणिक गतिविधिको शुद्ध भाषिक प्रयोगका लागि सार्वजनिक सूचनाहरूलाई दृष्टान्तका रूपमा ग्रहण गर्न नसकिने किसिमका पाइन्छन् । भाषिक त्रुटिको प्रकार, वर्गीकरण र भाषाको वर्तमान प्रयोगको अवस्थाको अवलोकन गरी सुधारात्मक दिशातर्फ उन्मुख हुनका लागि

सार्वजनिक सूचनाको शैक्षणिक उपादेयता रहेको पाइन्छ । भाषाप्रति बेवास्ता गर्ने प्रवृत्ति सर्वत्र बढेको अवस्थामा रहेका सार्वजनिक सूचनाका भाषिक त्रुटिहरू निराकरण गरी शुद्ध लेखन, प्रयोग र मानक भाषाको स्तरीय प्रयोग सिकाउने शैक्षिक उद्देश्यका लागि सार्वजनिक सूचनाका भाषिक त्रुटिहरू उपयोगी रहेका पाइन्छन् ।

छलफल

भाषाको मानकीकरणका लागि व्याकरण र शब्दकोश महत्त्वपूर्ण साधन हुन् । भाषाको प्रयोगगत विविधतामध्ये खास भेदलाई प्रोत्साहन गर्नु मानकीकरणको कार्य हो । जुन भाषामा व्याकरण र कोशको प्रशस्त उपयोग गरिन्छ; त्यस भाषामा मानक रूपको प्रयोग बढी भएको हुन्छ । त्यसैले भाषाको प्रयोगलाई परिष्कार, परिमार्जन र एकरूपता कायम गर्न व्याकरण र शब्दकोशको योगदान रहेको पाइन्छ । नेपाली भाषा शुद्ध कहाँ लेखिन्छ ? भन्थो भने सरकारी कार्यालय वा निकायहरूको उदाहरण दिनुपर्ने अवस्थामा त्यसो हुन सकेको पाइँदैन । स्नातक, स्नातोत्तर तह उत्तीर्ण गरी आएका सूचना अधिकारीले भाषागत त्रुटि गर्नु गम्भीर विषय हो । बौद्धिक, प्रतिष्ठित व्यक्तिले नै भाषिक अशुद्धताको प्रयोग गरी लेख्ने कार्यले भाषाप्रतिको बेवास्ता बढेको पाइन्छ । शिक्षित, पठित व्यक्तिहरूले नेपाली भाषाप्रति सम्मान गर्न नसक्नु हो भन्ने बुझिन्छ । संस्थागत रूपमा भाषागत त्रुटिले विद्यार्थीको सिकाइमा नकारात्मक असर पर्न जान्छ । गल्तीका लागि प्रेरणाको स्रोत बनेका छन् । भाषागत गल्ती, कमजोरी हटाउन प्रज्ञा नेपाली बृहत शब्दकोश, शैली पुस्तिकाको प्रयोग गर्नु आवश्यक छ । संस्थागत रूपमा भाषागत त्रुटिले विद्यार्थीको सिकाइमा नकारात्मक असर पर्न जान्छ । सरकारी सार्वजनिक निकायका सूचनाहरू गल्तीका लागि प्रेरणाका स्रोत बनेका पाइन्छन् । भाषागत गल्ती, कमजोरी हटाउनका लागि नेपाली भाषा शुद्ध लेखौं, पढौं र प्रयोग गरौंको अभियान नै सरकारी स्तरबाट सञ्चालन हुनुपर्ने देखिन्छ । ऐच्छिक नेपाली विषय पढेकाले मात्र नेपाली भाषा शुद्ध लेख्नु, बोल्नु, पढ्नु र प्रयोग गर्नपर्छ भन्ने आम बुझाइले नेपाली भाषाको स्तरीकरण र एकरूपतामा समस्या देखिएको पाइन्छ । नेपाली भाषा विषय इतरका विषय शिक्षक वा अन्यले नेपाली भाषाको प्रयोग जस्तो गरे पनि हुन्छ भन्ने दृष्टिकोणबाट अहिले नेपाली भाषा ग्रसित बनेको पाइन्छ । अन्य विषयका शिक्षक, नेपाली भाषाका प्रयोक्ता सबैले नेपाली भाषाको शुद्ध प्रयोगमा जोड दिनु आवश्यक छ । भाषाको शुद्ध प्रयोगमा सिकारुलाई सुरु देखि नै अभ्यस्त गराउनाले सिकारु सचेत भएर सिक्छ । भाषाको सचेतताको अवस्थाबाट सिकाइ प्रारम्भ हुँदा सिकाइ प्रभावकारी हुन जान्छ । नेपाली भाषा नेपालको सरकारी कामकाजको भाषा, पत्रपत्रिकाको भाषा, पठनपाठनको माध्यम भाषा भएकाले जान्दैन, प्रयोग गर्दैन भन्न कसैले पनि पाउँदैनन् । एउटै नेपाली भाषाका शिक्षकले मात्र मानक नेपाली भाषाको प्रयोग, उपयोग र महत्त्वमाथि जोड दिँदा त्यो हल्केलाले सूर्यलाई छेकेको जस्तो हुन जान्छ । नेपाली भाषाका शिक्षकहरूको ठेक्काको रूपमा मात्र नेपाली भाषाको शुद्ध लेखनको स्थितिले नेपाली भाषा स्तरीकरणको एउटा पूर्ण स्वरूप र स्थितिमा पुग्न नसकेको हो । नेपाली भाषाप्रतिका विभिन्न समयका बहस, पैरवी र आफूअनुकूलका भाष्य र परिभाषाले नेपाली भाषालाई शुद्ध लेखन र प्रयोगमा समस्या उत्पन्न हुने गरेको पाइन्छ ।

समाजका लब्ध प्रतिष्ठित व्यक्तिले नै विद्युतीय माध्यमबाट प्रसारित हुने सूचनामा नेपाली भाषाको गलत प्रयोग गरी लेखेर सम्प्रेषण गर्नाले सिकारुमा नकारात्मक प्रभाव परेको पाइन्छ । सिकारुले वहाँले त लेखेको छ; मैले लेख्दा के हुन्छ भनी गलत अनुकरण गरी लेख्नाले सिकारुमा गलत सिकाइ भएको पाइन्छ । आदर्श व्यक्ति, लब्ध प्रतिष्ठित व्यक्ति, संस्था र सार्वजनिक निकायहरूले भाषाको शुद्ध प्रयोगका लागि सच्चिनु पर्ने र सक्षम हुनुपर्ने देखिन्छ । सार्वजनिक सूचनामा कम्तिमा ४/५ देखि १५/२० ओटासम्म वर्णविन्यासगत त्रुटि र लेख्यचिह्नगत त्रुटि एउटै सूचनामा रहेका पाइन्छन् । यी सूचनाहरू लेख्ने र सम्प्रेषण गर्ने व्यक्तित्वहरू अधिकृत तहसम्मका हुने भएकाले सूचनामा हुने त्रुटिहरूलाई निराकरण गर्न प्रकाशित सूचनामाथि, अनुगमन, निगरानी गर्नुपर्ने देखिन्छ । कार्यालयमा प्रज्ञा नेपाली शब्दकोशको प्रयोग, शैली पुस्तिकाको प्रयोग गर्ने बानीको विकास हुनुपर्ने देखिन्छ ।

भाषिक रूपमा अशुद्ध सूचनाबाट सिकारुमा नकारात्मक असर पर्ने भएकोले शैक्षणिक उपादेयता शून्य हुन पुग्छ । सिकारुमा त जस्तो लेखे पनि हुन्छ भन्ने प्रभाव पर्छ । फरक पर्ने भए त सरकारी निकायका सूचना प्रभावित हुन्थे त त्यसो त भएको छैन । यो विषय व्यक्ति, संस्था र सरकारसँग जोडिएको पाइन्छ । सरकारले गल्ती गरेको

कुरामा मतलब छैन । व्यक्तिले गरेको त्रुटिको के अर्थ छ र ? माथिल्लो निकायबाट त्रुटि ग्रहणका रूपमा लिइरहेको छ भने त्यो नकारात्मक प्रभाव पर्दछ । भाषिक शुद्धता कायम भएका सूचना सरकारी निकायका भइदिएका भए सिकाइका लागि प्रेरणाका स्रोत हुन्थे । सूचनाहरू त त्रुटिका लागि प्रेरणाका स्रोत बनेका पाइन्छन् । गल्ती हुँदाहुँदै पनि शैक्षणिक स्रोतका लागि गल्ती कहाँ कहाँ हुन्छन् भनी अध्ययन अनुसन्धान गर्ने पाटोबाट हेर्ने हो भने शोधार्थी, सिकारु, भाषिक अध्येताका लागि शैक्षणिक उपादेयताका रूपमा लिइएको पाइन्छ; तर यसो हुनु नेपाली मानक भाषाका लागि घातक हुन्छ । भाषाको स्तरीकृत रूपको प्रयोग सरकारी निकायका सार्वजनिक सूचनामा हुनु आवश्यक भएको छ ।

पढेलेखेका व्यक्तिहरूबाट भाषिक अशुद्धता बढी भएको पाइन्छ । लिखित अभिव्यक्तिमा विचार सम्प्रेषण गर्ने व्यक्तिहरूबाट नै भाषिक त्रुटि भएको पाइन्छ । यी सूचनाहरू सरल, सहज रूपमा सरोकारवाला पक्षहरू समक्ष प्रवाहित हुनु आवश्यक हुन्छ । सूचनामा देखिने अस्पष्टता, द्वैध अर्थ, वर्ण विन्यासगत, अर्थगत, स्रोतगत त्रुटिहरूले सरोकारवाला पक्षका साथै भाषाका विद्यार्थी, शिक्षक, भाषाविज्ञ वा मानक नेपाली भाषाको प्रयोग गर्ने भाषिक वक्ताहरूमा नकारात्मक प्रभाव पारेको पाइन्छ । भाषाको अशुद्ध प्रयोगले भाषिक स्थिति नै धरमरको अवस्थामा परेको हुन्छ । भाषाको शुद्ध प्रयोग के हो ? भन्ने विषय नै अन्योलमा परेको हुन्छ । सार्वजनिक सूचना लेखन र प्रयोगका लागि सूचना अधिकारी, सूचनासँग सरोकार राख्ने सम्बद्ध व्यक्ति, कार्यालय प्रमुखहरूलाई सूचनामा प्रयुक्त भाषा र नेपाली भाषाको मानक प्रयोग सम्बन्धी भाषाविज्ञ, भाषाविदको व्यवस्थापन र नीति निर्माण गरी प्रशिक्षण अभियान सञ्चालन गरेर भाषिक एकरूपता कायम गर्नुपर्ने देखिन्छ ।

निष्कर्ष

सरकारी निकायका सार्वजनिक सूचनामा प्रयुक्त भाषिक त्रुटि र त्यसको शैक्षणिक उपादेयता खोजी गर्ने विषयमा केन्द्रित रही यो लेख तयार पारिएको हो । सार्वजनिक सूचनामा मानक नेपाली भाषा प्रयोगको अवस्था कस्तो छ ? सरकारी निकायका सार्वजनिक सूचनामा प्रयुक्त भाषिक त्रुटिहरू के-कस्ता रहेका छन् ? भाषिक त्रुटिहरूमा सुधार ल्याउन के-कस्ता सुझावहरू प्रस्तुत गर्न सकिन्छ ? भाषिक त्रुटिहरूको शैक्षणिक उपादेयताको प्रभाव के कस्तो रहेको छ ? भन्ने समस्यालाई प्रमुख रूपमा लिइएको छ । यो गुणात्मक ढाँचाको लेख बनेको छ । सूचनाहरू अहिले मनलाग्दो तरिकाले मानक नेपाली भाषाको विपरित दिशातिर उन्मुख भई प्रकाशित, प्रसारित भएका पाइन्छन् । यो भाषाप्रतिको बेवास्ता हो । एउटै सार्वजनिक सूचनामा चार/पाँचदेखि पन्ध्र/बिसभन्दा बढी विविध प्रकृतिका भाषिक त्रुटिहरू भएका पाइन्छन् । शिक्षित, पठित व्यक्तिबाट नै भाषाप्रतिको सम्मान हुन सकेको छैन; जे जस्तो लेखे पनि काम चलि हाल्यो भन्ने प्रवृत्ति बढेकाले मानक नेपालीको प्रयोगमा समस्या देखिएको हो । सरकारी निकायबाट भाषिक शुद्धता र स्पष्टताको ख्याल नगरी सूचना प्रसारित हुने परिपाटीले भाषिक त्रुटिको प्रकार, वर्गीकरण र भाषाको वर्तमान प्रयोगको अवस्थाको अवलोकन गरी सुधारात्मक दिशातर्फ उन्मुख हुनका लागि सार्वजनिक सूचनाको शैक्षणिक उपादेयता रहेको पाइन्छ । शैक्षणिक गतिविधिको शुद्ध भाषिक प्रयोगका लागि सार्वजनिक सूचनाहरूलाई दृष्टान्तका रूपमा ग्रहण गर्न नसकिने किसिमका पाइन्छन् । भाषिक त्रुटिको प्रकार, वर्गीकरण र भाषाको वर्तमान प्रयोगको अवस्थाको अवलोकन गरी सुधारात्मक दिशातर्फ उन्मुख हुनका लागि सार्वजनिक सूचनाको शैक्षणिक उपादेयता रहेको पाइन्छ । शैक्षणिक गतिविधिको शुद्ध भाषिक प्रयोगका लागि सार्वजनिक सूचनाहरूलाई दृष्टान्तका रूपमा ग्रहण गर्न नसकिने किसिमका पाइन्छन् । भाषिक त्रुटिको प्रकार, वर्गीकरण र भाषाको वर्तमान प्रयोगको अवस्थाको अवलोकन गरी सुधारात्मक दिशातर्फ उन्मुख हुनका लागि सार्वजनिक सूचनाको शैक्षणिक उपादेयता रहेको पाइन्छ । नेपाली विषय शिक्षकको मात्र ठेक्का हो भन्ने आम मानसिकता र बुझाइले भाषाप्रतिको आकर्षण घटेको पाइन्छ । नेपाली भाषाप्रति आफूअनुकूलका भाष्य र परिभाषाहरू गर्ने प्रवृत्तिलाई त्याग गरी साझा मानक नेपाली भाषाको प्रयोगमा जोड दिनुपर्ने देखिन्छ । सरकारी निकायका सार्वजनिक सूचनामा भाषिक एकरूपता, स्तरीकरण र मानकीकरण कायम गर्नका लागि सरकारले तालिम, प्रशिक्षण, नियमन, अनुगमन समेतको कार्यमा जोड दिनु आवश्यक देखिन्छ ।

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ज्वरसमना प्रकृति कवितामा रूपकालङ्कार

अनिल अधिकारी^१, रेखा रेग्मी^२, निर्मला ढकाल^३

^१नेपाली विभाग, महेन्द्र मोरङ आदर्श बहुमुखी क्याम्पस, विराटनगर

^२नेपाली विभाग, म्याग्दी बहुमुखी क्याम्पस, म्याग्दी (वेनी)

^३शोधार्थी, मानविकी तथा सामाजिक शास्त्रसङ्काय, त्रि. वि. कीर्तिपुर

Corresponding Author: Nirmala Dhakal; Email: nirmaladhakal165@gmail.com

लेखसार

प्रस्तुत लेख ज्वरसमना प्रकृति कवितामा अर्थालङ्कारान्तर्गत रूपकालङ्कारको विश्लेषण तथा त्यसका आधारमा कविताको मूल्याङ्कनमा केन्द्रित छ। यस लेखमा गुणात्मक अनुसन्धान पद्धति तथा कवितामा रूपकालङ्कार र यसका भेदको प्रस्तुति भएका उद्धरणका आधारमा विश्लेषण र मूल्याङ्कन हुने भएकाले यो पाठमा अभिव्यक्त विषयवस्तुको विश्लेषणकेन्द्री एवम् विश्लेषणात्मक विधिको प्रयोग भएको लेख हो। यस लेखको सैद्धान्तिक र अवधारणात्मक आधार संस्कृत काव्यचिन्तनान्तर्गतको रूपकालङ्कार र यससम्बन्धी मान्यता हो। शब्दमा सन्निहित अर्थ तथा त्यसलाई निधारण गर्ने उपमान, उपमेय साधारण धर्म तथा वाचक शब्दले उपमान र उपमेयबीचमा अभेद्य सम्बन्ध प्रस्तुत गरी प्राप्त हुने अर्थ रूपकालङ्कारको मूलभूत अभिलक्षण हो। प्रस्तुत ज्वरसमना प्रकृति अलङ्कार प्राप्तिमा दृष्टिले रूपकालङ्कार अङ्गी रूपमा प्रतिपाद्य भएको कविता हो। यस कवितामा परम्परित रूपकालङ्कार प्रयोग भएका सन्दर्भमा उपमान, उपमेय अभेद्य सम्बन्ध प्रस्तुत भई यी दुईमा प्रयोगगत भिन्नता नदेखिई अर्थ प्रस्तुत भएको छ। यस कवितामा प्रयोग भएको सावयव रूपकालङ्कारमा प्रकृतिका विभिन्न अवयव तथा प्राणीजगतसँग सम्बन्धित अवयवका बीचको अभेद सादृश्य सम्बन्ध स्थापित भई आलङ्कारिकता सिर्जना भएको छ। यस कवितामा प्रस्तुत भएको मालारूपकालङ्कार एक उपमानका अनेक उपमेयका साथ अभेद सादृश्यको शृङ्खलाबाट काव्यिक आलङ्कारिकता सिर्जना गर्ने कलात्मक माध्यम बनेको छ। यस लेखमा ज्वरसमना प्रकृति कवितामा उपर्युक्त तीन रूपकभेदका साथै हेतुरूपकालङ्कारको साध्य-साधन अभेदसम्बन्धबाट सृजित आलङ्कारिकता सहित अङ्गी अलङ्कारका रूपमा रूपकालङ्कारको सहजात प्रयोगबाट काव्यिक कलासौन्दर्य सिर्जना गरेको विषयमा विमर्श भएको छ।

शब्दकुञ्जी: परम्परितरूपक, सावयवरूपक, मालारूपक, हेतुरूपक

परिचय

प्रस्तुत लेख 'ज्वरसमना प्रकृति' कवितामा रूपकालङ्कारको विश्लेषण र अर्थार्पणका साथै यस सिद्धान्तका आधारमा मूल्याङ्कनमा केन्द्रित छ। प्रस्तुत 'ज्वरसमना प्रकृति' कविताका रचनाकार लक्ष्मीप्रसाद देवकोटा हुन्। प्रस्तुत



लेख 'ज्वरसमना प्रकृति' कवितामा अर्थालङ्कारान्तर्गत रूपकालङ्कारको विश्लेषणमा केन्द्रित छ । प्रस्तुत कृति लक्ष्मी कवितासङ्ग्रहमा प्रकाशित लोकलयको कविता हो । यस कविताका रचनाकार देवकोटा सम्बत् १९९१ सालको फागुन महिनामा प्रकाशित 'पूर्णमाको जलधि' शीर्षक कविता प्रकाशन गरी साहित्यक्षेत्रमा प्रवेश गरेका हुन् । नेपाली साहित्यमा पाश्चात्य स्वच्छन्दतावादी भावधाराको आमन्त्रण, उन्नयन र विकसित तुल्याउने देवकोटा बहुमुखी प्रतिभा हुन् । नेपाली साहित्यलाई समृद्ध तुल्याउने देवकोटा कविता विधाका सबै उपविधाका कृतिका अतिरिक्त आख्यान, नाटक, निबन्ध र अंशतः समालोचना विधामा समेत रचना गर्ने स्रष्टा हुन् । देवकोटालाई कवि व्यक्तित्व प्रदान गर्ने पुस्तकाकार कवितासङ्ग्रहमा भिखारी (२०१०), जन्मोत्सव र मुटुका थोपा (२०१५), नवरस (२०३६), लक्ष्मी कवितासङ्ग्रह (२०३९), लक्ष्मी गीतसङ्ग्रह (२०४१) मुख्य छन् । आरम्भकालीन कवितामा स्वच्छन्दतावादी भाव प्रस्तुत भएका देवकोटाका पछिल्ला अवधिका कवितामा स्वच्छन्दतावादभित्रै प्रगतिवादी चिन्तनको प्रस्तुति भएको छ । प्रकृति, यसको सर्वोपरि ता र जीवन सञ्चालनका लागि यसको महत्त्वको विश्लेषण गर्ने 'ज्वरसमना प्रकृति' २०१३ सालको इन्द्रेणी वर्ष १(८) मा प्रथमपटक प्रकाशित (बन्धु, २०३६, पृ. ४३०) भई लक्ष्मी कवितासङ्ग्रह २०३९ मा सङ्ग्रहित भई पुनर्प्रकाशित भएको कविता हो । प्रकृतिदर्शन र यसको सर्वोपरितालाई अन्तर्वस्तुका रूपमा प्रस्तुत गर्ने यो कविता परिष्कृत र परिमार्जित कृति हो । स्वच्छन्दतावादी दार्शनिक पीठिकामा संरचित प्रस्तुत कविता सुललित पदावलीमा संरचित छ । सहजात र स्वतस्फूर्त अलङ्कार विधान रहेको यस कवितामा मुख्य अर्थालङ्कारका स्थानमा रूपकालङ्कारको प्रयोग भएको छ भने यही विषयलाई मुख्य समस्या चयन गरिने यस लेखमा उपर्युक्त विषयको रिक्तता स्थापित गर्नका लागि प्रतिनिधि पूर्वकार्यको समीक्षासहित शोधान्तराल र रिक्तता स्थापित गर्न उपयुक्त हुन्छ ।

प्रस्तुत 'ज्वरसमना प्रकृति' कविताका सम्बन्धमा चूडामणि बन्धु (२०३६) को देवकोटा शीर्षक पुस्तकमा प्रकृतितिर फर्कने सन्देशप्रवाह भएको 'ज्वरसमना प्रकृति' समसामयिक विश्वपरिस्थितिप्रतिको स्रष्टा अनुभूति र लोकलयको स्वाभाविक प्रस्तुतीकरणयुक्त रहेको कविताका रूपमा विवेचना भएको छ । वासुदेव त्रिपाठी र अन्य (२०४६) सम्पादित नेपाली कविता भाग ४ पुस्तकमा 'ज्वरसमना प्रकृति' पर्याप्त परिष्कृत र देवकोटेली कल्पना वैभवको पूर्ण एवम् कलात्मक परिपाक प्राप्त भएको उत्कृष्ट फुटकर कविता रहेको दृष्टिकोण प्रस्तुत भएको छ । कुमारबहादुर जोशी (२०४८) को देवकोटाका प्रमुख कविताकृतिको कालक्रमिक विवेचना शीर्षक पुस्तकमा 'ज्वरसमना प्रकृति' संरचनागत स्थापत्यका कोणबाट सुगठित, भाषाशैलीगत सुकुमारता, नवीन बिम्बको प्रभावशाली प्रयोग, अन्तर्वस्तुगत सघनता, व्यञ्जकता र अभिव्यक्तिगत परिमार्जन भएको कविता रहेको अभिमत प्रस्तुत भएको छ । लक्ष्मणप्रसाद गौतम र नेत्र एटम (२०७४) सम्पादक रहेको प्रज्ञा आधुनिक नेपाली कविता पुस्तकमा देवकोटाका कविता विषयप्रतिको अनुभूतिमूलक प्रक्रियाको सतत् प्रवाहशीलता र कलात्मक बिम्बहरूको सामाजिक उपादेयताका कारण मानवीय चिन्तन र काव्यिक सौन्दर्यको भव्यता प्रस्तुत गर्न सफल रहेको दृष्टिकोण प्रस्तुत भएको छ । लक्ष्मणप्रसाद गौतम (२०७८) को आधुनिक नेपाली छन्दकवितामा युगीन यथार्थ पुस्तकमा देवकोटाको 'उग्रे बिग्रेको बिहान' कविता प्रतीकात्मक रूपमा विद्रोही चेतनाको सशक्ततालाई प्रस्तुत गर्न सक्षम रहेको दृष्टिकोण प्रस्तुत भएको छ । प्रस्तुत कविता र देवकोटाको कवित्वका सम्बन्धमा भएका उपर्युक्त पूर्वाध्ययनले 'ज्वरसमना प्रकृति' परिष्कृत र परिमार्जित शैलीमा रचना भएको कविताका रूपमा चर्चा गरेको छ ।

काव्यचिन्तनको सुदीर्घ परम्परामा रूपकालङ्कार अर्थालङ्कारको एक भेदका रूपमा व्याख्येय छ । अलङ्कार र यसका अभिलक्षणका आधारमा शब्दाश्रित र अर्थाश्रित भेदान्तर्गत अर्थका आधारमा निरूपित हुने अर्थालङ्कारको भेदका रूपमा रूपकालङ्कार र यसको सैद्धान्तिक मत स्थापित छ । रूपकालङ्कार मूलतः अर्थालङ्कार हो । अर्थालङ्कारका विभिन्न भेद तथा तिनका अभिलक्षण प्रस्तुत गर्ने सन्दर्भमा रूपकालङ्कार र यसको सैद्धान्तिक पक्षको विषय प्रस्तुत भएको छ । अलङ्कार र यसको काव्यिक उपादेयता एवम् महत्त्वका सम्बन्धमा विस्तृत व्याख्या संस्कृत काव्यचिन्तनमा भएको छ । संस्कृत काव्यचिन्तनका अतिरिक्त अङ्ग्रेजी अर्थात् पश्चिम एवम् नेपाली काव्यचिन्तनमा पनि अलङ्कार तथा यसका अन्तर्यमा अर्थालङ्कारको परिचर्चा विशेष रूपमा भएको छ । अर्थालङ्कारान्तर्गत

रूपकालङ्कारका दृष्टिले अध्ययनीय 'ज्वरसमना प्रकृति' कविता यस लेखको विषयगत शोधक्षेत्र हो । यस कविताका सम्बन्धमा भएका उपर्युक्त पूर्वाध्ययन यसको आलङ्कारिक पक्षको विश्लेषण गर्ने प्रयोजनका लागि नभई यसको समग्र प्राप्तिको संश्लेषणमा केन्द्रित छन् । यी अध्ययनका आधारमा प्रस्तुत कविता अर्थालङ्कारान्तर्गत रूपकालङ्कारका दृष्टिले अध्ययनीय रहेको शोधान्तराल प्राप्त हुन्छ ।

प्रस्तुत लेखका मुख्य समस्या 'ज्वरसमना प्रकृति' कवितामा रूपकालङ्कार हो । यस कविताका विषयमा भएका पूर्वाध्ययन, तिनमा कविताका सम्बन्धमा प्रस्तुत भएका अभिमतका आधारमा प्राप्त शोधान्तरालले यो विषय रिक्त र अध्ययनीय रहेको तथ्यको पुष्टि गर्दछन् । यस लेखमा ज्वरसमना प्रकृति कवितामा परम्परित रूपकालङ्कार के कस्तो छ ? ज्वरसमना प्रकृति कवितामा सावयव रूपकालङ्कार कसरी प्रयोग भएको छ ? ज्वरसमना प्रकृति कवितामा मालारूपकालङ्कार कसरी अभिव्यक्त भएको छ ? तथा ज्वरसमना प्रकृति कवितामा हेतुरूपकालङ्कार किन छ ? भन्ने शोधप्रश्नका आधारमा कवितामा प्रयोग भएको रूपकालङ्कारको निरूपण भएको छ । यस लेखको मुख्य उद्देश्य नै ज्वरसमनाप्रकृति कवितामा रूपकालङ्कारको विश्लेषण तथा मूल्याङ्कन हो । यस लेखको अध्ययनबाट संस्कृत काव्यचिन्तनान्तर्गत अलङ्कारसिद्धान्त तथा त्यसमा पनि निश्चित अलङ्कार र यसका भेद-उपभेदका आधारमा साहित्यिक कृतिको अध्ययन, विश्लेषण र मूल्याङ्कनसम्बन्धी ठोस अवधारणा र प्रयोगिक पद्धतिका सम्बन्धमा दिग्दर्शन हुने भएकाले यसको प्राज्ञिक औचित्य एवम् महत्त्वको पनि पुष्टि हुन्छ ।

अध्ययनविधि

गुणात्मक अनुसन्धान पद्धति अवलम्बन हुने यो पाठविश्लेषणकेन्द्री अध्ययन हो । यस लेखमा प्राथमिक र द्वितीयक दुवै स्रोतका सामग्रीको उपयोग भएको छ । यस लेखको प्राथमिक सामग्री लक्ष्मीप्रसाद देवकोटाको "ज्वरसमना प्रकृति" कविता हो । यस लेखमा प्रयोग भएको द्वितीयक स्रोतका सामग्री प्रथमतः कविताका विषयमा पूर्वाध्ययन भएका पुस्तक र लेख हुन् भने द्वितीयतः सैद्धान्तिक पक्षका विषयमा विमर्श भएका सामग्री हुन् । उपर्युक्त विषयका अतिरिक्त अन्य प्राथमिक र द्वितीयक स्रोतका सामग्री यस लेखको सीमाङ्कन हो । प्रस्तुत लेखको अर्थापनका लागि अर्थालङ्कार तथा रूपकालङ्कारसँग सम्बन्धित सिद्धान्त र अवधारणाको उपयोग भएको छ । यस लेखलाई अर्थापन गर्नका लागि विश्लेषणविधिको उपयोग गरिएको छ ।

सैद्धान्तिक आधार

संस्कृत काव्यचिन्तनमा अलङ्कार भेदान्तर्गत अर्थालङ्कारको चर्चा भई अलङ्कारवादी सम्प्रदायकै स्थापना भएको छ । संस्कृत काव्यचिन्तनमा अलङ्कारको प्रथम चर्चा नाट्यशास्त्रमा भएको हो । साहित्यमा प्राप्त हुने र प्रयोग गरिने अर्थालङ्कार उपमा, रूपक, दीपक र यमक चार प्रकारका छन् (भरत, २०४०, पृ. २८६) । संस्कृत काव्यचिन्तनमा नाट्यशास्त्र नाटकको सैद्धान्तिक पक्षको विवेचना गर्ने प्रयोजनसँग सम्बन्धित कृति भए पनि यसले प्रस्तुत गरेका सिद्धान्त र अवधारणा नाटकइतरका साहित्यिक विधाका लागि पनि उपयुक्त छन् । काव्यसाहित्यमा आनन्दादि सिर्जना गरी काव्यात्मालाई प्रकाशित गर्ने अनुप्रास, यमक, रूपक, दीपक र उपमा जस्ता पञ्चालङ्कार छन् (भामह, सन् २०१०, पृ. ११) । अलङ्कारवाद र सम्प्रदायको स्थापना गरी काव्यात्मा नै यही विषयलाई स्थापित गर्न मार्ग प्रशस्त गर्ने काव्यालङ्कारमा प्रस्तुत अवधारणा एक दृष्टिले पूर्ववत् परम्पराकै निरन्तरता हो ।

अलङ्कारका सम्बन्धमा पारिभाषिक अभिलक्षण र विशेषताको प्रस्तुति प्रथमपटक काव्यादर्शमा भएको छ । काव्यलाई सुन्दर तुल्याई सहृदयका हृदयमा आनन्दादि आभासको सञ्चार गराउने प्रेरक काव्यतत्त्व अलङ्कार हो (दण्डी, सन् २०१०, पृ. १५) । काव्यादर्श लक्षणग्रन्थमा प्रस्तुत अलङ्कारसम्बन्धी अभिलक्षणले नै अलङ्कार काव्यको बाह्यसौन्दर्यको प्रकटीकरण गर्ने निर्जीव आवरण वा आभूषण मात्र नभई यो काव्यिक भावलाई ग्रहणशील र पाठकलाई अनान्दानुभूतिका लागि उत्प्रेरक सामग्री वा तत्त्व हो भन्ने पक्षलाई स्थापित गरेको छ । अलङ्करण अर्थात् 'अलङ्करणमलङ्कार', 'अलङ्कृत्यते अनेन इति वा अलङ्कार' र अलङ्करोति इति अलङ्कारः' अर्थात् भावघनान्त,

करणदन्त, तथा काव्यार्थ प्रधान 'अण' प्रत्ययान्तबाट निर्मित, विकसित र व्यवहृत काव्यिक शिल्प अलङ्कार हो (अग्निपूराण, सन् २०१२, पृ. ८५४) । अर्थालङ्कारको पारिभाषिक लक्षणका विषयमा प्रकाश पार्ने क्रममा अलङ्कार के हो भन्ने सन्दर्भको विवेचनाका क्रममा प्रस्तुत अवधारणाले अलङ्कार र यसको स्वरूप काव्यमा आभूषणादि सौन्दर्य मात्र नभई यो काव्यपठनबाट आत्मभूत तत्त्वसम्म पुग्ने तथा पाठकलाई पठन एवम् श्रवणतुल्य बनाई काव्याकर्षण सिर्जना गर्ने माध्यम हो भन्ने पक्षको पुष्टि हो ।

संस्कृत काव्यचिन्तनमा अलङ्कार र यसको विषयमा व्यापक अध्ययन भएको छ । संस्कृत काव्यचिन्तनमा अग्निपूराणपछि स्थापित भएका सिद्धान्तको विकासका क्रममा अलङ्कारका सम्बन्धमा प्रस्तुत अवधारणालाई संश्लेषण गर्दा मूलतः अलङ्कारसम्बन्धी अवधारणा यसप्रकारको निर्माण हुन्छ –

नानाप्रकारका हार तथा आभूषणद्वारा जुन रूपमा सुन्दर रमणीका अङ्ग सुशोभित भएभैं शब्दार्थसौन्दर्य अर्थात् शोभाकारक अर्थ संवहन गर्ने अलङ्कार शब्द र अर्थबाट प्रतिपाद्य हुने अस्थिर धर्म तथा आभूषणादि अलङ्कार द्वारा शरीरलाई सुन्दर तुल्याई अत्युच्च शोभा दिएर पनि अन्ततोगत्वा शरीरको शोभा एवम् रसभाव (आत्मभूत) प्रस्तुतीकरणको सहायक मानवीय उच्छ्वासको अभिव्यञ्जना गर्ने कलात्मक भाषिक सामग्री हो (रुद्रट, सन् १९६५, पृ. १९६, मम्मट, सन् १९८३, पृ. ३९०, विश्वनाथ, सन् १९८३, पृ. ६६५, अजितसेन, सन् १९७३, पृ. १११) ।

अलङ्कार साहित्यमा आत्मतत्त्व अर्थात् रसभावगत विषयीलाई केन्द्रमा राखी यसको सौन्दर्यात्मक प्राप्तिलाई अलङ्कारादि तत्त्वका माध्यमबाट सुन्दर कलात्मक विधाका रूपमा स्थापित गर्ने माध्यम हो । नेपाली काव्यचिन्तनमा पनि अलङ्कारको पारिभाषिक अभिलक्षण तथा सैद्धान्तिक विमर्श भएको छ । नेपाली काव्यचिन्तनमा अलङ्कारको पारिभाषिक अभिलक्षणका सम्बन्धमा प्रस्तुत भएका अभिमतलाई संश्लेषण गर्दा – 'अलङ्करोतीति अलङ्कारः' व्युत्पत्तिमूलक अभिलक्षण रहेको काव्योक्ति र काव्यमूलक विशेष वैचित्त्ययुक्त कथन जसका माध्यमबाट काव्य सुशोभित भई श्रोता बोद्धाहरूको हृदयमा भित्री आनन्दोल्लासरूप चमत्कार पैदा गर्ने शब्द र अर्थमा रहने चमत्कार, वाणीको भूषण र काव्यको शोभाकारक वैचित्त्ययुक्त साधन अलङ्कार हो (सिग्दाल, २०२८, पृ. ८३, भट्टराई, २०७७, पृ. २८५, उपाध्याय, २०६७, पृ. १०८, गौतम, २०६९, पृ. ११०, एटम, २०७४, पृ. ३७, शर्मा, सन् १९९६, पृ. २२, गड्तौला, २०७७, पृ. ३३) ।

अलङ्कार साहित्यमा सार्वभौम कलासौन्दर्यको अभिव्यञ्जनाका माध्यमबाट पाठक, श्रोता, भावक, दर्शक आदिलाई यसप्रतिको अनुराग तथा भावबोधबाट आत्मतत्त्वको प्राप्ति का लागि अभिमुख गराउने सौन्दर्यतत्त्व हो । सुन्दर व्यक्तित्वका लागि आन्तरिक सौन्दर्यकै सापेक्ष बाह्यसौन्दर्यको आवश्यकता व्यक्तिका लागि जुन रूपमा अपरिहार्य मानिन्छ काव्यको आत्मभूत व्यक्तित्वको सुन्दरताका लागि शरीरभूत अलङ्कार उही रूपमा अपरिहार्य मानिने अवधारणा संस्कृत र नेपाली काव्यचिन्तनमा अभिव्यक्त अलङ्कारसम्बन्धी अन्तर्वस्तु हो ।

अर्थालङ्कारका सम्बन्धमा काव्यचिन्तन परम्परामा पहिलो लक्षणग्रन्थबाट आरम्भ भएको अलङ्कारचिन्तन संस्कृत भाषाबाट विकास भएका आधुनिक आर्यभाषाका काव्यसिद्धान्तमा निरन्तर गतिशील र उत्तरोत्तर विकासतर्फ अभिमुख छ । संस्कृत काव्यचिन्तनमा अर्थालङ्कारका विषयमा प्रस्तुत अभिमतलाई संश्लेषण गर्दा विशेषतः यो अर्थको 'अलङ्करण' अर्थलाई अन्तर्वस्तुका रूपमा ग्रहण गरी आलङ्कारिकता सिर्जना गर्ने तत्त्व नै अर्थालङ्कार हो जसको उपस्थिति बिना शब्दसौन्दर्य मात्रैले आत्मभूत मनलाई काव्याकर्षण गर्न नसक्ने विषयलाई प्रतिपादन गर्ने काव्यतत्त्व हो (अग्निपूराण, सन् २०१२, पृ. ८५४, रुद्रट, सन् १९६५, पृ. १९६, मम्मट, सन् १९७३, पृ. ३९०) । अलङ्कार, अलङ्कारिकता तथा अर्थालङ्कारको सारभूत पक्ष काव्यात्मभूत वा शरीरभूत के हो ? भन्ने सम्बन्धमा द्वन्द्वात्मक अभिमत प्रस्तुत गर्ने संस्कृत काव्यचिन्तनमा अलङ्कार सारतः काव्यशोभाकारक सौन्दर्यचिन्तन हो भन्ने निष्कर्ष प्राप्त गर्नसकिन्छ ।

नेपाली काव्यचिन्तनमा अलङ्कारका सम्बन्धमा काव्यशास्त्रीय व्याख्या तथा यसको सैद्धान्तिक विषयमा विमर्श भएको छ । अलङ्कार काव्यशोभाकारक तत्त्व हो भन्ने अन्तर्वस्तु प्रस्तुत गर्ने नेपाली काव्यचिन्तनले यसलाई काव्यको आत्मभूत नभई शरीरभूत शोभाधर्म निर्वाह गर्ने तर स्थायी तत्त्वका रूपमा स्थापित गरेको छ । नेपाली काव्यचिन्तनमा

प्रस्तुत अर्थालङ्कारसम्बन्धी अवधारणालाई संश्लेषण गर्दा काव्यमा आएका एकै वर्ण वा शब्दको उपस्थिति रहे पनि नरहे पनि, त्यसका स्थानमा अन्य वर्ण वा पदको उपस्थिति भएको अवस्थामा पनि अर्थको उपस्थिति वा चमत्कार रही प्राप्त अर्थका आधारमा काव्यिक सौन्दर्य र त्यसको आर्थी सुन्दरताको आस्वादन सिर्जना गर्ने शब्दार्थसम्बन्ध अर्थालङ्कार रहिरहने काव्यिक शिल्प हो (सिग्दाल, २०२८, पृ. ८६, उपाध्याय, २०६७, पृ. ११६, (गौतम, २०६९, पृ. १११, थापा, २०६६, पृ. २३३, एटम, २०७४, पृ. ३७, शर्मा, सन् १९९६, पृ. २१) । संस्कृत काव्यचिन्तनमा अलङ्कार आत्मभूत काव्यात्माका रूपमा व्याख्या गर्ने अलङ्कारवादी सम्प्रदायले स्थापना गरेका मान्यताभन्दा भिन्न विषयको प्रतिपादनमा केन्द्रित छ । नेपाली काव्यचिन्तनमा अलङ्कार काव्यशोभाकारक तत्त्व नै हो भन्ने यसले कृतिमा कलासौन्दर्यको प्रतिबिम्बन गर्दछ ।

संस्कृत काव्यचिन्तनमा अर्थालङ्कारका भेद-उपभेदका विषयमा विमर्श सर्वप्रथम नाट्यशास्त्रमा भएको छ । वैदिक संहितामा शाब्दी प्रयोग भए पनि यसको सैद्धान्तिक अभिलक्षण नाट्यशास्त्रको योगदान छ । उपमा, रूपक, दीपक र यमक चार प्रकारका छन् (भरत, २०४०, पृ. २८६) । नाट्यशास्त्रमा अभिव्यक्त प्रस्तुत विषय नै अलङ्कारका विषयमा प्रस्तुत पहिलो सैद्धान्तिक अवधारणा हो । काव्यात्मालाई प्रकाशित गर्ने अनुप्रास, यमक, रूपक, दीपक र उपमा जस्ता पञ्चालङ्कार छन् (भामह, सन् २०१०, पृ. ११) । काव्यमा अलङ्कारको भूमिका अनिवार्य तत्त्व रहेको तथा यो नै काव्यात्मा रहने पक्षलाई केन्द्रीय विषयका रूपमा काव्यालङ्कारमा व्याख्या भएको छ भन्ने यसले अलङ्कारका अभिलक्षणका क्रममा यसका पाँचभेदको चर्चा गरेको छ । अर्थालङ्कार स्वरूप, सादृश्य, उत्प्रेक्षा, अतिशय, विभावना, विरोध, हेतु र सम आठ प्रकारका हुन्छन् (अग्निपूराण, सन् २०१२, पृ. ८५४) । अग्निपूरणमा अभिव्यक्त यस अवधारणाले अर्थालङ्कारका आठ भेद स्थापना गरेको छ । अर्थालङ्कारका भेदको सङ्ख्या काव्यसिद्धान्तको उत्तरोत्तर विकाससँगै बढ्दै जाने सन्दर्भ काव्यदर्शमा अभिव्यक्त भेदसम्बन्धी दृष्टिकोणमा प्राप्त हुन्छ । अर्थमा केन्द्रित रही काव्यिक सौन्दर्य निर्माण गर्ने अर्थालङ्कारका स्वभावोक्ति, उपमा, रूपक, दीपक, अर्थान्तरन्यास, व्यतिरेक, विभावना, समासोक्ति, अतिशयोक्ति, उत्प्रेक्षा, हेतु, प्रेयस, रसवद, पर्यायोक्ति, अपह्नुति, श्लेष, विशेष, तुल्ययोगिता, विरोध, व्याजस्तुति, निदर्शना, सहोक्ति, संसृष्टि र भाविक मुख्य भेद छन् (दण्डी, सन् २०१०, पृ. १५) । सङ्ख्यात्मक दृष्टिले चौबीस अर्थालङ्कारको व्याख्या गर्ने काव्यदर्शले यसको सैद्धान्तिक अवधारणासहित त्यसको व्याख्या गर्ने क्रममा यसको सङ्ख्या पनि विस्तारित गरेको छ । मूलतः अर्थालङ्कार वास्तव, औपम्य (उपमा), अतिशय, र श्लेष यी चार नै चार भेद नै अर्थालङ्कार हुन् भन्ने अर्थालङ्कारका अन्य भेद यी चार भेदमै सन्निविष्ट रहने दृष्टिकोण प्रस्तुत गरेको छ (रुद्रट, सन् १९६५, पृ. १९६) । अलङ्कारको सैद्धान्तिक अभिलक्षण तथा त्यसका भेदउपभेदका सम्बन्धमा वैज्ञानिक अध्ययन मानिने रुद्रटको काव्यालङ्कारमा प्रस्तुत अभिलक्षणका आधारमा यसको स्थूल र सूक्ष्म विभाजनका आधार प्रस्तुत भएको छ ।

वास्तव अर्थालङ्कारका सहोक्ति, समुच्चय, जाति, यथासङ्ख्या, भाव, पर्याय, विषय, अनुमान, दीपक, परिकर, परिवृत्ति, परिसङ्ख्या, हेतु, कारणमाला, व्यतिरेक, अन्योन्य, उत्तर, सार, सूक्ष्म, लेस, अवसर, मीलित र एकावलीजस्ता तेईस भेद (पृ. २००), औपम्यमूलकका उपमा, उत्प्रेक्षा, रूपक, अपह्नुति, संशय, समासोक्ति, मत, उत्तर, अन्योक्ति, प्रतीप, अर्थान्तरन्यास, उभयन्यास, भ्रान्तिमान्, आक्षेप, प्रत्यनीक, दृष्टान्त, पूर्व, सहोक्ति, समुच्चय, साम्य र स्मरणजस्ता एक्काईस (पृ. २४५), अतिशयका पूर्व, विशेष, उत्प्रेक्षा, विभावना, तद्गुण, अधिक, विरोध, विषम, असङ्गति, पीहित, व्याघात, र अहेतुजस्ता बाह्र (पृ. २९१) तथा श्लेषका शब्दश्लेष, अर्थश्लेष, संसृष्टि र संकर (पृ. ३१०) जस्ता चार भेदसहित अर्थालङ्कारका कूल साठी सङ्ख्या छन् । (रुद्रट, सन् १९६५, पृ. २००-३१०)

संस्कृत काव्यचिन्तनमा काव्यचिन्तनमा अर्थालङ्कार र यसको भेदका रूपमा रूपकालङ्कारको उपस्थिति सबै विमर्शमा प्रस्तुत हुनु, प्रत्येक चरणका अवधारणामा यसको अभिलक्षण तथा त्यसमा पनि समान दृष्टिकोण प्रस्तुत हुनुले रूपकालङ्कार काव्यचिन्तनमा अर्थालङ्कारको प्रतिनिधित्व गर्ने प्राचीन र लोकप्रिय अलङ्कार हो भन्ने तथ्यको पुष्टि हुन्छ ।

नेपाली काव्यचिन्तनमा अर्थालङ्कारका भेदसम्बन्धी दुई मत स्थापित छन् भने परवर्ती अध्ययनमा पनि यही विषयको पुनरावृत्ति भएको छ। नेपाली काव्यचिन्तनमा अर्थालङ्कारको वर्गीकरणका सम्बन्धमा स्थूल र सूक्ष्म दुई प्रकारको अवधारणा प्रस्तुत भएको छ। अर्थालङ्कार मूलभूत रूपमा स्वभावोक्ति र अतिशयोक्ति दुईप्रकारका छन् (सिग्दाल, २०२८, पृ. ८९)। अर्थालङ्कारको भेदसम्बन्धी यस स्थूल भेदको निरूपणका क्रममा काव्यमा अभिव्यञ्जित जे जति अन्यान्य अर्थालङ्कार छन् ती सबै यी दुई भेदकै उपभेद रहेको विषय प्रस्तुत भएको छ। नेपाली काव्यचिन्तनमा अर्थालङ्कारको सूक्ष्म विभाजनका सम्बन्धमा गोविन्दप्रसाद भट्टराई (२०७७) को अवधारणाअनुसार:

वास्तव, औपम्य, अतिशय, र श्लेष चार अलङ्कारमातृकाबाट निर्माण हुने औपम्यमूलक, विरोधमूलक, न्यायमूलक, शृङ्खलामूलक, गूढार्थमूलक, उक्तिचातुर्यमूलक, संसर्गमूलक र प्रकीर्णक आठ भेद तथा औपम्यमूलकका उपमादि तीस, विरोधमूलकका विरोधादि बाह्र, न्यायमूलकका काव्यलिङ्गादि चौध, शृङ्खलामूलकका कारणमालादि चार, गूढार्थप्रतीतिमूलकका सूक्ष्मादि एघार, उक्तिचातुर्यमूलकका गूढोक्ति आदि सात, संसर्गमूलकका मिलित आदि दश तथा प्रकीर्णकका सम आदि बाह्र उपभेद गरी कूल एकसय उपभेद छन् (भट्टराई, २०७७, पृ. २९३-२९४)।

नेपाली काव्यचिन्तनमा प्रस्तुत यस अभिमतकै आधारमा परवर्ती काव्यचिन्तनमा अर्थालङ्कारको वर्गीकरण र सैद्धान्तिक पक्षको निरूपण भएको छ। नेपाली काव्यचिन्तनमा स्थापित स्थूल र सूक्ष्म विभाजनअनुसार रूपकालङ्कारको स्थान अन्य अलङ्कारकै सापेक्ष प्रस्तुत भएको छ भने यसका सैद्धान्तिक अभिलक्षण पनि निर्माण भएको छ।

संस्कृत काव्यचिन्तनमा अर्थालङ्कारको एक भेदका रूपमा रूपकालङ्कार तथा यसको सैद्धान्तिक अभिलक्षणका विषयमा विमर्श भएको छ। रूपकालङ्कार तुलनीय अवयव र सादृश्ययुक्त गुणको अन्वयबाट निःशृत अर्थालङ्कार हो (भरत, २०४०, २९०)। नाट्यशास्त्र र त्यसको सैद्धान्तिक अभिलक्षणको निरूपणका क्रममा अलङ्कारको औचित्य तथा त्यसको प्रयोगका सन्दर्भमा प्रस्तुत यो अवधारणा रसवादी काव्यात्मभूत तत्त्वको सिद्धिलाई सार्थक र सम्यक् साहित्यशास्त्रको केन्द्रीय विषयका रूपमा स्थापित गर्ने सन्दर्भमा आएको अवधारणा हो। अनेकानेक द्रव्यादिको सम्बन्धबाट उपमाका गुणलाई आश्रय लिई जुन स्वरूपको सम्यक् वर्णन हुन्छ वा गरिन्छ त्यहाँ रूपकालङ्कार प्रतिपाद्य हुन्छ (भरत, २०४०, २९०)। रूपकालङ्कारको मूलभूत अभिलक्षण दुई तुलनीय विषय, व्यक्ति वा वस्तु तथा तिनको रूप, गुण, क्रिया आदि अभिलक्षणका आधारमा समानताको अभिव्यक्ति हो। उपमेयका तत्त्व, गुण, विशेषता र धर्म उपमानसँग सादृश्य भई अर्थप्राप्त हुनु रूपक हो (भामह, सन् २०१०, पृ. ११)। रूपकालङ्कार सिर्जना भई आलङ्कारिकता सिर्जना हुनका लागि काव्यिक अभिव्यक्तिका उपमान, उपमेय तथा तिनीहरूबीचको अभेद सादृश्यसम्बन्ध अनिवार्य प्रस्तुत हुनुपर्दछ।

संस्कृत काव्यचिन्तनको सुदीर्घ परम्परामा नाट्यशास्त्र र काव्यालङ्कारमा प्रस्तुत भएका अभिमतको प्रभाव परवर्ती काव्यचिन्तन तथा लक्षणग्रन्थमा विस्तारित छ। रूपकालङ्कारका विषयमा काव्यालङ्कारपछिका लक्षणग्रन्थमा प्रस्तुत अवधारणालाई संश्लेषण गर्दा मूलतः यो उपमेयतावच्छेदक अर्थात् मुखत्व (उपमेय) रूपको उपस्थितिद्योतन गर्ने मुख शब्दमा जुन उपमानको तादात्म्य अभेद छ भन्ने तत्त्वको समानधर्मिता अथवा सादृश्यविधानको निश्चयबोध भई आलङ्कारिकता वा अर्थको चमत्कृति सिर्जना हुने आलङ्कारिक अभिलक्षण हो (अग्निपूराण, सन् २०१२, पृ. ८५६, रूद्रट, सन् १९६५, पृ. २६१, मम्मट, सन् १९८०, पृ. ४०७, विश्वनाथ, सन् १९८२, पृ. ७१५, दीक्षित, सन् २०१०, पृ. १५, जगन्नाथ, २०२०, पृ. ११, अजितसेन, सन् १९७३, पृ. १४३)। काव्यमा रूपकालङ्कार प्रतिपाद्य भई आलङ्कारिकता सिर्जना हुनका लागि उपमेय, उपमान, साधारण धर्म (सादृश्य सम्बन्ध) तथा उपमान र उपमेय बीचको अभेदसम्बन्धको प्रस्तुति अनिवार्य विषयको उपस्थिति हुनैपर्ने अभिलक्षण प्रस्तुत भएको छ।

अङ्ग्रेजी काव्यचिन्तनमा पनि अर्थालङ्कारका रूपमा रूपकालङ्कारका विषयमा विमर्श भएको छ अङ्ग्रेजी काव्यचिन्तनमा रूपकालङ्कारका लागि Allegory र Metaphor दुई भिन्न शब्दको प्रयोग भएको छ। अङ्ग्रेजी काव्यचिन्तनमा Allegory र Metaphor दुई भिन्न शब्दका माध्यमबाट परिभाषित गरिए पनि यी पारिभाषिक शब्दको प्रकारान्तरले समान अर्थ नै प्राप्त छ। अङ्ग्रेजी काव्यचिन्तनमा अभिव्यक्त रूपकालङ्कारसम्बन्धी अभिमतलाई संश्लेषण गर्दा –

रूपक Allegory वा Metaphor यो काव्यिक विचार, बिम्ब र विषयलाई प्रतिबिम्बन गर्ने सम्पूर्ण शब्दलाई परस्परमा सम्पृक्त गर्नका लागि अवलम्बन हुने विशिष्टीकृत शैली हो भने यसले काव्य (गद्य वा पद्य) मा प्रस्तुत भएका विचार, बिम्ब, व्यक्ति, वस्तु वा विषय प्रस्तुत र अप्रस्तुत (विषय र विषयी) परस्परमा भिन्न हुँदाहुँदै पनि ती परस्परमा अभेद तथा तिनका गुण एकआपसमा एकै हुन् भन्ने अर्थको अभिव्यञ्जनाका लागि तुलना, प्रतितुलना वा सामञ्जस्य सम्बन्धको स्थापना र औचित्य प्रस्तुत गर्दछ (कडन, सन् २०१३, पृ. ६५७, अब्राम्स, सन् २००७, पृ. ९७, चाइल्ड र फाउलर, सन् २०००, पृ. २१८, बल्डिङ, सन् २००१, पृ. २३७, बोल्टन, सन् २०१३, पृ. १३०, कोम्ली, सन् १९९६, पृ. ५३९) ।

अङ्ग्रेजी भाषाका सामग्री तथा विधासिद्धान्तको परिचर्चाका क्रममा भएका विमर्शका आधारमा रूपकका अभिलक्षणहरू संस्कृत काव्यचिन्तनले प्रस्तुत गरेका मान्यतासँग निकट छन् । रूपकालङ्कारका लागि दुई प्राकृत र अप्राकृत वस्तु, व्यक्ति र विषयबीच तुलना, प्रतितुलना तथा तिनीहरूबीचको साधारण धर्म वा सादृश्य विधान समान छन् तथा ती परस्परमा भिन्न व्यक्ति, वस्तु वा विषय नभई एकै हुन् भन्ने अर्थको प्राप्ति नै यसको मूलभूत अभिलक्षण रहने निष्कर्ष प्रस्तुत भएको छ ।

रूपकालङ्कारका सम्बन्धमा संस्कृत र अङ्ग्रेजी काव्यचिन्तनकै सापेक्ष नेपाली काव्यचिन्तनमा पनि विमर्श भएको छ । रूपकालङ्कारका सन्दर्भमा नेपाली काव्यचिन्तनमा अभिव्यक्त भएका मतलाई संश्लेषण गर्दा रूपसाम्य वा कार्यसाम्यका आधारमा उपमेयलाई निषेध नगरी उपमेय र उपमानबीच अभेदमूलक आरोप गरिनु रूपकालङ्कार हो (सिग्दाल, २०२८, पृ. ९७, भट्टराई, २०७७, पृ. २९८, उपाध्याय, २०६७, पृ. १२१, पन्त, २०७९, पृ. ६१, थापा, २०६६, पृ. २३९, न्यौपाने २०३८, पृ. ३६४, अधिकारी, २०५६, पृ. ५८, एटम, २०७४, पृ. १९९, अधिकारी, २०५६, पृ. ५८) । रूपकालङ्कार तात्त्विक रूपमा उपमान, उपमेय, सादृश्य धर्म तथा तिनीहरू बीचको अभेद सम्बन्धका अन्वयबाट सृजित आलङ्कारिकता हो । रूपकालङ्कारमा दुई परस्परमा भिन्न वस्तु, व्यक्ति वा विषयको उपस्थिति तथा तिनीहरू बीचमा परस्परमा समानता र अभेद सम्बन्ध अनिवार्य तत्त्व हुन् ।

संस्कृत काव्यचिन्तनमा रूपकालङ्कारका भेद-उपभेदका सम्बन्धमा समान अवधारणा छैन । अलङ्कार वादी सम्प्रदायमा रूपकालङ्कारका विषयमा भएका विमर्शमा यसका दुई भेददेखि अनेक भेदको विषयमा सैद्धान्तिक अवधारणासहित ती कृतिमा कसरी प्रस्तुत भएका छन् भन्ने विषयको प्रस्तुति छ । उपमान-उपमेय अभेद सम्बन्धलाई प्रस्तुत गर्ने रूपकालङ्कारका असमस्तरूपक, समस्तरूपक, पूर्वरूपक, व्यस्तरूपक, सकलरूपक, वयवरूपक, अवयविरूपक, योगादयरूपक, विषमरूपक, विशेषणरूपक, द्विरुद्धरूपक, हेतुरूपक, श्लिष्टरूपक, क्षेत्ररूपक, समाधानरूपक, रम्यरूपक, पहनवरूपक आदि भेद छन् (दण्डी, सन् २०१०, पृ. २२-२५) । संस्कृत काव्यचिन्तनको समृद्ध परम्परामा अलङ्कारको व्यवस्थित अध्ययन र तर्कसम्म वर्गीकरणको आधार मानिने रुद्रटको काव्यालङ्कारमा रूपकालङ्कारका तीन भेदको चर्चा भएको छ । रूपकालङ्कारका तीन प्रमुख भेद सावयव, निरवयव र सङ्कीर्ण मुख्य तीन तथा यी प्रत्येकका अन्य उपभेद छन् (रुद्रट, सन् १९६५, पृ. २६१) । संस्कृत काव्यचिन्तनका परवर्ती संस्करणमा पनि यसको भेदका सम्बन्धमा विमर्श तथा निरूपणका विषयमा विमर्श भएको छ ।

रूपक भेदका विषयमा साहित्यदर्पणले पनि मुख्य तीन तथा तिनका अन्य उपभेदको परिचर्चा गरी आठभेदको निर्धारण गरेको छ । रूपकालङ्कारका तीन प्रमुख भेद परम्परित, साङ्ग र निरङ्ग मुख्य तीन भेद छन् (विश्वनाथ, सन् १९८३, पृ. ७९६) । कुवलयानन्द लक्षणग्रन्थमा रूपकका दुई भेद मात्र स्वीकृत छन् भने यसका अन्यान्य उपभेद रहने अवधारणा प्रस्तुत भएको छ । मूलतः रूपकालङ्कारका अभेद र ताद्रूप्य दुई मुख्य तथा तिनका अन्य उपभेद छन् (दीक्षित, सन् २०१०, पृ. १६) । रूपकभेदका सम्बन्धमा अलङ्कारचिन्तामणिले पनि तीनप्रकारको हुने तथा त्यसका अनेक उपभेदको सैद्धान्तिक र प्रायोगिक पक्षको विश्लेषण गरेको छ । रूपकालङ्कारका सावयव, निरवयव र परम्परित तीन भेद छन् (अजितसेन, सन् १९७३, पृ. १४३) । यसप्रकार संस्कृत काव्यचिन्तनमा रूपकालङ्कारका सम्बन्धमा भएका विमर्शले यसको भेद सङ्ख्या यति हो भनेर निश्चित गर्ननसके पनि यी लक्षणग्रन्थको अन्तर्वस्तु यसका तीन मुख्य भेद हुने तथ्यको

निकट छन् । मूलभूत रूपमा रूपकालङ्कारका परम्परित, सावयव र माला तीन भेद छन् (भट्टराई, २०७७, पृ. २९८-२९९, उपाध्याय, २०६७, पृ. १२१-१२२) । संस्कृत र नेपाली काव्यचिन्तनमा रूपकालङ्कारका विषयमा भएका अध्ययनबाट यसका अनेक भेद तथा ती भेदका उपभेदको चर्चा भए पनि यस लेखमा यसका परम्परित, सावयव, माला र हेतु चार भेदका कोणबाट 'ज्वरसमना प्रकृति कविताको आलङ्कारिक पक्षको विवेचना तलका उपशीर्षक र सन्दर्भमा भएको छ ।

नतिजा र छलफल

प्रस्तुत ज्वरसमना प्रकृति कविता स्वच्छन्दतावादी भावाभिव्यक्ति भएको लोकलयमा संरचित कविता हो । प्रकृति नै जीवनजगतका लागि साध्य हो भन्ने केन्द्रीय विषय प्रतिपाद्य यस कवितामा प्रकृतिमा नै जीवनको सृष्टि, स्थिति र नियमनका लागि अन्तर्निर्भर रहने भावको प्रस्तुति छ । प्रकृतिलाई केन्द्रमा राखी सहजात भाषिक विन्यासको प्रयोग भई रचना भएको यस कवितामा अलङ्कारको उचित तथा सहजात प्रयोग भएको छ । यस कवितामा शब्दालङ्कार र अर्थालङ्कारको सन्तुलित, सम्यक र स्वतस्फूर्त प्रयोग भएको छ । मूलत आलङ्कारिकताका दृष्टिले यस कवितामा रूपक, उपमा, स्वभावोक्ति, अर्थान्तरन्यास, विशेषोक्ति, उत्प्रेक्षा र दीपकालङ्कारको प्रयोगबाट आलङ्कारिकता सिर्जना भएको छ । अलङ्कारका दृष्टिले यस कवितामा शब्दालङ्कारअन्तर्गत अनुप्रास तथा अर्थालङ्कारअन्तर्गत रूपकालङ्कार अङ्गी अलङ्कार हुन् । प्रकृति र चराचरजगतमा मानवीय भूमिका र प्रकृतिको उदार र उदात्ततासँग मानवीय सम्बन्धलाई प्रस्तुत गर्ने सन्दर्भमा रूपकालङ्कार र यसका विविध उपभेदको सार्थक र सम्यक उपस्थिति भएको छ । यस कवितामा रूपकालङ्कारको प्रस्तुति तथा प्रयोजनले सिर्जना गरेको काव्यिक आलङ्कारिकताको विश्लेषण यसका उपभेद तथा तीसम्बन्धी सैद्धान्तिक अभिलक्षणका आधारमा क्रमशः तलका सन्दर्भमा भएको छ ।

ज्वरसमना प्रकृति कवितामा परम्परित रूपक

आलङ्कारिकताका दृष्टिले रूपकालङ्कारप्रधान ज्वरसमना प्रकृति कवितामा परम्परित रूपकालङ्कारको सम्यक् र सार्थक प्रयोग भएको छ । संस्कृत काव्यचिन्तमा सैद्धान्तिक पक्ष तथा अवधारणासहित कृतिविश्लेषणको आधार प्रस्तुत भएको रूपक भेदअन्तर्गत परम्परित रूपकालङ्कारको विषयमा नेपाली काव्यचिन्तनमा पनि रूपक भेदअन्तर्गत परम्परित रूपक तथा यसको सैद्धान्तिक मत स्थापित छ । संस्कृत र नेपाली काव्यचिन्तनमा परम्परित रूपकालङ्कारमा सम्बन्धमा प्रस्तुत भएका अभिमतलाई एकै सन्दर्भमा संश्लेषण गर्नसकिन्छ । यस अलङ्कारका सम्बन्धमा संस्कृत र नेपाली काव्यचिन्तनमा अभिव्यक्त अवधारणालाई संश्लेषण गर्दा मूलतः यो एक उपमान-उपमेय वीचको आरोप दोस्रो अभेद आरोपका कारण हुनु परम्परित रूपकको अभिलक्षण हो (विश्वनाथ, सन् १९८३, पृ. ७१६, उपाध्याय, २०६७, पृ. १२१, उपाध्याय, २०६७, पृ. १२१) । संस्कृत र नेपाली काव्यचिन्तनमा प्रस्तुत परम्परित रूपकसम्बन्धी अभिमतको अन्तर्वस्तु रूपक अलङ्कारका उपमान, उपमेय, साधारण (सादृश्य) धर्म तथा तिनीहरूबीचको अभेद सम्बन्धजस्ता विशेषता नै हुन् । काव्यिक अलङ्कार प्रयोगका दृष्टिले 'ज्वरसमना प्रकृति' कवितामा परम्परित रूपकालङ्कारले आलङ्कारिकता सिर्जना गरेको छ यो कविताका निम्नलिखित पङ्क्तिगुच्छमा सशक्त छ ।

ए ! साथी ! हाम्लाई सम्झने कोही छ, विरुवा ! चरा हो !

घामले दुःखी ए फूल राम्रा ! नबोल्ने कुरा हो !

हप्केका घाँस ! दुःख र सुख सम्झने ए प्राणी !

कसैको हेर ! करुण छायो !

पग्लन्छ, भर्छ, अमृत भई वर्षाले अशमानी

दक्षिण चुली-किनारा पर कोही दिल छ दयालु !

उसैको सारा भावना छाए आकाशमा मायालु ! (देवकोटा, २०७६, पृ. १५६) ।

प्रस्तुत कवितांशमा परम्परित रूपकभेद प्रतिपाद्य भई आलङ्कारिकता सिर्जना भएको छ । यस कवितांशको उपमेय मानवलगायतको जीवजगत् हो । यस कवितांशमा उपमान प्रकृति तथा यसका विविध स्वरूप हुन् । यस कवितांशमा प्राकृत जगत्का कविताको प्रस्तुतकर्ताले सम्बोधन गरेको साथी, बिरुवा, चरा, फूल, घामले सुकेका अथवा वैलाएका घाँसलगायतका प्रकृतिका सिर्जना र तिनमा परेको प्रभाव र तिनलाई प्राकृतिक उग्रताबाट उन्मुक्ति दिने निर्विकल्प माध्यम वा विषय प्रकृति नै हो भन्ने कथ्यप्रस्तुत गर्ने सन्दर्भमा परम्परित रूपकालङ्कारको प्रयोग भएको छ । प्रकृति र प्रकृतिद्वारा सिर्जना गरिएका वस्तु प्रकारान्तरलेले एकै हुन् भन्ने विषयका माध्यमबाट काव्यिक रचनाले समूर्तन प्राप्त गरेको यस कवितांशमा पृथ्वी र चराचर जगत्को वस्तुता तथा प्राणीजगत् र प्रकृति भन्नु नै एकै हुन् भन्ने कथ्यको प्रस्तुति भएको छ । प्रकृति र प्रकृति निर्मित वस्तुबीच एकाकार अथवा यी दुई भिन्न विषय नभई एकै हुन् भन्ने अभेद सम्बन्धको अभिव्यक्ति भएको यस कवितांशका आलङ्कारिक दृष्टिले रूपकालङ्कार प्रतिपाद्य छ । उपमेय र उपमान भिन्न विषय नभई एकै हुन् भन्ने रूपकालङ्कारका विशेषता तथा त्यसका अन्तर्यमा प्रकृति र यसको सृष्टि भन्नु नै वास्तविकतामा प्रकृति नै हुन् भन्ने आर्थी चमत्कृतिका साथै यसले नै उष्णता र शीतलता दुबैलाई ग्रहण र सहन गर्नसक्ने क्षमता प्रदान गरेको अर्थ प्रस्तुत गरेको छ । यस कवितांशमा प्रकृति भन्नु नै सिङ्गो सृष्टिजगत् र प्राणीजगत् भन्नु नै प्रकृति रहेको दृष्टिकोण प्रस्तुत भएको छ । यस विशेषताका आधारमा यो कवितांश परम्परित रूपकालङ्कार प्रतिपाद्य भएको सन्दर्भ हो भने यस कविताका निम्नलिखितानुसारका सन्दर्भमा पनि यसको उपस्थिति सघन छ ।

पृथ्वी तम्लाइ गर्मी छ, पख, स्वर्ग नै रुनेछ

ए जीव हो ! तिम्लाइ ताप छ, पख, मलमले छुनेछ

ए रोगी तिम्लाइ जरो छ, पख, ज्वर-शमन हुनेछ,

किनकि कोही लुकेर हेर्छ मायाले हुनेछ ! (देवकोटा, २०७६, पृ. १५६) ।

प्रस्तुत कवितांशमा परम्परित रूपकालङ्कार प्रतिपाद्य छ । यस कवितांशको उपमेयका रूपमा पाँच फरक विषयको प्रस्तुति छ भने यसको उपमान प्रकृति नै हो । यस कवितांशमा पृथ्वी, स्वर्ग, जीव, मन (आत्मा) तथा रोगी उपमेय हुन् । यस कवितांशमा प्रकृतिको सिर्जनाका रूपमा पृथ्वी, स्वर्ग, जीव, आत्मा, रोग, पथ्य आदि आस्तित्वमा रहने विषय रहेकाले प्रकृतिभन्दा बाहिर कुनै पनि विषयको उपस्थिति हुनसक्ने विषयको प्रस्तुति भएको छ । प्रकृतिले सिर्जना गर्ने वस्तु नै जीवनजगत्का वास्तविकता रहेकाले सृष्टि, स्थिति र अन्त्यका विषयमा जेजस्ता तर्क र भाष्य निर्माण भए पनि अन्तत यी सबै प्राकृतिक नियमभन्दा माथि किमार्थ शक्तिशाली छैनन् भन्ने दृष्टिकोण प्रस्तुत गर्ने यस कवितांशमा प्रकृति नै सर्वोच्च शक्ति रहेकाले यसले सिर्जना गरेका प्रत्येक वस्तुमा प्राकृतधर्मिता अवशिष्ट स्वतः छ भन्ने अर्थको अभिव्यञ्जना भएको छ । पृथ्वी, प्रकृति, स्वर्ग, जीव, आत्मा वा यिनले अनुभव गर्ने व्याधिको अनुभूति पनि प्रकृतिद्वारा नै निर्माण र निर्धारण भएकाले यी सबैसकारका विषय अन्तत प्रकृतिसँगै समाविष्ट छ भन्ने अर्थको प्रस्तुति भएको यस कवितांशमा प्रकृति र यसको सिर्जनामा कुनै पनि भिन्नता नभएको अर्थ प्रस्तुत भएको छ । यस कवितांशमा पृथ्वी, स्वर्ग, जीव, मन (आत्मा) तथा रोगी र रोग भन्नु नै प्रकृति हो तथा प्रकृति नै उपर्युक्त सन्दर्भ भएकाले सृष्टिसँगै तिनलाई स्थिति प्रदान गर्न प्रकृति नै सक्षम छ भन्ने अर्थको प्रस्तुति भएको छ । प्रकृति उपमान तथा प्रकृतिद्वारा सिर्जना गरिएका विभिन्न वस्तु र तिनका विशेषता उपमेय भिन्न नभई अभिन्न वा एकै हुन् भन्ने अभेद आरोप प्रस्तुत भएको यस कवितांशमा परम्परित रूपकालङ्कार प्रतिपाद्य छ । अर्थालङ्कारान्तर्गत रूपकालङ्कार अङ्गी रहेको प्रस्तुत 'ज्वरसमना प्रकृति' कवितामा रूपकभेदान्तर्गत परम्परित रूपकालङ्कारका साथै सावयव भेदको पनि सशक्त प्रस्तुति भई आलङ्कारिकताको सिर्जना भएको छ ।

ज्वरसमना प्रकृति कवितामा सावयवरूपक

रूपकालङ्कारको भेदका रूपमा सावयवरूपकको प्रयोगबाट 'ज्वरसमना प्रकृति' कवितामा आलङ्कारिकता सिर्जना भएको छ । रूपकालङ्कारका विभिन्न भेदान्तर्गतको एक भेद सावयव रूपकमा आलङ्कारिकता सिर्जना गर्नका

लागि प्रयोग भएका उपमान र उपमेयका विभिन्न अवयवको सार्थक र सम्यक् प्रस्तुति भई तिनका बीचमा अभेद सम्बन्ध अपेक्षित रहन्छ। उपमान र उपमेयका अवयवहरूको परस्परमा अभेद विषय वर्णित भई सृजित आलङ्कारिकता सावयव रूपकका अभिलक्षण हुन् (रूद्रट, सन् १९६५, पृ. २६३)। संस्कृत काव्यचिन्तनमा प्रस्तुत यस अवधारणाअनुसार सावयव रूपक प्रतिपाद्य हुनका लागि कवितामा प्रस्तुत भएका उपमान र उपमेय तथा तिनका अवयवको अभिव्यञ्जना सार्थक रूपमा भएको हुनैपर्दछ। संस्कृत काव्यचिन्तनकै सापेक्ष नेपाली काव्यचिन्तनमा प्रस्तुत सावयव रूपकालङ्कारका अभिलक्षणलाई संश्लेषण गर्दा उपमेयवर्गका नाना अवयव अवयवीहरूमा उपमान-वर्गका नाना अवयव अवयवीहरूको आरोप भएमा सावयवरूपक हुन्छ (सिग्दाल, २०२८, पृ. ९८, भट्टराई, २०७७, पृ. २९९, उपाध्याय, २०६७, पृ. १२२)। संस्कृत र नेपाली काव्यचिन्तनमा प्रस्तुत सावयवरूपक आलङ्कारका सम्बन्धमा प्रस्तुत भएका अवधारणाको केन्द्रीय विषय भन्नु नै उपमान र उपमेयका अङ्ग तथा तिनको सम्यक् प्रयोगबाट सृजित आलङ्कारिकता हो। प्रस्तुत 'ज्वरसमना प्रकृति' कविताका निम्नलिखितअनुसारका पङ्क्तिगुच्छमा सावयवरूपकालङ्कारको प्रस्तुति भई आलङ्कारिकता सिर्जना भएको छ।

प्रकृतिदेवी काम गर्छिन् कहीं नजरका घेरामा

बादल-फूल लगाउन भूल पृथ्वीका डेरामा

कलिला करले मुसार्छिन् मलाई हावाले निधारमा,

जुन वायु निला वनबाट धाउँछ भोपडी किनारमा,

कलिलो पर्श ! कलिली सँगै ! एकान्त गुल्जार छ !

संसारको जरो रन्केको अब शीतल निधार छ ! (देवकोटा, २०७६, पृ. १५५)।

प्रस्तुत कवितांशमा सावयव रूपकालङ्कार प्रतिपाद्य भई आलङ्कारिकता सिर्जना भएको छ। यस कवितांशको उपमान प्रकृति हो भने उपमेय प्राणीजगत् हो। यस कवितांशमा उपमानका अनेक सार्थक र सम्यक् अवयवको उपस्थितिमा उपमेयका साही सन्दर्भसँग सम्बन्धित पक्षबीचको अभेद सम्बन्ध प्रस्तुत भएको छ। यस कवितांशमा प्रकृति उपमानका पृथ्वी, बादल, हावा आदि अवयव तथा उपमेयका रूपमा प्राणीजगत्का फूल, नीला वन, भोपडीका आनन्द, सुस्त वायुप्रवाहको कोम स्पर्श, बढ्दो तापमानसँगै चढेको ज्वरो, ज्वरो घटेर शीतलताको अनुभूति आदि अनेक अवयवको प्रस्तुति छ। उपमानका विविध सावयव स्वरूप तथा उपमेयका विविध सावयव स्वरूपका बीच पारस्परिक अर्थमा समानता अर्थात् यी दुई भिन्न विषय वा वस्तु नभई यी एकै हुन् भन्ने अर्थघोतन गर्ने यस कवितांशमा मनसुनी वर्सातका कारण पृथ्वी शीतल बनी सबै प्राणीजगत्ले अनुभव गरेका चर्को प्राकृतिक कहरको अन्त्य भएको, बादलको आगमनले सबै वैलाएका प्राणी र वनस्पतिजगत्मा उल्लास आएको, मानवीय अनुभवमा अब सिर्जनशीलताको नयाँ समयचक्रको अनुभूति भएको अर्थ दिने सन्दर्भको अभिव्यञ्जना भएको छ। प्रकृतिका अवयवका रूपमा यसका विविध स्वरूप उपमान तथा उपमेयका रूपमा जीवजगत्का विविध स्वरूपका बीच समान र अभेद अर्थ रहेको आर्थीचमत्कृति प्रस्तुत गर्ने यस कवितांशमा सावयव रूपकालङ्कारको अभिव्यक्ति सशक्त छ। उपमानका अवयव तथा उपमेयका अवयवका बीचमा अभेद सम्बन्धका आधारमा सावयव रूपकालङ्कारको पुष्टि गर्ने 'ज्वरसमना प्रकृति' कविताका निम्नलिखित सन्दर्भमा पनि यो विषय प्रतिपाद्य छ।

उत्तरमा हेरें हिमालउपर बाफिलो हिमाल छ,

शिरबिन्दुतिर तान्नेको बादल लमतन्ने कमाल छ,

चुपचाप ती छिन् तन्केका लामा सूर्यलाई भेटाउन,

सियाल हाल्ने कर्तव्य आफ्नो जगत्मा चुकाउन, (देवकोटा, २०७६, पृ. १५६)।

प्रस्तुत कवितांशमा रूपकभेदअन्तर्गत सावयवरूपकालङ्कार प्रतिपाद्य छ । यस कवितांशमा उपमान प्रकृति र यसको विविधता तथा उपमेय जीवनजगत् नै हो । यस कवितांशमा उपमेयका प्रकृतिको फेरिएको स्वरूप तथा त्यसले जीवनजगत्मा ल्याएको परिवर्तन एवम् तिनका विभिन्न अवयव र उपमानका विविध स्वरूपका बीचको अभेद सम्बन्ध प्रस्तुत भएको छ । यस कवितांशमा उपमानको सावयव स्वरूप वर्षात्को सूचक बाफ, बाफिलो हिमाल, बादल, बादलको विस्तार र वर्षा आगमनको पूर्वसन्ध्यासँग सम्बन्धित प्रकृति हो । यस कवितांशमा वर्णित उपमेयको सावयव स्वरूप बाफिएको हिमालबाट निस्किएको सेतो बाफ अर्थात् कुहिरो यसको विस्तार, कुहिरोको सघनताबाट नै वर्षात् भई प्राणीजगत्को उद्धार भई जीवनजगत्मा सहज वातावरणको सिर्जना हुने सन्दर्भलाई सन्दर्भित गर्ने आकाश र क्षितिजमा विस्तार भएको अन्त्यहीन बादल तथा त्यसका विविध रूपको प्रस्तुति नै हो । यस कवितांशमा प्राकृतजगत्को एकांश मानिने वर्षात्को प्रक्रियाका विविध स्वरूप तथा तिनले प्राणीजगत्मा सिर्जना गर्ने आशा र उमङ्गसँग सम्बन्धित विविध स्वरूपको सावयव सम्बन्धको प्रस्तुति छ । उपमान र उपमेय दुबैका अवयवका बीचमा सादृश्य तर अभेद सम्बन्ध स्थापित भई आर्थी चमत्कृति सिर्जना भएको यस कवितांशमा सावयवरूपकालङ्कार प्रतिपाद्य छ । काव्यिक प्रस्तुतिका क्रममा भावगत सघनतालाई उत्कृष्ट तुल्याउने सन्दर्भमा प्रयोग भएको यस अलङ्कारको उपस्थिति नियोजित नभई स्वतस्फूर्त छ । यस कवितालाई आलङ्कारिक तुल्याउनका लागि सावयवरूपकालङ्कारकै तुलनीय मालारूपकालङ्कारको पनि सशक्त भूमिका छ ।

ज्वरसमना प्रकृति कवितामा मालारूपक

रूपकालङ्कारका अनेक भेदमध्ये मालारूपक एक हो भने 'ज्वरसमना प्रकृति' कवितामा यसको सम्यक् प्रयोग भएको छ । मालारूपक रूपकालङ्कारका सार्विक विशेषताभिन्न उपमान र उपमेयको सम्बन्ध अनेक दृष्टिले समान वा अभेद छन् भन्ने पक्षको पृष्ठपोषण गर्ने अलङ्कार हो । मूलतः मालारूपकालङ्कार एक उपमेयका अनेक उपमानबीचको अभेद सम्बन्ध प्रस्तुत भई तिनका बीचमा अभेद सम्बन्ध देखाउनु वा देखिई सृजित आलङ्कारिकता हो (रुद्रट, सन् १९६५, पृ. २६६, मम्मट, सन् १९८३, पृ. ४१०) । मालारूपका प्रतिपाद्य हुनका लागि एक उपमेयका अनेक उपमान तथा तिनका बीचको अभेद सम्बन्ध स्थापित भई उपमानको शृङ्खला निर्माण हुनु अपेक्षित रहन्छ । नेपाली काव्यचिन्तनमा मालारूपकका सम्बन्धमा प्रस्तुत भएका अवधारणालाई संश्लेषण गर्दा एकै उपमेयमा अनेक उपमानको अभेद आरोप भएका स्थानमा मालारूपकालङ्कार प्रतिपाद्य हुन्छ (सिग्दाल, २०२८, पृ. ९८, भट्टराई, २०७७, पृ. २९९) । संस्कृत र नेपाली काव्यचिन्तनमा मालारूपकका सम्बन्धमा प्रस्तुत भएका सैद्धान्तिक अभिलक्षणको अन्तर्वस्तु भन्नु नै यसमा एक उपमेयका अनेक उपमासँगको अभेद सम्बन्ध नै हो । मालारूपकालङ्कार प्रयोगबाट आलङ्कारिकता सिर्जना भएको 'ज्वरसमना प्रकृति' कविताका निम्नलिखित कवितांश व्याख्येय छन् ।

दक्षिणी चुली नीलिए गाढा, उपल्ला घेरामा !

पाँच तह, बादल चाँदीका बुट्टा,

उक्लर सुस्त मौन र मस्त,

उज्यालो हिरा भुवामा हाँसे, हिमालका दौरामा !

खाँदिला चुली बाफ भई उक्ली,

चुलीमा चुली बाफ फुली, निक्ली,

जीवन बढ्दछन् नदेख्ने गरी, आकासे गौडामा !

सियाली छाया घामले छिरबिरडदोरडी डाँडामा ! (देवकोटा, २०७६, पृ. १५५) ।

प्रस्तुत कवितांशमा रूपकभेदअन्तर्गत मालारूपकालङ्कार प्रतिपाद्य भई आलङ्कारिकता सिर्जना भएको छ । यस कवितांशको उपमान प्राकृतजगत्लाई प्रतिबिम्बन गर्ने विविधता तथा तिनका विशेषता नै हुन् । कवितांशमा उपमेय हिमाल, पहाड र आकाश हुन् । यस कवितांशमा उपमान प्रकृतिका विविधतासूचक प्राणीजगत् र यसको उपमानको शृङ्खलालाई सूचित गर्ने सूचकका रूपमा सफेद दौरा, हिरा र कोमल भुवा, खिलदोर वजनदार बादलको उपस्थिति, तापमानका कारण बादलको विस्तार तथा सबै क्षेत्रमा समान उपस्थिति, आकाशमा बादलको उपस्थिति नै पृथ्वीमा जीवनकै तुलनीय नयाँ जीवनको आभास दिने एवम् सघन जलविन्दु बोकेको बादलमा सूर्यको किरण पर्दा देखिने सुन्दर इन्द्रेणीको दृश्यले जीवनमा सञ्चार गरेको नवीन उर्जाद्योतक अर्थ प्रस्तुत गर्ने सन्दर्भमा मालारूपक प्रतिपाद्य हुनपुगेको छ । प्रकृतिको प्रतिबिम्बन गर्ने यसका विविधस्वरूप तथा जीवनजगत्लाई प्रस्तुत गर्ने विविध सन्दर्भबीचको अभेद सम्बन्धको अभिव्यञ्जना गर्ने शब्दका माध्यमबाट आलङ्कारिकता सिर्जना भएको यस कवितांशमा मालारूपकालङ्कार प्रतिपाद्य छ । यस कवितांशमा उपमेय-उपमान अभेद सम्बन्धलाई अभिव्यक्त गर्ने अनेक सादृश्यवाची शब्द र सन्दर्भको प्रयोग भएको छ । मालारूपकालङ्कारको प्रयोगबाट आलङ्कारिकता सिर्जना भएको यस कवितांशका अतिरिक्त निम्नलिखित सन्दर्भमा पनि यसको सार्थक र सम्यक् प्रस्तुति भएको छ ।

सुन्दरी कोही, सधैकी बहार, अमित सुषमा,

फूलका पाउमा चल्दछिन् मानो,

रेशमी पोशाक सल्सलाई स्यानो,

सीमलको मेरो तकिया सम्पाई, मुसार्न शिरमा;

हरियो मानो काचौबी बिछ्छाई, प्यारले ज्वरमा,

बिरुवा जस्तै मलाई पनि सन्चोले लठ पारी,

पशैर आँग, गीत गाउँछिन् गुन्गुन, पछ्यौरा लतारी, (देवकोटा, २०७६, पृ. १५५-१५६) ।

प्रस्तुत कवितांशमा पनि पूर्ववत् सन्दर्भकै तुलनीय मालारूपकको उपस्थिति भई आलङ्कारिकता सिर्जना भएको छ । प्रस्तुत कवितांशको उपमान प्रकृति तथा त्यसमा पनि वर्षाको आगमन नै हो । यस कवितांशको उपमेय प्राणीजगत् को प्रतिनिधि अर्थात् मानिस र त्यसमा पनि ज्वरार्त प्रकृतिको पीडाबाट मुक्ति पाई उदार प्रकृतिको स्नेह पाई आनन्दित र हर्षविभोर भएको कविताको प्रस्तुतकर्ता हो । प्रस्तुत कवितांशमा उपमेयले अनुभूति गरेका प्रकृति अर्थात् वर्षातृका विभिन्न विशेषता र अभिलक्षणको प्रस्तुतिका क्रममा एक नभई अनेक विशेषता अभिव्यक्त भएका छन् । यस कवितांशको प्रस्तुतकर्ताको अनुभूति प्रतिबिम्बन गर्ने अनेक सन्दर्भ तथा तिनमा अवशिष्ट प्राकृत गूण वास्तविकतामा प्रकृतिद्वारा नै निर्माण र निर्धारण भएका विषय हुन् । प्रकृतिका विषयमा मानवीय अनुभूति जे छ त्यही नै प्रकृतिको वास्तविक स्वरूप रहेको अर्थ प्रस्तुत भएको यस कवितांशमा मानव-प्रकृतिबीचको अभेद सम्बन्धको चित्रण भएको छ । मानव-प्रकृति सम्बन्ध तथा तिनका विशेषता समान हुनुको तात्पर्य प्रस्तुत भएको यस कवितांशमा उपमान र उपमेयबीचको समानता प्रस्तुत गर्ने क्रममा प्रयोग भएका कथन तथा तिनका अभिलक्षणसमेतमा समानताबाट सृजित आलङ्कारिकताले मालारूपकालङ्कारका मान्यतालाई पुष्टि गर्दछन् । सहजात काव्यिक प्रस्तुतीकरणका सन्दर्भमा आलङ्कारिकता सिर्जना भएको यस कवितांशको प्रतिपाद्य आलङ्कारिकता नै मालारूपक हो । अलङ्कार प्रयोगका दृष्टिले मालारूपकको यथोचित विन्यास भएको यस कवितामा रूपकभेदअन्तर्गत हेतुरूपकालङ्कारको प्रयोग भई आलङ्कारिकता सिर्जना भएको छ ।

ज्वरसमना प्रकृति कवितामा हेतुरूपक

प्रस्तुत 'ज्वरसमना प्रकृति' कवितामा रूपकभेदअन्तर्गत मालारूपकको पनि प्रयोग भई आलङ्कारिकता सिर्जना भएको छ । रूपकालङ्कारका विविध भेद मध्ये हेतुरूपकालङ्कारमा अन्यभेदका तुलनामा अलि भिन्न अभिलक्षण प्राप्त

छन् । हेतुरूपकमा अन्य भेदमा अभिव्यक्त उपमान, उपमेय, साधारण धर्म र अभेदवाचक शब्दको अनिवार्यता रहेर पनि पूर्वापर भेदका वस्तु, व्यक्ति वा विषयसँगै यसमा तिनीहरूबीच साध्य र साधान सम्बन्धको निरूपण हुन्छ भने कवितामा हेतुरूपकालङ्कार प्रतिपाद्य हुनका लागि साध्य-साधन अभेद सम्बन्धको अभिव्यक्ति हुनैपर्दछ । हेतुरूपकालङ्कारका सम्बन्धमा नेपाली र संस्कृत काव्यचिन्तनमा प्रस्तुत भएका अभिमतलाई एकैस्थानमा संश्लेषण गर्दा निश्चित विषयको प्राप्तिको माध्यम साधना (उपमेय) मा साधनाबाट प्राप्त उपलब्धि वा कार्य (साध्य) को अभेद आरोप अर्थात् साधान र साध्य एकै हुन् भन्ने विषयको अभिव्यञ्जना भएको आलङ्कारिकताका स्थानमा हेतुरूपकालङ्कार हुन्छ (सिग्दाल, २०२८, पृ. ९८, दण्डी, सन् २०१०, पृ. २४) । हेतुरूपकालङ्कारमा अन्य भेदका तुलनामा साधन-साध्य सम्बन्ध तथा तिनको अभेल स्वरूपको व्याख्याका क्रममा देखिने अभेद विशेषताको खोजी र विश्लेषण हुन्छ । प्रस्तुत 'ज्वरसमना प्रकृति' कवितामा हेतुरूपकले आलङ्कारिकता सिर्जना गरेको छ । हेतुरूपकालङ्कार प्राप्तिबाट दृष्टिले यस कविताका निम्नलिखित अंश व्याख्येय छन् ।

सहस्रकोटी सागरका मोती गीत गाए भरर !

विफलताका हजार ज्वाला मारेर सरर !

बादलभुवाले मलम लागे छातीमा चरर !

निभनरको जरो शीतल भो, आत्मा आँखामा बरर !

गरीब मानिस सम्भरेर रुन्छु हर्षले दुखी भै,

यो धन बाँडन मन लाग्छ मलाई समाजमा हरर ! (देवकोटा, २०७६, पृ. १५८) ।

प्रस्तुत कवितांशमा साधन-साध्य अभेद सम्बन्धको प्रतीति भई हेतुरूपकालङ्कार प्रतिपाद्य छ । यस कवितांशमा उपमानको प्रस्तुत कवितांशमा उपमानका रूपमा प्रकृति तथा यसको उदार र उदात्त स्वरूप हो भने यसको उपमेय मानवजगत् तथा त्यसमा पनि ज्वरार्त प्रकृतिको उदारताबाट बर्षात् भई सुखानुभूति अनुभव गर्ने मान्छे हो । यस कवितांशमा साध्य प्रकृति नै हो भने यसमा साधन प्राणीजगत् र त्यसमा पनि मान्छेको अवस्था हो । यस कवितांशमा प्रकृतिको उदार र उदात्तताले नै मान्छेलगायत प्राणीजगत्लाई सुखी र समृद्ध तुल्याउनका लागि विभेदरहित समान जलधारा बर्साई सबैमा समान अनन्दको अनुभूति सञ्चरण गर्ने भएकाले आम प्राणीजगत्मा समान रूपले आफ्ना सबै तत्त्व वितरण गर्ने तथा चराचरजगत्का सबै समस्यालाई निराकरण गर्नसक्ने सामर्थ्य प्रकृतिमा मात्रै सन्निहित छ भन्ने विषयको पुष्टिसँग सम्बन्धित सन्दर्भको प्रस्तुति छ । यस कवितांशमा उपमेय अर्थात् प्राणीजगत्मा रहेको ज्वरार्त र अनन्य गर्मीको प्रकोपको निराकरणका लागि पृथ्वीमा बर्षाको आवश्यकता रहेको विषयलाई आर्थी चमत्कृतिसहित अभिव्यक्त गर्ने क्रममा प्रकृतिको नियमित चक्र (बर्षा) को आगमनलाई असङ्ख्य जलकाविन्दुले मोतीको रूपधारण गर्नु, शीतलता प्राप्त गर्ने प्राणीका अनेकौँ निरर्थक प्रयास एकैपटकमा सार्थक तुल्याउने प्रकृतिको उदारता, गर्मीको अजस्र पीडाबाट मोक्ष पाई आम प्राणीजगत् र यिनले अनुभूति गरेको स्वर्गीय सुखको अनुभूति, चराचर जगत्मा छाएको सुख र हर्षको असीमित आनन्द एवम् प्रकृतिमा मात्रै त्यस्तो सामर्थ्य छ जसले सबैलाई समान न्याय दिनसक्छ भन्ने सन्दर्भका माध्यमबाट यो सृष्टि अर्थात् जीवनचक्रको निर्माण गर्ने प्रकृतिको विकल्प केही हुननसक्ने एवम् मान्छेलगायतको प्राणीजगत् त प्रकृतिमै निर्भर रहने वस्तुमात्र रहेको अर्थ प्रस्तुत भएको छ । यसप्रकार जीवनको साध्य प्रकृति तथा साधानका रूपमा जीवनजगत् बीचको सम्बन्ध साध्यसाधन रहेको तथा यी परस्परमा अभेद छन् भन्ने पक्षको पृष्ठपोषण गर्ने अर्थको प्रयोग भएको यस कवितांशमा हेतुरूपकालङ्कारको प्रयोग भएको छ । काव्यिक रचनाका क्रममा सहजात तथा स्वतस्फूर्त रूपमा प्रयोग भएको हेतुरूपकालङ्कारले यस कवितालाई आलङ्कारिक तुल्याउन महत्त्वपूर्ण भूमिका खेलेको छ ।

नेपाली साहित्यमा स्वच्छन्दतावादी भावधाराका माध्यमबाट साहित्यको उत्तरोत्तर विकासमा लक्ष्मीप्रसाल देवकोटाको योगदान विशिष्ट छ। साहित्यका सबै विधामा कलम चलाउने देवकोटाको लेखनसिद्धि कविता र निबन्ध नै हो। देवकोटाद्वारा लिखित तथा पाठ्यक्रम प्रयोजनका लागि तयार भएका विभिन्न पुस्तकाकार कृतिका अतिरिक्त लक्ष्मी कवितासङ्ग्रहमा सङ्गृहीत भई प्रकाशित 'ज्वरसमना प्रकृति' कविता प्रकृतिकेन्द्री मानवतावादी दर्शन प्रतिपाद्य भएको सशक्त कविता हो। नेपाली लोकभाकाको लयात्मकतामा संरचित यस कवितामा प्रकृति नै सम्पूर्ण समस्याको समाधान गर्न सक्षम रहने भावाभिव्यञ्जना भएको छ। सहज, स्वतस्फूर्त तथा स्वाभाविक आलङ्कारिकता अवलम्बन भई संरचित यस कवितामा अर्थालङ्कारकारूपक, उपमा, स्वभावोक्ति, अर्थान्तरन्यास, विशेषोक्ति, उत्प्रेक्षा र दीपकालङ्कारको प्रयोग भएको छ। अलङ्कार र यसले सिर्जना गर्ने कलासौन्दर्यका दृष्टिले यस कवितामा रूपकालङ्कार अझै तथा अन्य अलङ्कार यसलाई परिपाक तुल्याउन सहयोगी बनेका छन्। संस्कृत काव्यचिन्तनले उपमान र उपमेयबीच अभेद सम्बन्ध तथा सादृश्यवाचक विशेषता भएको अर्थालङ्कारका रूपमा रूपकालङ्कारको अभिलक्षण प्रस्तुत गरेको छ। अङ्ग्रेजी काव्यचिन्तनमा पनि संस्कृत काव्यचिन्तनकै सापेक्ष विशेषता प्रस्तुत भएको यस अलङ्कारका सम्बन्धमा पनि सोही दृष्टिकोण ले निरन्तरता प्राप्त गरेको छ।

रूपकालङ्कार र यसका भेद-उपभेदको विषयमा संस्कृत र नेपाली काव्यचिन्तनमा ठोस अवधारणा प्रस्तुत भए पनि अङ्ग्रेजी काव्यचिन्तनमा यसको वर्गीकरण तथा तिनको अभिलक्षण प्रस्तुत भएको छैन। संस्कृत र नेपाली काव्यचिन्तनमा यसका अनेक भेदको चर्चा भए पनि यसका मूलभूत भेद परम्परित, सावयव, माला र हेतुरूपकालङ्कारको सैद्धान्तिक अभिलक्षण प्राप्त छ। प्रस्तुत 'ज्वरसमना प्रकृति' कवितामा पनि रूपकालङ्कारका उपर्युक्त चार भेद प्रतिपाद्य छन् भने यिनको उपस्थिति यस कृतिमा रूपकालङ्कारलाई अङ्गी अलङ्कार तुल्याउन महत्त्वपूर्ण छ। यस कवितामा सहजात र स्वतस्फूर्त रूपमा प्रयोग भएको परम्परित रूपकालङ्कारले सम्पूर्ण चराचरजगत्को सिर्जना गर्ने प्रकृति र प्राणीजगत् प्रकारान्तरले एकै हुन् यिनमा कुनै भिन्नता छैन भन्ने अभेद आरोपसहितको आर्थीचमत्कृति प्रस्तुत गरेको छ। यस कवितामा प्रकृतिको स्वरूप एक नभई अनेक छ। यसको रचना एउटा निश्चित विशेषता मात्र नभई यो अनेकौं अवयवबाट निर्मित छ। प्रकृतिमा प्राप्त हुने अनेक अवयव तथा जीवनजगत्का विविधतामा समानता वा तिनमा कुनै पार्थक्य नरहेको आर्थी सन्दर्भको प्रस्तुति यस कवितामा प्रस्तुत सावयवरूपकालङ्कारले सिर्जना गर्ने आलङ्कारिकता हो।

प्रस्तुत 'ज्वरसमना प्रकृति' कवितामा रूपकभेदअन्तर्गत प्रयोग भएको मालारूपकालङ्कारमा प्रकृतिका विविध स्वरूपसँग जीवनजगत्का अनेक सन्दर्भको शृङ्खलाबद्ध अभेद सम्बन्धको प्रस्तुति भएको छ। यस कवितामा प्रस्तुत मालारूपकालङ्कारले समग्र जीवनजगत् भन्नु नै वास्तविकतामा प्रकृतिको सिर्जना रहेकाले प्राणी वा वनस्पतिजगत् भन्नु नै प्रकृतिको विराटताका अंश रहेकाले प्रकृतिप्रदत्त यी वस्तुको नियन्त्रया, नियमन तथा यिनको आर्तनादलाई शीतलता प्रदान गर्ने निर्विकल्प माध्यम नै आफैमा प्रकृति नै हो भन्ने काव्यिक कलासौन्दर्यको सिर्जना गर्न महत्त्वपूर्ण भूमिका निर्वाह गरेको छ। यस कवितामा साध्य-साधनबीचको अभेद सम्बन्धको अभिव्यञ्जना भई आर्थी चमत्कृति सिर्जना गर्ने हेतुरूपकालङ्कारको प्रयोग पनि सशक्त छ। जीवन र जगत्मा सृष्टि, स्थिति तथा यसको नियमनका लागि प्रकृति नै निर्विकल्प विषय हो। प्रकृति नै सबै जगत्को व्यवस्थापन गर्न सक्षम विषय रहेकाले जीवनजगत्का सबै समस्याको समाधान प्रकृतिमै अन्तर्निर्भर रहेको कथ्यसन्देश प्रस्तुत गर्ने यस कविताका सन्दर्भमा प्रकृति सामु सबै शक्ति तथा

यसमाथि नियन्त्रण गर्ने मानवीय प्रयास निरर्थक रहने दृष्टिकोण प्रस्तुत भएको छ । कुनै पनि जीवनका लागि साधनका तुलनामा साध्यको औचित्य नै शक्तिशाली हुने सत्यलाई आत्मसात् गर्न मान्छेलगायत चराचर जगत् तयार बन्नुपर्ने अर्थको अभिव्यञ्जना भएको यस कवितामा हेतुरूपकालङ्कारको प्रयोग सार्थक रहेको निष्कर्ष प्राप्त गर्नसकिन्छ ।

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