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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. All the expenses are born by the Research Management Cell, Kailali Multiple Campus, Dhangadhi, Nepal.

KMC Journal, Volume 4, Issue 2 includes 18 research-based articles from English education, English literature, Education, Sociology, Science, Health Education, Tourism and Mathematics. All these empirical papers have been undergone the rigorous processes of reviewing, editing and proofreading. We believe that all these articles will be fruitful for the practitioners in the concerned disciplines around the globe. We request to all the valued readers, academicians and scholars to contribute by getting published in the coming issues of this journal.

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

Happy Reading!

Editor-in-Chief
KMC Journal

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Challenges of Using Information and Communication Technology in Teaching English in Nepal

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Abstract

Nepal government has initiated the policy of integrating Information and Communication Technology (ICT) at school level education with the hope of empowering quality in education by enhancing teachers' and students' knowledge, confidence and skills in ICT use. In this scenario, this study aimed to investigate the challenges in implementing ICTs in language education from teachers' perspectives. For this objective, sequential explanatory mixed method research design was used. Questionnaire, interview and observation were the tools used for data collection from 40 purposively selected secondary level English teachers. Quantitative data were analyzed statistically while qualitative information was analyzed textually. Both the results were integrated and interpreted in discussion. The findings exhibited that teacher and policy-related obstacles were the significant challenges than institution/school-related ones. The findings indicate that teachers are in need of immediate training on ICT use in language teaching to enhance their professionalism in ICTs and adequate ICT policy should be implemented to achieve optimum opportunities and reduce the challenges.

Keywords: challenges, ICT in ELT, opportunities, School Education

Introduction

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in education manifests using ICT tools like the Internet, wireless, mobile phones, computer, e-mail,

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facebook, blogging, and instant message including traditional technologies such as radio, television, telephone, etc. in the pedagogical processes. For effectively communicating, creating, disseminating, storing and managing the information, various resources and technologies are used. They have taken a groundswell of interest in how they can best be applied to improve the abundance and efficacy of all formal, informal and non-formal levels of education. These technologies provide teachers with vast content knowledge and pedagogical skills, which they can use for better and effective language teaching and administrative tasks. Language teaching and learning have become ICT-friendly throughout the world in the last few years, but Pelgrum and Law (2003) concede that the progress due to its use has been uneven. With the application of ICT, the modes and modalities of pedagogical practices in language education can be changed. The cultural, content, linguistics, and technological knowledge and skills have been integrated with the current language teaching and learning processes for effective and comprehensive global communication rather than isolated teaching of prescriptive grammar and memorized vocabulary.

The teachers and students are enabled to create and construct affluent, correlative, communicative and multisensory contexts having high potentialities of teaching and learning with the use of ICTs. Similarly, Unwin (2004) concedes that computers and the Internet can be used to increase teachers' basic skills and make them resourceful and confident in subject matter that they can use later in the classrooms. Likewise, UNESCO (2014) mentions that ICTs in education enhance learners' learning performance by providing them with new, innovative skills and resources, and facilitate teachers' teaching by training them on various ICT applications and their uses. Education can be valued, and effective education and pedagogical practices with better performance and wider communication can be promoted through the use of ICTs in language learning. In this context, ICT has a significant position to make innovative, updated and bettered pedagogical model in language education.

Learners get more exposure to the culture of foreign language speaking communities when they are taught using ICT. The use of ICT makes language teaching more learners' friendly, useful and competitive. A report of American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Language claims that language teaching and learning supported with ICTs can produce better and skillful human resource (ACTFL, 2013). ICT tools can be a means for fostering professional growth and development for the teachers and better learning for the learners.

Each English language curricula either at school education or higher education have been seeking the use of ICT means to imply that ICT has been

necessitated in language education. World Bank (2004) in its report shows that the world's education system, and knowledge and skills to be taught in the 21st century are under pressure of using ICTs due to the rapid growth and development of the global economy and information-based society.

Though ICT in language teaching plays effective role, the e-learning in language classes are just arising in the developing countries like Nepal, where stable internet connection and adequate ICT infrastructure are poorly managed (Duff, 2015; Laudari, 2008). Moreover, teachers' ICT operating skills and knowledge, and the government's blur ICT policies in language education are blazing challenges in Nepal for implementing ICT in language classes (Rana, 2018; Shrestha, 2018). ICT is still not available everywhere in Nepal because there are still many students, teachers, and educational institutions across the country without access to ICTs' knowledge, skills, and devices.

As an educator, I have experienced and observed that many teachers in Nepalese context are unaware and unknown about technology and its application in English as a second or foreign language learning contexts. Those who are aware are unable to handle and use them properly. In these contexts, this research aims to draw English teachers' perspectives on challenges while implementing ICTs at secondary level school education in Nepal. The findings obtained in this study would be used to provide information that the use of ICT in teaching English at the school level holds a great promise in getting avenues for academic excellence suitable to the global market. Moreover, it would also help the ministry of education, curriculum designers, and teachers in the formulation and implementation of adequate policies and strategies that can be used to enhance academic standards in our schools since it postulates the possible challenges that the teachers have been facing in implementing ICTs in English language classroom. It would also be a motivational tool for the teachers who have been working at school or higher level whatever the subject they have been teaching. In this sense, this study seeks to answer the nature and type of challenges that the teachers have been facing in using ICTs in English classes.

Literature Review

Structure of Education and ICT Policies in Nepal

In Nepal, school education policies are formed, controlled and guided by the Ministry of Education (MOE) while university level education is done by the respective university through its university acts. The education system in Nepal consists of primary, basic, secondary and higher education (ADB, 2015; MOE, 2013). The overall school education programmes and activities are developed and implemented by the Department of Education (DOE) under the MOE (MOE,

2013). DOE implements all educational programmes in the districts through the district education coordination unit. Similarly, the local education committee and school management committee in each school are responsible for planning and implementing school activities and managing education at the local level. There are many units under the ministry of education curriculum development, teacher development, teacher's record management, non-formal education, and examination (MOE, 2013). Apart from these bodies, there are 1091 resource centers at the local level, mainly for implementing the educational policies, programmes, and 29 education training centers across the country under the national center for education and development (MOE, 2020). For the betterment of education, several bodies have been working either jointly or alone from national to local levels of the country.

The first policy level inception of ICT in school curriculum has been incorporated in 2005 in the National Curriculum Framework [NCF] for school education (MOE, 2005). The curriculum intended to integrate Nepal's education system with the global context and remove disillusion among the youths who are the output of the contemporary education system of Nepal (MOE, 2005). ICTs are suggested as transformational tools of education at school level for integrating them to the related subjects, or offering it as an optional subject, and enhancing teachers' quality in applying them in the classroom instruction (MOE, 2005). The use of ICT in language classroom not only supports for effective teaching and learning but empowers teachers' caliber.

The practice of ICT in language teaching in Nepal is a recent phenomenon. The first ICT policy introduced in 2000 was amended in 2010 making provision of easy internet access to all the schools throughout the country with support of governmental, national and international organizations (MOE, 2009). The amended policy intends to enhance skilled human resources required for the educational sector in the country (Joshi, 2017; Karki, 2019; Paudel, 2020). With the aim of extending ICT in education, some awareness programmes were conducted on ICTs and some schools were supported financially with NRS 50000 for purchasing computers by the governments, and some schools were assisted with computer sets by NGOs and INGOs (MOE, 2009). ICT-based teaching and learning strategies were implemented and expanded throughout the country alongside the effectiveness of the Secondary Sector Reform Project [SSRP] (2009-2015). The importance of ICT in education is greatly focused on though very few schools and colleges in Nepal have been implementing and incorporating it in teaching and learning process. Moreover, the NCF (2007) for school education in Nepal has pointed out the need for ICT in school education and mentioned that ICT has been incorporated in school and higher education curricula, however, the numbers of schools and colleges implementing

it are very limited (MOE, 2007). Further, it has pointed out that ICT has not been properly addressed by the curriculum, and ICT as a subject has not been clearly defined but it has asserted to integrate ICT in school curricula by creating adequate physical infrastructures and a conducive environment. Ministry of education under the Nepal government has initiated ICT based teaching and learning so that the education policy (2019) has also made the provision of making ICT a part of teaching and learning and run online-based integrated educational management information system (IEMIS) at all the levels of government (MOE, 2019). All these facts reveal the need for ICT-based education to prepare capable human resources that could stand the challenges brought about by globalization, science, and technology.

ICTs can be effective tools for getting reliable resources and motivation for learners in learning English language in many underdeveloped and developing countries like Nepal where genuine learning resources in printed form are rarely found. In this context, Khaniya (2007) states that teachers are under great pressure in adopting technology to be suitable in teaching changed curricula. Dahal and Dahal (2015) from their research conclude that the use of ICT provides professionals for improving their performance. In the same phenomenon, Singh's (2019) study shows students' high motivation in learning through ICT and recommends teachers to be ready for this. Rana and Rana (2020) conclude that teachers of the old generation have limited ICT knowledge and skills which may lead them to escape from using it. Paudel (2021) from his research found strong motivation of English teachers in applying ICTs even they lack confidence, adequate training, skills, and knowledge on them. All these accounts echo the need of exploring what opportunities motivate them in using ICTs despite their short understanding of ICT.

The use of ICT in English language education can be a boon for quality teaching and world learning through interaction and resources. Learning through ICTs becomes more effective, sustain, lively and exciting (Brian et al., 2000; Salehi & Salehi, 2011; Yunus et al., 2009). The success of ICTs use in language teaching and learning depends on the the purposes and the ways of using them. ICT use in pedagogical field is more process based rather than product (Earle, 2001), that is, its focus is on how and why aspects of pedagogical design.

For the effective use of ICTs in education, their users should have basis ICT knowledge and skill with affirmative motive in using them. However, lack of awareness on ICT use, poor internet connection, poor computer network, leaners and teachers' motivation, poor ICT infrastructure, lack of adequate skill and knowledge to handle computer based technology, poor English language knowledge, blur ICT policy of the country, and administrative plan, policy and support are the major challenges in effective implementation of ICTs in education (Bouziane, 2013;

Chisenga, 2006; Muilenburg, 2001; Pascopella, 2001; Shiller, 2003). From a research, Poudel (2015) argues that teachers were unable to use ICTs in classroom teaching at school education of Nepal due to lack of teacher training, insufficient resources and demotivating administrative system despite their motivation and readiness to use them in the instruction.

Therefore, a teacher should have the skill and knowledge of choosing a plausible approach that suits technology in a particular context. The policy of implementing ICT in school education basically in teaching English, maths, and science has been facing several challenges in its implementation, access to ICT, ICT based infrastructure, trained and qualified teachers, awareness and attitude of the teachers, lack of electricity supply, economic standard, suitable ICT based curricula, clear strategy and policy to implement ICTs and the gap between ICT policy and practice (Dahal & Dahal, 2015; Dhital, 2018; Maski Rana, 2018; Rana & Rana, 2020) are the specific problem that the use of ICT has been facing in Nepali context.

The reviewed literatures unveil the importance of ICT for pedagogical enhancement. In light of them, suitable ICT policy in language education can be formed. However, these researches lacked to answer the challenges that the real implementers have been facing in implementing ICTs in language education. In this sense, this research attempts to investigate English teachers' perception on the challenges in applying ICTs in classroom teaching at secondary school education of Nepal. The context, problems to be investigated, methodologies applied, and the findings have differentiated this research from the previous ones.

Theoretical Stand of the Study

This study stands on constructivist approach of implementing ICT in education. Constructive approach believes on multiple contexts, many minds, many ways and multiple actions in teaching and learning. The swing growth and development of ICT in education enhance problem based, case based and task based learning in pedagogical practices (Lou, 2005). Motivation and active participation of social agents; both teachers and students contribute in constructing new knowledge (Pritchard & Woollard, 2010). This indicates that learning is social, contextual and active (Tinio, 2002). In this study, based on the assumption of the constructivist approach, I believe that Knowledge is not absolute and prescriptive, instead, it encourages teachers and learners to construct contextual knowledge themselves through constant interaction and negotiation with the societies through the use of ICT. For this purpose, it is important to investigate the teachers' perspective on the challenges they have been experiencing in applying ICTs in English language instruction.

Methods and Procedures

For achieving the objective of the research, the following methodology had been used.

Research Design

A sequential explanatory mixed method research design was used in this research, where quantitative phase is followed by qualitative phase. The quantitative results become the basic for planning qualitative research. The quantitative study is conducted in the first phase and its results are analyzed statistically and, then only qualitative study is conducted in which analysis is thematically done (Wipulanusat et al., 2020). The results of both the studies were integrated and interpreted during discussion. I have used sequential explanatory mixed method research design believing that this method explores in-depth information on the phenomenon, establishes balance between two approaches and provides more reliable generalizations of the research findings.

The Data

Both primary and secondary sources of data were used in this study. The selected English teachers were the primary sources of data, in which information was collected through questionnaire, interview and observation. Similarly, books, research articles, references, online resources related and relevant to the study were the secondary sources that were used for firm explanation of literature and the discussion in the study. The legitimation of the data was established with methodological triangulation with the data and their analysis.

The Participants

The participants involved in this study were purposively selected 40 secondary level English teachers from 40 schools of Kaski district of Nepal. Only English teachers were selected because the ICT policy of Nepal government requires English subject at school education to be taught with ICTs. The forty teachers were the sample in the study because generally, 40 participants are supposed to be an appropriate number for most of the survey of quantitative studies (Budiu & Moran, 2021). Among the selected 40 English teachers six teachers were interviewed and their classes were non-participantly observed. Before engaging in the research process, the participants were told about the aim of the research. After getting oral permission of their voluntary participation in the research, a written participants consent form was signed by both the researcher and the participants.

Instruments

Structured survey questionnaire, unstructured interview and nonparticipant observation were the instruments used in the study. Structured questionnaire includes statements related to challenges in using ICTs that consisted 15 statements (into three sub-categories) in three Likert scale. The interviews and observations were taken with guideline protocols.

Data Collection Procedures

After designing the research tools, 40 schools and 40 teachers (1 from each school) were selected. Then, a kind of rapport was built with them and the purpose of the research was described. The respondents were sent the survey questionnaire in their respective e-mail which the researcher received from the education training centre, Gandaki province. However, thirteen of them did not have e-mail accounts, so they were physically met and the questionnaire was given. After receiving the responses to the survey questionnaire, the selected teachers were interviewed and the classes were observed. The ideas gained through interviews and non-participant observation were noted down as the participants did not permit to record their voices.

Data Analysis Procedures

The quantitative data collected through questionnaire were statistically analyzed using percentage and the qualitative data collected through interview and observation were analyzed thematically. First quantitative data were analyzed into two headings. The results of such data were the beginning for planning qualitative research. Interview protocols and observation schedules for qualitative research were made on the basis of the quantitative results for ensuring both qualitative and quantitative data, those were intersected, interrelated and integrated. The qualitative data collected from two different tools were analyzed individually first and then they were categorized, classified and integrated into two themes and analyzed thematically. Finally, the results of both the data sets were integrated and interpreted during discussion.

Research Ethics

I focused on what and how but not whom. Before distributing the survey questionnaire, interviews, and class observations, permission was taken from the respondents and conflict-creating questions were not asked. The name of the schools and respondents were not disclosed without getting permission from them. Instead, alphanumeric codes (T1, T2...Tn) substituted the real name of the informants and S1-S2...Sn for the school's names. The information provided by them was exactly presented without any exaggeration. Further, analysis was made more the recount of

informants instead of representing their emotions and experiences. The sources cited, quoted, and paraphrased were given adequate credit.

Results

Since this is a sequential explanatory mixed method research, quantitative data were analyzed first into a single heading; challenges in implementing ICTs and qualitative information was analyzed into two themes; Hindrances drive ineffectiveness and feebleness in the implementation of ICTs and teachers' efficiency in implementing ICTs inside the classroom.

Challenges in Implementing ICTs

This section of analysis intended to investigate the challenges affecting teaching English at secondary level education in Nepal with ICTs. For accomplishing the objective, the questions were designed to incorporate the challenges from three different aspects; teacher-related barriers, institution-related barriers, and policy-related barriers. Table 1 presents the challenges that the teachers have been facing while implementing ICTs.

Table 1
Challenges in Implementing ICTs

Challenges	Responses		
	Major	Minor	Not a Challenge
Teachers related			
Lack of teachers' motivation	40(100%)	-	-
Lack of teachers' confidence	40(100%)	-	-
Lack of teachers' skills and knowledge in ICT	40(100%)	-	-
Large student number	40(100%)	-	-
Lack of ICT training to the teachers	40(100%)	-	-
Institution related			
Limited access to ICT equipment at school	40(100%)	-	-
Lack of digitalized books or content of CDs	-	20(50%)	20(50%)
Lack of internet connection in school	-	20(50%)	20(50%)
Lack of administrative support	-	20(50%)	20(50%)
Lack of technical assistance	-	-	40(100%)
Policy related			
Running cost is too expensive	40(100%)	-	-
Absence of ICT mainstream strategies	40(100%)	-	-
Inappropriate ICT policy in education	40(100%)	-	-
Inadequate monitoring of ICT implementation	40(100%)	-	-
Lack of ICT friendly English curricula	40(100%)	-	-

Table 1 indicates that all the respondents reported teacher-related aspects as the significant challenges in using ICTs followed by policy-related challenges. All the teachers (40/100%) indicated that lack of motivation, confidence, skills, knowledge and ICT training were the major challenges they faced while teaching English with ICTs. The results show that overcrowded classes were major challenges in implementing ICTs in the classroom for all the respondents.

Moreover, table 1 reveals that all the respondents indicated expensive running cost, lack of ICT policy, strategy, implementation monitoring and lack of ICT friendly English curricula were also the major challenges in using ICTs at school education. Further, the respondents indicated institution related barriers as minor or not challenge.

Similarly, 40 (100%) took limited access to ICT equipment at school as the major challenge related to institution. Likewise, lack of digitalized books/content of CDs, lack of internet connection in school, and lack of administrative support were taken as minor challenges by half of the respondents (i.e. 50%), half others took them as not challenges. Lack of technical assistance was taken as not a challenge by all the respondents.

The information collected through interview and observation was transliterated, coded, and then categorized into different strata based on their similarities. After making a critical study on those strata, the information analyzed into two themes:

Hindrances Drive Ineffectiveness and Feebleness in the Implementation of ICTs

Teachers are the real implementers of any policies or practices in real classroom context. Nepal government has initiated integrating ICTs in English language teaching at secondary education. From both interview and classroom observation, it is revealed that the most influential factors that hinder the implementation of ICT in the language teaching and learning process are the teachers themselves. All the respondents reported that no policy can work effectively if the teachers are not knowledgeable, skillful, and motivated in using ICT for language teaching. One of the respondents (T1) justified that his school has ICT classrooms but only two teachers use them and others afraid of using them. If the teachers are not intrinsically motivated and do not show their eagerness to learn and use technology in classroom pedagogy, the government's policy of integrating ICTs will be rugged. In the question of what makes them demotivated in using ICTs, all the respondents stated that it was a lack of their skill, knowledge, and confidence in operating and using them. During class observation, it was noted that teachers had a fear if something goes wrong with the equipment that they have used. They were

neither confident in preparing slides instantly nor operating multimedia projector. Most of them were found taking the support of their students. In this vein, T5 shared her difficulties as:

We, English teachers have to meet the global trends following new approaches, methods, and techniques, which are fully integrated with ICTs. We know we have to use them but we are not given any ICT-based training. We are using ICTs in our classes as much as we know from self-preparation and learning. If the government wants to implement ICTs in education, teachers must be trained on them.

This account reveals that despite teachers' motivation, they cannot use ICTs confidently due to the lack of proper training for them. The respondents' responses further reveal that the lack of ICT tools at their school is another problem in the implementation of ICTs in the language teaching and learning process. In this respect, all the respondents complained that they either do not have ICT lab or have very limited computers and recorders in their schools. A single lab is shared by all the teachers and students of the schools that limit the use of ICTs in the class. One of the respondents (T4) asserted that:

I have five separate classes to teach English each day, but I can use ICT room set in my school hardly once a week only for one class because other teachers do also use the same ICT room for their classes.

Further, three of the respondents told that their classrooms are too crowded with 60 students in a class that has created an obstacle in using ICTs and taking the students in the ICT lab in the school. They mentioned that ICT lab has only 15 computers, a projector, and a recorder, which prevents students from having a single computer and work properly. In this context, (T3) stated:

The student number and the available ICT resources at my school do not help me to teach English more effectively. My students hardly prepare slides and they have to wait until next week to present their slides since we have only one projector at school. I wish we had sufficient computer, projector in each class and the strong internet access fixed. So, I can teach in the way that I want.

The respondent stated that if the schools have ICT resources, they would not worry about internet connection because they could buy data in their mobile phone and could use it for sometimes though it is not a sustainable solution. All the respondents reported that unclear and unspecific ICT policy, strategy, and monitoring are the overall problems in ICT implementation.

Teachers' Efficiency in Implementing ICTs Inside the Classroom

To investigate the real classroom challenges that the teachers have been facing in using ICTs and to validate the results obtained from the survey and interview, the classes of the selected English teacher were observed visiting their schools and classes. Though the teachers' permission was taken for observing their classes, they were not informed about the date and day. I secretly observed their classes standing outside the windows and doors for 45 minutes each focusing on the observation guidelines. During class observation, it was noted that teachers were found discomfort to manage computers and seating arrangements of the students. Their tape recorders were not also working properly even they were seen confident in operating them. In all the observations, teachers were seen more comfortable in using traditional modes of technological devices like tape recorder, word-processor, etc. than using modern devices and applications. Some teachers were found using zoom, google meet, and various search engine in presenting and searching resources. Such skill of teachers indicates gradual progress in their ability of using ICTs in language education. In contrast, many teachers' inability to handle and use modern devices and applications unveil the fact that they are in immediate need of training. If the teachers are intrinsically motivated and develop their skills and confidence in integrating ICTs in language education, then only the policy of government can be materialized. Whenever they experienced difficulty in operating, they took support from their students that indicates that teachers were under pressure of getting skill and knowledge in ICT. During the observation, one of the students asked the teacher to locate the USA in the google map, but the teacher was unable. Moreover, when the students asked for resources of English language learning, the teachers were unable to indicate the particular websites, instead, they asked them to visit the library. All these observed behaviours of the teachers imply that teachers can get more opportunities for teaching and learning if they have adequate skills and knowledge of ICT and various ICT tools and applications.

Discussion

Teachers motivation is the key drive to reach to the goal of education since they are the real implementers of the programme. The data were analyzed from social constructivist perspectives. The results show that teachers' motivation, confidence, and skills and knowledge in using ICTs in the classroom are the major challenges as social constructivist approach claims motivation and active participation are the keys to success and knowledge is created gradually in the social context (Tinio, 2002; Pritchard & Woollard, 2010). The finding contrasts with the claim that teachers' motivation, skills, attitudes, opinions and their confidence on using ICTs in the language teaching are the effective measure of the success (Paudel, 2021;

Schulz et al., 2015). Since teachers are the main actors for effective ICT adoption and use in the classroom, their poor skills and knowledge in handling ICT tools and modern computer based applications leads the programme to be failed. The results further indicate that teachers are not given proper training on ICTs and their uses. The teachers' skills and knowledge on ICTs can be facilitated by the administrative functions like engaging them in ICT training, workshops, equipping classroom with ICT tools and making it ICT friendly (Ngoungouo, 2017). If the teachers are not well trained in operating and using ICT tools and applications as the results show, the expected curricula goals cannot be achieved. Teachers' involvement in designing ICT tools for education can enhance teachers' intrinsic motivation, confidence, and skill in using ICTs in the classroom (Schulz et al., 2015). The results further concede that large class size is also a challenge in implementing ICTs in English language teaching in the classroom. This finding contrasts with the claim that ideal class size can be an effective means for successful teaching and learning (Harmer, 2007). Moreover, Teachers fail to admit their students due to their limited ICT knowledge and even if they have good skill for their personal use, they become unable to transfer it to using ICTs in the classroom if the number of students is inadequate (Becta, 2004; 2006). Unblended knowledge is personal that cannot bring pedagogical transformation in English language instruction.

The results also show that the teachers found lack of ICT equipment, digitalized books are the major institutional related challenges that they have been facing. Moreover, they have also faced poor internet connection and lack of administrative support are more challenges in implementing ICTs at their schools. These findings corporate with Doff (2015) and Laudari (2008) reviewed in this study. During interviews and class observation, it was found that the teachers were compelled to share one projector and one ICT room set up at their schools. If the teachers lack ICT facilities, its implementation is always in question despite teachers' strong motivation and eagerness. Moreover, the results point out that expensive ICT implementation and inadequate or insufficient ICT policy of the government are also the challenges that the teachers have faced while implementing ICTs in language education in contrast with this, Mokhtar and Alias (2006) argue that academic and adequate computing is possible only with explicit ICT policy. Administrators, Teachers and any other concerned authority can develop ICT infrastructure in the schools and can manage ICT friendly resources and facilities only when the government provides clear and particular ICT policy. English teachers have been several opportunities in using ICTs in classroom teaching because they can be catalysts for their improved and effective classroom performance if they are given adequate training and opportunities. Moreover, several offline and online

resources can be highly valued for the teachers of Nepal where there is a lack of authentic English language teaching resources. With the help of portable ICT devices, the teachers can take teaching out of the classroom and incorporate project work and fieldwork to be investigated which promote discussion, interaction, and collaboration. The teachers can develop their confidence, independent and accessible educational prospects in the English language teaching and learning process. ICTs can be pivotal in constructing new knowledge by facilitating creative and meaningful interaction among teachers and students (Jha, 2017). Improvements in teachers' knowledge and skills can be seen gradually along with the teachers' eagerness, motivation and dedication in using ICTs building their confidence through training, discussion, participation, problem solving activities and interaction as social constructivism believes (Lou, 2005; Tinio, 2002; Pritchard & Woollard, 2010). ICTs provide them opportunities of keeping them updated with the latest information, approaches, and methods of English language teaching and can incorporate them in their classes if the challenges that they have been facing are minimized or reduced. They can get opportunities of an exchange programme or study opportunities in foreign educational institutes that can be a landmark in their academic achievements and professional endeavor.

Conclusion

This research aimed to investigate secondary level English teachers' perspectives on challenges that they have been facing while applying ICTs in classroom instruction. The teachers reported that teacher and policy-related obstacles are the significant challenges than institution/school-related. The research displays that lack of teachers' confidence, intrinsic motivation; skills, and knowledge are the significant challenges of using ICTs. Teachers are the real implementers, so they need to be ready and skillful to use ICTs. If the teachers are demotivated due to poor ICT skills and knowledge, the effective use of ICT is not possible no matter how good the curriculum is. The research also exhibits a lack of ICT equipment; ICT training to the teachers and adequate policy are also the challenges in the school education system. Despite these challenges, teachers are using ICTs to teach English at secondary level school education in Nepal.

The research has commenced a modish influx and intuition on ICTs and its use in the context of school education in Nepal despite its very limited area and process. This study explored the perspectives of only 40 English on challenges in using ICTs in the Nepali education system. Thus, it can be reiterated for more teachers from throughout the country or across countries incorporating the informants from different levels and fields, and a comparative study can be made. The findings can be climacteric for the concerned people form policy to practice

level of decision making. Further, its limitation only in sequential explanatory mixed method has unlocked the possibilities of using many more research designs, informants, tools and research area. Despite its small scope, the findings of the study encourage and direct the concerned authorities and practitioners to form appropriate ICT policy for effective integration of ICT in English language education reducing several teachers related, policy related and institution related challenges, and it also motivates the researcher further research in the domain.

From the findings of the research, it is recommended that teachers need to be familiar, knowledgeable, confident, and skillful with modern ICT tools and their applications if they wish to get access to the global market and updated knowledge. They should also be made aware on the paradigm shift in teaching methods and new developments in ICT. Secondly, the schools should improve the quantity and quality of ICT equipment and infrastructures and should encourage the teachers in using them appropriately. Similarly, the policymakers should make explicit ICT policies in education and develop curricula accordingly.

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Becoming an Autonomous Learner in Nepalese EFL Context An Autoethnographic Study

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Abstract

This autoethnographic study explores the researcher's own perceptions on learner autonomy in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context of Nepal. I collected the data from my experiences of learning English at Master's level education in a campus from Kailali district under Tribhuvan University of Nepal. Using the autoethnographic research design of qualitative research, I conducted the study. More specifically, the data consisted of seven diaries written from March 2018 to April 2021. This study substantiates Vygotsky's (1896-1934) socio-cultural theory as the main theoretical base. Furthermore, I also consulted Holec's (1981) learner autonomy and Knowles' (1975) self-directed learning to strengthen my experiences to reveal how I became an autonomous EFL learner. The findings of this study reveal that close academic connection with the professors and universities is essential for becoming an autonomous learner in learning EFL in the researched context. Moreover, the learner's personal effort and rigour in the process of learning seem to be paramount for the continuation of learner autonomy.

Keywords: Learner autonomy, autonomous EFL learner, personal diary, higher study

Introduction

An autonomous learner is a person who takes full responsibility of his/her learning. An autonomous learner does hard work and proves to be an honest person in the workplace. To be a successful professional in life, learning seems to be prerequisite for teaching profession. In fact, learning in higher level could be influenced by personal interest. When the learner is forwarded by his/her internal drive, he/she can do better in higher study. Internal drive is so crucial for those

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learners who are engaged in their profession and wanted to get further academic degrees in their subjects of interests.

In my case, I determined to continue my further study with the involvement in a private school as an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teacher. Frequently, my internal drive forced me towards formal higher study, but my financial part appeared as a barrier on the way of learning. Slowly and gradually, I found myself able to mitigate my economic problem to some extent. Then I thought it was time for learning at Master's level taking English as a specialization subject. That is why, I admitted to Master's level in 2018 at an affiliated campus of Tribhuvan University which is located in Kailali district of Nepal.

Actually, I felt really weak in English though I taught at a private school. My students complimented that I was good at English. My fellow teachers and colleagues also appreciated my proficiency in English. However, I was not satisfied with my English proficiency. I felt, to some extent, I was weak in pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar due to the lack of full-fledged knowledge. Without having content knowledge, I thought I could not get mastery over a language beyond my mother tongue. Moreover, I realized that my knowledge in ELT and learning is insufficient for my professional development.

Knowles (1975) stated that being self-directed, the learners initiate learning to fulfil their intellectual needs. In fact, autonomous learners can initiate learning for the betterment of their survival in an intellectual society. Similarly, Blidi (2017) concurred that "Autonomous learning has emerged as one response to the growing challenges and the changes that continually happen in the field of education, and has become central to teaching and learning" (p. 22). Indeed, autonomous learning is a part of learners' hard work in both formal and informal settings.

In Negi's (2019) words, "A self directed learner is one who is self motivated, one who takes the initiative, one who has a clear idea of what he wants to learn, and one who has his own plan for pursuing and achieving his goal" (p. 66). An autonomous learner can be understood as a self-directed learner in the sense that the learner gets success as he/she sets the plan himself/herself for learning a language.

Basically, the teacher learners of English in the context of Nepal can be benefitted from this autoethnographic study. In this study, I shared my lived experiences related to social, cultural and educational contexts of EFL learning. In autoethnography, a researcher uses his/her self-reflection to explore personal experiences for connecting the autobiographical story to wider cultural, political, educational and social meanings for developing good understandings about human life and activities. Besides teacher learners, learners of higher study in the context

of Nepal are also equally benefitted from the study. Furthermore, this study can inspire and motivate the learners to start and continue their EFL learning in higher study. After involving in teaching profession, teachers are found that they leave their learning. Actually, continuation in further study is essential for professional development as well. Therefore, this study seems to be paramount for the EFL learners who want to get higher degrees in their life.

So far I consulted the previous research studies regarding learner autonomy in various EFL contexts done by Al-Khawlani (2018), Almusharraf (2018), Bozkurt and Arslan (2018), Godwin-Jones (2019), Jora (2020), Negi (2019), Panta (2019) and Yuzulia (2020). Among these research studies, Al-Khawlani's (2018) study revealed that there was a significant difference between Polish and Yemeni learners in some of the learning categories. Almusharraf's (2018) study explored that adult learners' levels of autonomy are influenced by their teachers' practices. In the study of Bozkurt and Arslan (2018), the female students seem more autonomous in terms of their perceptions of the role of teachers as well as feedback. Godwin-Jones (2019) explored that learner autonomy is successfully promoted by using digital devices in learning.

Regarding learner autonomy, Jora (2020), Negi (2019) and Panta (2019) conducted research studies in the EFL context of Nepal. Basically, Jora's (2020) study revealed that learner autonomy is essential for the learners' encouragement and the opportunity of EFL learning. Similarly, Negi's (2019) study revealed that the students in Far Western University of Nepal seem to be familiar with the concept of learner autonomy. That is why, the students focus on different trainings and programmes that promote learner autonomy. Moreover, Panta's (2019) study explored the role of English language teachers in creating better language learning opportunities for the learners in the context of Nepal that promote learner autonomy.

Likewise, Yuzulia's (2020) research exposed that the experienced and the novice teacher hold the same perceptions that the learner's role is important to promote learner autonomy. However, I found no studies regarding autonomous learner of Master's level using autoethnographic research design in the EFL context of Nepal. I could not find any research study regarding experiences of Nepali autonomous EFL learner in the existing literature.

After consulting existing literature in learner autonomy, I realized that personnel experiences of learner can be significant in foreign language learning especially in EFL context of Nepal. In another way, Nepali EFL learners' lived experiences and self reflections are rare though such experiences are crucial in EFL teaching and learning. Actually, I conducted this research on learner autonomy to

find my initiation in EFL learning for my survival in teaching profession. Therefore, I attempted to explore how I became an autonomous learner of EFL in the context of Nepal.

This study explores the answers of the following questions:

1. How did I become an autonomous learner in the EFL context of Nepal?
2. Why was learner autonomy essential in my learning at Master's level?
3. What challenges did I face in the process of becoming an autonomous learner?

Theoretical Framework

Constructivism is a main philosophical thought which focuses on the human-generated and socially constructed knowledge in which meaning can be made from human experiences. As constructivism stresses that learning is a social construct, learners construct the knowledge interacting with people in society. Taking constructivism as a philosophical standpoint and Vygotsky's (1896-1934) socio-cultural theory as a main theoretical base for this autoethnography, I have used 'self-directed learning theory' (Knowles, 1975) and 'learner autonomy' (Holec, 1981) to strengthen my experiences of higher study for becoming an autonomous learner.

Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory advocates for socially constructed knowledge. As Vygotsky conceptualized Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and More Knowledgeable Other (MKO) theories, I found these two theories are significant in the process of language learning. ZPD refers to the difference between the learners' own ability of getting knowledge and what they accomplish with other's support. According to Daneshfar and Moharami (2018), ZPD is considered as "the prime concept of Vygotsky's sociocultural theory" (p. 605). Learning takes place in social setting where the particular language is connected with the particular culture. Obviously, learners learn the language interacting with people in society. Similarly, MKO focuses on the learning which can be gained from more knowledgeable colleague learners. Learners' own role is important to make their active participation in social interaction for gaining knowledge. Oxford (2011) vividly contended that "the socio-cultural perspective emphasizes social interaction as a major part of cognitive and language development" (p. 85). Therefore, social interaction is significant to the EFL context of learning.

Self-directed learning theory (Knowles, 1975) highlights that learners themselves initiate the learning. This theory also advocates for independent learning. As the phrase 'self directed learning' describes that the initiation of learning is always in the hand of learners, learning is taken as a process in self directed learning theory. This theory emphasizes on self initiation in the solution of learning problems

and learning outcomes can be expected through being to becoming autonomous learner. Moreover, the learners should direct language learning by themselves to be autonomous learner of EFL so that there could be success at the hand of learners in future.

The term ‘learner autonomy’ was coined by Henari Holec, who is considered as the father of learner autonomy, in 1981. Holec (1981) defined learner autonomy as “to take charge of one’s own learning” (p. 3). Likewise, Little (1991) stated that learner autonomy refers to a “capacity - for detachment, critical reflection, decision-making and independent action” (p. 4). Najeed (2012) concurred that learners are compelled to assume responsibility for their own learning to make it deeper and better. In the existing literature, various terms have been used to refer ‘learner autonomy’ such as ‘learner independence’, ‘self-direction’, ‘autonomous learning’, and ‘independent learning’ which are similar concepts to be an autonomous learner. In the words of Wright (2005), “Independent learning is a term in common use in relation to teaching and learning in higher education” (p. 133). Thus, an autonomous learner continues his/her learning independently in the process of learning. Similarly, Ivanovska (2015) stated that autonomous learning “takes place in situations in which the teacher is expected to provide a learning environment” and learners take better initiation for their desired learning (p. 355). Actually, teachers facilitate learners providing sound environment so that they could receive the best learning outcomes.

Having reflection critically and decision making ability in the sound state of mind, learners initiate how, when, what and why to learn a foreign language. Therefore, Ganza (2008) focused on “the capacity of the teacher and the learner to develop and maintain an interrelational climate” for better learning outcomes from the side of the learner (p. 66). Connecting the characters of teachers and learners, learning becomes meaningful in the lives of learners. Learners are influenced by their teachers in the process of EFL learning.

Teacher’s role seems to be significant to make the learners autonomous as autonomy is the concept of promoting learners in the learning process. Teng (2019) highlighted that EFL learners step towards autonomy when they feel responsibility in the learning process. Furthermore, Panta (2019) vividly revealed that teachers and learners are responsible “to adapt facets of learner autonomy that fit our context” (p. 231). EFL learners can be autonomous when they initiate language learning by themselves.

An autonomous learner takes learning as a personal responsibility for gaining academic success through physical, social, and psychological ability. Learners who

do not depend upon instructors in learning and attempt to construct knowledge from own experiences are autonomous learners. Frankly speaking, autonomous learners are those who are able to reflect on their own learning through knowledge about learning and who are willing to learn in collaboration with others (Holec, 1981; Little, 1991). Involving self in collaborative and interactive learning with self-initiation, autonomous learners form their networks of learning.

Realizing ‘sociocultural theory’ is a main theoretical base of this study in the sense that it focuses on the construction of knowledge in society by the learners themselves and ‘self directed learning theory’ reveals the learner’s self initiation in the process of language learning as well as learner autonomy is a shift from teaching to learning, I found these theories are highly relevant for this study, I connected each theory to strengthen my autoethnography. Depending upon previous studies on learner autonomy and finding personal experiences unexplored in the EFL context of Nepal, I attempted to explore my lived experiences as an EFL learner.

Methods and Procedures

This study employs autoethnographic research design in which the researcher attempts to explore his learner autonomy in EFL learning. In this study, documenting specific moments in the diary entries are used to analyze the required data for interpretation. Being myself as the primary data source, I used seven specific diary entries to collect data that were written in different days including my experiences of semester class from March 2018 to April 2021 during my study at Master’s level. This study attempted to explore information regarding the real life experiences of learning EFL in Nepali context.

Being myself as the only participant, I researched my lived experiences and self-reflection from seven diary entries of learning English in Nepalese EFL context. The information collection instrument consisted of self reflection and personal narrative which were as the written documents. The information was gathered through reflection and personal narrative techniques using diaries. This study employed a two-step procedure: the first was information collection and the information analysis second. In the information collection, the researcher collected seven important diary entries that were written from March 2018 to April 2021 AD. In the information analysis, the data were analyzed by meaning making process and drawing the themes through thematic approach in which themes are drawn from the data and then those themes are interpreted by making meanings of lived experiences in this study.

Findings and Discussion

Being learner autonomy as the process of lifelong learning, rigorous study is essential to be an autonomous learner. Though the EFL learning with the continuation of teaching English by myself at private school was challenging for me in the context of Nepal, it was possible to give continuity in formal higher study. The findings are described and discussed under five themes.

First Semester as the Stepping Stone of my EFL Learning

First semester of my EFL learning consisted of six months as scheduled by Faculty of Education, Tribhuvan University, the formal semester classes ran from the second half of February 2018 and examinations were conducted in August 2018. Nepali EFL learners have been learning English finding its widespread scope in the global market. After learning English, attractive jobs especially in teaching sector are available in the context of Nepal.

Mehdiyev (2020) contended that “The autonomous individual . . . can freely choose the information to be learned and effectively take responsibility in learning” (p. 523). Learners are free to choose the contents for learning in the subject of their desires and interests. Little (1991) stated that autonomous learners are aware of their learning activities. The initiation of the journey of learner autonomy in first semester was interesting to me as I narrated:

It was my first day at campus after sixteen years. I was at classroom. The professor who taught us English literature entered the classroom with a backpack. We, EFL learners, stood and greeted our professor in our first class. Taking attendance, he attracted our attention on a piece of text. His teaching impressed me a lot. I really got new insights in the first class of EFL learning at Master level. It is said that first impression is the last impression. I thought my heart was filled with boundless happiness. I got an opportunity to learn in semester class. I was much impressed when the professor provided me home assignment. Really, the first class was the stepping stone for my university level learning. (Personal Diary, 2018 Mar 18)

From this, I infer that I want to be rigorous like him who taught me English literature. I really felt proud to be a student of semester system when I was obliged to attend in regular class of Master’s level. According to Verenikina (2003), “The social context refers to interactions with the people who surround us” (p. 2). As the entire colleague learners were from same social context, I interacted in English with them freely. Daneshfar and Moharami (2018) stated that learning in socio-cultural theory can be taken “as a social process formed by human intelligence in the culture

or society the learner lives” (pp. 600-601). Our department Head informed us about internal exams, quiz contests, term paper writings and doing homeworks. Yuzulia (2020) focused that learner autonomy is not the “learning without the teacher or letting the students learn alone without a guide” (p. 37). As the teachers facilitate in learning, learners certainly get lots of benefits in the process of learning.

In Vygotsky’s (1978) words, ZPD refers to “the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem-solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem-solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers” (p. 86). As I got support from my professors, I shared with my colleague teachers at school and assisted them in learning. Little (1991) concurred that a university learner is also unable “to define and meet his learning targets without expert assistance” (p. 39). Therefore, facilitation from the professors is essential in EFL learning activities. From one of my diaries I cheerfully penned:

Today, I attended 1:30 hour long Second Language Acquisition (SLA) class. Our respected professor’s lecture on SLA triggered me in writing. At the very beginning of class, he conducted an objective test. Only ten questions were included in the test. One of the questions was related to name Krashen’s hypotheses. When I read the question, immediately I listed Krashen’s five hypotheses. When he saw my answer, he provided me one mark. My heart was filled with incredible joy. He also suggested me for writing diaries to improve writing. Inspiring from SLA professor, I started writing diaries. It is my pleasant experience in the process of learning. (Personal Diary, 2018 Apr 5)

From this, I knew the fruit of hard work is sweet. Gradually, I emphasized on both reading and writing English. I initiated emphasis on learning by doing. Knowles (1975) contended that learners become responsible to direct their learning with their own plans and decisions. However, Panta (2019) argued that “students need constant care and attention from teachers” (p. 229). Being a school level EFL teacher at private school, I also motivated my school level students on learning by doing activities so that they could feel that the learning was better going.

Bozkurt and Arslan (2018) state that “When learners become more aware of themselves and teachers become more aware of their students, they can commence a more efficient learning process and overall integration into a given educational system” (pp. 136-137). From this, it can be inferred that teachers’ guidance and feedback are essential to promote learner autonomy. As I initiated learning myself, professors’ facilitation assisted my EFL learning. Thus, I got supports from experienced professors in the journey of formal higher study to become an autonomous learner.

Second Semester as the Developing Stage of my EFL Learning

My EFL learning at second semester began after the completion of first semester examination. The second semester classes began from October, 2018. When learners are motivated, they keep on practice in EFL learning in their track of learning. Later on learning becomes automatic. To be an autonomous learner, one should be motivated to reach in the desired destination of learning. In second semester, the professor who taught me Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) impressed me in learning. Here, I reflected my experience as:

Today, I attended in CDA class in time. Sometimes, I would be late to take the class. His lectures on ideologies and theories of Marx and Foucault were thoroughly outstanding. I practiced more to learn CDA. I found the ideas were full of complexities. I think the contents are tough. Thus, I have to manage time to develop my understanding about learning CDA by revising, rewriting and reading the texts many times. Oh! Man, be courageous. Read and write many more times. I reminded myself. I said to me, "Happy learning and reading English!" (Personal Diary, 2018 Nov 26)

From consciousness raising thought of CDA professor pulled me towards critical learning. When critical learning takes place, a critical learner goes beyond the status quo situation of learning. A critical learner himself/herself takes initiation for his/her learning. Knowles (1975) highlighted in self directed learning theory that the learners take the initiative without others' support. I thought I took initiation for my learning.

Morris (2019) contended that formal education gives opportunity to learners to develop self-directed learning competence. Actually, learning critically in EFL context helps to empower learners to make them autonomous learners. Similarly, Negi (2019) contended that learner autonomy at larger extent reveals "various skills like critical thinking, decision making, independent action, and collaboration" (p. 60). My critical thinking has assisted to fulfil my desires of learning English which ultimately supported me to become an autonomous learner.

Third Semester as the Turning Point of my EFL Learning

During my Master's level EFL learning, I argued that third semester seemed to be turning point in the process of EFL learning. An EFL learner who becomes a lifelong learner can be an autonomous learner. The third semester is memorable in the sense that I was able to write a full length research article. Here, I forwarded my experience as:

It was a great opportunity for me in my academic life. The inspiring and motivating professor's fluent lectures on ELT research and Language Testing, and Research Methodology really pushed me towards learning research articles. Actually, I heard discussions among learners about the textbook written by him while I was in B. Ed. before 2006 AD. Then, I became interested in research writing. I wrote a research article. I got boundless satisfaction when my first research article was published in a multidisciplinary journal published by Scholars' Association of Nepal. Really, it is my turning point in EFL learning. I said to me, "Happy research article reading and writing!" (Personal Diary, 2019 Dec 12)

From this, I found crystal clear fact about autonomous learning on the way of academic and research writing. Abdipoor and Gholami (2016) stated that autonomous learners involve in "more productive activities such as composing emails, writing articles, chatting with native speakers and their friends" (p. 107). Research writing really indicates real learning which is self initiated. Similarly, Phan (2012) stated that "Language teachers have a crucial role in developing autonomy in their learners" (p. 468). Without teachers' guidance, learning does not become social and meaningful. I think learning is meaningless without writing, recording, reflecting and updating as per the advice of professors in higher study.

Moreover, Blidi (2017) stated that "the learning process involves, and actually consists of, engaging the learners in recycling their experiences at deeper levels of understanding and interpretation" (p. 9). Therefore, third semester emerged as the turning point in EFL learning for me. Likewise, I remembered the professor's lectures on ELT Materials and Pedagogy that made me familiar with teaching principles, learning strategies and innovative methods of ELT and learning. I could not forget the time on which he introduced post method pedagogy. Therefore, I heartily inserted my experience as:

I knew about post method pedagogy in today's class. His code-mixing in classroom lectures while teaching was motivational in learning. He explained about post method pedagogy in detail. While learning about post method pedagogy, I came to know that no method is perfect in itself. Before this, I didn't have much idea about this method. I learnt how we make teaching and learning context sensitive. I talked with my colleagues about fruitful and funny learning. (Personal Diary, 2019 Dec 27)

From this, I inferred that postmethod pedagogy assists a learner to be a postmethod learner which also assists to make one to be an autonomous learner. As postmethod pedagogy insists on content and context sensitive interaction, ZPD also

emphasizes on interaction with experienced learners for better learning. Similarly, Verenikina (2003) stressed that “Learning in the ZPD awakens a variety of internal developmental processes that are able to operate only when people are interacting with more experienced people” (p. 4). Interaction with experienced learners is necessary for fruitful learning. Furthermore, Negi and Laudari (2022) stated that learner autonomy can be a fruitful strategy “for quality learning outcomes” (p. 74). In fact, self initiation is a must in the process of learning for clear outcomes in future.

According to Al-Khawlani (2018), “To cope with the highly modern, progressive, and global learning environments, we need to consistently develop and improve skills and abilities of the learners as well as learning styles” (p. 109). For upgrading overall knowledge of EFL with full content knowledge in the EFL contexts, teachers need to teach innovative skills and learners need to be autonomous learners. Keeping myself in reading and writing research articles, I took initiation of my learning with the assistance of my professors. Thus, I stated that I was able to become autonomous learner by involving myself in research writing and reading.

Fourth Semester as the Full-fledged Semester of my EFL Learning

For me, fourth semester was a full-fledged semester in the course of EFL learning in the sense that I had full control of my EFL learning. Benson (2008) stated that autonomy in the context of language learning is basically referred “as a radically learner-centred idea” (p. 16). Shifting teaching from teacher centered to learner centered, learner autonomy can be enhanced in a greater extent. Likewise, Neupane (2010) argued that learner autonomy never frees “teachers from their responsibility” (p. 120). Regarding my study in the fourth semester, from one of my diaries I narrated my experience as:

Today, I wanted to reflect my classroom learning which was paused. Almost one month I took physical class in fourth semester. Due to lockdown, I stayed at home. However, I took online class to continue my learning. I found that one of my articles was also published in ‘ELT Choutari’. It was about my reflection after watching ‘The Ramayana’ movie in Hindi language broadcast from ‘Door Darshan’ channel. The happiness triggered my mind. Lockdown provided me time to reflect my experiences in writing. After writing some articles and publishing them in journals, I think I gain full-fledged understanding of research writing. I said to me, “Hello! Man, write, write and write.” (Personal Diary, 2020 Apr 20)

From this, I took out the crux that my passion in EFL learning and research writing was increasing day by day. Verenikina (2003) stated that “the higher mental functions in humans originate only in the interaction of people with people” (p. 1). Learners need to be connected with experienced people whether they are

university professors or experienced colleagues. Moreover, Blidi (2017) stressed that autonomous learning is “deliberate and purposeful learning that is pursued individually” (p. 101). I continued my EFL learning by using the learning materials available in Internet. Similarly, Little (1991) also stressed that learners become autonomous “to fulfil some personal or professional need” (p. 38). Therefore, learner’s personal endeavours are crucial to be an independent learner.

Godwin-Jones (2019) concurred that learner autonomy can promote the learners “to see the learner or user in the full interdependence of individual and social context” (p.18). In this sense, learner autonomy facilitates learners’ interaction in personal as well as social context to achieve the goal of learning. I also focused on writing personal reflections on learning and teaching English. Therefore, writing reflections and active involvement in online class help me to become an autonomous learner.

Professors’ Motivation as Building Blocks of my EFL Learning

While learning in the semester system with English education specialization, professors including visiting one’s lecture motivated me a lot in the path of EFL learning. Trebbi (2008) opined that learner autonomy is concerned “with the idea of freedom as a central component of the concept” (p. 33). It is the freedom for learning independently with or without the help of teachers. According to Oates (2019), “The teacher’s role is viewed as paramount in the development of self-regulated learning” (p. 1). Thus, teachers should assist the learners to take responsibility of their own learning so that the learners become autonomous in their learning.

Likewise, Liu (2015) highlighted that inspiration and motivation “from teachers and more task-based activities inside or outside the classroom are necessary for students to become more autonomous learners” (p. 1172). Most importantly, learners’ internal drive play pivotal role to be an autonomous learner. Similarly, Stroupe, Rundle and Tomita (2016) concurred that “Assisting with the development of the learner autonomy of students is a challenging process” (p. 57). How teachers or professors present the teaching items is focal to me rather than what they present in the classroom. Dhimi (2019) stressed that the pace of learning depends upon our context of learning where “our internal drive matters” (p. 152). An autonomous learner must consider context of the content in EFL learning. Here, from my diary I reflected my experience as:

Today is the day of April fool. However, I didn’t make others fool. I think we celebrate each day to make self and others wise. In today’s diary, I am writing on my lived experience. My frequent contact with professor who taught Research Methodology inspired me in learning formally as well as informally. His lectures

on research and ELT in different seminars motivated not only me but also other EFL learners a lot as well. I think close academic connection with professors after the completion of formal study also enhances and flourishes learning. Professors' lectures and motivation are the building blocks in the process of my learning. Really, I felt I was born to learn new thing in each and every step of my life. I have to walk to learn and learn to walk. I am thankful to my professors who spent time to make me wise. (Personal Diary, 2021 Apr 1)

From this entry of diary, I inferred that frequent connection with professors assists to move forward in the path of EFL learning and research writing. In the words of Verenikina (2003), "To instruct in the ZPD is to be responsive to the learner's current goals and stage of development and to provide assistance that enables them to achieve those goals and to increase their potential for future participation" (p. 6). More importantly, teachers' support is essential to foster learner autonomy in learners. Similarly, Panta (2019) asserted that "EFL teachers perceive learner autonomy as simply giving freedom to learners" (p. 229). An EFL learner can be an autonomous when he/she becomes learner for intellectual and professional growth.

Likewise, Little (1999) contended that "the effect of learner autonomy is to remove the barriers that so easily erect themselves between formal learning and the wider environment in which the learner lives" (p. 11). From this view, learner autonomy can be taken as own responsibility of learners in the formal setting of education.

Moreover, Kamali (2021) contended that in Nepalese context of EFL teaching and learning, "local realities should be highly considered" (p. 33). When our teachers show the directions, we need to walk to reach in our destination. Similarly, Eberle (2013) stressed that "self-determined learning encourages students to become active participants in what they are learning" (p. 145). Being autonomous especially in EFL learning, we gain knowledge and quintessentially success follows us. According to Han (2021), "A learner who regularly credits a positive relationship with his/her educator in a class understands the material more quickly and acts well in the class" (p. 5). To be autonomous, learners focus on rapport building with their teachers so that there can be good relation between teachers and learners. In my case, I made close connection and relation with my professors. I followed their feedbacks, comments and suggestions and then I was able to become an autonomous learner.

My Reflections on Challenges of Becoming an Autonomous EFL Learner

In the process of becoming an autonomous learner of English in Nepalese EFL context, I faced various challenges such as challenge of time management,

family burden, economic problem and lack of knowledge on ICT and Internet. Negi (2019) highlighted the challenges in the path of promoting learner autonomy which are “lack of resources in the classroom and outside of it, low motivation on students, no proper guidance from teachers and poor economic background of the students” (p. 63). I think time management is crucial to become an autonomous learner. Similarly, family burden is also one of the constraints in the process of developing learner autonomy. I also opine that family support in EFL learning seems to be crucial. Similarly, economic problem is also one of the hindrances in the process of developing autonomous learning.

Eventually, lack of knowledge on Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and Internet can be seen as a barrier to foster learner autonomy. Though I had an android cell phone, I didn’t know how to prepare power point slides for presentation at the beginning. As Honarзад and Rassae (2019) stated that “Autonomy opens an outstanding window of opportunity for avid learners to pursue their learning goals in today’s technology-driven world” (p. 27). Learners should be aware in the use of ICT tools to foster their learning. Thus, autonomous learner needs to be familiar with ICT and internet to enhance his/her learning.

Conclusion

From this autoethnography, as the research questions set, the findings of this study reveal that close academic connection with the professors and universities is essential for becoming an autonomous learner in the context of Nepal. The findings of the study also highlight that a learner can be able to become an autonomous learner by interacting and collaborating with colleagues inside and outside the classroom setting, initiating EFL learning motivated by professors, learning ICT and the Internet related matters for collecting reading materials and involving in academic writing. Being the semester class innovative, favourable for learning and research-based, learners can be able to give continuity in learning which ultimately direct towards learner autonomy. On the basis of findings, it can be concluded that motivation, inspiration, feedback and constructive suggestions from professors are pivotal to foster learner autonomy among EFL learners. Self initiation along with regular activities for learning authentic books, research articles and journals plays a great role in the process of making the learners autonomous. Additionally, time management for work and study seems to be significant for those learners who are involved in teaching professions. Experiences of EFL autonomous learners without involving in teaching profession can be an area of further autoethnographic exploration in the context of Nepal.

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EFL Teachers' Lived Experiences on Using Grading System

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Abstract

The Grading System, first used by Yale University in the 18th century for the purpose of descriptive evaluation of the students' achievement, has now become popular worldwide. This paper explores and analyzes the Grade nine and ten English teachers' lived experiences of using Grading System (GS) in English language teaching and testing in the institutional schools of Kathmandu. For this, we collected the required information taking phenomenological interview with the five purposively selected teachers of English from five respective institutional schools of Nagarjun Municipality in Kathmandu. The collected information was thematically analyzed using ATLAS.ti 9. The lived experiences of the concerned teachers showed the praxis of arbitrary and systematic use of GS in the researched context. The results reveal that the arbitrary use of GS has negative impact on the students' classroom participation and teaching learning environment while the systematic use of GS has motivated the students towards learning, and thereby enhanced the teachers' professional development. The study concludes that there is need for using systematic GS making it even more appropriate and scientific for the betterment of overall teaching and learning of English in particular, and thereby the system of secondary level education as a whole.

Keywords: professional development, systematic grading system, arbitrary grading system, students' motivation, learning environment

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Introduction

The Grading System (GS), nowadays, has been implemented worldwide including Nepal with its contextual appropriation. Grades are viewed as “information . . . for making decisions about students, curricula and programmes, and educational policy” (Brown, 2019, p. 13). They are one of the many forms of teachers’ communication with the learners. Nonetheless, the concerned students and their parents perceive that they “just add more pressure and keep making up more and more tests” (Simon & Schusternd, 2004, as cited in Kafle, 2020, p. 625). This shows that people have different views on the GS based on its various pros and cons.

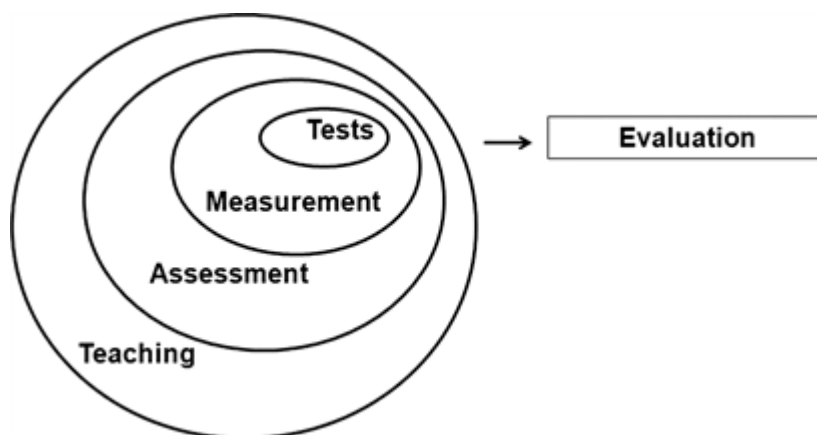
The GS of evaluation in general is also related to the concepts of test, measurement, assessment, and teaching. A test takes place at previously declared times and places making the learners aware that their responses to testing are measured and evaluated (Brown, 2003). Testing is a kind of assessment and employed at the end of an instruction while assessment is a continuous process and may occur at any time when the students respond a question, comment on something, or share their opinions (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2010). The other terms confused are measurement and evaluation. Bachman (1990) regards measurement as the process of enumerating the characteristics of people based on clearly defined rules and scheme. In a sense, there are quantifications such as numerical or letter grades and labels in the measurement. The quantifications provide the institutes or teachers a means for comparing students with each other. Additionally, following Bachman, mental traits and abilities including aptitude, intelligence, motivation, field independence/dependence, attitude, receptive skills are observed indirectly in measurement. Evaluation, on the other hand, is a kind of systematic collection of outputs with the aim of making judgements by the interpretation of the measurement results. It is “an attempt to understand what is going on to judge its worth and make decisions about it” (Desheng & Varghese, 2013, p. 33).

Thus, in brief, measurement and test contain quantification of monitoring. As a type of measurement, a test is designed to draw out a specific sample of behaviour. The evaluation enables decision-making about the overall issue drawing on the information provided by the measurement (Bachman, 1990). Evaluation can be classified as formative, illuminative, and summative (Richards, 2001). Following Richards (2001), the formative evaluation aims to find out how the programme works and whether there are problems or not; illuminative evaluation determines implementations of the programme in different aspects; summative assessment seeks the efficiency of a programme. Following the author, the purposes of evaluation are to decide whether teaching and learning are suitable to the programme; to make

decisions about learners' status in a programme, and to guide for teaching. The above discussed relationship between test, measurement, assessment, teaching, and evaluation can be shown as in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Interrelationship Between Different Elements of Evaluation



(Brown & Abeywickrama, 2010, p. 6)

The essence of using GS in ELT classes has long been a controversial issue as reflected in the relevant empirical and theoretical literature. Both theorists and researchers have expressed widely varying views on it. For example, the scholars such as Acharya (2016), (Knaack et al., 2012) and Majumder (2015) reveal the positive responses of teachers and students as they argued that the implementation of GS was done with new and favourable method suitable for their circumstances. On the other hand, the scholars such as Cederqvist (2016), Michaelides and Kirshner (2005), and Paneru (2015) show that higher level of effort and stress is required in letter grading system of evaluation, and it has neither motivated the students nor solved the current education problems. Such a controversial arguments regarding the use of the GS motivated us to carry out a research that analyses and synthesizes the lived experience of EFL teachers in using GS in their classes for illuminating the essence of the phenomenon descriptively. More specifically, we aimed at exploring the EFL teachers' lived experiences of using GS in their classes in terms of the students' motivation towards learning, their classroom participation, and the teaching learning environment. Corresponding to these objectives we established the following research questions as the foundation of the research:

1. How do the teachers experience the use of GS in relation to the students' motivation towards learning?

2. How do the teachers experience the students' participation due to the implementation of GS?
3. How do the teachers experience the teaching learning environment due to the implementation of GS?

Use of GS in Nepal

The GS has been mobilized in some universities such as Kathmandu University and Pokhara University amidst the journey of bachelor studies with four grades before its implementation in school level (Bhatt, 2018). But, after the intensive decision of the Ministry of Education (MOE), the Office of Controller of Examination (OCE) first introduced the GS in 2015 particularly in the field of technical and vocational subjects. OCE continued the grading system in the School Level Certification (SLC) result in both technical and general fields of Education in 2016. To continue GS in school education as well, the meeting of the National Curriculum Development and Evaluation Council (NCDEC) introduced GS with nine grades (Bhatt, 2018).

According to Acharya (2022), SLC students were supposed to be awarded A+ (90% and above), A (80% and below 90%), B+ (70% and below 80%), B (60% and below 70%), C+ (50% and below 60%), C (40% and below 50%), D (20% and below 40%) and E (below 20%) in the SEE (School Education Examination) results. Following the author, there is also a provision of N, which stands for zero scores, if and when an examinee submits a blank answer booklet or is expelled in exams or in case of the candidate's absenteeism. The pattern of the GS of Nepal implemented for high school can be visualized as in Table 1.

Table 1

Grading System in Nepal

S.N.	Interval in Percentage	Grade	Description	Grade Point
1	90 to 100	A+	Outstanding	3.6- 4.0
2.	80 to below 90	A	Excellent	3.2-3.6
3.	70 to below 80	B+	Very Good	2.8-3.2
4.	60 to below 70	B	Good	2.4-2.8
5.	50 to below 60	C+	Above Average	2.0-2.4
6.	40 to below 50	C	Average	1.6-2.0
7.	20 to below 40	D	Below Average	0.8-1.6
8	0 to below 20	E	Insufficient	0-0.8
9.	0	N	Non-Graded	0

(see Acharya, 2022)

The meeting of NCDEC held on 19th March 2016 revised the letter grading system. Grading A+, A, B+, B, C+, C remained the same. The changes were in D, E, and N as follows:

30- 40 % marks: D+

20- 30% marks: D

0- 20% marks: E

Thus, the earlier provision of the ‘N’ grade has been omitted in the revised system. This revised form of grading system also decided to divide the SEE result into nine grading groups as shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Grading System in Nepal (Revised)

S.N.	Interval in Percentage	Grade	Description	Grade Point
1	90 to 100	A+	Outstanding	3.6- 4.0
2.	80 to below 90	A	Excellent	3.2-3.6
3.	70 to below 80	B+	Very Good	2.8-3.2
4.	60 to below 70	B	Good	2.4-2.8
5.	50 to below 60	C+	Satisfactory	2.0-2.4
6.	40 to below 50	C	Acceptable	1.6-2.0
7.	30 to below 40	D+	Partially Acceptable	1.2-1.6
8	20 to below 30	D	Insufficient	0.8-1.2
9.	Below 20	E	Very Insufficient	0-0.8

(see Acharya, 2022)

Methods and Procedures

As we intended to explore the lived experiences of the selected teachers on the use of GS in ELT classes, we opted Husserlian transcendental/descriptive phenomenological research design. In descriptive phenomenology, “nothing should be assumed or taken for granted when trying to understand a phenomenon” (Peoples, 2021, p. 47). Therefore, we did not use any theoretical framework to interpret the data through. Descriptive phenomenological research design aims to study the participants’ lived experiences of a phenomenon to illuminate the pure essence of the phenomenon bracketing aside any theoretical assumption and the researcher’s priory knowledge about the phenomenon (Peoples, 2021; Vagle, 2018). Since the research design was qualitative, we purposively selected only five secondary level (Grade nine and ten) EFL teachers from five institutional schools within Nagarjun Municipality in Kathmandu as the research participants. We collected the required information

taking “phenomenological interviews” (Bevan, 2014) with the participants using the interview guidelines (see Appendix) as the research tool.

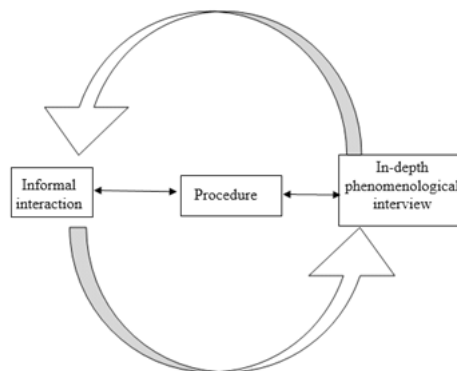
For the collection of the required information, we constructed the interview guidelines and piloted them on two potential participants. To some extent, the probing questions in the guidelines fetched the responses relevant to the research objectives and questions. Based on the relevance of the responses, we modified the tool so as to illicit as accurate and appropriate information as possible from the research participants.

We took interviews with all the selected participants twice. Each interview with each of the participants was preceded by informal interaction with them so as to establish a rapport with them for the first time, and to prepare them for the interview at the second time. We captured the audio or video record of the participants’ accounts of their experiences of using GS in ELT classes depending upon the situation. The first phase interviews were conducted online due to lockdown because of the spread of COVID 19 pandemic all over the country. Therefore, the interview videos were captured via the FastStone screen recorder software with the help of the computer. The second phase interviews with all the participants were taken face to face after COVID-19 pandemic situation coming back to normalcy. Therefore, the interviews were recorded in an MP3 recording device.

The aforementioned procedure for the collection of the required information implies that we collected the information in a cyclical way rather than the linear fashion. The cyclical process of collecting the information can be visualized as in Figure 2.

Figure 2

Information Collection Procedure



We inductively explicated the collected information, and derived the thematic results. For this, we take help of ATLAS.ti 9—a computer aided qualitative data analysis software CAQDAS. We followed the following steps for the explication of the information using the software:

In the first step we prepared written text documents transcribing and translating the oral field data. The field data in English language were transcribed using orthographic writing while the data originally in Nepali were translated into English.

In the second step, we added all the text documents prepared in the first step to the research project created in ATLAS.ti library.

In the third step, we coded the documents using the software repeating the procedures involved and finalized the coding after several revisions.

In the fourth step, we created themes/subthemes (or code groups) from the codes inductively.

Similarly, in the fifth step, we finalized the themes and supporting codes repeatedly revising the activities in the third and fourth step.

After we finalized the themes, we created, saved, and exported networks from the project in the image form in the sixth step so that we could use them our report. They include the network for categorization of themes, and theme-codes network.

In the seventh step, we reported the theme-wise codes with comments and supporting quotations from the ATLAS.ti project.

In the final step of the data analysis and interpretation procedure, we wrote the report utilizing the output of step 6 and 7.

Results

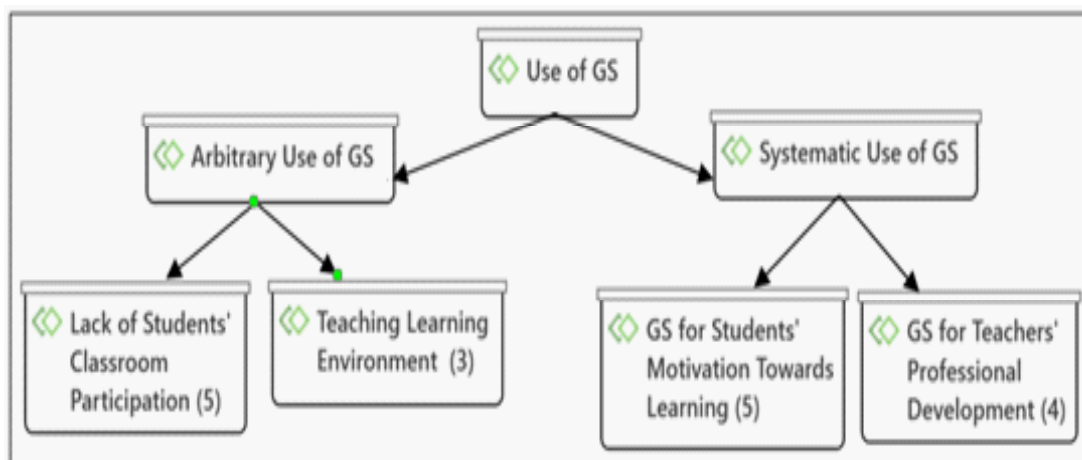
Adding and organizing the set of ten written documents, prepared from the oral information, to a project in ATLAS.ti library, and analyzing and synthesizing the information using the software as a tool, this study identifies both the arbitrary and systematic use of grading system as lived by the participants in the researched context—secondary level ELT classes in institutional schools of Kathmandu.


Therefore, in this section the overall findings from the field data have been described under two superordinate themes: arbitrary and systematic use of grading

system (see Figure 3). As shown in the figure, the first theme incorporates two subordinate themes: Lack of students' classroom participation (supported by five grounded codes) and Teaching learning environment (supported by three grounded codes); and the second theme includes two subordinate themes: GS for students' motivation towards learning (supported by five grounded codes) and GS for teachers' professional development (supported by four grounded codes).

Figure 3

Overall Classification of Qualitative Themes



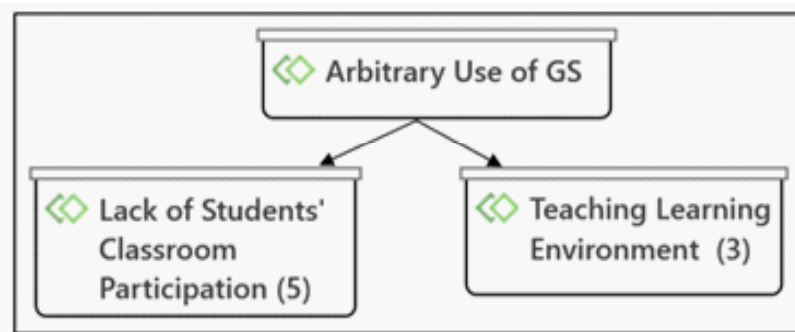
Note: GS= Grading System;  = theme; the number in the parenthesis indicates the number of supporting codes grounded in the text documents.


Arbitrary Use of GS

Arbitrary use of GS in ELT classes refers to the evaluation of students' performance on the basis of the teachers' self-judgement rather than following the systematic procedure prescribed by MOE. Endicott (2014) asserts arbitrariness as a lack of reason which is a departure from the rule of law, in favour of rule by the mere will of the rulers. The interpretive analysis of the field information shows that the arbitrary use of GS is supported by two interrelated subordinate themes: Lack of classroom participation and Teaching learning environment and supported by five and three grounded codes respectively (see Figure 4).

Figure 4

Subordinate Themes Supporting the Arbitrary Use of GS



Note: GS= Grading System;  = theme; the number in the parenthesis indicates the number of supporting codes grounded in the text documents.

The participants shared their experience that arbitrary use of GS has led to develop misconception about its use even after giving descriptive feedback to the students. The students' response towards GS depends upon their awareness regarding the GS. In this regard, T3 for example said that, "Some students are using no failure system as a weapon just to get certificate" (T3 Int 1) because teachers are not able to update themselves as well as their students about grading system. Such situation occurs when the grading system is used arbitrarily. Weak students who have been always ignorant have started to ignore their study even more because there is no failure system in GS. This system has assured them to get at least some grades even if they couldn't perform well in exam. Similarly, evolving assignments like worksheets, pictorial works, graphic works, presentation etc. have been distracting both the teachers and students as they are used just for obtained grade but not for content knowledge. In this regard, T3 in second interview shared his experience as:

I have been giving them pictorial assessments, graphic ideas, presentation etc. to develop their communication skills and creativity but, the students just use the materials from social media to get good grades. They don't use their own capacity to prepare the project and write creative answers (T3 Int 2).

On the other hand, due to the teachers' favorable attitude instead of adopting this system properly, most of the teachers have been still using the shortcut method visualizing students' face rather than performance to grade their students. Such condition obliges the students doubt on their teachers and result which creates biased environment. Supporting this present situation in ELT classes, T1 also said that the students are biased because of "untrained teachers and traditional method of

teaching”. Likewise, T3 shared his lived experience of using GS as biased one. He said:

Sometimes, I feel like by myself and even by my colleagues, biased environment is created. We visualize the students’ face rather than their performance while grading them. Somehow, the system that I have been practicing and I am accustomed with has overruled upon our thought process. Instead of descriptive feedback that we are told to provide to the students, we emphasize on oral discussion among the colleagues to grade them. (T3 Int 2).

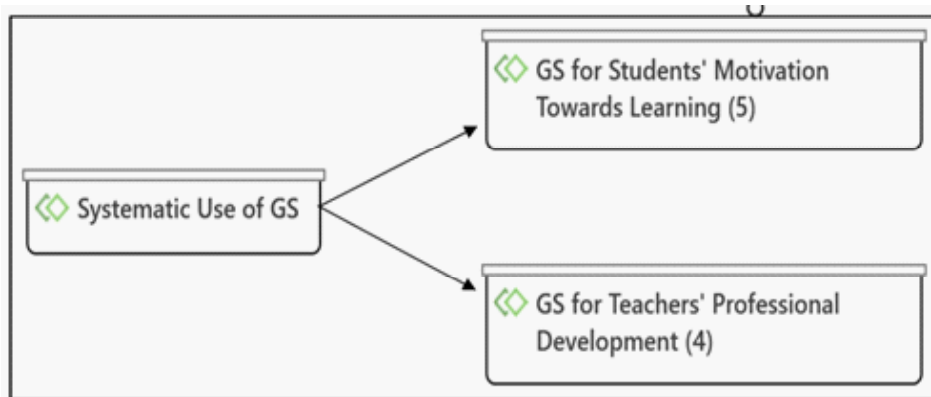
Due to the unavoidable reasons and situations mentioned above, GS doesn’t seem to be implemented systematically in the context of Nepal.


Systematic Use of GS

The term systematic use refers to the implementation of GS according to a fixed plan or system. Systematic use of GS in ELT classes helps students to be motivated towards learning and it also develops teachers’ proficiency. The interpretive analysis of the field information shows that the systematic use of GS is supported by two interrelated subordinate themes: use of GS for students’ motivation towards learning and use of GS for teachers’ professional development which are supported by five and four grounded codes respectively (see Figure 5). The themes are interrelated in the sense of systematic use of GS motivates students towards learning and students’ enthusiasm along with expected outcome encourages teachers to work hard for their professional development.

Figure 5

Subordinate Themes Supporting the Systematic Use of GS



Note: GS= Grading System;  = theme; the number in the parenthesis indicates the number of supporting codes grounded in the text documents.

The systematic use of GS emphasizes learning over grading, reassessment opportunities are intended to “keep hope alive” (Cox, 2011) for struggling students, foster a growth mind-set and improve long-term learning and responsibility. Overall, GS alters how grades are determined by focusing on standards, isolating academic evidence, and allowing multiple opportunities to demonstrate proficiency. Each of these key components is designed to increase the validity, reliability, and equity of grades to ultimately improve student learning. However, the practical application of each GS component continues to clash with centuries-old evaluation traditions and deeply ingrained belief systems among parents, students, and teachers. Therefore, specific GS practices continue to evolve as motivation for the students.

GS includes regular assessment system which evaluates students in regular basis and motivates them to try again, try differently in different areas. Validation of phrase, “keep hope alive” (Cox, 2011) is supported by T1 in this research. He said:

“Students are being motivated towards learning by the systematic use of grading system. It has become a plus point to the good students and an opportunity for weak and average students. It has encouraged students to try again, try differently in different areas. Students don’t have to be the victim of inevitable situations like sickness, accident etc. because grading system doesn’t evaluate only at a certain period of time” (T1 Int 1).

Even a poor child intends to work hard to achieve good grade because of holistic assessment system that should be applied while evaluating the students based on GS. Since this system includes continuous assessment system along with many other evaluation processes/tools, it helps the students to find their strong and weak points and improves themselves according to their interest. This helps them to be career oriented. The systematic use of GS gives an opportunity to the students who rigorously attempt several times to improve their grades. Similarly, the process of evaluating them in regular basis in different areas like attendance, classroom participation, assignment etc. are the motivational factors for the students to get better result. In this regard, T5 for example, said:

If a student gets B+ in written test but receives excellent grade in other variables of evaluation process, it leads to excellent grade in final. Hence, pen paper test + additional qualitative remarks leads to good grade. (T5 Int 1)

Furthermore, the finding of this study ‘GS allows for full credit’ under the major theme ‘systematic use of GS’ is also informed by (Rapaport, 2009). According to his article, full credit can be provided to the students’ performance with descriptive feedback if the item is clearly or substantially correct. The response supporting this from one of the participants illustrates clearly that GS allows for full credit:

In this system, we can evaluate the students in language subject with full grade because full grade (A+) itself includes some flaws within it. According to this system A+ doesn't mean 100% right. Even if the student gets 3.6, 3.7, 3.8 and 3.9 it's A+. Which means there is always space for improvement and progress. (T4 Int 1)

Thus, GS seems to be more advantageous through which lots of the teachers as well as the students have achieved various opportunities for further study and job placement.

The summary of the findings derived from the information under two superordinate themes: arbitrary and systematic use of GS along with the subordinate themes and the supporting codes for each of them can be visualized in Table 3. To each of the superordinate themes, we have fitted two subordinate themes along with their supporting codes.

Table 3

Summary of Findings in Terms of Themes and Supporting Codes

Superordinate themes	Subordinate themes	Supporting codes
Arbitrary use of GS	GS for students' classroom participation	GS to reduce subjective biasness Students' response towards GS Standard system with weak procedure Parents' participation to implement GS No failure grade encourages weak students to become more careless.
	GS for developing interactive environment	Evolving assignments for interactive environment GS creates biased environment GS; a discomfort zone for teachers
Systematic use of GS	GS for students' motivation towards learning	GS as a motivational tool GS as an opportunity GS develops hardworking students GS for the better result GS for goal setting and career development
	GS for teachers' professional development	GS increases the teachers' responsibility GS helps to upgrade the teachers GS includes big community GS allows for full credit

Note: GS = Grading system

Discussion

The data showed that GS has just been implemented by the MOE since 2015 in Nepal without any proper preparation, dissemination, and diffusion program in education sectors previously. Therefore, it results as the arbitrary use of GS. However, this finding is in contradiction with (Kafle, 2020) as he has presented the teachers' perception towards GS to be positively relevant, applicable, enthusiastic and appropriate for increasing the students' classroom participation in the context of Tanahu district of Nepal. Such a contradiction might be due the diverse procedures for the implementation of the system on the one hand, and due to the different perspectives of the teachers belonging to diverse sociocultural contexts.

Similarly, the finding showed that use of GS either arbitrarily or systematically determines the teaching learning environment in ELT classes. The teachers' use of non-testing devices such as project work, classroom assignment, homework, group work, practical work etc. in ELT classes have created the interactive teaching learning environment as informed by (Nafosat et al., 2019). While, the teachers' perception also showed that GS creates biased environment due to their arbitrary use of GS. This finding is in line with (Hardre, 2014) as he states, multiple factors influence teachers' grading on students' classroom performance. Hence, biased environment created by teachers themselves makes the teaching zone a discomfort one for them in the context of Nepal.

Another major finding of this research study deals with the systematic use of GS. We found even the finding related to the systematic use of GS to be conform to the existing literature. For instance, the finding drawn on the information that systematic use of GS motivates students towards learning and develops the teachers' professional skills is in line with (Knaack et al., 2012) as his finding also shows that majority of the students agreed with the fairness of the grades that were assigned to them. Teachers implemented a new way of grading that didn't allow outside factors to affect grades. Systematic use of GS in ELT classes motivates the students to work hard for the upcoming result. This finding is also in line with (McClure & Spector, 2005) as it states that, smaller differences between any two given grades give students a greater possibility of being able to improve their grade during the course of the semester. Validation of this statement would support the notion that setting higher standards in grading will increase students' success in the classroom and subsequently lead to a higher probability of achievement on professional exams.

Similarly, the finding 'teachers' professional development' under the major finding systematic use of GS shows that teachers have been enhancing their proficiency as they have to develop the self-directed, independent, lifelong learners

through their provided grades. This finding is in line with (O'Connor et al., 2018) as it states that the role of the teacher in GS is to develop, encourage, and extend learning of students through their feedback making grades as achievement so that students understand that school is about learning and not just accumulating points. The overall discussion shows that GS has played the significant role in the present evaluation system. It helps to uplift the students' success in education, to get better opportunities in the future. It has reinforced to the students for better doing their examination, homework, assignment, project work, and practical work too. It is necessary to save the students for their demoralizing experiences. However, it also seems to have a lot of challenges in evaluation. Not understanding its core concept and spreading the whims about it, learners' and teachers' reluctance in learning and teaching in GS has created many challenges have been shown in the present context of Nepal. The GS has lots of limitations but understanding it positively and its real sense and making students and parents too known about it can be seen as great challenge for teachers.

Conclusion

The forgoing result and discussion of this study depicts a detailed picture of how EFL teachers feel towards the use of GS. The analysis and interpretation of the findings of this study shows that GS has established a progressive performance of students by motivating and encouraging them through descriptive feedback on regular basis. Despite the fact, it is found that teachers are not clear yet about the concept and applicability of GS smoothly. But, they are trying their best to adopt this system systematically. There seem to be some obstacles or challenges about GS via concept and importance to its implement, norms and values of GS, and satisfaction of learners. Because, it is identified that teachers cannot hold entirely its responsibilities without providing innovative knowledge of grading through the orientation programs, trainings and seminars by the National Education Board and other concerned authorities. The variety of grading categorical scale has converged upon one another in regard to their performance level of subject matter. Still, the teachers are found confused on either their students are satisfied or not by achieving their potentialities of a certain level of grade. Based on the mixed responses given by teachers of their perceptions on GS, we came to the conclusion that there is need for using systematic GS making it even more appropriate and scientific for the betterment of overall teaching and learning of English in particular, and thereby the system of secondary level education as a whole. Even though the purpose of GS is to provide a meaningful, reliable, valid, and consistent picture of students learning achievement, this type of product will be lacking in effectiveness until teachers, students, parents, and all stakeholders have a clear understanding about the use of

GS. Since the present study was limited in descriptive research design based on limited secondary schools in Nagarjun Municipality, the findings of the study cannot be generalized in a broader context. Therefore, on the foundation of this research the issue can be further researched in a different or broader perspective(s).

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Appendix: Interview Guidelines for the Participants

We used the following theme based questions including many other related questions and counter questions as per the demand of the situation.

Students' classroom participation

- How is the impact of grading system on students' regular classroom activities and participation in the class?
- Does grading system effect at the holistic assessment of the students?

Motivation towards learning

- How is the response of students regarding the use of grading system? Are they stimulated by the grades and feedback?
- Is grading system an effective motivation for students' achievement? Explain your opinion.

Teaching learning environment

- How do you respond to the fact that letter grading system reduces the subjective biasness in evaluation? Does it help to identify the ability of students?
- What kind of teaching environment do you find after the implementation of letter grading system?



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Motivational Strategies Employed by Pre-Primary School English Teachers in Nepal

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Abstract

Motivation plays an important role in teaching learning activities. The motivational techniques make the classroom more interesting, effective, and successful as they help teachers teach the students effectively and students learn enthusiastically and interestingly. Considering the teaching learning activities using motivational techniques in the classroom, this paper explores the current practices of motivational strategies implemented by English teachers at the pre-primary level. A series of interviews with purposively selected pre-primary level English teachers and their class observations reveal various motivational strategies used in the teaching learning activities in the classrooms. The strategies the teachers used in their daily practices include greetings the students, playing with goods, using rhymes in the class, offering rewards, and calling lovely names to the students. The implication of the study is that the motivational strategies employed in the classroom activities are more effective, fruitful, and the students learn the teaching stuff in a joyful environment.

Keywords: Greetings, playing, rhymes, rewards, learning, joyful environment

Introduction

This paper explores some current practices relating to motivational strategies implemented by English teachers at the pre-primary level while teaching. Teaching is supposed to be a complex task. Simply speaking, teaching means the act of making

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students know, earn and do what has been prescribed in the curriculum. It is an act of conveying knowledge to students. Through teaching, the teachers intend to bring positive changes in students' behaviour. The teacher in the classrooms wants to teach effectively but sometimes what happens is students do not want to learn in the way the teacher instructs in the prescribed lessons and they show unintended behaviours like making noise and disturbing the teaching learning activities. It means some students do not show interest in their studies. In this context, the teacher cannot teach them effectively as he/she plans. This kind of situation can be minimized by motivating the students inside the classrooms. A number of research works (e.g., Chen et al., 2022; Filgona et al., 2020; Johnson, 2017; Rahman et al., 2021; Singh & Singh, 2021) reveal that motivation plays a great and significant role in learning.

Motivation is generally assumed as an inner drive or desire that moves a person to a particular action and it is an action word that can influence every part of our daily lives. Motivation is “a star player in the cast of characters assigned to second language learning scenarios” (Brown, 2000, p. 168) around the globe. It can have a principal role to make the learners success or failure in learning the content as well as a particular language. It makes learning fun (Malone & Lepper, 2021). Kelly et al. (1946) claim that motivation is the central factor in the effective management of the process of learning and they also claim that some type of motivation must be present to learn everything effectively. Showing the importance of motivation in learning, Deci (1975) and Weiner (1992) claim that motivation, in general, is a key to learning.

Motivation in learning is a strong predictor of course outcomes and is influenced by both individual and situational features (Klein et al., 2006; Pintrich & De Groot, 1990). Individual interest refers to “an intrinsic desire and tendency to engage in particular ideas, content, and activities over time” and situational interest, in contrast, refers to “the attention and affective reactions elicited by the environment” (Plass et al., 2013, p. 1054).

Brown (2000) distinguishes two types of motivation: intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic motivation is concerned with the factors such as physical condition, student's interest, demand, level, method of the teachers, etc. in the classroom. Intrinsically motivated behaviors are ones that “are involved with the human need for being competent and self-determining” and this motivation “is innate and motivates such things as play, exploration, and the development of cognitive structures” (Deci, 1975, p. 131). In contrast, extrinsic motivation is “fueled by the anticipation of a reward from outside and beyond the self, typical extrinsic rewards are money, prizes, grades, and even certain types of positive feedback, and behaviors initiated solely to avoid punishment are also extrinsically motivated” (Brown, 2000, p. 172). We

tried to explore what strategies the pre-primary English teachers use to motivate the students in learning.

The subject of motivation, especially in the field of second language acquisition/learning has garnered plenty of consideration (e.g., B. K., 2012; Bhattarai, 2006; Bhusal, 2020; Bush, 1957; Gyenwali, 2006; Harrold, 2015; Lokandri, 2014; McNamee, 2017; Miura, 2011; Seward, 2017; Vinogradova, 2016) but little attention has been paid to the study concentrating on the strategies used to motivate the pre-primary school children aged below six year. In this context, this study aimed at exploring the current practices of motivation strategies employed by English teachers at the pre-primary level.

Methods and Procedures

In this research, we adopted the phenomenological qualitative research design (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018; Flick, 2022; Kumar, 2019; Maxwell, 2013; Tracy, 2020) in which the “qualitative researchers stress on the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry . . . the value-laden nature of inquiry” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 8). In this present research, we assumed the same philosophical assumption as explained by Denzin and Lincoln above while exploring the motivational strategies used by the pre-primary school English teachers of selected schools.

To collect the information, we selected six pre-primary school English teachers from six schools in Kathmandu district applying a purposive sampling procedure. We selected three community and three institutional schools to observe whether they applied a variety of strategies of motivation in teaching learning activities. To maintain anonymity, we used the pseudonyms such as School A, B, C, D, E, and F to indicate the selected schools and Teacher A, B, C, D, E, and F to the teachers. All the teachers were female. The teachers seemed to be varied in terms of qualification and experience. Teacher B (B. Ed. with 12 years of experience), D (M. Ed. with 18 years of experience), and E (M. Ed. with 18 years of experience) were from community schools. Similarly, Teacher A (B. Ed. with 16 years of experience), C (B. Ed. with 11 years of experience), and F (B. Ed. with 10 years of experience) were from institutional schools.

Information was collected through interviews with selected teachers using the interview guidelines as a tool and through classroom observation (three classes of each teacher). During the data collection, an audio recorder and diaries were used to note down the information. In the whole research process, we followed ethical issues as informed by Creswell (2007), Ryen (2007), Ary et al. (2019), and Cohen

et al. (2018). After taking information from participants, we listened to the audio recordings many times. We transcribed the collected information and translated them into English. After reading the English-translated data many times, we coded and interpreted the information by categorizing it into different themes following ‘thematic networks’ (Attride-Stirling, 2001), a tool for analyzing qualitative information. To establish the credibility and trustworthiness of this research, we applied the strategies such as ‘triangulation’ (Denzin, 1978), ‘member checking’ (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and ‘thick description’ (Denzin, 1989), and ‘prolonged engagement’ (Fetterman, 2009) in the field collaborating with the participants.

Results and Discussion

The information received from the research participants has been interpreted and discussed categorizing it into five themes: greeting the students, playing with goods, using rhymes in the class, offering rewards, and calling lovely names to the students with the supporting details as follows.

Greetings

Greetings simply means a polite sign of welcome or recognition. Most often, in all schools, the students greet their teachers when they meet and when teachers enter the classroom. As we found greetings was used by the selected teachers in the classrooms to motivate their students. During the interview time, Teacher B, A, and C commonly said that they are using greetings in the classroom “to motivate their students”. Teacher C further expressed that “greetings motivates the students if they share their greetings each other in the classroom.” She further added that their happiness is clearly seen while they greet each other by saying ‘Good morning, Bimal’, . . . etc.”. Her opinion is that though the class becomes a bit noisier the greetings they share it functions as a catalyst to motivate the students.

Greetings was found to be used as one of the most important practices of motivation used by pre-primary English teachers. During an observation in a school, we found that Teacher B entered the classroom and greeted students by saying “Good morning my dear students” and students replied the greeting to the teacher. Then the teacher said to students, “Please, share your greetings to your friends”. Students shared their greetings with each other happily. The same teacher further said to the students, “Good students always share greetings to their friends”. Teacher A of another school greeted all the students differently as he greeted all the students individually. He greeted saying, “Good morning X, Y, Z [using students’ names], How are you?” All the students seemed cheerful when they shared greetings to their teachers. Individual greetings with students used in the classroom also helps to have close relationships with teachers the activities, and makes a positive environment for learning when it functions for warming up for learning.

The finding corroborates with the study conducted by B. K. (2012). He concluded that “many teachers greet to the class and warm up to motivate the students” before entering the particular topic. He argued that greeting is one of the techniques of motivation. It is also in line with Bhusal’s (2020) study that greetings in the class is used for “warming up, encouraging to the study, remembering and calling by name, establishing a good relationship with the teachers and students”. From the shreds of evidence, it can be concluded that greetings is one of the motivational strategies used for the teaching learning process.

Playing with Goods

The strategy ‘playing with goods’ used in the pre-primary school classrooms refers to the use of goods or playing materials so as to help the students’ learning. Some of the pre-primary school teachers were found to use various types of goods and materials to make the children engaged in learning. During the observation, a teacher was found to use this technique in School C, which was sponsored by Australian Agency. We saw several playing goods, blocks, balls, and other various small objects in different shapes and sizes collected in the classroom. In the classroom, Teacher A was instructing, advising, and communicating with the children to engage with the playing goods. Providing the goods to the children the teacher asked them to build some buildings, vehicles, kitchen sets, etc. The teacher asked them to work with them in groups and individually. The children seemed to work eagerly, actively, and enthusiastically communicating freely with their friends.

Teacher D of another school also engages the school children as Teacher A does. Providing the English alphabets haphazardly, Teacher D asked to arrange these alphabets alphabetically A-Z. She also announced to award the children who manage the alphabets from A-Z first in the order. The children being motivated intrinsically and extrinsically (Brown, 2000) engaged in playing and learning rather than rote memory. The children working with this method were found to engage with their full autonomy and they seemed to involve in the process of learning in their own ways.

School C even was using this technique. Teacher C found this technique especially to motivate the students. She opined that using this technique is quite easy to motivate the children in that they get easily motivated. She further added that they always “show their interest in playing and they easily and immediately involve in such activities as soon as we suggest them.” She found using this technique easy to “motivate students and to make teaching learning activities more effectively.”

This finding is informed by the “play-way method” of learning that is a “complete package that enables overall development of the child by developing in terms of feeling, intellect, and skills parameters” (Kanal, 2018). This method focuses

on the subjective as well as emotional development of the children. In this method of learning, playing acts as the motivating force as the entire learning method turns around activity-based learning. This finding is also in agreement with Karki's (2018) findings which showed that "the teacher needs to use supplementary materials to promote motivation, which is one of the key factors influencing learning" (p. 251). Here, "supplementary materials" are equal to the use of supplementary goods as described in the present study.

Using Rhymes

Rhyme is a short poem or song that is sung for the children with the intention of teaching them a kind of lesson, knowledge, and information. Using rhymes is one of the most popular techniques used in teaching English at the pre-primary level. We found some teachers were using this technique during class observations. Relating to this, Teacher D used this technique to teach the alphabet a-z to the children. While teaching them she used the rhymes (phonic song) such as "A" for apple, "B" for ball, "C" for cat, etc. In a similar way, Teacher F was using the rhymes in order to teach the name of the seven days "Sunday-Saturday" of the week using Nepali. The rhymes sung in the classroom was "आइतबार बिहान घामसित उठें म, हातमुख धोएर पढ्न बसें म, सोमबार बिहान आमासित उठें म, हातमुख धोएर लेख्न बसें म . . ." The teacher used these rhymes to teach the equivalent English names of the days with the Nepali terms. We found the teachers engaging their students in learning by singing rhymes. The important point was that the students seemed to participate more spontaneously and enthusiastically while using the Nepali language in the class.

Teacher D was playing rhymes using her mobile phone "Baa Baa Black sheep have you any wool? Yes sir, Yes sir three baskets full; One for the master, one for the dame, and one for the little boy who lives down the lane" to refresh and arise the motivation in the classroom. With the reason for using the rhymes in the classrooms, Teacher F expressed, "Students get easily motivated by the rhymes, they learn comfortably with this practice giving more attention to it." She further said, "It is the best and easiest way to teach students because they give more attention to it and they show more interest in listening to the rhymes."

From the indications provided by the teachers and the information received from the class observations, it can be concluded that rhymes were found to be the most important and effective practice of motivation used by English teachers in the classroom. Students even seemed to be really motivated by rhymes in their learning. The result is consistent with the finding of B. K. (2012) who concluded that singing songs in the classrooms is very helpful to motivate bored and unmotivated students. Similarly, This finding broadly supports the work of Concannon-Gibney's (2021)

study that nursery rhymes are useful to “teach vocabulary and grammar to young children who are learning English” and Long and Mustafa’s (2020) study which suggests that “teachers must be professionally-trained” for the purpose of motivating the children by using “nursery rhymes and songs in teaching vocabulary in early childhood classroom.” The finding related students are more motivated in learning using their own language (here, Nepali) is also in line with the concept of Baker and Wright (2017), and Cummins (2006).

Offering Rewards

‘Reward’ simply means awarding and strengthening some important stimuli or objects that help the learners attain some targeted goal. It is an act of “reinforcing stimulus following a behavior that makes it more likely that behavior will occur again in the future” (Cherry, 2022). Pre-primary school English teachers have the practice of offering positive rewards for a desirable or pleasant stimulus after certain positive changes. They normally offer rewards in the forms of words, objects, and opportunities to motivate the children in learning.

With this regard, Teacher B offered a piece of chocolate to one student saying “Well done, you have done very well. Keep it up.” when a child submitted an assignment to the teacher. She offered the reward in the form of words. In the same way, Teacher A presented a pencil to one of the students saying “Excellent! You are a very good student, keep it up.” She further said, “If you do your class work properly and if you read the answer to the questions, I will give you a sharpener and a pencil.” The teacher provided the reward in the form of objects and words. We found the students who were rewarded were very excited and energetic towards their tasks in the classroom. The reason for showing their intention and action towards work was to receive positive rewards from the teachers again. The children in the class appeared to be engaging in writing and reading in the class in order to receive positive rewards from the teacher.

Similarly, Teacher A gave pencils to those students who performed desirable actions and who read and memorized the answer to the targeted questions. She said, “It is the easiest way to motivate the students, they complete their homework and class work with the intention of getting reward from the teachers.” The teacher of School C reported that the school organizes a program “Democratic Tuesday” in which students are given freedom fully to participate in various extra-curricular activities like singing, dancing, games, and other activities. Students openly and freely participate in different activities of their wishes and interests. She also shared that unless the students complete the assignment, they are not allowed to take part in the program “Democratic Tuesday”. She added almost all the students normally

complete all the tasks assigned to them to participate in the program. The school strategically organizes the program to motivate the children in learning and they (the school teachers) “become successful” in our goal as she said. In this sense, they offer rewards in the form of opportunity.

The finding concerning offering rewards is informed by the information given by Dörnyei (2001) who stated that the basic motivational conditions can be created when there is “appropriate teacher behavior” in the school, “a pleasant and supportive atmosphere” in the classroom” and “a cohesive learner group with appropriate group norms”. The teachers and the schools in the present study tried to create the appropriate environment to motivate the children for learning. The result of this study is also in line with Bhattarai’s (2006) study that rewarding the students is essential to motivate in learning.

Calling Students with Lovely Names

Calling the students with lovely names is a kind of activity in which students are given lovely names with full love and care by the teachers. In this activity, the teachers call the students with lovely names and full of love whenever students perform the desirable activities. It is a verbal expression of affection with lovely names for the students. Calling the students by lovely names is also one of the impressive practices of motivation used by the English teachers in the pre-primary level. We found the teachers giving lovely names to the students to motivate them toward their tasks. This kind of activity was observed in Teacher B’s class. She said to the student who had submitted her class work to the teacher, “Very good my ‘motu’! You have done really well, keep it up.”

It was also used by Teacher F in her class. When a student submitted homework to her she said to the little boy, “Well done, ‘Gyanu’! You did well, I know you are a good student, keep it up.” Similarly, Teacher E said to a little girl when the girl answered correctly asked by the teacher “Wow! It is absolutely good, ‘little princess’ I like it very much, keep it up.” The students who received the lovely names from the teacher were extremely happy and motivated. The students were trying to get the lovely names from the teachers by doing their class work properly, submitting their class work appropriately, and copying the text from the book beautifully. The expressions made by the teachers such as ‘motu’, ‘Gyanu’, and ‘little princess’ are lovely names for the students. We found students were greatly motivated towards their task by calling with lovely names.

The finding of the present study (i.e., calling the students with lovely names to motivate the children to learning) is informed by the studies such as Maslow (1970), Dörnyei (2001), and McLeod (2022). They mentioned that love, affection, and belongingness are essential to motivate to learn the language and content.

Conclusion

This paper explored some motivational strategies employed by English teachers at the pre-primary level. The major strategies they used in their daily practices were greetings to the students, playing with goods, using rhymes in the class, offering rewards, and calling lovely names to the students. Motivation is one of the important factors for successful teaching and learning. It helps to strengthen, direct, and stand constructive behavior over a long period of time. It also helps to develop the students' creativity and curiosity to learn the language and content. If the learners are motivated they will actively engage in the teaching learning activities. In such an encouraging learning environment, the teachers will feel comfortable for teaching, and the students will feel stress-free to learn. Such practices of motivation are better to be implemented in the classroom to meet the expected goals and objectives set in the curriculum.

Implementation of the motivational practices depends on the facilities of the schools provided to the teachers and the students, and the teachers how much capable and knowledgeable they are to apply the motivational techniques in the classroom situations regardless of the type of school whether it is a community or institutional. The language or languages (i.e., students' home language or foreign language; English in our context) used in the classroom appear one of the important motivational factors for learning. The students naturally seem to be motivated and interested to take part in the interaction with the teachers and among the students in their home languages. The implication of the study is that the motivational strategies employed in classroom activities are more effective, and fruitful. Most importantly, the students learn the teaching stuff in a joyful environment.

It is does not seem to be easy to confirm whether an intrinsic, extrinsic or any other type of motivation is useful for learning. Considering the available context (i.e., existing facilities of the particular school, level and interest of the students, knowledge, interest, and capacity of the teacher to use motivation) into consideration, the teacher can use the appropriate amount and type of motivation to stimulate the students for learning. With regard to the strategic and appropriate use of motivation in various levels of school education, more qualitative and quantitative research concerning the levels of the students situating in various contexts (i.e., geographical, socio-economic/political, and so on) are essential to carry out focusing on macro, meso, and micro policy and practice level.

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Alienation and Fragmentation in Naipaul's *A House for Mr. Biswas*

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Abstract

This paper seeks to examine the issues of alienation, fragmentation, and the predicament of identity experienced by Mohun Biswas, the protagonist in V.S. Naipaul's novel, *A House for Mr. Biswas*, from the perspective of post-colonialism. To uncover how Naipaul grapples with issues of post-colonialism such as dislocation, identity crisis, and longing for a sense of belonging in an alien world, the research tool taken for the investigation is post-colonialism, with special reference to Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Homi K. Bhabha, and Leela Gandhi. The research design used for the analysis is textual analysis. The principal finding is that Mr. Biswas, a representative of the novelist's voice, resides in an alienated situation within his own community, despite the fact that he is physically residing with them. The paper focuses on key terms of postcolonial literature such as dislocation, identity crisis, and diaspora to diagnose the character's attitudes towards the alienated lifestyle. The readers and scholars interested in researching diaspora literature in future are expected to take the paper as a reference.

Keywords: diaspora, displaced, identity crisis, resistance

Introduction

Postcolonial literature often records racism, including slavery, dislocation, alienation, and exile experienced by the people who were formerly colonized (Masood, 2019). The chief focus of this research paper is to observe certain post-colonial issues of dislocation, and loss of identity addressed in V.S. Naipaul's novel *A House for Mr. Biswas*. Boehmer (1995) marked V.S. Naipaul as the founding figure of the old diaspora and Salman Rushdie as the representative of the modern diaspora. Naipaul's writings have been taken as the best representative of the problems of

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people living a nomadic life. Naipaul is noted for his dark novels of alienation and his vigilant narrative of life and travels (Barnouw, 2003; Dooley, 2006; Ray, 2005). Although Naipaul's had lineage, he was born and brought up in the multicultural society of Trinidad where he felt as if he were an alien in the midst of other aliens (Chakroberty, 2005). Despite living in London for twenty-seven years, Naipaul felt as an outsider there and depicted the autobiographical experiences in his novels. He sensed being an Indian in the West Indies, and a West Indian in England (Ray, 2005). Naipaul's third novel *A House for Mr. Biswas*, published in 1961, is about a Trinidadian Hindu whose greatest desire is to own his own home. The novel is mainly concerned with Naipaul's journey in quest of the personal community beyond the alienating effects of colonialism (Garebian, 1984; Kumar, 2002). It is replete with the life story of the author's father, and hence, some biographical elements from.

The story of *A House for Mr. Biswas* (AHMB) rotates around the continuous struggle of Mohun Biswas, a Hindu Indo-Trinidadian, who is married into the dominating Tulsi family, finally sets into the mission of owning his own house (Hayward, 2002). Naipaul attempts to record the sentimental and traumatic adventures of an immigrant through the protagonist (Kukreti, 2007; Ray, 2005). The novel depicts the struggle of Naipaul to become a writer. The use of the indefinite article, "'A' in the title, *A House for Mr. Biswas* indicates the intensity of his desire to belong somewhere, to feel at home, to get rid of alienation" (Kukreti, 2007, para. 1). A researcher intends to ask why his characters in the novel are obsessed with the idea of escaping the dreary intolerable environment of the Caribbean, why his characters feel as if they have lost their identity, and they are certified as mere slaves of Western cultural imperialism. The rationale of the paper lies in the researcher's attempt to mark the loss of identity and other post-colonial traits in the fiction.

Literature Review

There are several works carried out on Naipaul's *A House for Mr. Biswas* that shed light on Naipaul's characterization, narrative, theme, and purpose of writing this novel. Chinnam (2014) made a critical analysis of Naipaul's characters and found the central character, Biswas undergoing the process of articulation and socialization.

Thieme (1996), a critic inseparably associated with Naipaul, wrote about the use of the central trope of the house and Biswas's struggle to become a householder. This idea is recorded after his own experience of visiting the houses of the settlers in a foreign land when he was working on Naipaul. The real-life experience on which the novel is based was transformed into fiction (Kukreti 2007; Thieme, 1996). Another critic Dooliy (2006) embarked on an academic pilgrimage. He notices an Indian standpoint, and while doing so he engages in a new exploration of the trope of

the house and home. In the process, he had a vision of Naipaul's successive homes, especially the two Naipaul inhabited in the formative early years. Mr. Biswas lives in a comic position because he is unfamiliar to the familiar world (Garebian, 1984; Hayward, 2002; Kumar, 2002). *A House for Mr. Biswas* projects the struggle of the settlers through the lens of creolization, a process of settling by establishing control over the indigenous people of an area-to gain a better understanding of Biswas's characterization. Khan (1998) noted Naipaul's emphasis is on the linguistic hybridity and cultural amalgamation which is part of Trinidad identity formation. According to Tas (2011), Naipaul depicts a real fighter who is "in all his littleness, and still preserve a sense of man's inner dignity" (p.117). Levy (1995) observes the language of Naipaul in this novel and finds that his narrative technique is characterized by simplicity. In this way, critics like Khan and Tas marked simple language, rather than the ornate with the use of literary devices in the novel.

The critics' reviews on the text *A House for Mr. Biswas* from various perspectives signify that they have noticed the problems of settlement and unsettlement confronted by the central characters of the novel. But the critics have not noticed the predicament of identity and fragmentation and their impacts on the lives of the chief characters in the text. Therefore, this article attempts to address the research gap. It is oriented to survey the causes and impacts of the loss of identity, fragmentation, alienation, and exile connected to the protagonist of the novel, Mr. Biswas.

Methods and Procedures

The paper made an analysis of the primary resource, that is, the text, *A House for Mr. Biswas*, by V. S. Naipaul applying a discursive, qualitative approach itself from a theoretical modality based on postcolonial theories of Leela Gandhi, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, and Homi K. Bhabha. And the secondary resources such as literature from journals, and commentaries on the text given through websites were surveyed to note the research gap. The delimitation of the paper primarily lies in focusing on the attempt of the characters of the novel to find their identity in an alien world.

Postcolonial literature is the literature created and narrated by the people from the countries formerly colonized (Raja, 2019). It addresses the problems and consequences of decolonization of a country, and issues related to the political and cultural independence of formerly subjugated people. Hybridity, dislocation, mimicry, third-space, and ambivalence are the key aspects of postcolonial literature (Bhabha, 1994). Postcolonial literature is typically characterized by its revolt against the colonization by the colonizers. All postcolonial writing is resistance writing

(Bhabha, 1994; Gandhi, 1998). When the colonizer gets encountered with the colonized, both cultures get affected (Bhabha, 1994). The colonizer intends to deter the colonized by developing specific behavior of suppression. Spivak (1988) marked the exploitation of subalterns like that of the colonized by the colonizers in the post-colonial discourse.

The Post-colonial approaches of the theorists mentioned above are key research tools used to examine how the sense of dislocation and anonymity are experienced by Mr. Biswas in Naipaul's *A House for Mr. Biswas*.

Results and Discussion

The central concern of the paper is to observe how V. S. Naipaul raises the issues of identity crisis, dislocation, and indifference towards an individual leading to alienation and fragmentation in his celebrated work *A House for Mr. Biswas*. From the very beginning of the fiction, the novelist portrays a desperate picture of the leading character. Mr. Biswas is struggling to preserve his identity and build an authentic selfhood in a bizarre environment. Bhabha (1994) argued that migrant subjects suffer from “a doubling, dissembling image of being in at least two places at once which makes it impossible...to accept the invitation to identity” (pp. 112-113). A researcher notices how Mohun Biswas is sketched as an individual losing his identity in the very first chapter of the novel. Even an astrologer, Pundit Sitaram studied the birth details of Mohun Biswas consulting his astrological almanac and remarked, “The boy will be a lecher and a spendthrift. Possibly a liar as well” (p. 16). The six fingers of Mr. Biswas, for Pundit Sitaram, symbolize bad fortune for his family. Hence, Mohun's predicament of identity begins from his home. It is the ruling ideology that makes the elites to discriminate against the non-elites (Gandhi, 1998; Spivak, 1988). Pundit Sitaram stands for the elite who create space for the marginalization of Mr. Biswas. Mohun experiences alienation in his house because the family priest has interpreted his horoscope and declared him to be ominous. Such judgments make him feel as if he was an outsider in his Indian community. His journey to find a home is his attempt to acquire his social role and identity.

Mr. Biswas realizes that the crisis in identity arises due to the ambivalence state. Ambivalence refers to “a simultaneous attraction toward and repulsion from an object, person or action” (Young, 1995, p. 161), or a continual fluctuation between wanting one thing and wanting its opposite. Naipaul portrays the ambivalence and complexity of the relationship between a man and his origins and his inability to escape from it. Aware of his loneliness and dilemma, Mr. Biswas tells his son, “I am just somebody. Nobody at all” (*AHMB*, p. 279). Unlike his father and brothers who have inherited the social identity of laborers, this cannot be claimed by Mr. Biswas.

Alienation is viewed as an emblem of personal dissatisfaction with certain structural components of modern society (Lystad, 1972; Silva, 2017). Mr. Biswas first looks after his uncle's shop; then he finds work as sign-painter. While doing the job of the sign-painter, he encounters Shama, the Tulsis' daughter, and later on, marries her. His life after marriage is a symbol of the third space. The alienated people struggle to find their identity in the third space (Bhabha, 1994; Oversveen, 2021). The married life makes Mr. Biswas feel that life opens no room for not romance, but increases responsibility.

When no money and dowry were received from the Tulsis, Mr. Biswas has no alternative but to shift into the Hanuman House. Bhabha (1994) contended that home is not home but it signifies a mode of living taken as "a metaphor of survival" (p. 113). But this metaphor does not work for Mr. Biswas. The unfriendly family atmosphere heightens his mental complexity. To Mr. Biswas, it is a typical joint family which functions on the same pattern as "the British Empire in the West Indies" (p. 112). Hanuman House provides shelter to Mr. Biswas but loses his identity in return. Hanuman House, another metaphorical representation, is depicted as follows:

The concrete walls looked as thick as they were and when the narrow doors of the Tulsi Store on the ground floor were closed, the House became bulky, impregnable, and blank. The balustrade which hedged the flat roof was crowned with a concrete statue of the benevolent Monkey God Hanuman. (p. 186)

This description signifies how the concrete wall of the house appeared narrow and how the House looked bulky for a struggling settler like Mr. Biswas in an alien world.

Mr. Biswas finds his condition ambivalent day after day. Ambivalence is a complicated state of repulsion and attraction marked in the link between the colonizer and the colonized (Bhabha, 194). Mr. Biswas observes that men are required to do labor work in the Tulsi family, no matter whether they are husbands or not. He realizes that he is not welcomed in Hanuman House where "he was treated with indifference rather than hostility" (*AHMB*, p. 187). This realization builds his ambivalent character. However, he "held his tongue and tried to win favor" (p. 188). He has a strong faith in gaining his freedom and independence. He keeps on attempting to rediscover his identity. Govind, one of Tulsi sons-in-law, advises Mr. Biswas to quit sign-painting and be a driver of the Tulsi estate. Mr. Biswas retorts his disapproval: "Give up sign-painting? And my independence? No, boy. My motto is: paddle your own canoe" (p. 107). It seems that for Mr. Biswas sign-painting displays his identity. He disagrees to adopt any profession connected to the Tulsis.

Moreover, he does not intend to get himself identified by the insignificant son-in-law, in the Tulsi family. This demonstrates his attempt to create his own identity from the ambivalent state.

Mr. Biswas looks bewildered in the hybrid state. Hybridity is a postcolonial trait highlighted by Homi K. Bhabha. Hybridity commonly refers to the creation of new transcultural forms within the contact zone produced by colonization (Bhabha, 1994). Mr. Biswas attempts to gain his freedom in Hanuman House. He tries to be closer to the Aryans, the so-called protestant Hindu communities from India. His voice for the eradication of the caste system, child marriage, and idol worship doctrines making the Tulsis ferocious. Like the colonized, Mr. Biswas struggles without any proper job, income, and a house of his own in his identity predicament. This is shown in the text:

The future he feared was upon him. He was falling into the void, and that terror known only in dreams, was with him as he lay awake at nights, hearing the snores and creaks and the occasional cries of babies from the other rooms. The relief that morning brought steadily diminished. Food and tobacco were tasteless. He was always tired and always restless. (AHMB, p. 227)

The fragmented life makes his world dark. He apprehends life without solace and comfort.

Mr. Biswas is disappointed that nobody loves him, nobody knows him, rather everybody ridicules at his condition (Levy, 1995). Mr. Biswas experiences bitter stillness around him in the evenings as long as he is locked into the room.

Mr. Biswas is a subaltern who acts in an absurd way in many situations. The crisis of identity, the rootlessness, and the feeling of subaltern force man to act in an absurd way (Spivak, 1988). Mr. Biswas performs several absurd activities to highlight his individuality and to get acknowledged, such as his revenge on Bhandat (spitting in his rum) or giving various nicknames to the Tulsis. For example, 'the old hen', 'the old queen', 'the old cow' intended to Mrs. Tulsi, and 'the big boss' for Seth, or 'the two Gods' for Tulsi's sons. The narrator finds himself so troubled that he says "he could not be trusted" (AHMB, p. 102). Even when Mr. Biswas's daughter is born, Seth and Hari decide to name her Savi without consulting Mr. Biswas. To register his protest, Mr. Biswas writes on the birth certificate: "Real calling name: Lakshmi. Signed by Mohun Biswas, father. Below that was the date" (p. 163). This signifies the ceaseless attempt of Mr. Biswas to assert his identity in the post-colonial world.

Mr. Biswas goes through the creolization. Creolization is mostly used to refer to those “post-colonial societies whose present ethnically or racially mixed populations are a product of European colonization” (Ashcroft et al., 2000, p. 51). In another section, named, ‘The Chase’, Mr. Biswas begins to live independent life with Sharma. Nevertheless, he has a bitter feeling that he is an inessential and unwanted person. For Mr. Biswas, “Chase was a pause, a preparation” (AHMB, p. 147). Mr. Biswas’s desire to own his own house signals the problem of identity crisis among displaced people. Spivak (1988) believed that the dispossessed attempt to establish their identity, voice, and collective locus. At Chase, Mr. Biswas marks that “the Hanuman House was the world, more real than the Chase, and less exposed; everything beyond its gates was foreign and unimportant” (AHMB, p. 188). Mr. Biswas expects to get his identity discovered in Chase. But wherever he shifts, he experiences a sense of fragmentation and alienation looming before him. He finds himself as the dispossessed and keeps on attempting to establish his identity. It is the perception of economic inequality that intensifies the affliction of alienation (Oversveen, 2021; Silva, 2017). Mr. Biswas keeps on striving to regain his own identity among the migrated East Indians in Trinidad.

Mr. Biswas suffers in his attempt to imitate the English colonizers. Mimicry is a key term associated with post-colonialism and marked in the novel. Bhabha (1994) defined mimicry as exaggerated copying of language, culture, manners, and ideas. Pundit Jairum tries to teach Mr. Biswas the Ramayana and other traditional lessons. But he ignores reading them. Instead, he reads philosophical books like Bell’s Standard Elocutionist. Reading philosophical books and fiction, Mr. Biswas realizes that the people of his community have no valuable history. Mr. Biswas regards that the romance which he notices reading Bell’s Standard Elocutionist is unachievable in this land. This idea is recorded in these lines: “He read the novels of Hall Caine and Marie Corelli. They introduced him to intoxicating worlds” (AHMB, p. 74). His disappointment intensifies his inferiority complex. Seth questions Mr. Biswas about his father at the very first encounter with the Tulsis, but Mr. Biswas evades the question and says, “I am the nephew of Ajodha Pagotes” (p. 85). He admits this because his inheritance and his identity in Trinidad are not safe, and he cannot be totally free from suffering. Life, for Mr. Biswas, is futile without Sharma, without his children, and even without the Tulsis. Garebian (1984) found Mr. Biswas a grotesque character ridiculed by his state of dislocation. Mr. Biswas visits Hanuman House more frequently in bewilderment and to seek his identity.

Mr. Biswas is sometimes found to be performing colonial mimicry for the sake of identity. It is a violation of self in order to gain something great. Bhabha (1994) believed that “colonial mimicry is the desire for a reformed, recognizable

other, as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite” (p. 86). Mr. Biswas admits the truth that England is the land of offering opportunity and freedom. He does not like the trend of identifying a person by his caste. He believes that “a man’s caste should be determined only by his actions” (AHMB, p. 111). Thus, his thoughts are of a modern English man, while he is really a Brahmin Indian immigrant who inherits a status as a labourer from his immigrant father.

The loneliness and depression of Mr. Biswas are the results of this incongruity which is by itself a product of his mimicry. Mimicry is not a representation of the servitude of the colonized; rather it can be considered as an attempt to change its identity (Bhabha, 1994). Mr. Biswas has a strong faith that a nobler purpose is awaiting him. The narrator reports this conviction of Mr. Biswas in these words: “Though he never ceased to feel that some nobler purpose awaited him, even in this limiting society, he gave up reading Samuel Smiles. That author depressed him acutely. He turned to religion and philosophy” (AHMB, p. 174). All the time Mr. Biswas finds himself as a man belonging to another world, quite distanced from the world he resides in. Though the books read by him are unfamiliar to his world, they offer him comfort and relief. The books provide him with solace because he lacks security in his real world. He cannot decide where to start from. Thus, living a life of mimicry throws him in a position where no one notices him. This even intensifies his feeling of humiliation. Readers can notice the paradox between Mr. Biswas’s intention and confrontation, dream and reality. Nevertheless, he intends to imitate the English so that he can disguise himself from being colonized.

Although his stay at the Green Vale provides Mr. Biswas a sense of liberty and significance, his activities in Green Vale are characterized by the physical and mental insecurity. In the Post-colonial scenario, the non-elites, the discarded fight against insecurity for their identity (Gaandhi, 1998). Here, his dream to build a house begins to shape into reality. It is not that he wants a spacious place for himself, but he wants to be recognized as the father of his children, especially by his son, Anand. For Mr. Biswas, “Anand belonged completely to Tulsis” (AHMB, p. 216). Though he begins to build his house in Green Vale, it is not exactly identical to his dream house. Bhabha (1994) delineated “mimicry repeats rather than re-presents” (p. 85). Mr. Biswas goes into the comfortable rooms of the house thinking that it will bring a change in his mind. But the feeling of alienation and dislocation lurks here too. He feels discarded like the non-elite in the world of the so-called elites.

Wherever Mr. Biswas goes, he finds entangled between mimicry and mockery. Bhabha (1994) opined that “ambivalence represents the existing fluctuating relationship between mimicry and mockery” (p. 87). Port of Spain exposes new

prospects for Mr. Biswas. The city proffers him some prospects of establishing his identity. He works as a reporter for the Trinidad Sentinel and draws a salary of fifteen dollars a month. This job helps him gain some prestige from the Tulsis as well. Mr. Biswas, too, never feels what he used to feel when Sharma is pregnant for the fourth time, “one child claimed; one still hostile, one unknown. And now another” (AHMB, p. 227). His relation with Mrs. Tulsi is gradually improved. But the tragedy is that happiness is short-lived. The hold of the Trinidad Sentinel by new authorities and Mrs. Tulsi’s verdict to live in Shorthills gives a blow to Mr. Biswas. Nevertheless, the house of Mr. Biswas is not conveniently situated. He has to walk a mile daily for shopping confronting the problem of transportation. His children also wish to go back to Port of Spain.

Mr. Biswas keeps on realizing his duties as a father and as a husband in Port of Spain. He always has double consciousness. Tyson (2006) described that the colonized have a double consciousness, that of the colonizer and indigenous community. The house stands as a prison for Mr. Biswas because it is distanced from the city. Mr. Biswas “could not simply leave the house in this place. He had to be released from it” (AHMB, p. 432). Mr. Biswas reports Sharma that he is going to leave the house very soon. He has a quest for his own house. The quest for the house signifies the quest of Mr. Biswas to obtain his identity, self-respect, and dignity. This instinct is a process of creolization of Mr. Biswas. When people are fed up with the dominant culture, they produce a totally new construct in creolization (Ashcroft et al., 2000; Oversveen, 2021). Sharma, the wife of Mr. Biswas wishes to leave the house although she had insisted on living with the Tulsi family earlier. Sharma remarks, “I do not want anything bigger. This is just right for me. Something small and nice” (p. 580). Ultimately, Mr. Biswas succeeds in getting a loan from Ajodha and purchasing a house in Port of Spain. He depicts the house in these words: “The sun came through the open window on the ground floor and struck the kitchen wall. Woodwork and frosted glass were hot to the touch. The Sun went through the home and laid dazzling strips on the exposed staircase” (p. 572). The presence of the sun in the dazzling house signifies the happiness and gratification of Mr. Biswas living in the new house.

This is the indirect representation of Naipaul’s gratification at the accomplishment of his wish. But Mr. Biswas finds many infirmities in the house later on though his sense of satisfaction for owning a house lurks there. Naipaul implies that for dislocated people like Mr. Biswas, owning a house is not just a matter of sheltering from the cold or rain but also an indication of establishing order in the heterogeneous and fragmented society of Trinidad.

Mr. Biswas is described as a determined man who is struggling against the hostile environment instead of escaping from it. One of the dominant issues of post-colonial literature is the diaspora. Ingleby (1999) regarded that diaspora includes a dispersion from one place or a center from which all the dispersed take their identity. The symbolic meaning of a house for Mr. Biswas is highlighted in the Prologue:

How terrible it would have been, at this time, to be without it; to have died among the Tulsis; amid of the squalor of that large, disintegrating and indifferent family; to have left Shama and the children among them, in one room; worse, to have lived without even attempting to lay claim to one's portion of the earth; to have lived and died as one had been born, unnecessary and unaccommodated. (AHMB, p. 14)

Naipaul demonstrates the bitter situation and the lifestyle of the Indian diasporic community in Trinidad through the depiction of the hero, Mr. Biswas.

In this way, the novelist becomes successful in universalizing the issue of alienation experienced by an individual. The protagonist stands for the novelist himself who battles against the painful condition of dislocation. At times, the novel even grows darker as Biswas's battle with the Tulsis becomes complicated. Nevertheless, Mr. Biswas succeeds to possess a house of his own by the end. Naipaul seems to have carefully chosen the name of the protagonist, Mr. Biswas. He seeks to picture the problems of the Hindu living in an alien world. Therefore, the first name of Mr. Biswas, Mohun signifies 'beloved', although Mr. Biswas is portrayed as an unlucky individual struggling to trace out his identity in a hostile world. The novel depicts the activities of the Indians struggling to find their place and identity in an alien country. The predicament of identity is generated by unfamiliar language, and religious and cultural practices.

Conclusion

Thus, Naipaul's fiction, *A House for Mr. Biswas*, delineates the pathos of migrants struggling for survival in a state devoid of their identity. The life of Mr. Biswas revolves around the unifying, integrating, and central metaphor of the house. Narrated in compassionate tones, the house, for Mr. Biswas, stands for his search for independence from dependence. The novel exposes the dark outlook of the social and ethnic past of the marginalized East Indian migrants living in Trinidad. The narrative attempts to balance Mr. Biswas's inner self and the disinterested view of the outer world. The dislocated life of Mr. Biswas reflects the ambivalent life of Naipaul himself. Naipaul, like Mr. Biswas, had experienced a bitter life of fragmentation and alienation while residing in Trinidad. In the quest for his own identity, Mr. Biswas moves from village to city and from nuclear family to joint family. But, he is unable

to discover his own roots in the alienated world. The chief finding of the research is that the novel demonstrates how the dislocated Indians live a hard life in Trinidad, and how they find themselves colonized by the local people or the colonizers there. Despite being a member of the Trinidad community, he resides in a situation of anonymity. He is displaced from his ancestors' home because he has no home and land in India, neither does he have loving community in Trinidad despite he succeeds in possessing a house there. Like his forefathers, Mr. Biswas is obliged to go away from his birthplace and wander in an alien world in quest for the identity and security. Naipaul portrays struggle of Biswas in tracing out his identity in the novel. It is not just an expression of an individual but the collective attempt of the Indian diaspora that finds a place in the fiction.

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Fellow Creatures in War with Humans: Status Quo Struggle in Alfred Hitchcock's *The Birds*

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Abstract

This article examines the intricate matrix of human and non-human relations to explore the symbolic essence of war of birds with the humanity in Alfred Hitchcock's movie 'The Birds'. This movie contains a plot in which nature strikes back to humanity. The everyday life is terrorized by the flocks of birds that attack people forcing them to think of their hostile relationship with other creatures. The study concentrates on exploring the reasons of havoc caused by the mute creatures, specially the birds that behave strangely. It analyses the film from an ecocritical insight envisioned by the theorists Arne Naess, Vandana Shiva, and Lawrence Buell. As it is a thematic interpretation of the movie, it reviews the scholarly comments of different critics and sets to explore the avian status quo struggle departing from the criticisms. Its finding suggests that anthropocentric hubris is the reason behind the dystopic state of the planet and the animals and birds are ultimately struggling for their own position on earth. It challenges the human claim that they are the most powerful creatures of this universe to keep everything under their control.

Keywords: Anthropocentric, harmony, hubris, species

Introduction

This paper aims to observe closely the intricate chain of relationship among the human beings and the birds to explore the causes of birds' war with the humanity in Alfred Hitchcock's 1963 film *The Birds* which was produced and directed by Hitchcock himself. It bases its plot on Daphne de Maurier's novella of the same name that first got published in 1952. Hitchcock slightly modifies the narrative in

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which he presents the birds as ferocious, violent and savage creatures hungry for humans. The movie was starred by Rod Taylor as Mitch Brenner, Jessica Tandy as Lydia Brenner, Veronica Cartwright as Cathy Brenner, Tippi Hedren as Melanie Daniels, Suzanne Pleshette as Annie Hayworth, a schoolteacher.

The film was a great success and the US Library of Congress deemed it as a significant work of art from cultural, historical and aesthetical perspectives. The main storyline of the film describes a troubled state of the seagulls and several other species of birds that fly here and there and attack human beings wherever they find them. The birds look angry and ferocious. They are hungry for humans and attempt to kill them.

The birds have often been used in the films to communicate varieties of themes. Here, in the movie, they have been used to punish the human beings as they are taking nature for granted (Paglia, 1998, p.87). The birds pounce upon anyone who comes out of their houses. The major character Melanie Daniels is first attacked by the seagulls at Bodega Bay, California, as she was returning from Mitch Brenner's house leaving a pair of lovebirds to Mitch's sister Cathy Brenner as a gift for her eleventh happy birthday. Then the birds assault school children, the teachers and anyone they find outside. The real cause of the violent behavior of the birds is kept unexplained in both the original story by Maurier and Hitchcock's adaptation. This makes the movie a suspense thriller. However, it certainly is a metaphor that hints that the birds are symbols of unbridled power of nature and they resent as the human beings threaten their survival. There is a status quo battle as the human beings are killing and eating different species of birds. This forces them to repeatedly swoop down violently to the town and village residences. Bellanca (2011) asserts:

The Birds' taps into a primal anxiety about animals that are equipped by nature with built-in tools- sharp beaks and tearing claws- against which individual humans have little defense, while it also expresses a very modern anxiety about destruction rained from the sky with powerful man-made weaponry. (p.27)

The birds are powerful because they are gifted with automatic weaponry especially their beaks and claws which are as powerful as the human- made weapons. Hitchcock's film depicts that the civilians are helpless in front of the threat posed by these birds and it also unfolds a fact that our social mechanisms are not capable enough to protect us from such vulnerability. Looking from an environmentalist perspective, the birds in the film represent the unconstrained power of nature and they force human beings to accept the reality that nature's unrestrained power remains somewhere very far beyond human imagination. Human beings therefore should not undervalue the power inherent in birds and animals that are not often violent unless a serious threat looms

over them. So, humans need to follow the spirit of Deep Ecology which stresses on realizing the complex network of relations that bind all life-forms, objects and the phenomena.

Literature Review

The Birds has got quite a lot of literary and critical attention. Paglia (1998) explains it as an ode to many facets of female sexuality and, by extension, nature itself (p.88). She notes that women play pivotal roles in it. Mitch is defined by his relationship with his mother, sister, and an ex-lover- a careful balance which is disrupted by his attraction to the beautiful Melanie. Paglia finds that the central issue of the movie moves round the female characters. Together she also makes a psychological reading of the movie. She remarks that *The Birds* unfolds a return of the repressed; a release of the primitive forces of sex and appetite that have been subdued but never fully tamed (p.8). She finds that the incestuous and the sexual tensions among the principal characters do not erupt in actual conflict between them but in the vicious and unprovoked attack of the birds. The birds, in other words, are the “return of the repressed” or in Lacanian term ‘irruption’ of the Real into the Symbolic order (Humbert, 2010, p.89). The anthropocentric acts (‘symbols’ or the ‘signifiers’) of human beings turn into ‘real’ when the birds begin to attack humans.

Zizek (2006) also interprets the movie from a psychological lens. He asserts *The Birds* is an outbreak of “raw incestuous energy”(n.p.). He interprets the movie as a conflict or fear of relationship between son and mother who is afraid of her son’s potential beloved. Walter Raubicheck and Srebic (2011) find that the movie shows the entrapment of civilians (p.140). They describe a miserable fate that the people are forced to meet.

Sarris (1998) makes typical remarks about the movie:

The theme of the film, after all, is complacency, as the director has stated on numerous occasions. When we first meet each of the major characters, their infinite capacity of the self-absorption is emphasized. Tippi Hedren’s bored socialite is addicted to elaborately time-consuming practical jokes. Rod Taylor’s self-righteous lawyer flaunts his arrogant sensuality, Suzanne Pleshette, his ex-fiancée, wallows in self- pity, and Jessica Tandy, his possessive mother, cringes from her fear of loneliness. With such complex, unsympathetic characters to contend with, the audience begins to identify with the point of view of birds, actually the inhuman point of view. (p.297)

Sarris interprets the movie from a sociological perspective. He notices individual typicality in each character and their personal concerns.

Crowther (1963) describes *The Birds* as a horror film (p. 53). He could not exactly confirm whether the birds in the movie were allegorical. He stresses on the need of evaluating the movie as a whole on the basis of its content. Cohen (1996) argues that the birds' attack on human beings dramatizes the post-traumatic nightmare reminiscent of German air- raids and envisions the nuclear threat newly pervading the whole world (p.12). He regards that as *The Birds* was produced during the Cold War period, the movie definitely contains the war sensibility in spite of the fact that it lacks any specific mention of the global tension between the nations. The birds' attack from an unexpected direction from the above reflects the Cold War threat and the entire doom of the townspeople which can be brought about by the nuclear warfare.

These critical opinions expressed above cover a range of concerns. However, they do not speak anything about the events from an environmental perspective. This article analyzes the events concentrating on the extreme behavior of humanity over the fellow creatures. It explores why the birds behave strangely over the humans forcing them to realize that all creatures have their own importance and no one of them has the right to exploit others taking nature for granted.

Methods and Procedures

This study is a qualitative study of the film. Different from quantitative study that focuses on numbers and facts for deriving conclusions, it uses the film as a source of primary concept rather than a numerical data. It makes a thematic analysis on the basis of characters' roles and symbols used in the film.

Results and Discussion

The Birds is set in a small northern coastal area of California. In spite its intricate plot, it sounds like a love story of Mitch Brenner and Melanie Denials who meet at a pet shop. Mitch has gone to the shop to buy lovebirds for his little Cathy's eleventh birthday. Their first encounter develops into a love relation. Melanie surprises Mitch by buying lovebirds for Cathy. But on her way back home across the bay on a boat, she is attacked by a seagull on her head. Mitch runs to help Melanie whose head was bleeding out of the bird's attack. Next day, he invites her to the birthday party of his sister, Cathy. But at dinner, it is found out that the Brenner's chickens do not eat. They are sick. The very night a seagull crashes into the door of Annie's house where Melanie was staying. The next day, children who had come to Cathy's birthday party are also attacked by the birds. The same night, a number of sparrows come down the chimney. They frighten Melanie and the Brenner family. The police officer comes to find out the cause of the attack but he cannot find it out. The things are normal next morning but Lydia finds that the chickens in her farm are

sick. Dan Fawcett's chickens also have the same problem like Lydia's. As she enters the house, she finds that Dan is dead in his bedroom with the windows broken, and there are also other dead birds scattered here and there. Surprisingly his eyes are pecked out. Later, Annie is also found dead in the same way.

As Melanie waits for Cathy to end her classes, a group of crows are there behind her. When the school children run home, they are attacked by the crows. Many of Cathy's friends fall on the ground and one of them breaks her eye glass. The birds ultimately force Mitch to leave his home for San Francisco. Even at the time he departs for San Francisco with his family, numbers of birds are watching him go.

The movie has variously been interpreted by different scholars and critics. However, this article ponders on why animals and birds behave so aggressively towards human being. It claims that the reason behind the birds' resentment against humanity is due to the marginalization of other creatures and a selfish anthropocentric tendency. As humans keep them in the center, the nature hits back to them time and again.

Causes behind Anthropocentric Psychology

Environmental theories express a serious problem over the anthropocentric tendency. Callicott (1984) in an article defines the anthropocentrism as a theory that regards human beings intrinsically valuable and all other things, as being instrumentally valuable only to the extent that they are means or instruments which may serve human beings (p. 299). *The Birds* challenges this notion of anthropocentrism. It advocates for biocentrism that regards the intrinsic worth of all fellow beings. Environmental discourse concerns with the sound relationship between organisms and the environment. It raises questions against the human interference in biotic communities. So many institutions are devoted to study about the relationship between organisms. Living Planet Report (2020) published by World Wide Fund (WWF) reveals:

In the last 50 years our world has been transformed by an explosion in global trade, consumption and human population growth, as well as an enormous move towards urbanization. Until the 1970s, humanity's ecological footprint was smaller than the earth's rate of regeneration. To feed and fuel our 21st century lifestyles, we are overusing the earth's biocapacity by at least 56%". (p. 6)

This report also reveals that a million species of animals, plants and insects are threatened over the coming decades to centuries (p.12). Anthropocentric activities are the cause behind the threat of entire ecosystem. The decline and even extinction of several species of fishes, birds and mammals are several examples of this threat.

Because human beings regard other animals and birds as the means for their benefit, they have an arrogant behavior towards them from the beginning of civilization. Beckmann et al. (1997) claim that the essential feature of the anthropocentric dimension of the cosmological domain is the belief that humans are separate from and ethically superior to the rest of nature. As a result, humans consider themselves to be rightfully, the masters of nature subduing it for their own instrumental purposes. Its reflection can be seen in the pet shop in *The Birds* also. There are hundreds of subdued birds caged for selling for the instrumental pleasure of the keeper. It is an example of anthropocentrism.

The anthropocentrism has further extended to patenting rights also. Shiva (2001) opposes the patenting act over the plants and animals. She remarks that this act has plundered the living rights of animals and plant species. She claims that patents on life and the positioning of man as a creator of other beings have tremendous economic and ecological meanings, apart from moral problems (p.42). She wonders over the fact that currently, hundreds of genetically engineered animals, including fish, cows, mice and pigs are figuratively standing in line to be patented by a variety of researchers and corporations (p.41). Shiva feels that the genetic engineering of animals, birds and other species on modern laboratories are anthropocentric activities which put other creatures in a marginal hierarchy. The caged birds in the movie look like a patent right of the aviary where the owners have every right to keep them the way they like.

There are many elements of anthropocentrism in Hitchcock's movie *The Birds*. In contrast to the spirit of deep ecology envisioned by Arne Naess (1990) who regards that human life is just one element among millions of lives on earth, the birds are caged and they are used as gifts for the human events. The pet shop is also a place where numbers of animals and birds are imprisoned for the fun of human beings. Innocent mute creatures are captured from their shelters and sold for people's benefit. This shows that neither Mitch nor Melanie gives a thought for the rights of those caged creatures. Even after Melanie is attacked by a seagull, they do not think if the birds are behaving so strangely due to hunger. People nowadays feed animals and birds but Melanie and Mitch do not feel to do so. Nor they contemplate about any other possible cures about how the birds can be silenced. Their only concern is for themselves; how they can be safe from the birds' attack.

***The Birds*: Gothic Horror as Rhetoric**

When the film opens, a group of crows are flying. It adds suspense from the beginning. The birds call their friends to join them. Melanie sees a flock of seagulls swarming above the town. The cawing of the crows foreshadows something ominous

taking place. Melanie's fear is confirmed when the birds start circling around. The exposition of birds as ferocious creatures is frequently repeated in the film. Alfred Hitchcock sets the ground to give the Gothic impression from the opening. Bishop (2011) states that by reinventing the melodramatic romance, Hitchcock has created supernatural horror film, a movie that crosses the boundary into science fiction and leaves viewers with an uncanny and unresolved conclusion (p.135). But the ominous scene of the film, in the beginning, sets grounds to remind humanity of the possible apocalypse that the present civilization is heading to. Hogle (2022) describes that the Gothic literature stems from the way it helps us address and disguise some of the most important desires, sources of anxiety from the most internal and mental to the widely social and cultural (p.4). Hitchcock's concern here is for human beings' cruel behavior towards other species. He adopts Gothic pattern to punish humans so as to make them realize their cruelty. Allen (2013), talking about the electronic sound track of "The Birds" comments that Hitchcock has intensified the horror by making children play the electronic sound that sounds like the annoyed birds' sound. He says that all these environmental sounds are linked to Melanie's attack. She is trapped like a bird in a cage. The car she entered in becomes a chamber of horror. So, the movie uses Gothic horror rhetorically. Hitchcock uses Gothic horror to make human beings realize that their situation would be like Melanie's if they disregarded the fellow creatures.

The Birds: An Apocalyptic Rhetoric

Environmental apocalypse has long been used as rhetoric in literature. Environmental critics Buell (1995) and Garrard (2012) claim that apocalyptic rhetoric such as "Silent Spring" seems to be a "powerful master metaphor" influencing government policy, environmental activism, and, shaping all manner of popular narratives about impending environmental crisis (Buell, p. 285; Garrard, p. 101-02). Their point is that the literary rhetorics put a pressure to the concerned sectors to think over the environmental degradation and take necessary precautions. Making a comparative study of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (1962) and Hitchcock's *The Birds*, Soles (2014) remarks that Carson and Hitchcock both take bird deaths as a symptom of ecological apocalypse. Carson's title, "Silent Spring", evokes the disturbing lack of bird song in areas devastated by DDT spraying (p.528). Carson (1962) writes that spraying DDT for Dutch elm disease took place on Michigan State University campus in 1954. By the following year, "the sprayed area had become a lethal trap in which each wave of migrating robins would be eliminated (p.106). Both Carson and Soles envision a possible apocalypse of the environment due to the use of DDT to destroy the birds.

There are reflections of some true events in *The Birds*. Coombs (2008) writes that the film is based more acutely on dramatic real-life incidents. On 18 August 1961, residents in the town of Capitola, California awoke to notice sooty shearwaters slamming into their rooftops, and their streets were covered with dead birds (n.p.). These birds, according to UC Santa Cruz Ocean scientist Raphael Kudela, were perhaps suffering from domoic acid poisoning caused by septic leaks from local sewage treatment plants. As Kudela claims in 2008, “animals poisoned by domoic acid have erratic behavior (qtd. in Coombs). Quoting an ornithologist Mrs. Bundi, Carter Soles describes that birds do not possess the brain power to intrigue coordinated attacks against humans. These birds, as she claims, bring beauty to the world. She opines that it is humanity that makes life difficult upon this planet (p.529). Similarly, Murphy (2013) asserts that *The Birds* is an apocalyptic revolt of nature (p.184). As the birds do not care about their own predicament while attacking the humans, the apocalyptic steps are realized everywhere. Abrash (2011) explains that once the attacks start, the humans are not safe in any place, any time and finally the assailants, in their single-minded determination, to carry out the planned massacre, are utterly indifferent to their own fate (p.169). The seagulls, crows, sparrows, and the farmhouse chicken are found dead here and there, a complete chaos pervades the environment. Humbert (2010) finds that Hitchcock writes in a cluster of themes. *The Birds* is the variation of the work of 1950s rather than a complete new point of departure. It is an apocalyptic crystallization of the themes that had always preoccupied Hitchcock (p.88). The critics seem to agree that Hitchcock’s *The Birds* envisions a complete breakdown of the civilization. They also stand in agreement to each other that anthropocentric attitude is the cause of this impending apocalypse.

Causes behind Birds’ Strange Behaviour

In Hitchcock’s movie, the birds behave unpredictably. There are some critics who see no reasons behind the birds’ attack over the humans. Wood (2002) argues that *The Birds* obtains its power from absolute meaninglessness and its unpredictability of the attack (p.162). It is true that the movie does not clearly depict any cause and effect scene that the birds are terrorized by human behavior. However, the messages are not always straightforward. It cannot be denied that there is human beings’ fault at the extinction of birds and many other environmental catastrophes. Towards the start in the movie Melanie purchases a pair of lovebirds for Cathy’s birthday gift to surprise Mitch. She leaves these birds in a cage outside someone’s home. The birds almost die of suffocation there. It was a very cruel behavior on the part of Melanie. The seagulls perhaps noticed the suffering of those lovebirds kept outside in a cage. Out of compassion, they probably thought to fight back for the freedom of those caged birds. Therefore, the birds showed strange behavior towards humans.

Bogdanovich (1997) remarks that *The Birds* is about the fact that nature can turn on people. For him, the birds' attacks were targeted against human follies (p. 535). Merrit Abrash writes that Hitchcock chose a scenario as unlikely as attacks by birds because he had read of individual aggression and unpredictable mass migration of birds. So, the choice of birds as attackers proves the state of his consciousness (p. 169). After the release of the film, Hitchcock was asked what he really wanted to hind by the birds' attack. Truffaut (1967) found that Hitchcock gave no profound reason for the attack in the film (p. 216). But Hunter (1997) describes the scene in which many different kinds of birds attack Melanie in the attic. Hunter replied to Hitchcock that it demonstrated a unified attempt to annihilate the human race (p.34). According to Hunter Mitch and Melanie speak lightheartedly at first. They try to joke about the attack but the humor falls flat and there is chill of horror in Melanie's words. She says the finches came down the chimney in a fury as if they wanted everyone in the house dead (p.47-48). From Hunter's description, it can be said that the birds attacked the humans to avenge for their atrocities. Gerard (1979) remarks that the 'Sacred' of all those forces whose dominance over man increases or seems to increase in proportion to man's effort to master them (p. 31). As the birds dominate the humans as a force of contagion that is linked to man's attempt to control nature. So, the birds stand as sacred symbols of the ultimate and unbridled power to punish wrongdoers. They resemble an anarchic crowd that penalizes the evil. They establish a truth that the sacred, as Gerard claims, is present everywhere in an uncontrolled and violent form to establish peace, harmony, and order.

Conclusion

Alfred Hitchcock's birds symbolize so many things together. They represent terror in the bizarre world dominated by humans. The birds also stand for the unconstrained power of nature. Though they are peace lovers, they cannot tolerate the extreme cruelty over the nature. They do not care for their own fate when the human interruption exceeds the level of tolerance. Through their unpredictable attacks and punishment to the humans, they prove that human beings are not the most powerful species of this universe. They are rather miserable in front of avian power that can make them silent in a while. The birds influence Lydia transform herself from an authoritative mother to a caring one. Similarly, Melanie and Mitch are forced to accept their powerlessness in front of birds. They think of moving to some peaceful place for their safety. By giving the movie a typical end without ending, Hitchcock intends to make everyone reflect that the possibility of an unpredictable peril is always there if human hubris is not checked in time. Thus, the film contains a strong flavor of biocentrism. It advocates that the atrocity of human beings must stop for the healthy and harmonious living. It also opens ground for the further study of this movie from film and technocratic theories.

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Implementing Project-Based Language Learning and Teaching in Classrooms: EFL Teachers' Perspectives

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Abstract

This study explores secondary level English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers' perceptions about Project-Based Language Teaching (PBLT) in terms of its benefits in EFL classrooms. Moreover, it investigates the challenges EFL teachers face while implementing it in English language instruction and recommends the solutions as perceived by the EFL teachers in the EFL context of Nepal. Backing up with theoretical perspectives on PBLT approach, this study adopts phenomenological qualitative research design to analyze the data obtained from the in-depth interviews conducted with three secondary level EFL teachers from three schools of Kailali district of Nepal. This study reveals that even though EFL teachers have knowledge about the importance and benefits of using PBLT in English language teaching, they still face some ideological, pedagogical and operational challenges in effective implementation of PBLT in classrooms. However, the EFL teachers suggest some solutions to overcome the challenges for successful implementation of PBLT for better language teaching and learning.

Keywords: learner-centred, instruction, pedagogical challenges, approach

Introduction

Recently, academic institutions have been making efforts to develop both hard and soft skills of language in the students. Hard skills include skills related to professional knowledge and knowledge that help to understand meaning (cognitive knowledge) and soft skills include skills required for social and group interaction and solving the communicative problems the students face in their daily life (Guo et al., 2020). However, achieving the goals related to such skills is not possible through traditional language teaching approaches. Even though modern learner

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centered approaches may address the issues related to hard and soft skills of language, Project-Based Language Teaching and Learning (PBLT) seems to be more efficient in developing cognitive and professional knowledge skills through team work and problem solving approaches. The popularity and influence of PBLT lies in its possibility of developing language skills that are required to the students to cope up with challenges in the 21st century. PBLT engages students to the real world tasks through the diverse projects they involve in while learning in and outside the classroom (Bell, 2010; Han et al., 2015). Similarly, Thomas (2010) claims that PBLT is not only beneficial for the students but also facilitates the teachers for their personal and professional development. In the same line, Han et al. (2015) and Kokotsaki et al. (2016) assert that earlier research shows PBLT is an effective approach to language teaching and learning. However, its success depends on how teachers understand and select criteria to successfully implement PBLT in the classroom. The selection criteria of PBLT directly incorporate with the students' development of language skills and knowledge of content. Thomas (2010) argues that the research is inadequate about the challenges faced by teachers in developing and implementing PBLT by themselves. Therefore, carrying out further research to investigate the benefits and the challenges of PBLT from the perspective of active EFL teachers seems to be essential for promoting use of PBL in the classroom practices.

Even though PBLT provides students with the opportunity to learn a language as a whole, especially English as a foreign language, 'through interactive way connecting students with communicative language teaching and learning' (Brown & Lee, 2015) and through 'learning by doing' (Dewey, 1915) connecting task based language learning, Thomas (2010) argues that studies on PBLT do not still have remarkable effects in the actual practice of PBLT in the classroom. He further argues researches are inadequate to explore the difficulties the EFL teachers face while designing and implementing PBLT by themselves in the classroom. The challenges primarily emerge from two perspectives: educating EFL teachers to effectively use PBL in the classrooms (Beckett, 2002 cited in Grant, 2017) and EFL teachers' constraints/reluctance to use PBLT in real classroom teaching and learning. Such challenges in PBLT are also prevalent in EFL context of Nepal as well. Hence, carrying out further research to investigate the benefits and the challenges of PBLT from the perspective of active EFL teachers seems to be essential for promoting use of PBL in the classroom practices in the context of Nepal.

The purposes of this study are to investigate perceptions of secondary level EFL teachers on how PBLT facilitates in ELT, what challenges they encounter while implementing PBLT in the classroom and how they overcome such challenges in

the context of Nepal. To achieve the purposes, the study answers these research questions:

1. How do EFL teachers perceive PBLT in English language teaching?
2. What are the challenges faced by the secondary level EFL teachers while implementing it in the EFL classroom?
3. How do they address these challenges?

Literature Review

This section primarily deals with the theoretical overview of conceptualization of PBLT, benefits and challenges that occur while implementing PBLT in different EFL/ELT contexts. This theoretical overview gives theoretical back for analysis and discussion for the data collected for the research. Even though the theoretical underpinnings discussed in this section are from different contexts and time, the insights obtained from the review of such theories are relevant to ELT research in the context of Nepal as well.

Conceptualizing PBLT

Scholars have defined and interpreted PBLT in different contexts. However, they seem to have a similar notion to it and they use similar philosophical and theoretical backgrounds for it. In project based teaching and learning as, Blank (1997, cited in Railsback, 2002) asserts, students have the opportunity to involve in making plans for projects, executing these projects in the classroom and evaluate their own projects which have real life application beyond the classroom. Similarly, project based instructional strategies, as Railsback (2002) states, are connected to several theories such as, ‘constructivist approach’ of Lev Vygotsky, Jerome Bruner, Jean Piaget and John Dewey. Karlin and Vianni (2001) opine learning as an outcome of ‘mental construction’ i.e. the learners learn through the construction of new ideas or concepts based on their present and prior knowledge. Similarly, Ravitz (2010) states that PBLT makes use of various kinds of ‘projects’ as tools to motivate students towards learning along with the presentation and demonstration of the language skills that the students have learned. Thus PBLT is said to be based on ‘constructivism. However, Guo et al. (2020), Barron and Darling-Hammond (2008) and Savery (2006) argue that PBLT is rather based on problem solving, and inquiry based teaching and learning approaches than the constructivism. The scholars use the ‘problem-based and ‘inquiry-based’ method interchangeably. Similarly, Krajcik and Shin (2014) indicate six hallmarks of PBLT which include a driving question, the focus on learning goals, participation in educational activities, collaboration among students, the use of scaffolding technologies, and the creation of tangible artifacts.

Similarly, Cocco (2006) describes project-based learning as a student-centered form of instruction which is basically based on three constructivist principles: first, learning is context-specific; second, learners are involved actively in the learning process and they achieve their goals through social interactions and the sharing of knowledge and understanding. Similarly, Al-Balushi and Al-Aamri (2014) opine that PBLT is considered to be a particular type of inquiry-based learning where the context of learning is provided through authentic questions and problems within real-world practices that lead to meaningful learning experiences (Wurdinger et al., 2007). However, Kokotsaki et al. (2016) argue that freedom and challenge that students experience as a result of solving the problems that arise in designing and building their projects result in 'high levels of student engagement' (Wurdinger et al., 2007) due to the cognitive challenge as well as the strong affective, ethical and aesthetic dimensions that form part of a well-designed project.

Gibbs and Carson (2013), on the other hand, perceive PBLT as a formal language teaching approach which traces back to Dewey's practical method of learning that is based on the principle of "learning by doing" (Dewey, 1915), Kilpatrick's (1918) project method and subsequent approaches to progressive education. Similarly, Hedge (1993) informs that PBLT began in the mid-1970s as a response to pedagogical theories of learner-centered teaching, learner autonomy, the negotiated syllabus, collaborative learning, and learning through tasks. PBLT has also been compared with other pedagogical practices such as experiential or collaborative learning. In this context, Helle et al. (2006) argue, project work is a collaborative form of learning as all participants need to contribute to the shared outcome and has elements of experiential learning with active reflection and conscious engagement rather than passive experiences being essential.

Benefits of PBLT

According to Han et al. (2015), the common goal for PBL is to help students acquire deeper content knowledge, skills as well as feelings of commitment and ownership of their learning. This requires active engagement of students' effort over an extended period of time. Scholars have clear views that PBLT is an effective method of teaching and learning in general and second language teaching and learning in particular. It is considered to be effective in sense that it incorporates social, cognitive and professional development of a learner through the projects, collaboration, motivation and learner autonomy. On this, Aksela and Haatainen (2020) claim that learning responsibility, goal setting, independence, and discipline are outcomes of PBLT. It promotes social learning as children practice and become proficient with the twenty "first- century skills" (Bell, 2010) of communication, negotiation, and collaboration. Implementation of PBLT allows children to discover

who they are as learners. It is important for the teacher to confer with students regularly to ensure that students are on track and developing their ideas and skills fully. Similarly, Bell (2010) asserts that these skills are critical for future success in both school and life. He further argues that PBLT promotes links among subject matter disciplines and presents an expanded, rather than narrow, view of subject matter. In the same line, Blumenfeld et al. (1991) opine that projects are adaptable to different types of learners and learning situations. Similarly, some studies on PBLT report unintended, beneficial consequences associated with its experiences: enhanced professionalism and collaboration on the part of teachers and increased attendance, self-reliance, and improved attitudes towards learning on the part of students (Thomas, 2010).

Challenges of PBLT

Even though there are a number of benefits of implementing PBLT in second language learning, there are some common barriers in implementing PBLT effectively. Such barriers include teachers' resistance to student-driven learning because they often see this as giving up control of the class. According to Mentzer et al. (2017), teachers with little practice on PBLT are more prone to resist the idea that students should self-determine their own the important concepts of the lesson. In this context, Aksela and Haatainen (2020) state that the other barriers with the implementation of PBLT are teachers' confusion on inquiry-based instruction with hands-on activities, inability to motivate students to work in collaborative learning, scaffolding instructions, the development of authentic assessments and overcoming student resistance to employing critical thinking. Similarly, Mentzer et al. (2017) mention that time issues, granting students sufficient autonomy and understanding what this entails as well as melding required curriculum with PBL are noted as barriers in PBLT research.

The previous studies reveal, as Thomas (2010) claims, that there are evidences that PBLT is beneficial both for teachers and students. Similarly, earlier researches show that teachers' understanding of the criteria for effective PBLT plays an essential role in how teachers implement PBLT, thereby also affecting students' content understanding and developing skills (Han et al., 2015; Kokotsaki et al., 2016). However, research studies on the challenges experienced by teachers in developing and enacting PBLT on their own, as Thomas (2010) argues, are inadequate. Therefore, more research work is required in exploring the benefits and the challenges of PBLT from the perspective of active teachers in order to promote the use of PBLT in practice.

Methods and Procedures

This study is based on phenomenological qualitative research design. It tries to explore secondary level EFL teachers' perceptions about the effective implementation of PBLT in Nepalese classrooms as a recent phenomenon of English language teaching. To fulfil the purpose of the study, the researcher selected three secondary level schools, two community schools located at Godawari Municipality and Kailari Rural Municipality and one private school located at Tikapur Municipality of Kailali district based on convenient sampling as the area of the study. The selected schools were coded as SSS for first school, JSS for second school and USS for the last school considering ethical issues. After selecting the schools, the researcher selected three secondary level EFL teachers (each from one school) who have been teaching English for more than ten years. The selected teachers were also coded as P1, P2 and P3 to maintain the research ethics.

As data collection technique, in-depth interviews were taken with the participants for obtaining information and semi-structured interview was conducted to obtain additional information. All of the participants were physically approached and interviewed for 20 minutes each to collect the data for the research. All the interviews were audio recorded by taking consent from the participants. Additional information was collected through telephone conversation. The participants (as they are EFL teachers) felt comfortable to give interview in English language even though the researcher offered them both Nepali and English language for the interview. The data were noted, recorded on mobile phone recorder, and the transcribed in written format. Then, the data were presented, discussed and analyzed qualitatively.

Findings and Discussion

Since the purposes of this study are to explore the EFL teachers' perception on how PBLT facilitates ELT in Nepalese context, what challenges the EFL teachers face in implementing PBLT in the classrooms and how they overcome the challenges, the data collected from the participants are discussed into three categories: factors facilitating English language teaching in PBLT, the challenges, and addressing the challenges. However, before presenting these three-category analysis, it is relevant to present the EFL teachers' knowledge about PBLT. During the interview, I first asked the participants about their understanding and knowledge on PBLT. The participants responded:

P1: PBTL is a learner based teaching approach which is based on learning by doing philosophy. It believes that language skills can be best learnt in a real context. Thus, students are given small projects to work on with the aim of developing particular language skills.

The response on the perception of PBLT from P1 reflects the Dewey's (1915) concept of 'learning by doing' philosophy. Further the response shows that real context is a significant factor that facilitates learning English as a second language. Additionally, the participant perceives that PBLT helps in developing the language skills in the learners through the 'projects' (Ravitz, 2010) assigned to them during teaching and learning.

P2: Project-based language teaching and learning means giving students a project to teach the language and the students complete any task based on that project work. It helps students to learn the language in collaboration. It not only helps to learn any language but also helps to gain knowledge about the culture of people who speak different languages.

Similarly, P2 agrees with the perception of P1 in that better language learning takes place through projects. However, P2 states that the projects the learners should complete should be 'based on tasks' (Thomas, 2010). The response of P2 also reflects that learning is more 'collaborative' (Helle et al., 2006) in PBLT which is also aligned with knowledge of culture as well.

P3: PBTL is a pedagogical method of teaching and learning. It is basically a student centered method where students learn by themselves by engaging in some project works.

The response about PBLT from P3 is similar to the perception of P1 and P2 in terms of using projects for language learning. Additionally, P3 perceives that PBLT as 'pedagogical' and 'student-centered' (Cocco, 2006) approach to language learning.

These responses from the participants EFL teachers show that they have a good knowledge about PBLT. They perceive PBLT as learner- centered approach as described by Cocco (2006), a pedagogical method of language teaching as described by Gibbs and Carson (2013) and a 'collaborative learning' (Helle, 2006) which involves projects (Kilpatrick, 1918) for developing language skills. The projects are based on problem solving, learning by doing (Dewey 1915). This knowledge of participant EFL teachers shows that they are capable in understanding and using PBLT in ELT in the Nepalese context. However, none of the participants specified the language items they use PBLT for, frequency and patterns of using PBLT in their classrooms. They responded that they sometimes/ occasionally use PBLT in the ELT classes.

Factors Facilitating ELT in PBLT

The second question of the interview was about how PBLT facilitates ELT in the classes of the participant teachers. The interview revealed that there are a number of factors in PBLT that facilitate ELT in the classroom. One facilitating factor they perceived is high quality collaborative group work which involves learning from each other and learning by doing. In this context, P2 replied:

Project-based language teaching and learning opens the way for students to learn languages together. They learn by doing and the learning retention is long. They also get knowledge about each other's language and culture. It promotes the collaborative learning and they know the true meaning of group work and collaboration as it is based on 'win-win' principle.

The response from P2 informs that PBLT provides students with the opportunity to work and learn in the group. Learning in group through the projects can develop interactive and equal participation, individual responsibility for learning and reciprocal learning skills. Such skills facilitate the students in collaboration through projects they perform (Cheng, et al., 2008). Moreover, using PBLT in the classroom can minimize the issues related to 'social class, power relation and gender differences' through equal participation and meaningful collaboration. As a result, students can feel more comfortable in learning. However, Crossouard (2012) argues that teachers' role is significant in supporting the students for group work and collaboration, developing sense of responsibility, and mitigating the issues related to equity and equality in learning. Thus, PBLT helps to enhance equity, equality and motivation in learning which creates 'a win-win' situation for the students of diverse potential and contexts.

Apart from the group process and collaboration, the participant EFL teachers perceived that use of technology can be a motivating factor that can enhance ELT in the classroom. Regarding using technology as facilitating factor in PBLT, P3 responded:

It makes the learners autonomous in learning. it can even make language learning more effective if technology is used to handle the project works. Students feel themselves responsible in teaching learning process and can improve learning.

Modern Technology in ELT can provide learner autonomy and responsibility to improve the learning of the students. Technology functions as an effective tool for planning, designing and performing the projects. Additionally, students can share their tasks among the group or class in a convenient way using the digital technology which can even increase their responsibility, confidence and presentation and

communication skills (Patton, 2012). However, for effective use of technology in PBLT, Bell (2010) insists that a proper support and guidance is necessary for the students to handle the technology for better learning.

Similarly, the other facilitating factor in ELT through PBLT is the teachers' skill to address the learning issues of the learners, skills to create real-life situations for projects, skills to support and guide the students properly and skills to collaborate with their colleagues. In this regard, P1 responded:

PBLT requires teachers' support to engage in the real life situation, it motivates students to use language in real life environment. All language skills are given equal importance and students are also actively involved in the activities which lead them to successful language learning.

Teacher's professional and personal skills are essential to facilitate students to involve in successful language learning in the classroom and in the real life as well. Effective scaffolded instruction within high-quality experiences will help reduce students' "cognitive load" (Hmelo-Silver et al., 2007), will enable them to make small successful steps and ultimately achieve "cognitive growth just beyond their reach" (Bell, 2010, p.41).

Challenges in Implementing PBLT

The third issue I discussed with the participant EFL teacher was the challenges they face while using PBLT in their language classes. Even though all the participants used different words, they indicated the similar kinds of challenges. In response to the question related to the challenges, the participant EFL teachers responded:

P1: Low language proficiency of the students is the main challenge. Similarly, it is time consuming and mostly active and talent students dominate the activity.

During the interview regarding the challenges in implementing PBLT in the classroom, P1 states that he had to basically face three types of challenges that hinder true implementation of PBLT, first, low proficiency of the learners in English language. Second is related to management of time and the third one is the issue related to the students' personality and performance; active students dominate the learning.

P2: The hardest part is getting the students to speak because they don't know the English language well and because of that they can't participate openly. Some students have a shy nature which stops them to give their best in learning. Similarly, some students do not like to work in groups.

Even though P2 uses different words, the challenges regarding students' language proficiency and personality faced by him in implementing PBLT in the classroom are similar. However, P2 does not perceive time management a significant factor as a challenge in PBLT. Instead he opines that some students (e.g. Shy and introvert students) may not like to work in group because of their personality constraints.

P3: The main challenges are- it is time consuming and all the students do not equally take part in the project works. Some of them can cheat in collaborative works.

In response to the questions related to challenges, P3 has also similar views to P1 and P2. However, P3 opines that wrong intention of the students (e. g. cheating) can be a barrier in implementing PBLT in the classroom.

The responses from all participant EFL teachers reveal that there are basically three challenges the teachers face in implementing PBLT in classroom practice. The first issue is related to the learners' proficiency over English language. The responses show that students having low proficiency in language skills are less or not interested to take part in collaboration, self-learning, learning through problem-solving approach and 'learning by doing' (Dewey, 2015). Students with high proficiency over the language, on the other hand, dominate the learning processes and activities. This creates a divide between stronger and weaker students which hinders the successful implementation of PBLT. The second issue is 'time management. All of the participant EFL teachers perceived that using PBLT is time consuming. It is challenging to design the project, assigning the projects to the students and evaluating the projects and students within a certain period of time for English language teaching. The third issue perceived by all participants is personality constraints. They perceive that shy and introvert learners are less likely to take part in collaborative and group learning process. Some learners even cheat on the assigned tasks. Active and extrovert students, on the other hand, dominate, hence discourage other learners in collaboration and group processes. These challenges are not only specific to this research context, but also prevalent in all EFL/ELT contexts. However, the participants did not talk about the challenges related to ELT resources, teacher professional development and technology.

Recommendation for Solutions to the Challenges

The theme for final question in the interview was the solution to the challenges. The participant EFL teachers were asked how they think the challenges in PBLT can be overcome. They responded:

P1: *I motivate the weak students to contribute as much as they can. I also give the students freedom to choose the project by themselves. I suggest them to help each other to learn language. Similarly, I ask them to conduct the project during holidays and present them in the classroom next day.*

Regarding the suggestion for overcoming the challenges in implementing PBLT in the classroom, P1 views that motivation in learning, freedom of choosing projects and time and providing learner autonomy can reduce the challenges and contribute to effective implementation of PBLT and better learning.

P2: *Students should first be provided autonomy and knowledge about project work and then they should be advised not to be shy. They should also be taught that if they work in a group, they can learn well and learn from others. The teacher should also facilitate them in difficult situations.*

In the same question, P2 agrees with the responses of P1 that learner freedom, autonomy and motivation are crucial factors in overcoming the challenges in implementing PBLT. However, P2 further adds that informing students the value of group work (student support to each other) and teachers' facilitation are even more effective ways to deal with the challenges in PBLT.

P3: *We can assign them individual tasks or even group tasks. We should make sure that everyone is actively taking part in the group task.*

In the similar context, P3 on the other hand, opines that individual treatment to the to the students and teachers' support to the students in terms of assigning the tasks/projects and in terms of their active participation is necessary for minimizing the issues linked with the implementation of PBLT in teaching and learning of English language.

The responses from all participant EFL teachers suggested some solutions. The solutions include, student support, teacher support, effective group work, balance between didactic instruction with independent inquiry method, assessment, emphasis on reflection, self and peer evaluation, and student choice and autonomy. According to Kokotsaki et al. (2016), technology in language learning can be fully utilized by encouraging students in self-management, fostering support and guidance, making conscious about time management and allowing students to handle the technology in a reasonable way. Similarly, regular guidance from teachers is needed through regular networking and professional development opportunities. The support from the school senior management is crucial. High quality group work will help ensure that students share equal levels of agency and participation (Guo et al., 2020). Moreover, balance between didactic instruction with independent inquiry

method work will ensure that students develop a certain level of knowledge and skills before being comfortably engaged in independent work. evidence of progress needs to be regularly monitored and recorded (Kokotsaki et al., 2016). Finally, student choice and autonomy throughout the project-based learning process will help students develop a sense of ownership and control over their learning.

Conclusion

Even though PBLT provides students with the opportunity to learn a language as a whole, especially English as a foreign/second language, through interactive way connecting students with communicative language teaching and learning and through learning by doing connecting task based language learning, there are EFL teachers' constraints/reluctance to use PBLT in real classroom teaching and learning which are consequently, creating problems in language instruction of EFL/ESL in Nepalese classrooms. Based on these issues, the analysis of data in this research explore secondary level EFL teachers' perceptions in PBLT, challenges they encounter while implementing PBLT in classroom and how they overcome such challenges in the context of Nepal. The paper reveals that all the participant teachers are well informed about the importance and role of PBLT in ELT. However, they do not use it as a major ELT method or strategy in the classroom on regular basis. Hence, PBLT is not seen to be properly implemented in Nepalese schools. The paper reveals the challenges the EFL teachers face while implementing PBLT in the classroom such as, learners' low proficiency in English language, management of time and personality constraints of the learners. However, the EFL teachers are aware of minimizing the challenges they encounter while using PBLT as a method of ELT. The solution they recommend include the reasonable group activities, teacher and student support, self and peer evaluation, assessment emphasis on reflection, balance between didactic instruction with independent inquiry method, and student choice and autonomy.

Even though the previous studies reveal that PBLT is an effective method of teaching and language teaching for developing both cognitive and professional skills in the learners, the effective implementation of it is still problematic. Since, this study analyzes limited data and covers limited context of EFL, the results cannot represent overall issues of PBLT as an English language teaching method. However, the findings can be helpful for opening more space for further researches in the field of ELT. Similarly, the perception, issues and solutions on PBLT discussed in the paper may give an insight to the ELT practitioners and students for effective teaching and learning.

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Book Reading Habits of College Level English Language Teachers

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Abstract

Reading only textbooks or coursebooks is not enough for English language teachers. In addition to textbooks, they should read several books for their academic advancement. Keeping this in mind, this descriptive survey design under quantitative research tried to find out the book reading habits of the college level English Language (EL) teachers. The participants of the study consisted of 20 English language teachers who have been teaching English in different Tribhuvan University (TU) affiliated colleges located in Banke district. The participants were selected employing simple random sampling technique. The data was collected using a questionnaire which included altogether fifteen questions. The first ten questions were closed ended and the last five questions were open ended. The collected data was analyzed based on the descriptive statistics technique of data analysis. The results of the study showed that the average number of books the college teachers read in a year is approximately four. Similarly, the majority of college teachers have no habits of reading even a single book in a month. Another finding of this study is that college teachers prefer extensive reading over intensive one. Moreover, the college teachers believed that the library is the main source for college teachers to read.

Keywords: college teachers, comprehension, intensive reading, library

Introduction

Reading is a deliberate activity that involves creating word meanings. Reading with a purpose enables the reader to focus their attention and guide information towards a specific objective. According to Cross (1992), it is the amalgamation of visual and non-visual experience or behaviour. It is a process of decoding, understanding and interpreting information from pictures, signs, codes

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and written letters (Smith & Robinson, 1980). In the similar vein, Palani (2012) also writes that reading requires identification and comprehension. Reading, in a real sense, requires detailed or total understanding of the message given in the reading text. Good reading extracts not only the literary meaning but also the intention of the writer. Reading involves both mental and physical activities. In other words, it can be understood as an interactive process which requires interaction between a reader and the text. Richard (1998, as cited in Chaima, 2019, p.12) mentions “reading is the construction of meaning from a printed or written message.” Moreover, it is a dynamic skill which requires continual inference, predicting, verification, and self-questioning.

Reading is considered a habit when the activity of reading is repeated. Shen (2006) defined reading habits as how often, how much, and what people read. In a similar way, Wagner (2002) also expressed that the habits of reading may include the amount of material read, the frequency of reading and the average time spent in reading. In Sangkaeo’s (1999, as cited in Chhetri & Rout, 2016) opinion reading habit implies the behaviour which expresses the likeness of reading of individual types of reading and tastes of reading. The habit of reading can be considered as one of the important mediums for the development of an important tool for the development of personalities and mental capabilities. In this context, Tella and Akande (2007) assert that reading is one of the powerful activities of self-educating, transforming life and society. Nweke (1990) also agrees that reading plays a real role for the intellectual development of an individual. In this perspective, Chettri and Raut (2013, p. 14) has also agreed and written “a good reading habit is necessary for a healthy intellectual growth and plays a very crucial role in enabling a person to achieve practical efficiency.” Moreover, it is directly related to the total educational process in general and educational success in particular. The academic success of a person is based on the reading habit of a person. In the case of teachers, reading is considered the most essential activity. Reading is a very fundamental and attaining any international educational breakthrough.

Sufficient reading materials should be available to develop reading habits. In today’s world there is no shortage of reading material. Reading materials can be found everywhere. The reading materials are found in different forms. In this regard, Hassen (2016, p. 59) states that “the social world where we live in is unsurprisingly full of texts. There are unlimited books for people to study.” The possible reading materials according to Hassen (2016) includes:

Books, articles, magazines, newspapers, posters, dissertations, textbooks, pamphlets, blog posts, media coverage, government proclamations, analyses of government proclamations, activist manifestos, online books, posters, banners,

schedules, graffiti, email, text messages, announcements of the birth of professors' children, security warnings, maps and directional signs, historical placards, captions attached to bombastic statues, conference programs, course descriptions, online discussion forums, advertisements printed on the outside of bookstore sales bags, activist pin-on buttons, ID badges, job vacancies and others. (p. 59)

One can adopt different strategies to read and comprehend these different types of reading materials. Based on the perspectives of speed, a reader can employ normal, fast, and slow reading strategies. Normal reading involves reading at normal speed neither too slow nor too fast. This strategy is used while reading a medium type of text. The next, fast or rapid reading refers to the reading relatively at a fast speed. This strategy is used by native speakers while reading very simple and easy text. Likewise, from the point of view of purpose, reading strategies may involve intensive and extensive reading. Intensive reading aims at assimilation of language skills including the study of words/phrases, sentences patterns and other related aspects. But, extensive reading is free and comfortable reading. Rivers (1968) said that extensive reading is reading in quantity and in order to gain a general understanding of what is said. Likewise, from the point of view of focus, a reader can use skimming and scanning strategies. Skimming is a specific reading technique to go through reading text quickly in order to get the gist of it. It is a type of speed reading in which the readers make a rapid survey of texts to grasp the general theme or central idea of the text being read. On the other hand, scanning is a kind of search reading to find a specific word or piece of information. Readers mainly try to locate specific information and often they do not even follow the linearity of the passage in scanning. This is to say, the reader wants to locate a particular piece of information without necessarily understanding the rest of the reading text.

It is mandatory for teachers to read different types of reading materials apart from textbooks to deliver the contents more effectively. But most studies show that teachers don't have the habit of reading books apart from the textbooks. In this context, Trelease (2006) writes that teachers are seldom seen reading. Similarly, Adebayo (2009) also studied the reading habits of 100 high school teachers in Nigeria through questionnaire. His study has concluded that there is less reading habit among the teachers. Furthermore, his findings have shown that most of the teachers sampled do not read textbooks daily. Likewise, Palani (2012) investigated the reading habit of teachers in India. He employed a questionnaire as a technique to collect the data. The collected data was analyzed from the viewpoint of whether the participants read books or magazines or newspapers more. Furthermore, the researcher analyzed the data based on readers' social psychology and interests of various age-groups. The result has shown that the participants read less books

and more newspapers and magazines. In a like manner, Ahmad (2006) studied the attitude of teachers towards reading in Bangladesh. His study concluded the fact that teachers do not receive any training and they are reluctant towards reading. Besides this, the study has remarked that the teachers do not read a lot because of the lack of reading culture. Moreover, his study has confirmed that they mostly read magazines and newspapers rather than other reading materials just for pleasure.

In the context of Nepal, Chaffer (2010) has remarked that Nepali people do not read a lot. Even in terms of teachers, Bhattarai (2006) states that the major problems of the teachers are lack of reading materials and habits. He has further stated that nearly half of the teachers in Nepal are trained and even trained EL teachers do not read the books apart from the textbooks. This confirms that reading habits of Nepalese teachers have been declining these days. In fact, the teachers need to read various reading materials to be updated and refreshed in their profession. There are many reasons why teachers do not have reading habits. One of those reasons may be due to the lack of devotion in professionalism. Another reason could be the lack of adequate availability of the reading materials. All the colleges in Nepal do not have enough reading materials for the teachers. There are plenty of study materials available in the colleges around the city while colleges in rural areas lack it. This may be because of uneven development in the country, poor infrastructures, scarcity of financial resources, or centralized policy of the country. Moreover, well facilitated resourceful and well equipped academic institutions, international and national level libraries are confined within the capital city. In order to find ordinary books or reading materials, one has to visit the capital city. Another problem is not keeping the books other than textbooks in libraries. Libraries are found to keep only the cheap textbooks available in the market. Unauthorized textbooks books are more common in the college libraries. This kind of uncontrolled use of unauthorized reading materials has discouraged reading habits among the teachers and students.

It is also seen that teachers do not read the books even though they have enough reading materials. The main reason for this is that teachers do not have the habit of reading. Lack of study habits of the teachers has a negative impact on education in general and students' achievement in particular. Therefore, a teacher with a good reading habit can create interest and deliver necessary knowledge to the students.

The objective of this study was to find out the book reading habits of the college level EL teachers in Banke district.

Methods and Procedures

This descriptive survey is framed on quantitative research method. Based on the convenient sampling, i selected TU affiliated colleges located in Banke as the area of the study. There are altogether ten colleges in Banke district including one constituent and nine affiliated ones. I selected five colleges among ten TU affiliated colleges employing sampling random sampling. A total of 20 EL teachers, five from each of these five campuses were selected as the sample population employing simple random sampling method. The technique used for the collection of data was questionnaire. There were fifteen questions in the questionnaire. The first ten questions were closed ended and the last five questions were open ended. Each question was set seeking their usual habit and strategies at reading. The closed ended questions had two to four options to measure their values, beliefs and understanding towards reading. The participants were free to choose the option that their experience and knowledge highly support their view based on their perception. The open ended questions were asked to find out their personal ideas on the basis of their experience and available means and resources in their social setting. The collected data was analyzed based on the descriptive statistics technique of data analysis.

Results and Discussion

This section presents the results of the study as the findings of the research. It also incorporates the analysis and interpretation of the results based on the response provided by the respondents.

Annual Volume of Reading

The number of books which a teacher reads in a year is termed as the annual volume of reading here. The following table has clarified how many books each teacher studies in a year.

Table 1

Teachers' Annual Volume of Reading

No. of books	Number of teachers (f)	Mid value (m)	Fm
1-2	1	1.5	1.5
3-4	16	3.5	56
5-6	3	5.5	16.5
7-8	0	7	0
9-10	0	9	0
11-12	0	11	0
13-14	0	11	0

15 or More			
Total	20		$\Sigma fm=74$

$$\bar{X} = \frac{\Sigma fn}{N} = 3.7$$

The average number of books the teachers read in a year is 3.7, i.e. approximately four books in a year. Of course, there is no exact figure for how many books an English language teacher should read annually. According to the definition made by the American Library Association (as cited in Akçay, 2017 p. 49) “readers who read less than 5 books a year are less likely to read, 6-20 books per year read at medium level, and readers who read more than 20 books per year are considered as well-readers.” If we look at these statistics as a basis it is a pitiable condition for the teachers to read three books annually on average. Looking at the results of the study, it was found that the teachers did not study at an adequate level. There is no doubt that teachers are the source of knowledge. Moreover, teachers acquire knowledge through reading. But without adequate reading, it is not possible to acquire knowledge. If the teachers do not acquire sufficient knowledge, the entire education system will fail. Therefore, it seems necessary for teachers to develop the habit of reading.

Monthly Volume of Reading

The following table shows teachers’ annual reading volume i.e. the number of books they read in a month.

Table 2

Monthly Volume of Reading

No. of Books	No. of teachers (f)	Mid value (m)	Fm
0-1	19	0.5	9.5
1-2	1	1.5	1.5
2-3	0	2.5	0
3-4	0	3.5	0
4-5	0	4.5	0
Total	20		$\Sigma fm=11$

$$\bar{X} = \frac{\Sigma fn}{N} = 0.55$$

The average number of books the teachers read in a month is 0.55. Even on a monthly basis, the teachers did not read a single book. This also confirms that teachers are not ready to read. There are no statistics on how many books an English teacher has to read on a monthly basis. But there is no doubt that the teachers should teach only by reading enough books along with textbooks.

Extensive and Intensive Reading Habit

The table presented below shows the teachers' extensive and intensive reading habit.

Table 3

Extensive and Intensive Reading Teachers

S.N.	Habit	No. of Teachers	Percentage
1	Extensive Reading	16	80%
2	Intensive Reading	4	20%
	Total	20	100%

The data reflected that 80% teachers have extensive reading habits and 20% teachers have intensive reading habits. Statistics show that the teachers prefer extensive reading rather than intensive. For teachers, intensive reading is more important than extensive reading because a teacher should have detailed understanding after reading.

Preferred Medium of Reading

Preferred medium here implies teachers' interest in reading books written either in Nepali or English medium. The table below shows the teachers' preferred medium of reading.

Table 4

Teachers' Preferred Medium of Reading

S.N.	Medium	No. of teachers	Percentage
1	English	8	40%
2	Nepali	3	15%
3	Both	09	45%
Total		20	100%

The above table presents the fact that most of the teachers prefer both English

and Nepali medium reading text that is to say 45% teachers like both English and Nepali medium reading text, 40% prefer only English medium reading text and 15% like to read the text which is in Nepali medium. Based on the statistics, only less than half of the teachers preferred to read English medium texts. But, the truth is that EL teachers have to read the books mainly in English medium. Why English language teachers don't want to read a book written in English can be a subject of research.

Interest in Reading

The table presented below refers to the teachers' genre of reading. In other words, it shows what kinds of genres they especially have the habit of reading.

Table 5

Teachers Genre of Reading

S.N.	Book Types	No. of Teachers	Percentage
1	Literary	6	30%
4	Professional development (Academic)	5	25%
5	Political	4	20%
5	Film and Glamour	0	0%
6	Personal development	1	5%
7	Religion	1	5%
8	Art and Culture	0	0%
9	Philosophy	2	10%
10	History	0	0%
11	Technology	1	5%
Total		20	100%

The table above represents what kinds of special featured reading materials they like to read. The result shows that literary books (30%) are among the most frequently read works of college teachers. The books most frequently read by teachers after the literary books are professional development (25%), political books (20%), philosophy (10%), personal development (5%), religion (5%) and technology (5%). College teachers read more literary genres such as novels, poems and stories

despite the fact that teachers feel the need to read in these areas. Şahiner's (2005) research also found that teachers prefer to read literary books more than other types of books. Although the results of this study are similar to those of other studies, what teachers really need to read is perhaps more about professional development books.

Habit of Reading at Particular Time and Place

The table below presents the teachers' reading habits at a particular time and place. That is to say when and where they take reading materials with them to read.

Table 6

Teachers Habit of Reading at Particular Time and Place

S.N.	Particulars	No. of teachers	Percentage
1	Long Journey	4	20%
2	Long vacation	13	65%
3	Long waiting	1	5%
4	Irregular meeting	1	5%
5	Work Place	1	5%
Total		20	100%

The table shows the teachers' particular habit and particular time and place of reading. It shows that EL teachers particularly take the reading materials with them when they are on a long journey. 20% percent read most when going on a long journey. 65% read when they are on long vacation. Only 5% teachers read during long waiting and irregular meetings and 5% teachers read at their working place. That is to say they carry reading materials for the purpose of reading at their schools. A place does not have much influence to read and a teacher can read anywhere if s/he has inner motives to read. Showing the large number of teachers (65%) reading only during long vacation confirms that teachers do not read at times other than vacation. In fact, a teacher should always be reading for career advancement.

Length of Time Spent in Reading

Results related to the length of time that college teachers spend reading a book every day outside of their class time are shown in the following table.

Table 7*Time Spent in Reading*

S.N.	Time Spend in Reading	No. of Teachers	Percentage
1	10-30 minutes	12	60%
2	31-60 minutes	6	30%
3	61-90 minutes	1	5%
4	91-120 minutes	1	5%
5	120 minutes and over	0	0%
	Total	20	100%

The data shows that 60% of the college teachers spend time reading books between 10 and 30 minutes during the day. The rate of teachers who read books between 31 to 60 minutes is 30%. A total of 5% participants were found to be studying for 61 to 120 minutes. Similarly, only 5% of the college teachers found to spend 91 to 120 minutes during the day. But, no one was found to be studying for more than 120 minutes a day.

Source of Reading Materials Used by Teachers

The source from where the teachers get the books for reading is termed as source of reading materials. The following table reflects the possible sources which the participants used to read the books.

Table 8*Sources of Books*

S.N.	Sources	No. of teachers	Percentage
1	Visiting book fairs	1	5%
2	Sharing books	1	5%
3	Visiting book stores	13	65%
4	Visiting library	5	25%
	Total	20	100%

The table above shows that 65% of teachers visit book stores to get reading materials. 25% of teachers visit the library to find reading materials. Only 5% of teachers visit book fairs and share books in order to get new reading materials. This data shows a very poor habit of visiting libraries and sharing books which is the

cheapest way of finding new and interesting reading materials. The teachers' most practiced strategy in order to develop reading habits, visiting book stores and buying books is supposed to be costly and difficult to sustain. It may be because of the poor library management.

Teachers Responses on Availability of Reading Materials

The table below presents the availability and abundance of reading materials in the public and private schools on the basis of their responses. It shows teachers' beliefs about whether the schools have enough reading materials in their schools or not according to the needs of teachers and students.

Table 9

Teachers' Responses on Availability of Reading Materials

Abundance Scale	Teachers' response	Percentage
Strongly Agree	0	0%
Agree	2	10%
Disagree	18	90%
Don't know	0	0%
Total	20	100%

The data above shows that 90% of teachers agree that there are not sufficient numbers of reading materials in their colleges. That is to say, they do not agree that their colleges have sufficient books and other reading materials for the teachers and students according to the need, interest and age level. Only 10% teachers agree that their colleges have abundant reading materials. But, no teacher strongly agrees that they have an abundance of books and other reading materials.

Teachers' Believe on the Effects of Reading for Professional Updating

The table presented below refers to the strength of beliefs of the teachers towards their professional updating through reading. In other words, how many teachers believe that regular reading habits can support updating professional knowledge?

Table 10*Belief of Teachers on the Effects of Reading for Professional Updating*

Strength of Belief	No. of teachers	Percentage
Strongly agree	15	75%
Agree	4	20%
Disagree	1	5%
Don't know	0	0%
Total	20	100%

The data presented above represents the teachers' belief towards reading and professional updating. According to the data 75% teachers strongly agree that reading can support an updated language teaching profession. It shows that $\frac{3}{4}$ teachers strongly believe that a regular reading habit is necessary for professional updating. Furthermore, the data shows 20% of teachers just agree that reading can support professional updating. This shows that teachers have a positive attitude towards reading habits. Only 5% of teachers have shown disagreement towards the relation between reading and professional updating.

Conclusion

The result of the study has confirmed that the college teachers do not have the habits of reading books other than textbooks prescribed in the textbooks. Because, based on the guidelines given by the American Library society, teachers who read four books on average in a year cannot be considered as good readers. Moreover, the result shown by monthly book reading habits of the teachers helps us to conclude that the college teachers do not read the books on a regular basis. Such a fact justifies that the lack of interest in reading habits among the teachers may have adverse effects in teaching and learning processes. Therefore, it seems very essential to involve college teachers in reading activities. For this, local governments, school administrations can manage various reward and promotion policies based on the teachers reading activities. A teacher needs deep knowledge even after reading any type of book. But the results show that college teachers prefer extensive reading than intensive reading. Therefore, teachers should be encouraged to read intensively. For this, the concerned campus should provide textbooks to the teachers and they should be asked to read and prepare the worksheets. On the other hand, based on the teachers' answers, it was found that they prefer Nepali medium textbooks to read rather than medium ones. For this, the concerned campus should arrange the books written in English medium

in the library. Teachers should also be encouraged to develop the habit of reading by buying English Medium books. More specifically, the professional development of a teacher is possible mainly through reading. Therefore, the textbooks that help in the professional development of the teacher should be managed in the library.

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Nepali Medical Students' Knowledge and Attitude towards LGBT Population

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Abstract

The umbrella term “lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT)” is widely used to denote sexual and gender minority individuals. But the discrimination still exists in the medical community regarding the sexual identity because the knowledge about those rights is insufficient. Further, the skills and techniques to provide social and psychological support are not scientific in the medical community. The aim of the study was to assess the medical students' knowledge and attitude towards LGBT population. This cross-sectional study was carried out in 2017 at Kathmandu University with a sample size of 180 undergraduate and medical intern students. Data was collected using a self-administered questionnaire. Data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics (Mann-Whitney test, Kruskal-Wallis test, t-test and ANOVA). Finding shows the mean score of knowledge was 12.32 (± 3.7), and attitude was 73.04 (± 9.82). The mean coefficient attitude score was 13.44. Being female students and those who were very frank to teacher had a higher knowledge of LGBT. Similarly, internship medical students had a better attitude towards LGBT than other students. This study found higher knowledge and attitude were highly correlated. Being female students had higher knowledge of LGBT and Internship medical students had better attitude towards LGBT population.

Keywords: lesbian, bisexual, higher risk, Nepal

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Introduction

The umbrella term “lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT)” is widely used to denote sexual and gender minority individuals. This globalized world has gained freedom from all discriminations, oppressions, and prejudices. However, despite societal changes and even changing legislation for the rights of women and members of the LGBT community, both of these minorities still face overwhelming discrimination and prejudice in Nepalese society (UNDP, 2014).

Physical, social, and medical health care needs are unique to the LGBT population. The health care providers (doctors, nurses) and health technicians have discriminatory overlooks towards those minority groups (Sears & Mallory, 2011). Thus they tend to avoid medical counseling. Homosexual or LGBT individuals are suffering from unique health disparities. They tend to hide their health disorders especially sexual diseases because they are conscious about their sexual identity (UNDP, 2014). Also, the medical curriculum doesn't have homosexuality related issues to study. Therefore they lack knowledge about sexual orientations (Winter, 2012). Hence the health needs of sexual minorities are not well identified.

Health care providers or medical communities need to be trained and educated about sexual orientations and they need to be trained about their health needs and facilities (UNDP, 2014). This is to address the actual oppression they are facing while accessing health care facilities and to promote non-discriminatory approach in every field (UNDP, 2014). In the study done in India, about 56.53 percent of people have a negative attitude towards LGBT people (Winter, 2012).

The possible obstacles in the patient-physician relationships is considered the discrimination against Lesbian and gay men. Discrimination results an increased incidence of mental health problems, depression, suicide, higher risk of cardiovascular risk and lower immunity (Banwari et al., 2015). There are very little studies carried out focusing the medical student's knowledge and attitude towards LGBT in Nepal. The study aimed to assess medical students' knowledge and attitude towards LGBT people.

Methods and Procedures

This cross-sectional study was carried out in 2017 among undergraduate Medical Students of Kathmandu University School of Medical Sciences (KUSMS), Dhulikhel, Nepal. KUSMS has been running Bachelor's in Medicine and Bachelor's in Surgery since 2001. There are a total of 8 semesters at Bachelor's in Medicine and Bachelor's in Surgery (MBBS programme, where they are clinically exposed from the second half semesters only. This study included undergraduate (7th

and 9th semester) and interns (MBBS) of KUSMS (i.e. who had been clinically exposed). There were a total of 230 eligible students for this study. But, only 180 students completed the questionnaire. Data was collected using a self-administered questionnaire like in other studies (Acharya & Chalise, 2016; Mishra & Chalise, 2019; Khanal & Chalise, 2020; Acharya et al., 2021).

The questionnaire consisted of three parts: socio-demographic, knowledge and attitude. The socio-demographic questionnaire consisted of age, gender, year of medical schooling, religion, previous exposure with LGBT, sexual orientation.

Knowledge about LGBT: It is a questionnaire developed using the compilation of 25 true/false statements (Banwari et al., 2015). The instrument had Cronbach's alpha of 0.724 in the Indian study. In the present study internal consistency Cronbach's alpha was 0.768.

Attitude towards LGBT: It is a questionnaire developed using the compilation of 20 statements regarding homosexuals, their lifestyle, and their social position and is scored by the participants on a 5-grade Likert type scale ranging from 1 (Strongly agree) to 5 (Strongly disagree) (Banwari et al., 2015). It had internal consistency Cronbach's alpha of 0.810. In the present study, its Cronbach's alpha was 0.867.

Permission for this study was obtained from the Kathmandu University School of Medical Sciences. Data was analyzed using SPSS 21 software. Descriptive statistics, mean, standard deviation and percentage t- test, one way ANOVA was used to analyze data.

Results

More than half of the respondents (60%) were male students, the majority of the respondents (98.9%) were heterosexual where few of them (1.1%) did not prefer to answer. The majority of the participants were Hindus (91.7) follows by Buddhists (5.6%) and only a few (1.1) were Islam. Nearly 3/4th of the respondents (71.6%) were Brahmin/Chhetri whereas, 1/4th of them were Janajati, and only a few (3.3%) were Madhesi. The highest percentage of participants were from the ninth semester (37.8%) followed by the 7th semester (36.1%) and interns were (26.1%). The majority of the respondents (78.35%) were not exposed to no one, those who had exposed with friends were (15%) and only a few were exposed with the teacher (6.7%) (Table 1).

Table 1*Socio-demographic Information of the Respondents (n = 180)*

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	108	60.0
Female	72	40.0
Sexual orientation		
Heterosexual	178	98.9
Prefer not to answer	2	1.1
Religion		
Hindu	165	91.7
Buddhist	10	5.6
Others	5	2.8
Ethnic group		
Brahmin/Chhetri	129	71.6
Janajati	45	25.0
Madhesi	6	3.3
Year of medical schooling		
Seventh Semester	65	36.1
Ninth Semester	68	37.8
Internship	47	26.1
Exposure with LGBT		
Teacher	12	6.7
Friend	27	15.0
No One	141	78.3

The details of each of the questionnaire included to assess the knowledge level and percentage of correct answers of each question. The Mean and Standard deviation of the respondents on the Knowledge regarding LGBT was 12.32 ± 3.70 . As the knowledge level ranged from 0 to 25 (Table 2).

Table 2*Knowledge Regarding LGBT (n=180)*

S.N.	Statement	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Sex and gender have the same meaning	128	71.1
2.	Sexual orientation is usually well-established by adolescence	110	61.1
3.	The homosexuals usually disclose their sexual identity to a friend before they tell a parent	108	60

4.	The homosexual person's gender identity does not agree with his/her biological parents	47	26.1
5.	Testosterone is the hormone responsible for the growth of pubic hair on girls	113	62.8
6.	Boys breast typically grow during puberty	62	34.4
7.	In the world the most common mode of transmission of HIV is through gay male sex.	69	38.3
8.	Gay men and lesbian women have increased incidence of anxiety and depression	114	63.3
9.	Heterosexual men and women commonly report homosexual fantasies	41	22.8
10.	Most homosexuals want to encourage or entice others into a homosexual or gay life style	73	40.6
11.	If children are raised by homosexual, the likelihood that they themselves will develop homosexual orientation is greater	78	43.3
12.	Homosexuals are usually identifiable by their appearance or mannerisms	88	48.9
13.	About one-half of the population of men and more than one-third of women have had a homosexual experience at a time in their lives	34	18.9
14.	Homosexuality does not occur among animals	83	46.1
15.	Bisexuals will eventually "come out" as homosexuals	26	14.4
16.	Bisexual behaviour is just a cry for attention	111	61.7
17.	In order to be considered transgender , a person must have undergone a reassignment surgery	81	45.0
18.	Transgender women are usually attracted to male genitals	49	27.2
19.	LGBT patients do not seek medical treatment because of fear of discrimination	125	69.4
20.	Homosexual women always dress and act in masculine way.	90	50
21.	Most health care providers automatically make the assumption that their patient is heterosexual	125	69.4
22.	LGBT patient may present with signs of depression due to lack of social acceptance	141	78.3

23.	Lesbian patient do not need Pap smears as frequently as heterosexual women	102	56.7
24.	LGBT people do not make good role models for children and could do Psychological harm.	131	72.8
25.	LGBT people are less likely than heterosexual people to be in long-term monogamous relationship	90	50

The highest correct response was for the statement, “LGBT patient may present with signs of depression due to lack of social acceptance which is 78.3%. Also, the statement, “LGBT people do not make good role models for children and could do psychological harm to children with whom they interact as well as interfere with normal sexual development of children has the percentage correctness of 72.85%. The positive statement, “Sex and gender have the same meaning.” has the percentage correctness of 71.1%. Also, less than 3/4th of the respondents gave correct response to the statement, “LGBT patients do not seek medical treatment because of fear of discrimination.”

However, the lowest correct response (14.4%) was for the statement, “Bisexuals will eventually ‘come out’ as homosexuals”. Similarly, only 18.9% of the respondents gave correct response for the statement, “About one-half of the population of men and more than one-third of women have had a homosexual experience to the point of orgasm at some time in their lives.” The statement, “Heterosexual men and women commonly report a homosexual fantasy has the percentage correctness of only 22.8. Similarly, the Statement, “Transgender women are usually attracted to male genitals” is responded correctly by only 27.2 percentages of respondents (Table 2).

Table 3

Attitude towards Homosexuals Questionnaire with Respective Mean Values and Standard Deviation (n=180)

S.N.	Statement	Mean±SD
1.	Many gay men use their sexual orientation so that they can obtain special privileges.	2.98±1.32
2.	LGBT people still need to protest for equal rights.	4.41±0.79
3.	Homosexuals should be allowed to marry.	4.19±1.09
4.	Homosexual couples should be allowed to adopt children just like heterosexual couples.	4.13±1.08
5.	If a man has homosexual feelings , he should do everything he can do to overcome them	3.31±1.27

6.	In today's tough economic times, tax money shouldn't be used to support LGBT organizations.	3.47±1.24
7.	I think male homosexuals are disgusting.	3.85±1.13
8.	I would not be too upset, if I learned that my child was homosexual.	3.02±1.20
9.	LGBT should have equal opportunity of employment.	4.46±0.89
10.	Homosexuality is merely a different kind of lifestyle that should not be condemned or made guilty of.	4.14±1.08
11.	Bisexuality is a natural expression of sexuality in males and females.	3.75±1.12
12.	Bisexual people are not capable of monogamy.	3.38±1.02
13.	A person who feels that their sex (male or female) does not match their gender identity (masculine or feminine) is just a plain wrong.	3.40±1.15
14.	I would get angry if a bisexual person made sexual advances towards me.	2.62±1.21
15.	Having sex with both male and females is just a plain wrong.	3.19±1.10
16.	I would be upset, if someone I'd known for a long time revealed that they used to be another gender.	3.06±1.18
17.	I would be comfortable working for a company that welcomes transgender individuals.	3.86±1.09
18.	A person who is not sure of about being male or female is mentally ill.	3.84±1.19
19.	If a transgender person identifies as female, she should have right to marry a man.	3.51±1.04
20.	Transgender individuals are valuable human beings regardless of how I feel about transgender.	4.46±0.97

Mean±SD=(73.04±9.82), Mean variance = 13.44

The details of each of the questionnaire included to assess the attitude level of each questions. Its total score ranges from 20 to 100. Mean score of attitude score was 73.04±9.82. Negative attitudes towards homosexuals were most reflected on statements like “I would get angry if a bisexual person made sexual advances towards me” with a mean score of 2.62 and with the statement like “Many gay men use their sexual orientation so that they can obtain special privileges” with the mean score of 2.98. The negative statement like “I think male homosexuals are disgusting” and the statement, “A person who is not sure of being male or female is mentally ill” have the mean score of 3.85 and 3.84 respectively (Table 3).

Table 4*Relation between Socio-demographic Variables and Mean Knowledge Score LGBT*

Characteristics	Median knowledge score(IQR)	p-value
1. Gender		
Male	10.9	0.010
Female	13.2	
2. Sexual orientation		
Heterosexual	12.2	0.389
Do not prefer to answer	12.4	
3. Religion		
Hindu	11.5	0.063
Buddhist	13.1	
Others	13.0	
4. Ethnic group		
Brahmin/chhetri	12.1	0.257
Janajati	12.3	
Madhesi	12.4	
5. Year of medical schooling		
7 th Semester	11.0	0.052
9 th Semester	14.0	
Internship	12.3	
6. Exposure with LGBT		
Teacher	15.0	0.020
Friend	13.5	
No one	10.5	

Table 5*Association between Socio-demographic Variables and Attitude Regarding LGBT*

S.N.	Characteristics	Mean Attitude score	f-value	p-value
1.	Religion			
	Hindu	73.4	0.984	0.402
	Buddhist	70.7		
	Christian	65		
	Muslim	70		

2.	Ethnic group			
	Bhramin/Chhetri	72.3	0.937	0.458
	Janajati	75.3		
	Madhesi	72.2		
3.	Year of medical schooling			
	7 th semester	71.8	3.497	0.032
	9 th Semester	72.0		
	Internship	76.1		
4.	Exposure with LGBT			
	Teacher	73.1	0.616	0.541
	Friend	73.4		
	No one	73.2		

Also, the statement, “I would not be too upset if I learned that my child was homosexual had more negative attitude with mean score of 3.02 followed by another statement “If the transgender person identifies as female, she should have right to marry a man” had the mean score of 3.84. The positive statement “LGBT should have equal opportunity of employment” and the statement “Transgender individuals are valuable human beings regardless of how I feel about transgender” has same mean attitude score of 4.46 respectively. Also, the mean attitude score of the statement “LGBT people still need to protest for equal rights” has the more positive mean attitude score of 4.41 (Table 3).

The relationship between knowledge and socio-demographic variables was shown in the table. Regarding gender, the mean knowledge score of female was higher 13.2 than the mean knowledge score of male i.e. 10.9. This difference was statistically significant ($p=0.010$).

Likewise, the mean knowledge score of those who were heterosexual was 12.4 which were higher than those who didn't prefer to answer with the mean knowledge score of 12.2. Their difference was not statistically significant ($p=0.389$).

With regard to religion, Buddhist had higher mean knowledge (13.1) than Hindu (11.5) The difference was not statistically significant ($p=0.063$). Regarding ethnic group, Madhesi had higher mean knowledge score than Janajati and Bhramin/Chhetri. Their difference was not statistically significant ($p=0.257$). Similarly, the mean knowledge score of 9th semester was 14.0 which was higher than (12.3) followed by the 7th semester (11.0). And, their difference was not statistically significant ($p=0.052$)

Likewise, those who were exposed with teachers had mean score of 15.0 which is higher than the mean score of those who were exposed to friend 13.5 followed by those who had not been exposed to any LGBT people (10.2). This difference was statistically significant $p=(0.020)$ (Table 4).

The association between socio-demographic variables and attitude score was shown where, Females were found to have a more positive attitude than males. The mean attitude of female (76.76 ± 9.57) was significantly higher than mean attitude of male (70.56 ± 9.23) and their difference was statistically significant ($p=0.001$). The mean attitude score of heterosexual (73.04 ± 9.9) was slightly high than those who didn't prefer to answer (73 ± 2.4), ($p=0.995$). So their difference didn't reflect significantly with each other. The mean attitude of Hindu (73.4 ± 9.7) was significantly higher than mean attitude of Christian (65 ± 3.5), ($p<0.402$). Hindu religion was found to have more positive attitude whereas Christian had more negative attitude towards LGBT and the mean attitude score was not statistically significant.

The mean attitude score of Interns was (76.1 ± 10.2) which was higher than 9th semester with mean score of (72.0 ± 8.9) and mean score of 7th Semester (71.8 ± 9.9). The difference was statistically significant ($p<0.032$).

Further the relation between knowledge and attitude among medical students shows there was strong relation between knowledge and attitude towards LGBT ($p<0.001$) with Correlation Coefficient 0.658 (Table 5).

Discussion

Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) population is considered sexual minority group. There is limited studies focused on these issues in Nepal. So far in our knowledge, this is a first study carried out focusing the medical students' knowledge and attitude towards LGBT in Nepal.

Knowledge towards LGBT

This study found the mean knowledge score of knowledge of LGBT was 12.32 this knowledge was slightly lower than median knowledge of 12.5. So, this knowledge score is considered low among Nepalese medical students when compared with the study carried out in india (Banwari et al., 2015). In the present study, More than half of the respondents (60%) had given correct response to the statement that, "homosexuals usually disclose their sexual identity to a friend before they tell a parent," which was less than the study done in Belgrade, Serbia which revealed 84.20% (Dunjić-Kostić et al., 2012) and the research that was done in India, Ahmadabad with the percentage correctness of 72.5% for the same statement (Banwari et al., 2015).

In the present study, almost ($3/4^{\text{th}}$) 71.1% had correctly responded to the

statement sex and gender had the same meaning which as slightly lower than to the study done in Illinois Wesleyan University where the majority of the respondents (79.3%) had given correct response for the same statement. This could be because of lack of good sexual education system in our country. In this study, 18% gave the correct answer to the statement about one-half of the population of men and more than one-third of women have had a homosexual experience to the point of orgasm at some time in their lives which was higher than the study done Hungary where the percentage correctness is only 10.70% (Szél et al., 2020).

Concerning the statement, “transgender women were usually attracted to male genitals,” About 27.2% of the respondents gave the correct answer in the present study, which was lower than the study done in Illinois Wesleyan University (2013), where the majority of the respondents (94.8%) gave correct answer on the same statement. This could be because of lack of knowledge related to transgender (Deese & Dawson, 2013). With regard to the statement bisexuals will eventually come out as homosexuals, only 14.4% of the respondents gave correct answers in present study, which was lower than the respondents of Illinois Wesleyan university, where majority of the respondents (98.3%) had given correct response to the same statement. This could be due to lack of education related with bisexuality% (Dunjić-Kostić et al., 2012).

Likewise, regarding the Statement, “LGBT people do not make good role models for children and could do Psychological harm to children with whom they interact as well as interfere with the normal sexual development of children,” about 3/4th (72.8%) of the respondents have given a correct answer which is higher than the outcome of the study done in Serbia, Belgrade where the correct response to the statement was less than half of the respondents i.e. (41.2%) (Grabovac et al., 2014).

Attitude towards LGBT

The mean coefficient attitude score of the present study was 13.44. This score is low when compared with other studies (Acharya & Chalise, 2016; Kanamori, 2016). It shows Nepalese students’ attitude score towards LGBT is poor. In the present study, the mean attitude score for the statement, “I would get angry if a bisexual person made sexual advances towards me” was 2.62 ± 1.21 which was similar to the study done in Eastern Michigan University with the mean score of 2.68 ± 1.25 (Dahan et al., 2016). Response to the attitudinal statement, “Many gay men use their sexual orientation so that they can obtain special privileges” had a mean score of 2.98 ± 1.32 which was lower than the study conducted in Belgrade, Serbia, with the mean score of 3.29 ± 1.27 (Strong & Folse, 2015). Likewise, the mean score for the Statement, “I think male homosexuals are disgusting” is 3.85 ± 1.13 , which was higher than the study done in Ahmadabad India, with a mean

score of 2.72 ± 0.99 (Banwari et al, 2015), and the study done in Belgrade India, with the mean score of 2.59 ± 1.36 (Grabovac et al., 2014).

In the present study, the statement, “A person who is not sure of about being male or female is mentally ill has mean score of 3.84 ± 1.19 , which was similar to the a mean score of the study done in California State University i.e. 3.81 ± 1.16 (Kanamori, 2016). In the study done in Los Angeles, USA, the attitude score for the statement, “Transgender individuals are valuable human beings regardless of how I feel about transgender is 2.24 ± 1.2 (Grabovac et al., 2014). Whereas the mean attitude score for the same statement was 4.46 ± 0.97 in the present study (Dahan et al., 2016). In present study the mean attitude score for the statement, “The homosexuals should have equal opportunity of employment” is 4.46 ± 0.89 , which is higher the mean score for the same statement which is done in Belgrade Serbia, i.e. 1.99 ± 1.19 (Kanamori, 2016).

Relation of socio-demographic variables and knowledge of LGBT

This study found women had a higher mean score of knowledge than men. The finding was similar to the cross-sectional study done in Ahmadabad, India (Banwari et al., 2015). This finding was also supported by the research done in Belgrade Serbia (Acharya & Chalise, 2016). There was no significant relationship between Knowledge and sexual orientation, which is similar to the study done in Zagreb Croatia (Khanal & Chalise, 2020). The finding was consistent with the study done at Illinois Wesleyan University, USA. There was no association between religion and knowledge level in this study. This finding was in contrast to the study done in Ahmadabad, India (Banwari et al., 2015). However, the difference was supported by the study done in Belgrade Serbia (Strong & Folse, 2015). In the present study, there was a significant association between Knowledge and year of Medical schooling. This result was in contrast to the study carried out in Ahmadabad India (Banwari et al., 2015). In the present study, there was a significant relation between Knowledge with exposure of LGBT. This outcome supported by the study done in Zagreb, Croatia. This relation was consistent with the study done at Ohio State University (Strong & Folse, 2015).

Relation of socio-demographic variables and Attitude of LGBT

This study found there was a significant difference between gender and attitude towards LGBT. This finding supported by the research conducted in India and Serbia (Strong & Folse, 2015). Further, year of medical schooling and positive attitude towards LGBT is also supported by India's study (Banwari et al., 2015). But it is not supported by Serbian study (Strong & Folse, 2015). Nepal is a culturally and sexually conservative country, where respondents may feel less comfortable in expressing their views on sexuality related issues. So, they might not have been open

with all the questionnaires. As it was self administered questionnaire, there may be the students bias how did they perceived the questionnaire while responding.

Conclusion

The result found that nearly half of the respondents have knowledge score less than mean value. The result shows that more than half of the respondents have attitude score less than mean value. There is a significant relation between Knowledge and Socio-demographic variables (gender and exposure with LGBT. There is significant association between attitude and socio-demographic variables (gender and year of medical schooling). In clusion of sexuality, gender issues and LGBT patients' health needs in the medical curriculum to spread awareness regarding LGBT issues is the positive first step to combat negative attitude and reduce prejudice faced by LGBT patients.

Ethical approval and consent to participate

The study was approved by Kathmandu University School of Medical Sciences, and verbal as well as written informed consent was taken from all participants.

Availability of data and materials

The data sets of the current study are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request

Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no competing interests. There are no financial and/or personal relationships between the authors and others that might bias the work.

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Authors' contributions

RA participated in concept of paper, drafted the manuscript, HNC worked to finalise the paper and submission, AS developed the research plan and design, initiated and completed ethical clearance, collecting data, performed the statistical analysis. HNC finally went through all manuscript and helped to give a final shape. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

Consent for publication

The authors declare that we all agree for the publication.

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Exploring Challenges of Dalit School Education in Nepal An Ethnographic Study

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Abstract

The presence of the Dalits in the mainstream education needs social, historical, legal, cultural, political, and spiritual interferences to emancipate the Dalits from the chain of ignorance. This study, therefore, aimed to explore the challenges for the Dalits in approaching school education in the context of Nepal. Here, after identifying the Dalit concern, I reviewed the related literature. Similarly, the inquiry strategy was qualitative and ontologically based on multiple realities. Thus, I used an ethnographic research design with unstructured interview sessions and participatory observation. Likewise, school teachers, head-teacher, Dalit students, parents, School Management Committee members, and community people were purposively selected to collect information. The data was analyzed and interpreted with the lens of cultural difference theory and caste hierarchy theory to generate meanings. I also used my reflexivity to be aligned with the research and experiences obtained in the study field. The conclusion thus emphasized that the Dalits in Nepal are excluded in terms of cultural differences concerning the non-Dalits and caste hierarchy that is severely rooted in the socio-cultural context of Nepal.

Keywords: Dalit education, mainstream education, community people, caste hierarchy

Introduction

Dalit for this study is defined as the caste or group of people who are socially, culturally, economically, religiously, and politically exploited or discriminated and disadvantaged in the society due to the unequal social system (Rycroft, 2017). In other words, Dalits are considered politically voiceless, socially prestigeless,

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economically exploited, and psychologically dominated by a person, caste, or group of people. Because of an unequal social system, they are considered untouchable and unacceptable people by the people who believe in a caste system that helps to establish their legitimacy over the state's power and resources. Being the artisan and occupational group, the Dalits, in general, are the poor, marginalized, and excluded people who are practically denied their civil and human rights in their society (Kumar, 2009).

The meaning of Dalit helped me understand my study participants in terms of their social, cultural, and political space. Before going to the study field, such understanding made me conceptually clear about who the study participants were, especially in terms of their social, cultural, and political positioning. While interpreting their way of perceiving education and the way they explained their challenges, I linked their meaning of being Dalit in the given socio-cultural and socio-political context.

In this context of problematizing my research agenda, I appear with the question like, what sorts of perception, concepts, and worldview of Dalits and/or non-Dalits, especially in terms of education, caused such social relationship between Dalits and non-Dalits. This means, whether the problem lies in the perceptions of Dalits in their existing education that they possess at present. The problem as such induced me to inquire about non-Dalit's perceptions on education through this research. As an educator, I assessed my experiences which assert that my Dalit friends in schools during my childhood massively gave up their school education. They often used to be unsuccessful in the school exam and that they often remained silent and/or unresponsive in the classroom. The key purpose of the research was to explore Dalit's way of interpreting education and to identify the challenges that Dalits faced on the way to acquiring school education. I have developed research questions for seeking answer during research journey as how do the Dalit students and parents explain the challenges that they come across while acquiring education at school?

This study is important for multiple ways. First, it incorporated the section of Dalits in Tanahun district where no research as such was carried out in the past. This study provides how their perceptions towards education support or inhibit them to participate in the school education programme. Although empirical research on Dalit education has been done a lot but each research on this agenda in the past limited to their socio-cultural positioning, economic challenges, caste hierarchy, etc. to reveal these as the challenges on the way to acquiring education.

Literature Review

While discussing the discrimination of Dalits by caste and religion in the Nepalese society, it was started from the Malla period when King Jayasthiti Malla (1360-1395) formally divided Nepalese society into different functional and occupational groups. Later, the King Prithvi Narayan Shah, the founder of the kingdom of modern Nepal, also accepted the caste stratification in the society by announcing Nepal as a “*garden of four castes and thirty-six, varnas*,” all caste and ethnic groups, including the Dalits, have been dominated, excluded, marginalized, deprived, exploited, subjugated for centuries by so-called ‘high caste’ people (Bista, 1990). So, we can say that caste-based untouchability is one of the worst forms of violations of human right.

During the Panchayat period in Nepal (2017-2046 BS) for thirty years, some Dalit leaders were selected as members of parliaments and government. This was a significant political change for the Dalit community. In that period, some remarkable efforts were made to bring about social justice for the Dalit community. After the restoration of democracy, the constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal was promulgated. It states all citizens are equal before the law and no people would be discriminated against based on religion, sex, caste, tribe, ideological conviction, or any of these, it added right against untouchability has been enshrined and no persons are discriminated against based on caste as untouchables are deprived access to any place of being deprived of the use of public utilities, any contradiction of that provision shall be punishable (Constitution, 2047 BS).

Furthermore, it was the constitution that declared caste discrimination and untouchability punishable. With the change of political scenario, untouchables became politically aware, and a lot of efforts were made by Dalits and non-Dalits to minimize caste-based discrimination. As a result, the old civil code of Nepal 1854 was amended in *Muluki Ain* (2020 BS). This code has positive aspects since it is abolished for the first time and explicitly prohibited any form of discrimination based on caste denial of access to public places and public utilities and stipulated punishment for those violating those provisions.

According to the Constitution of Nepal (2015) Article No. 24, ‘right against untouchability and discrimination stated that (1) no person shall be treated with any kind of untouchability or discrimination in any private or public places or grounds of caste, ethnicity, origin, community, occupation, or physical condition’. Similarly, Article No.40, Right of Dalit states that Dalit shall have the right to participate in all agencies of the state, special legal provision of empowerment, representation, and participation of Dalit community for employment in another area also including the

public service, (2) Provision of free education with scholarships from primary to a higher level of education. In addition, it further says that everyone has the right to participate in the cultural life of his/her community as they have the right to preserve and promote culture and heritage. Significantly, the constitution provides the rights of the Dalits (GoN, 2015).

Theoretical Lenses

Cultural Difference theory and Caste Hierarchy theory helped me explain Dalit education in line with their philosophy and the school culture. Because of the differences in tools, systems, and cultural relationships, they seemingly appear to be different from the others in the community and schools, conditioned by their schooling and education opportunities. In the Cultural difference theory, Ogbu (2001) argues that the gap between the minority cultures and the mainstream culture does not favor schooling/ learning of minority children who are socially and culturally disadvantaged. The disadvantages of Dalit children as the marginalized minority cultures are also deprived due to the dominant mainstream culture.

Similarly, to make this research more scientific and meaningful I used one more theory i.e., Caste hierarchy theory. The social setting in Nepal is based on caste hierarchy. That is, the social category and/or identity of the people living in the given community is built up with reference to their caste. This means, that people under different castes have different identities that shape their social positioning, economic opportunities, educational participation, and social relationship. Although the practice of caste-based codes is illegal and/or unconstitutional, it is found to be in effect covertly.

Thus, the hierarchy of castes in Nepal is a social, cultural, and religious agenda. It is in practice since the dawn of the Hindu civilization, which is particularly traced to King Manu's time. According to Sharma (2006), in ancient times, King Manu categorized people based on their duty/work. People in society are divided into four castes: *Brahmins*, *Kshetri*, *Baisya*, and *Sudra*. The *Brahmins* belong to the highest caste, followed by the *Kshetri*, the *Baisya*, and the *Sudra*, respectively. Based on their hierarchy, they are provided with some work to perform.

Methods and Procedures

I developed my research design in the form of a plan, structure, and strategy to obtain answers to my research questions (Kerlinger, 1986). Being a qualitative researcher, I supposed that my research design must contribute to exploring and understanding the meaning that my study participants ascribe to my research agenda - Dalit education (Creswell, 2007). I developed an ethnography research design that

allowed me to explore multiple realities in line with the subjectivities of my study participants, especially by adapting relative values.

While doing so, I explored the experiences of the study participants relative to their social and cultural contexts and gave their experiences a meaning. Ethnography research design allowed me to be context-specific, flexible, and value-laden. In the context of this research, I was attached to the socio-cultural context of Dalit, and I became flexible in interpreting their multiple ideas and experiences related to their education. It also gave me space to observe their socio-cultural relationships and performances to learn how their education, learning to help them participate in the broader socio-cultural activities.

I interviewed the head-teacher, teachers, School Management Committee (SMC) chairperson, and some key parents and children using unstructured questionnaires. While conducting interviews, I held a dialogue with my study participants. The interview aimed to explore their in-depth understanding, enriched descriptions, and detailed account of their culture, the process of being educated, and the roles of schools as they perceived. It was an open-ended, discovery-oriented method (Hart, 2001).

I also visited school to explore how Dalit children perform school activities. I observed their participation in the classroom activities, regularity, punctuality, their way of reacting, responding, and greeting their teachers and peers. I also paid attention on how their peers and teachers receive their way of presence in the school. I asked the teachers about performances and participation of Dalit children in school activities (ECA) and the way they helped them (Dalit children) for the same. Besides formal interviews with teachers, I also engaged with them in informal conversation in which they shared their ideas by the virtue of their perceptions, actions and worldview towards Dalit children and their education in schools.

I did not only engage into observation and interview as claimed in (Marshall & Rossman, 1989), but also recording them in ink and electronic devices. During the day I was with my study participants and in the evening, I revisited those recording. While doing so, I often came with new ideas, opinions, feelings, and impressions which I noted them as my insights and learning about Dalit education. I also talked with some non-Dalit community members and children to explore their way to interpretation of Dalits' education. In this way, I stayed for about a month for collecting data in my study sites.

Results

The data were coded, categorized and analyzed depending upon the meanings/themes (Saldana, 2016) it revealed and were discussed with reference to theories and my reflexivity. The challenges on the way to Dalits' education are discussed in terms of different headings namely, economic, social, and other family-related challenges etc. as mentioned below:

Facing Economic Problem

Economy and education are the sectors in human life where the former influences the latter and vice versa. Hartas (2011) states that economic advancement of the families often provides children with opportunities for school choice, an improved learning environment and leisure to engage in educational activities. On the other hand, education offers opportunities for placing oneself in a better job and enhancing economic status (Hooley & Yates, 2015). Asserting these relationships between education and economy, Dalit experiences with obstacles to education, in my study context, also were observed in a similar line.

In this regard, one of my research participants (SMC Chairperson) said: *'The children coming in this school are from a low-income source, they cannot feed their children unless they go for house making'*. The poor economy as a barrier to education has massively been discussed in the work of Desai (2012). For some scholars (Hartas, 2011; Hubackova & Semradova, 2014; Lynch, 2006), a lower level of the economy on the part of the family brings an inability for the family members to manage the basic requirements that necessarily support children to access the school. For example, some key stationeries, books, bags, etc. are the basic needs to get the students in question ready to go to school. That is, a school preparedness plan in the family needs sufficient resources both in cash and in-kind (Hubackova & Semradova, 2014), which promotes the enabling conditions for the children to access the schools. In this context, I see that the family economy's role is to contribute to children's preparedness for school education.

But in the context of my research, my study participants did not only strive to get access to school education but also for survival. For example, as mentioned in the data, the parents work for survival and not just for supplying the basic requirements. Burkett (2006) encourages me to view the economy as the measure of human activities. That is, the economy shapes culture (Tan, 2002). Stepping on such Marxian's view, I get the meaning from the narrative of my study participants that their poor economy caused them to engage in work throughout. As revealed in the data, their economy is so deteriorating that the family in question can survive only when they can generate income daily.

In such conditions, the focus of the family is not to support children in going to school but also to make them survive by generating income daily. This shows that the measure of their education is their economy. Had their family income been enhanced, they would have been able to go to school. Besides this, their economy also hampered their preparedness for going to school. In this regard, one of the study participants (Teacher) told me: *'Dalit children do not take tiffin in the canteen, they do not wear washed uniforms like shirt, paint, shoes, tie etc.'* The school preparedness in the context of this research is not the basic knowledge to place in the classroom but the availability of the basic utilities like school dress, stationery, shoes, and so on. Access and availability of basic utilities create an enabling condition for children to go to school.

Thus, the basic utilities as such help the students convince and/or motivated in being regular, punctual, and active participation in the activities organized by the school.

Lower Motivation for Education among Dalit Children

Lower motivation for education among Dalit children was also a barrier to their education. Hubackova and Semradov's (2014) studies on participation in educational activities in schools demand motivation among the participants. In the context of my research, I inquired whether their level of motivation for education influenced Dalit participation in school.

In this connection, I asked Head-teacher (HT), why Dalit children's participation is lower in school. In reply, he said: *'Few children are participating in ECA in school days like dancing, singing and speech delivering. Dalit children are less present on a Schools' Day or Parents' Day. They take a holiday if there is no formal class in the school. In sports week also Dalit students are less participating. They take it as a holiday on those days.'* Motivation for learning is supposed to be the first step on the journey to acquiring education. Motivated students can learn faster and better than those who are not motivated at all. If so, are Dalit students motivated to school education? I raised this question to ensure whether Dalits' participation in school education is influenced by their level of motivation. As claimed in the narrative, Dalit children mostly remained absent in schools and they do not intend to participate in extracurricular activities.

Connecting the issues of school absenteeism on the part of Dalit children with Maslow's (1954) motivation encourages me to think that Dalit participation in school education is low as they do not get their various needs addressed. For Maslow, a child needs can be categorized into five different needs such as psychological, safety, social, esteem and self-actualization. They are motivated to perform the given task if

these needs are addressed. Since their rigorous engagement in school was reported to be less participatory and unpunctual, they are supposed to be less motivated to school education.

Parents' Inability to Support in Doing Homework

Parenting practices differ from one culture to another. This happens because every culture has a unique kind of parenting practice. However, cultures vary in the extent to which parents can vary the cultural socialization theme (Arnett, 1995). In this sense, parents' role is important in raising and educating the children. Therefore, parents' academic inability influences their child's performance at school.

In my research context, I discuss how parents' illiteracy affected children's performance. One of the participants (a girl student) said: *'I seldom do my homework; my teachers give me punishment for that'*. This shows that the teacher punishes her so that she can complete her homework in time. The use of punishment in this sense is a technique that accelerates one's learning. Punishment is used as pedagogically relevant technology in the classroom, particularly in the school where the child from a low socio-economic family is served. She doubtfully discussed how punishment functions as a form of pedagogical indifference in schools.

When I further inquired why she does not do homework. In reply, she said: *'My teacher told me to read and write the activities from the text, but I didn't do it because I asked my father to help, nevertheless, he couldn't help me, then I also stopped doing my homework.'* In this case, one of the participants shows interest in reading, but she does not get favoured in her study by anybody. She claimed that 'her father is not supporting her in her study, and she is, in some cases, unable to solve the problem in assignment herself.

Thus, she leaves homework undone. But when she goes to school the next day, her teacher beats her for the same. She is an inspiring girl because she makes a query with her father about things that she does not know. But the environment and people at home are not inspiring. Her problem at home is quite unknown to teachers. Teachers punish her simply because she does not submit her homework. But the teachers never seek reasons behind undone homework. Why do teachers not care for the reason for their inability to do homework? This question is relevant for fostering a school environment to make friendly to her.

Poor Communication between School and Home

The conversation between school and the home is vital in fostering children's performances and creating a learning environment at school (Faust-Horn, 2003). This means that any gap in the communication between the two hampers children's

performance and the relation between the two becomes doubtful. Thus, the poor communication between school and home functions as a barrier to the academic development of a child. One of the parents blamed the teachers that the *‘government gives money to teach children, but Sir and Madam only sit in the office and talk about political matters.’*

Here the participant emphasizes that, though teachers receive money from the government for their duty to teach children at school, they do not perform their duty well. They just gossip and pass on the time. She confirmed that, if teachers do not teach children at school, then there is no worth of sending children to school. Addressing the remark, one of the male teachers said: *‘We teachers are many; however, certain periods are assigned to us to go to the classroom, and some periods we have leisure. In our leisure time, we sit in the office and check the students’ performance.’* This shows that the school’s communication system with the parents is weak. The parents are to be well informed about the activities, duties and responsibilities of teachers within the school premises to avoid any such dilemma which is liable to lead the teaching-learning process on the wrong track.

Inadequate Classroom Management

Classroom management is an integral part of teaching, and teachers need to acquire techniques for managing students. The public widely considers inadequate classroom management and discipline to be the major educational problem. Therefore, it is essential to consider Dalit classrooms to understand the inaccessibility of school education. The remark one of the parents whose child studies in class two claimed that: *‘Children of various age groups are kept in the same classroom; the elder in the classroom tortures the younger one’*. She means they are naughty and keep on making noise. For minor cases, the bigger one beats pushes, pulls, and threatens the younger children in the same classroom. Sometimes the pencil, eraser, and cutter are lost. Since the younger children cannot fight with their bigger ones, they either bear the pain of torture or cry out. Any complaint to the teacher in this regard causes the teachers to make temporary peace in the classroom. Since the classroom environment does not maintain peace and group solidarity, learning always remains in doubt.

However, she questioned me whether she should send children to school to fight and cry or what? In fact, classroom management is a prerequisite for effective learning for which, as discussed by Walker et al. (1996), teachers are to develop classroom systems to “manage the academic performance and social behaviour of students within instructional environments and arrangements” (p. 198). Thus, the voice mentioned above demands a well-managed classroom to maintain peace and

order to ensure better academic performance and accepted social behaviour of Dalit children.

Children's Irregularity at School

We know that academic performance is highly dependent upon the attendance of students in school. If the children are not attending class regularly, they do not know what is taught in school in their absent days. Less achievement in learning among Dalit children is claimed to be the result of their low classroom attendance rate. For that, an English teacher at this school blamed that: *'Dalit students come to school once a week, they do not come to school regularly, making it difficult to teach and make them pass or upgrade from one level to another.'* The teacher above asserted that Dalit children are irregular in their studies. If they were regular, they would participate in the classroom learning processes. Participation in classroom activities would enhance their learning achievement. Being absent means they miss a lot of learning opportunities at school.

Thus, the learning achievement remained poor day by day. Supporting the view of the teacher above, the children who are likely to be regular in the school achieve a higher score than those who do not (Etsey, 2005). Thus, the regular participation of Dalit children in classroom activities is a must. Undisputedly, classroom participation can lead the Dalit child to some positive changes. University Teaching Development Centre (2004) also recognizes that regular classroom participation encourages children to think and reflect on issues and problems. It also fosters the children's presentation, communication, and language skills.

Moreover, it provides opportunities for the social interaction and sharing of ideas which could help Dalit children to vitalize their potential for occupying wider space in the larger social context. In the context of this research, when Dalit children became irregular, they missed the opportunities to foster their presentation, communication, and language skills, etc. They also missed the opportunities for participating in social interaction and sharing ideas, feelings, attitudes, thoughts, emotions, opinions etc.

As a result, they found themselves aloof from the educational setting available at school and often felt inferior to other children who are most regular at school. In the end, they left the school. The purpose of school is to unfold the immense potential of children (Awasthi, 2004). Since the irregular Dalit students remain aloof from the schools and the educational activities that are performed in it, they could not get their potentials unfolded. Thus, they could not realize the meaning of school and its contribution to imparting education.

Discussion

Some key challenges were found to be in place for Dalits' education. Their economic fragility was one of them. Their family occupation could not help them bring economic freedom in the family, nor did their socio-cultural positioning provide them opportunities to access other means of survival resources (Corno, 2013). In this context, Caste hierarchy theory sees education in the form of dominated and dominant forms. The dominants are in majority and therefore often impose their power on the dominated ones. As a result, the dominated ones hardly get any socio-economic opportunities to bring changes in their lifeworld. They were found to have led their life in economic confinement. Earning by one family member (family head) was not claimed to be sufficient for the survival of the family members throughout the year. All members of the family, including school-age children are bound to engage in income-generating work. As a result, the school-age children could not go to school regularly. The socio-cultural positioning was also found to be one of the severe challenges to their school education.

The key challenges in this regard were untouchability, exclusion, inequality, and discrimination (Bishwakarma, 2009). Although the visible practices as such are becoming poorer these days, these are still symbolically stronger affecting the socio-cultural life of the people and their regular attendance in the schools (Hartas, 2011). In this context, being placed themselves as the lower part of the caste hierarchy, Dalit segregate themselves from non-Dalit and demean themselves in the form of excluded, marginalized, and disadvantaged ones. Such practices also were found to be the reasons to create the feeling of emotional insecurity on the part of the Dalit children in schools, leading them to be irregular or school dropouts. The lower level of motivation for school education among the Dalit students was found to be responsible for their poor participation in school. The reasons behind the lower level of motivation for school education were found to be many.

First, they intensely engaged in domestic chores which hardly made them free to go to school. Second, their family tradition of work and wages often convinced them that they can survive without acquiring a school education. Third, the level of poverty in the family forced them to urgently need to increase family income rather than participate in school education programs. The lower level of motivation as to the caste hierarchy theory and to the cultural difference theory is the product of socio-cultural priorities.

In the caste hierarchy, the Dalit are placed at the lowest level, and in terms of culture, they are supposed to be less valued and useful, especially among the non-Dalit. Since the community and schools appear to prioritize those who are in

the uppermost rank of the hierarchy and those whose culture is prioritized the most, the Dalit in question perceive that the education which they receive is not helpful to promote their caste ranking and it does not also support them to be the part of those whose culture is valued in the community and schools.

As a result, they remain demotivated by school education. Their own family environment was found to be another challenge on the way to acquiring a school education. Most Dalit families claimed that children did not get an appropriate learning environment (Biesta, 2011). They did not receive any support from their parents in accelerating their learning achievement. Since most of the parents were found to be unschooled, they were not found to be able to contribute to accomplishing their children's educational assignments provided in the schools. The Dalit parents were also not found to have visited the schools and communicated with the teachers focusing their children's learnings (Bernstein, 1971). They were not found to have participated in various activities organized in schools. Home-school link thus was found to be poor.

However, their children's education was not claimed to move ahead in a desirable way. According to cultural difference theory, the connection between the school and home becomes strong, is aligned with the other in terms of culture. Since the culture of the schools favors the culture of those who are in majority, Dalit, as the minorities ones remain unaccounted for. As a result, the link between the Dalits' home and the school remains poor due to their poor education. After exploring Dalits' perceptions on education, I focused on identifying their challenges in acquiring education. Since Dalits' perceptions on education were a culturally rooted, socially situated, and contextually influenced phenomenon, the problems that they faced on the way to acquiring an education were found to have existed in the realm of their social, cultural, economic, and contextual lifeworld. Their hindrances of accessing education in these components of life are discussed hereunder.

Economic fragility among the Dalit was discussed to be one of the key challenges, which often created obstacles in getting access to education. Since the economy reciprocates the level of education (Bates, 2005), poverty among the Dalit appeared to be one component pushing them far back from school education. However, I observed that their poverty was the product of their cultural practices, social positioning, traditionally engaged occupations, and, by and large, their own perceptions of life and education. Finn (2010) sees the relation between poverty and school education and explains the poverty of the Dalit as a socially constructed phenomenon.

In this context, one may ask a question: In what way does the poverty among Dalit prevent them from getting access to education? In this regard, Bhattachan et al. (2001) seem more convincing when s/he claims that the practices of untouchability, exclusion, inequality and discrimination on the part of the Dalit have a wide gap between them and the economic opportunity available in their socio-cultural context. Since the Dalit in my study sites remained far from the available economic opportunities for centuries, they were bound to grow up in poverty. As a result, their key focus appeared to be survival rather than education.

In this sense, the poor economy among the Dalit in my study sites seems to be a challenge for them. What is there in a poor economy or the family conditions under poverty that makes 'poverty' responsible for poor education conditions among Dalit? This question is rather important to justify why poverty matters in acquiring education. According to the cultural difference theory, the economic condition of an individual is the outcome of one's cultural activities. For example, the economy of the Dalit in my study sites was deeply connected with their occupation's culture. Most of the Dalit in my study sites followed the ancestral business that caused them to live in economic confinement. Life under strictly defined income becomes hard as such levels of income often appear to be insufficient to meet life's everyday needs. Educating children is also supposed to be one of the most important daily needs, the economic support to Dalits' children's education did not adequately respond to their educational needs.

Thus, the lower level of motivation for education among Dalits was also discussed as one of the challenges. The level of motivation reciprocates the level of participation in educational activities (Valerio, 2012). That is, the active participation of Dalit in education can be ensured through their strong motivation. In this regard, some questions seem to be important: What motivation has to do with learning? How does motivation take place among children? What does it mean when we say Dalits' children are not motivated for school education? To answer these questions to inquire about the space of motivation in education, I would like to get support from (Poudel, 2007) who informs me that motivation energizes an individual and pushes them to participate in the target activities. On the other hand, it maintains that motivation arouses interest and further induces the individual in question to come into motion to finish the given task (Korde & Paulus, 2017).

If so, what brings obstacles to raising the level of interest among the Dalits to ensure their active participation in school activities? Seeking the answer to this question with reference to cultural difference theory seems to be relevant. For Poudel (2007), individuals feel happy or satisfied if they find a particular context like their cultural context. Cultural similarities strengthen interests while cultural differences

diminish them (Hofer, 1976). If so, is the school's culture different from the culture of Dalits? Why are schools in Dalits' catchment areas not able to be congruent with the culture of Dalits? These quotations seem to be the subject of further inquiry to resolve the issue of motivation for education among the Dalits of my study sites.

Similarly, the Dalit students have also faced difficulty in getting support at home to get an education. The culture of the school and the culture of home, in this context, were inconsistent. The culture of schools consists of student-students and teacher-student interaction (Pianta et al., 2008). Such interaction creates a learning environment for children in which the target children get opportunities to redefine, rearticulate and reform their knowledge- their socio-culturally rooted experiences. Such knowledge is validated through social interaction between teachers and students in the school setting (Baidhya, 2002).

The culture of the school, therefore, consists of a knowledge system that is globally recognized and nationally demanded (Vermeer, 2010). Dalit children, however, are largely prevented from getting such support at home. Historically and culturally, Dalits' home environment does not resemble the school environment so far, the matter of learning support available for children. Since the parents of Dalit children do not have the strength to support them in their home assignments, neither were they able to maintain family interaction in line with the one in the school. As a result, Dalits' children often become helpless and are not responded to in terms of their learning at home.

The cultural differences, in terms of learning, between home and school required intervention to be alike. The linkage between school and home is often focused on strengthening and promoting (Poudel, 2007). The purpose of linking home and school is to reduce children's complexities likely to occur on the way to acquiring knowledge (Bates, 2005). Linking home and school makes the channel of communication between the two effective. Effective communication in this context consists of sharing the purpose and activities related to children's education at home with schools and vice versa (Sullivan, 2002). Such communication is supposed to be learners' friendly in the way that teachers in schools get an opportunity to learn about students' family contexts and the parents, on the other hand, learn how their children in schools are dealt with by teachers in schools (LaRocque et al., 2011). It also helps the parents learn the meaning of interacting with children, especially in constructing knowledge.

In the context of my research sites, communication between the school and home was poor. The status of such poor communication is the product of cultural dissimilarity between home and school, especially in relation to children's learning.

Due to the poor link between home and school, the cultural differences of these two places do not interact to construct negotiated meaning of being Dalit or non-Dalit. As a result, the school, and the Dalits are indifferent to each other. The irregularity of Dalit children was another challenge for them in getting access to education.

Various studies on Dalit education in Nepal make their irregularities responsible for their poor educational performance (Ghimire, 2012). But, in this context, a question can be raised: Why do Dalit children often appear irregular in schools? There are so many reasons behind this. For Manandhar and Leslie (1994), Dalits become irregular in schools due to their intense engagement in household chores. On the other hand, it reveals Dalits' school irregularity as the result of family ignorance.

In the same way, in many cases, the Dalits are satisfied with their traditional occupation which they transfer from one generation to another. As a result, they think their occupation is sufficient to help them meet their family needs and, thus, they do not need to send their children to school (LaRocque et al., 2011). These reasons behind the irregularity of Dalit children in school also appeared to be prominent in my study sites.

Conclusion

While observing their challenges to education with the perspectives of cultural difference theory, I understand that the school culture, such as the classroom practices, curriculum, and the contents to be imparted to Dalit are still not coherent to the culture of the Dalits. That is, their irregularity and dropout appear to be the result of the differences that take place between the Dalit and non-Dalit children. The efforts so far made to address the Dalits' education appear to be external, borrowed, and conditional. To promote the status of Dalit education and ensure their active participation in education, the Dalits are supposed to enter the schools in the same way as non-Dalit children do. But their presence in schools often seems challenged by the school culture that is not supposed to be fully aligned with Dalit culture.

As a result, the school appears to be an unfamiliar space for Dalit children. Reflecting on the finding of this study, I feel that the issue of Dalit education cannot be duly addressed unless their perceptions and challenges to education are addressed within the socio-cultural environment of the schools. Dalit children enter the school along with their emotions, feelings, dispositions, habitus, etc. The schools can be claimed to be Dalit-friendly if they adequately respond to these Dalit features. The Dalit students can participate in the school activities equally as non-Dalit children if their issues, interest, capacity, and safety matters get space in the school curriculum, pedagogy, textbooks, extracurricular activities, and so on.

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Connecting Cultural Knowledge with Western-Based School Science: Experiences of Marginalized Students

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Abstract

This study focuses on interactive, creative, collaborative, and inclusive science teaching environments both in school and at home to create and extend multicultural science knowledge based on the experience of culturally marginalized students toward science learning. This case study explored the knowledge construction system of students. Two culturally and economically marginalized students of a public secondary school located at Gorkha Municipality were purposively selected. To collect information in-depth interview was taken with two students jointly, and classroom teaching activities were observed and noted in the diary. The transcription of interviews and field notes taken from the classroom observation were coded, categorized and three global themes were identified. Based on global themes, the data were analyzed according to the view of participants compared to the culturally relevant pedagogy and cultural theories. The selected students were not satisfied with their teacher's teaching strategies. The study found that culturally relevant science teaching is mainly affected by pedagogical, environmental, and strategic problems. Teachers and the school culture are seen as the main problem in implementing and braiding culturally relevant science teaching in the multicultural classroom. Science teacher is found to fail to link modern science teaching with community knowledge of culturally and economically marginalized students. Underestimating the other cultural students' participation and teachers' voices in science teaching is the limitation of this study.

Keywords: culturally relevant pedagogy, marginalized students, multicultural education, participatory learning

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Introduction

Nepal is a multicultural, multi-ethnic, multilingual, and socially diversified country. It is a tapestry of 125 castes, ethnic groups and languages (Khanal, 2017). It has about 26.5 million people who speak more than 123 languages (Central Bureau of Statistics [CBS], 2012). The diversity of human cultures, the wealth of languages, ideas, beliefs, customs, tools, artistic works, rituals, and other expressions collectively represent the social reality of any country (Gay, 2013). He showed accurate and comprehensive portrayals of ethnically and racially diverse groups and their experiences in various subject matter curricula. In this context, Khanal (2017) critiques that mainstream school culture is different from the culture at home and in the community. Nevertheless, he further added cultural discrepancies between home and school are evident in most countries around the globe, including developing countries such as Nepal, as well as developed countries such as the United States and the United Kingdom. In our context also ethno experiences of students of different marginalized groups are being unable to address the mainstream western schooling system. In Nepal, the number of ethnic groups and indigenous nationalities are rooted Khas–Arya culture and dominated by Hinduism. About multicultural and multi ethical society, Gay (2013) added that teaching cultural diversity helps students acquire more accurate knowledge about the lives, cultures, contributions, experiences, and challenges of different ethnic and racial groups. However, in Nepal, traditional teacher-centered teaching is practiced in a multi-cultural classroom without realizing the students' socio-cultural and ethnic identity, their learning capacity, and pre-knowledge.

Literature Review

In the following literature review section, we discussed the teachers' management, their training in cultural knowledge and professional development practice and contextual teaching of science and empowerment of science teaching through the culturally relevant pedagogy.

School Organization and Teachers' Management in Nepal

The school structure of Nepal was the primary level (grade 1-5), lower secondary level (grade 6-8), secondary level (Grade 9-10) and higher secondary level (grade 11-12). After the implementation of the School Sector Reform Program (SSRP) 2016/17- 2022-23, the school education system in Nepal is now structured Basic level (grade 1-8) and secondary level (grade 9-12) under the Ministry of Education (Ministry of Education [MoE], 2016). There are two types of school systems in Nepal. One is a community school completely governed by a run with Government's subsidies and public partnership. Another is institutional schools

(also called boarding schools) which are administered through the personal as well as a collective effort of individuals, in which financial sovereignty consists within the school investors (ADB, 2017). There are Madrasas, Gumbas, Gurukulas and Missionary schools which are conducted by religious groups applying both government and religious curricula. In community schools, Education Rules (the second amendment 2002) mentioned the student-teacher ratio (STR) 50 for terai, 45 for hills and 40 for mountain regions; however, it is challenging to implement due to political blockage (ADB, 2017). Permanent teachers are recruited by the Teacher Service Commission (TSC) which works under the Ministry of Education Science and Technology (MoEST). At present, fulfilling the criteria and decision made by the concerned teacher selection committee, the local government can also select the teachers who have a teaching license as a minimum requirement. But institutional school and religious schools can select the teachers in personal contact as well as public advertisement in local and national media. Generally, community schools follow the government curriculum but boarding and religious schools follow a government as well as a religious curriculum to fulfill their purposes. The SSRP mentioned that the teachers' qualifications for the Basic and secondary level should be a minimum Bachelor's Degree and Master's Degree respectively with a teaching license. However, TSC is not doing so. While selecting primary, lower secondary and secondary level teachers, it selects teachers having the qualification of only 10+2 or proficiency certificate level (PCL) for the Basic level and selects teachers having the qualification of Bachelor's level for secondary level (i.e., Grade 9-10) who have a teaching license in the respective level. Nepal Government and TSC have challenges in recruiting teachers having the required qualifications at different levels. Up to now, the secondary level (i.e., Grade 11-12) teachers are mostly on a contract basis and their job security and professional development are insecure. In institutional schools, the teachers are recruited based on financial negotiation. Mostly rich schools pay high salaries and recruit comparatively qualified teachers, but financially weak institutional schools cannot provide high salaries and recruit mainly low-quality teachers without considering qualifications and teaching licenses. But, in government policy, there is no place for such types of discrimination.

School Level Teachers' Professional Development Practice in Nepal

Teachers' professional development is the process of developing and improving knowledge and skills related to teaching and learning to build competencies both in pre-service and in-service teachers. The teachers' professional development in Nepal is classified into two categories a) in-service teachers training b) pre-service teachers training. Pre-service teacher training was conducted mostly by Tribhuvan University, Faculty of Education as semester-wise conventional as well as

Open and Distance Learning Mode Master's programme, and regular mode of one-year B. Ed, four-year B. Ed. and two-years M. Ed. programme. Now the pre-service teacher-training program is conducted by Kathmandu University, Nepal Sanskrit University, Midwestern University and Western University. Students learn both pedagogies and content in pre-service teacher training but they lack the knowledge of multicultural classroom teaching as recommended by Sustainable Development Goal (MoEST, 2076 BS). Moreover, the pedagogical knowledge gained at the university level is not fully implemented in classroom teaching.

In-service teacher training is highly encouraged in Nepal and government data says that 88.7 percent of secondary level teachers and 97.2 percent of primary level teachers got professional teacher training till 2017, however, its effectiveness in classroom practices are seen as very poor. Mostly in-service teacher training is conducted through the National Centre of Educational Development (NCED) as a part of the Teachers Professional Development (TPD) programme (Koirala et al., 2020), short-term refresher training and other workshops at Resource Centres (RCs) and Educational Training Centres (ETCs) for the Basic and Secondary level teachers respectively (ADB, 2017). These training programs are conducted for quality enhancement in school education, but these professional pieces of training are nominally transformative to enhance the quality of school education. Mostly these pieces of training are conducted only once which are being failed to support teaching in the multicultural classroom by connecting modern knowledge with learners' previous cultural knowledge. In present days, TSC selects teachers from different ethical, cultural, geographical, economically and linguistically marginalized groups following the reservation (quota) system and recommends the selected teachers' list to the local governments for their recruitment at schools. But, they are posted based on vacancies of schools at the local level. The authorities send the selected teachers irrespective of their cultural backgrounds to any schools where the marginalized students are studying. Thus, the present teacher management system in Nepal is found problematic to address the cultural issues in multicultural classroom scenarios which have become a barrier to uplift the achievement of marginalized and Dalit students compared to the students from the Brahmin/Chhetry community.

Contextual Teaching for School Success

Our long teaching experiences in different schools having different cultural and ethnic diversify enlighten that teaching is guided by the traditional behavioristic way and students rarely get the opportunity to construct knowledge themselves (Kalu et al., 2015). Generally, teachers from Khas-Arya communities are teaching at socio-culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms without addressing their learning capacity. They have little knowledge on how to manage the diverse

classroom, how to provide the opportunity to different minorities group, and which teaching techniques are appropriate to create a learning environment in the classroom through which students get the learning opportunity (Barajas, 2015; Rosa & Orey, 2010). Our long teaching experience indicates that students are usually physically present in the classroom, they seem to listen to the teacher's lecture and do assignments copying the book, but they are not giving interest in their teachers' teaching. Ultimately, it pushed towards bad school results and school drop-out as well. Krasnoff (2016) states that "there is extensive evidence from achievement test scores, grade promotion rates, graduation rates, and other common indicators of school success that students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds experience poorer educational outcomes than their peers" (p. 1). He further states that culturally relevant examples have positive effects on the academic achievement of racially, ethnically, culturally, and linguistically diverse students, but our teaching scenario of school is not found so. In most cases, teachers fail to understand students' language, their pre-experience, ethno knowledge, and cultural identities and also, feel uncomfortable delivering the knowledge according to their needs which ultimately turn out to be a catalyst to destruct the success of students at the school level education.

Focusing on ethno cultural knowledge, Gay (2013) added that "using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them" (p. 50). To do so, the teacher should be pedagogically sound and knowledgeable to manage the classroom providing equal opportunity. Similarly, they should have such knowledge that when students will be interested in learning, and such learning will be efficient in student's daily life as well as will be helpful to solve their day to day problems. But, as school and university teachers, we have bitter experiences of teaching in the different culturally diverse classrooms without addressing their learning capacity. We hardly tried to find out why students are not interested in my teaching, how can I increase their learning performance, and how to do school-level science teaching linking with their daily Ethno-knowledge.

Empowerment of Students through Culturally Relevant Science Teaching

We have got the in-service teacher training and attended different workshops specifically designed to reduce bias, increase cultural competence, and prepare teachers to more equitably lead their future classrooms; but, traditional cultural hegemony is still experienced in our teaching-learning reflecting the view of Hangen (2007) that "Hindu from the hills have dominated the state since its inception in the late eighteenth century and that has created political, economic and social disadvantages for others" (p. 2).

Different ethnic and indigenous nationalities' movements helped to secure the cultural diversity and ethnicity legitimately (Barajas, 2015; Hangen, 2007) which have supported students' academic success, enhanced networking and contact and competence with their primary cultural heritages. They have also helped to learn how to critique, challenge, and transform inequities, injustices, oppressions, exploitations, power, and privilege. However, classroom transformation has not been found effective to address minority students' voices. In this line, Rosa and Orey (2010) added six critical elements of culturally relevant education for the academic achievement of students are:

recognition and use of Native language, the implementation of a pedagogy that uses traditional cultural characteristics, the application of teaching strategies and curriculum that are congruent with traditional culture and traditional ways of knowing, strong Native community participation in education, and knowledge and use of political mores of the community. (p. 24)

Therefore, here our concerns are, firstly, how to culturally diversified teachers and students organize and manipulate their classroom pedagogically for better teaching and learning respectively. Secondly, how it cultivates cooperation, collaboration, reciprocity, and mutual responsibility for learning among students, and between students and teachers (Barajas, 2015; Gay, 2013). Thirdly, how teachers encourage students to become active learners who regulate their own learning through reflection and evaluation (Krasnoff, 2016). To empower ethnically diverse students, the key objectives of science teaching in the twenty-first century should be to cultivate their cultural integrity, individual abilities, and academic success (Barajas 2015; Hangen, 2007).

Here, our concerns are how our teachers can do this in our classroom practices and teachers and their teaching become more inclusive and how students think and learn academic content linking their Ethno knowledge (Cooper & Matthews, 2005). Pedagogical practices and social relations with students should not only acknowledge content competence but should also reflect the strengths of who students are and where they come from. The teaching paradigm is also shifted toward the development of cultural strength, intellectual capabilities, and culturally responsive science teaching and learning for marginalized students (Rosa & Orey, 2010; Wenzel, 2017). However, our school science learning context is not seen as mentioned in the above literature to link with the cultural context.

Considering the above scenario, here our concern in this study is to find out how is the perception of culturally marginalized students toward science teacher's teaching, how they have experienced the betterment of their science learning in

the diversified classroom, and how to link their Ethno/community knowledge with modern science learning practice through which they feel easier to learn science.

Theoretical Framing

In this study, we have taken two key theorists, Gloria Ladson-Billings (1995) and Geneva Gay (2002), who have established the foundational tenets of this cultural relevant pedagogy with two important purposes: (1) they provide evidential support that culturally responsive teaching has the potential to improve student achievement, (2) they served as models to help conceptualize a culturally responsive approach to the science program in this study (Garvin, 2015). Like that, another cultural theory will also be used to analyze the data connecting with cultural reality.

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP)

In this paper, we preferred the theory of culturally relevant pedagogy [CRP] because this theory is seen as suitable for studying culturally diverse students and teachers to motivate towards teaching-learning and also acknowledge how to teach and provide the knowledge in a culturally diverse classroom, and how to involve the marginalized students in science learning activities. The concept of CRP was, first, introduced by Gloria Ladson-Billings (1995). She invokes new teaching which is field-based practices to involve the culturally, ethnically, socially, politically and linguistically oppressed group. She stresses that teaching can better match the home and community cultures of students of color who have previously not had academic success in schools. She further states that “a science curriculum should (a) allow multiple points of entry, (b) allow for thinking about structures through recognizing networks, and (c) allow the development of identities and relationships centered on a desire for change” (p. 1113).

Culturally relevant pedagogy as the theoretical framework suggests culture as an invaluable asset to students in their educational process and learning achievement (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Laughter and Adams (2012) also agree with this statement and add how CRP requires that teachers attend to students’ academic needs, not merely make them feel good. In science teaching also students should get the chance to participate and choose academic excellence and demonstrate understanding. If the home environment is incorporated into school, students are likely to experience more academic success (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2014) which shows the roles of culturally relevant pedagogy for better student achievement. In this vein, Gay (2002, 2010) added that culturally relevant education/pedagogy was developed out of concern for the serious academic achievement gap experienced by low-income students, students of color, and students from linguistically and culturally diverse environment which helps to provide the knowledge according to the need and interest of students of

culturally diverse students. The government of Nepal has focused on multicultural classroom teaching, however, our previous experiences show that our teachers are not seen as trained much in the use of culturally relevant science teaching. They theoretically may know how to manage classrooms to address students from minority groups, but practically they are reluctant to show a willingness to use the appropriate methods for the emancipation of these culturally diverse students in multicultural classrooms. Therefore, the CRP is realized as more relevant and used as a theoretical lens to understand students' experiences and teachers' science teaching, especially in Nepalese classroom practices.

Cultural Theory

Another theory that we preferred for our study was the cultural theory. The cultural theory focuses on the preservation of forests, land, water resources, and sacred groves. It focuses on the cultural values, customs, beliefs, and values of human society in a relational way (Held, 2019). For example, Hindu worship *Tulasi*, *Peepal* is a symbol of Lord Bishnu. Like that land is worshipped chanting mantra; *Bhupatayeswaha*, *Bhuvanapatayeswaha*, *Bhutanampatayeswaha* (Mishra, 2061 B.S). Similarly, the earth is called the mother because it provides food, shelter, and clothes. Both in Hindu and Buddhist cultures cutting a young tree is a *sin*. Thus, Hindu and Buddhist people make their own spiritual rules to protect the different valuable plants and animals found around them and nature.

Moreover, people from different ethnic backgrounds have knowledge of the language, history, religion, custom, medicine, social structure, farming, horticulture, and fissing. These are different according to their cultural norms and values. Similarly, cultural theory helps genetic manipulation of crops and farm animals for a long time in the cultural group (Edgar & Sedgwick, 2008). These norms and values help to protect the cultural environment and cultural heritage of different religious groups linked with school science. Hence, this cultural theory is seen as appropriate in the multicultural and multi-religious context of Nepal to braid (McGregor et al., 2018) the cultural/community knowledge with school science teaching.

Methods and Procedures

The following section deals with the study design, population, participants of the study. Similarly, this section deals with data collection procedure and the analysis techniques used in the study.

Study Design and Sample

In this study, we employed a qualitative case study design (Creswell, 2007, 2012; Yin, 2003) which focuses on a school and two student cases studying there,

by gathering data through the collection of stories of science learning experiences, observing classroom interaction and discussing the meaning of those experiences for individuals understanding. The participants of this study were Dhurba Ashami (Pseudonym) and Pooja Shrestha (Pseudonym) who were studying science in grade ten at Ratna Laxmi Secondary School in district headquarter of Gorkha. Dhurba Ashami belongs Dalit group (i.e., a socially and culturally marginalized group in Nepal). His parents are only literate; however, they were careful about their children's academic excellence. His father was a foreign employer for a long time ago. Pooja Shrestha belongs Newari community (i.e., an indigenous [Janajati] group of Nepal). Her parents are also only literate. They have no fixed income sources and are dependent only on agriculture.

Our purpose in this study was to explore the culturally and economically marginalized students' opinions and experiences about science learning activities in a multicultural classroom where the teacher is different from than student's mother tongue and cultural background. To fulfill our objectives, we selected a secondary school in Gorkha Municipality purposively as suggested by Creswell (2007, 2012) and Yin (2016). While doing so, we preferred the school which was already been visited several time formally and informally by the first author (the first author is the data collector) and the first author has the knowledge of school science teachers who teaches at that school. Then, we selected two culturally and economically marginalized students as a participant for our study.

Data Collection Procedure and Analysis

First of all, the first author entered the school and met the school head teacher and other teaching staff where some teachers were checking students' homework and most of the teachers were in the classrooms. The concern of the study was to know how culturally and economically marginalized students experience their teacher's teaching science and to understand how teachers from culturally different backgrounds treat the economically and ethnically marginalized students during their classroom teaching. To fulfill the above objective, the first author took permission and support from the head teacher and selected Dhurba Ashami and Pooja Shrestha as participants purposively to support our study. The head teacher briefly introduced them to my purpose and encouraged them to provide the required information without any hesitation.

After that, the first author called both students separately and started discussing informally and introduced each other. Then, he explained the purpose of the interview in detail and requested each of them to provide all the experiences they got with their science teacher's teaching. Keeping the idea of 'pseudonym' and 'anonymity' during data collection proffered by Creswell and Poth (2018) in mind,

while eliciting the data, the first author assured them that their name would not be published without their permission and that pseudonyms would be used to save their anonymity. After a long discussion, he won their confidence and trust during the data collection procedures and developed the 'reciprocity' (Cohen et al., 2018) to protect them from harm in the research process and got permission to record their interviews. Then, he conducted forty-five minutes of in-depth interviews in a separate room of their school in pairs and audio recorded. The second interview was taken after two days for about 30 minutes for further justification of their arguments. After that, the science classroom interaction was conducted with the teacher from the Brahmin community, who had the qualification of a Master's degree in science education and also had attended professional development training. His class was observed twice in grade 10 in a two days interval and required information was immediately noted in the field note. The classroom interaction was about 'Acid Bases and Salt' and 'Preparation and properties of Carbon-dioxide gas'. The students in the classroom were from different cultural and economic groups; more than sixty percent of students were Dalit and thirty percent were Janajatis in that classroom.

After the data collection procedure was completed, the transcription of a recorded interview was done using a transcript sheet. Then, data collected in the Nepali language was translated into the English language and transcribed to reveal the meaning of the in-depth interview and class observation (Yin, 2016). After that, the translated data was coded. From the codes, seventeen basic themes and from it three main themes were established inductively, and from the global theme, data were analyzed deductively connecting the verbatim of the participants and my arguments as suggested by Creswell (2007) and Merriam (2009). The analysis was done by linking participants' arguments with the theory of 'culturally relevant pedagogy' and 'cultural theory' to find out how the practices of multicultural science teaching in a culturally diverse classroom. For the trustworthiness and confidentiality of qualitative data, as discussed by Cohen et al. (2018), the transcribed data were shown to the related students, and the validity and reliability of data were confirmed as suggested by Creswell (2007, 2012) and Cypress (2017). For the triangulation of data, Merriam's (2009) multi-method investigation was applied by observing the science teacher's classroom teaching without providing pre-information. From the transcribed open-ended interview and classroom observation, the following themes were established cooperatively with the second author.

Results

The following three recurrent themes were identified in the student's responses and classroom observation field notes. These are lacking pedagogically participatory teaching, learning culture at home, and linkage with Ethno knowledge.

Lacking Pedagogically Participatory Teaching

Pedagogically participatory teaching is that in which students are fully engaged in learning practice in the classroom connecting their cultural knowledge with their science learning (Ladson Billing, 1995). According to Dhurba, teachers are always the center of learning. Without teachers' initiation, our classroom interaction never becomes interactive and effective. Without teachers' sound pedagogical knowledge and capacity to involve the students in teaching-learning activities, science teaching never addresses our needs. Dhurba was representative of out of sixty percent of Dalit students studying in the science classroom who claimed that his science teachers never involved him including his friends to participate within or outside classroom activities. He added that “ *We are only passive listeners in the classroom. Teachers are used to delivering the content knowledge of science books without listening to our voices. He used to write most of the things on a whiteboard and we used to copy them in our notebooks. He never cares about our voices in science teaching*”. The same claim was expressed by Pooja, too. They are marginalized group students and have learned so much knowledge and skills from their community. However, their teachers never tried to understand their learning skills and abilities. Puja added that “*Our teacher only teaches bookish content without linking our daily knowledge. He used to ask a question for front bench students and only a few students involve actively in classroom interaction*”. But, in my classroom observation, there was a rotation system of students sitting on the bench but talented students tried to sit in front of the classroom, and students who are not active in the classroom had to sit back seats. However, during observation, the first author could not find discrimination in classroom teaching as they mentioned earlier. The teacher was a trained and qualified science teacher, but classroom teaching was dominated by traditional teaching methods and many of the students were inactive in classroom teaching. It seems that the teacher either did not learn about diverse classroom teaching or did not provide interest in his pre-service and in-service teacher training programme about engaging all the students in teaching-learning activities.

Near about twenty-five years of science teaching experience, the first author found that the prescribed science lessons can deliver to students by involving them in teaching-learning activities linked with their daily field activities; however, it was not found in real practice in my observed class. The teacher could teach different topics involving all students in the learning activities considering the socio-cultural knowledge which increases students' curiosity about learning. It confirms, Ladson Billing's statement that if we provide the science knowledge linking with their everyday experience, and involve all the students in teaching-learning activities

without bias, the students' participation in science learning will be increased automatically.

Learning Culture at Home and School

The learning culture means how students were learning in school and at home for their academic success. According to Dhurba, the learning culture of house and school both play a crucial role to explore the experience of learners about science teaching. Khanal (2017) states that classroom teaching is favouritism toward the dominant student and gives extra care and support to brighter students (p. 464), however, science teaching was not found so. The students shared that teachers provide equal opportunity to answer the questions and to discuss in the classroom. But, when the teacher asks some questions, instantly the active students from Brahmin culture respond without leaving enough time relatively than us. Dhurba and Pooja's argument was that if a teacher provides the practical opportunity, our engagement will be increased, but their science teacher was unable to do so. Both students felt that the lecture method, which was used by their teacher daily, is boring in science learning. According to Dhurba, there are no extra activities related to science. He said, *"We have heard about the science fair, exhibition, and field trip but neither school administration, nor subject teacher provides us such types of opportunity. The school conducts field trips only for entertainment, but not for learning purposes."* Both shared that they hadn't got the opportunity to observe the zoo and science museum till now. If the school takes the initiation of such an opportunity, they would surely get new knowledge and ideas about science and learn new things by observing, analyzing, and sharing themselves from that they could construct the knowledge which can be helpful for further science learning.

Dhurba's home environment also was not appropriate for his science learning. Both father and mother were only literate. Sometimes he used to make local science materials, but his parents restricted his work. According to Khanal (2017), social culture is also a determining factor for learners to get learning opportunities. Mostly, the family role is important for science choosing and learning. About the home environment, Suchlze and Lemmer (2017) stated that "towards science, provide educational resources and experiences in the home directed at stimulating science learning, motivate children to choose science as a school subject, encourage children to consider science in their plans, and promote the choice of science-oriented occupations"(p. 2). The literature indicates that family support is important to involve in science learning, but Dhurba and Pooja's home environments were not so favorable to them. Dhurba's parents help to buy new books and innovative achievements in science, but they did not know what to do, how to do, and how to manage the materials, but Pooja was found inactive in extra activities. So, we

realized that both the home and school environment are important for learning science; but, school plays a crucial role to encourage, motivate, and develop creativity in the students.

In the class observation, there was not a favorable school environment to learn science for the students. There was neither a well-managed laboratory nor a library which are minimum requirements for learning science. In biology learning, field trip plays a crucial role, but they never got the opportunity to go anywhere to learn science. The study found very poor linkage with Ladson Billing's (1995) theory of culturally relevant pedagogy and cultural theory in the Nepalese classroom practice in science.

Linkage with Ethno Knowledge

Students from different cultural and socio-economic backgrounds gather at schools with distinct cultural capital. The students whom we chose had rich Ethno and cultural knowledge and experiences. Dhurba and Pooja stated that their parents prepare local wine at home and they know how to prepare it, what materials are used there, and what material helps for fermentation. Dhurba argues that he knows how to filter the water they collect from rainwater, and how to prepare and use local fertilizers for better crop production. But, his science teacher never tried to link his science teaching to explore their knowledge. He never tried to link textbook knowledge with his daily life knowledge. Let's see the following excerpt:

if our science teacher provides the opportunity to express my experience in the classroom, I will creatively use and link my Ethno knowledge with textbook knowledge (modern science). Similarly, other friends also may have different socio-cultural knowledge, when they share their knowledge, we easily understand their practices and ultimately we easily learn science; but, my teacher never does this. He either does not have such knowledge or he did not have such a motive to link science with our daily knowledge.

Pooja also agreed with Dhurba's argument and said, "*We have so many cultural and spiritual values that carry scientific knowledge but these are not linked with our school science teaching*".

As mentioned by Dhurba and Pooja, the classroom teaching was out of connection with local knowledge; there was no linkage of school science teaching with cultural practices. The bookish knowledge of 'Acid Base and Salt' was taught only linking a few local acids found in the village. In our observation, students' cultural experience with 'Acid Bases and Salts' was not linked to his science teaching.

The study reveals that teachers are almost unable to link the classroom activities with their students' daily life experiences as Edgar and Sedgwick (2008) stated in their cultural theory in which they state that our learning should be relevant to our day-to-day customs, religion, values, and our life relevant example motivate us towards learning. It helps to protect the local plants and animals and provides ecological balance through proper use of resources. So this theory is seen as more relevant in the context of multicultural Nepalese society to link with modern school knowledge (McGregor et al., 2018). But, it is lacking in our school environment.

Discussion

This paper explored the experiences of science learning of the cultural and economically marginalized students. The experiences of Dhurba and Pooja show the present scenario of science learning in the Nepalese context. The school science teaching scenario indicates that, as cultural theory mentions, teachers should have self-motivation to link school science with day-to-day Ethno knowledge of students with creating an appropriate learning environment at school (Seehawer & Breidlid, 2021). Even in the absence of an appropriate science laboratory, science teachers could be able to participate culturally and economically marginalized students towards learning activities by providing the opportunity for discussion, interaction and free learning situations (Koirala, 2021). There is not found epistemologically diverse and pedagogically pluralistic learning situation (Higgins, 2016) in science classrooms considering previous knowledge of the culturally marginalized students.

As discussed earlier, culturally relevant pedagogy provides all students equal learning opportunities, students equally participate in the activities, think critically, ask questions, and respect the views of others (Koirala, 2021). A culturally relevant science teacher should try to involve all the culturally, ethnically, socially, politically, and linguistically oppressed groups. It focuses on how teaching can match better the home and community cultures of students who have previously not had academic success in schools (Goldman et al., 2020, Koirala, 2021). Both participants found being serious to link their day-to-day knowledge with school science, but such type of capacity was not experienced by science teachers. Science teacher could not have seen the braiding of cultural knowledge with school science teaching (McGregor et al., 2018; Seehawer, 2018). Dhurba's view was found positive toward participatory learning but his teacher did not provide an opportunity to be involved in such activities. Dhurba's science teacher was a higher class cast group. His classroom observation seen that he was neither biased towards all of the students; nor had he supported their learning activities as he used only teacher-dominated lecture methods rather than applying student-centered techniques considering the students' previous knowledge. The teaching topic was interesting, although it was unable to capture the students' feelings, "We are studying science in the classroom".

The professional teacher training programme was not seen as favorable for culturally marginalized students for their academic success. Community knowledge plays crucial role in culturally marginalized students' academic success, however, the school learning context was not favored for applying such knowledge (Goldman et al., 2021). The main problem in classroom success is ignoring the cultural knowledge of the scientific community (Ballard et al., 2021). The role of teachers to use transformative pedagogical discourse among the community people and school science teachers is important. By doing so, we can link the epistemic practice of marginalized students with science teaching. This helps connect cultural knowledge with the bookish knowledge about what they practiced, understand, and transfer to the new generation and supports for academic success of culturally marginalized students. In the present day central as well as Palika also can play such a role in connecting science teaching with their cultural knowledge.

Conclusion

From the above discussion, we concluded that culturally marginalized students have the huge cultural knowledge that they have developed from their cultural practice. However, our teachers are not trained and aware of connecting their cultural knowledge in modern classroom teaching. Therefore, we recommend effective teacher training to build the capacity to link modern science with community knowledge by involving all students equally in classroom teaching and playing a role model to involve the culturally and economically marginalized students in classroom activities. We found that trained, culturally conscious professional science teachers only can manage the multicultural, multi-ethnic, multilingual, and economically diverse science classroom by providing appropriate learning opportunities to the cultural students by connecting their previous knowledge with school science teaching. Culturally motivated teachers can braid the cultural knowledge of students with the modern school science curriculum. As selected students' arguments, it was not found in classroom teaching as they should be. So that this study will help to recruit qualified, trained, and culturally motivated science teachers at school.

In this study, only two marginalized students were taken from the Gorkha municipality. Interviews and classroom observations were done only two times without establishing an extended relationship with the students and teachers. If it could increase the involvement of multiple students with multiple interviews and classroom observations, it would have been ideal as appealed by Creswell and Poth (2018). However, we felt that the obtained data and our analysis have provided a strong foreground for a more in-depth examination of trust (see Merriam, 2009) between us and the interviewees for saturation of this study.

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Teacher Retention in Private Schools of Nepal: A Case from Bhaktapur District

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Abstract

Retention of qualified teachers is a crucial part for the quality education in schools because qualified, experienced and stable teachers can enhance the academic standard of students. It is equally important for the smooth operation and success of schools. Considering these facts, a quantitative research with correlational research design was carried out with the objective of finding out relationship between teacher retention and domains of its determinants in private schools of Bhaktapur district, Nepal. The data was collected through a questionnaire. This study concluded that financial and school culture domains have a powerful and significant impact on teacher retention. Similarly, there is a significant association between teacher retention and social domain, and between teacher retention and emotional domain. This study suggested that school administrators and policy makers need to understand that there is a strong positive impact of financial domain and school culture domain on teacher retention. They need to formulate policies which can satisfy financial needs and create a good school culture. Similarly, they need to improve teacher retention by addressing emotional domain and social domain.

Keywords: job satisfaction, motivation, school culture domain, emotional domain

Introduction

An organization can exist and succeed in achieving its goal when it has qualified employees. An organization can sustain and flourish with the recruitment and retention of qualified employees. But the retention of qualified employees is a big challenge for management (Barnes et al., 2007). As in other organizations, recruitment and retention of teachers is a challenging task for school management. The retention of teachers is a crucial issue in schools all over the world. It is a big issue in the context of schools of Nepal too.

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Retention of teachers in a school depends upon the level of satisfaction in their job as in other working institutions. Job satisfaction and motivation of teachers are key factors for teacher retention. Job satisfaction results in higher level of teacher's retention as well as increase in teacher's tenure (Bobbitt et al., 1991). The researchers also claimed that job satisfaction and teacher turnover have an inverse relationship (Bobbitt et al., 1991). They stated that increase in job satisfaction causes decrease in teacher turnover or increase in teacher retention. Those teachers who are satisfied in their jobs get retained in the same school and those who are not satisfied leave their job (Ingersoll, 2004). Therefore, we have to find major determinants of the job satisfaction of teachers which are defined as domains of teacher retention. Giacometti, (2005) stated that financial, institution-related or school culture, personal or emotional, demographic, social, etc. are such domains.

When the Government of Nepal brought a Liberal Policy of privatization in 1980, the rapid growth of several private schools has taken place since then (Mathema, 2007). Private schools are those schools which are funded and operated by a person, group of persons, or company (MOE, 2019). The growth of private schools is due to the trust and support of guardians. It is believed that there is better care of students and more dedication of teachers. A private school cannot exist and flourish without the dedication and support of its teachers and other staff members (Mathema, 2007). Therefore, it is essential to retain dedicated teachers and staff members by providing essential facilities.

Lower retention of teachers may bring many problems to stakeholders. There will be a loss of experienced human resources of the school on the one hand and on the other hand, it hampers day to day activities of the schools if not timely managed. New teachers after being recruited and selected should be trained and socialized for making them familiar with the school rules and regulations. It takes a long time and incurs a huge cost for new teachers' recruitment, training and socialization activities. Thus, turnover of teachers causes waste of time of administration and of financial resources of schools. Moreover, Barnes et al. (2007) stated that teachers' high turnover decreases school administration's goodwill.

Change of teachers untimely in the middle of the session affects student achievements (Guin, 2004). If the vacant positions are not fulfilled immediately, it affects the learning activities of the students. The teaching pedagogy of new teachers may be different from that of previous teachers. It may create problems for the students to adjust to the new methodology of new teachers.

From the above discussion, it appears that excessive teacher turnover is not good for all stakeholders. Therefore, it is necessary to explore determinants

for teacher turnover of private schools of Nepal and to motivate teachers to be retained in schools so that quality of teaching remains consistent in the short run and improved in the long run. There was dearth of studies carried out in the retention of teachers in private schools of Nepal. Moreover, this research incorporated the private schools of Bhaktapur District of Nepal and this issue has not been explored yet.

The objective of the study is to find out the relationship of teacher retention with domains of its determinants in private schools of Bhaktapur district. To fulfill this objective, the following research questions were used:

1. What is the association between teacher retention and domains (financial, school culture, social and emotional) of its determinants in private schools of Bhaktapur district?
2. To what extent do domains (financial, school culture, social and emotional) of determinants explain teacher retention in private schools of Bhaktapur district?

Based on research questions stated above, the following hypotheses were formulated:

H₁: There is a significant association between teacher retention and domains (financial, school culture, social and emotional) of determinants.

H₂: There is a significant predictive relationship between teacher retention and financial domain of determinants.

H₃: There is a significant predictive relationship between teacher retention and school culture domain of determinants.

H₄: There is a significant predictive relationship between teacher retention and social domain of determinants.

H₅: There is a significant predictive relationship between teacher retention and emotional domain of determinants.

There may be many determinants of retention and sustainability of teachers in private schools of Bhaktapur district. This study focused only on determinants of financial, school culture, social, and emotional domains. In the financial domain, the researcher focused only on the fulfillment of minimum requirement, pay scale, gratuity, provident fund, festival allowances, fringe benefit, and free education. The researcher particularly focused on the provision of necessary materials, supportive leadership, constructive feedback, autonomy, reward system, colleagues' support, collaborative leadership, evaluation system, working environment, and discipline of students in the school culture domain. The researcher focused on social respect,

privilege from society, social status, parental support in the social domain. Similarly, potential growth, challenging job, creativity, patience to the profession, contribution to society, and enjoy working were focused on the emotional domain.

Literature Review

Private schools are those schools which are funded and operated by a person, group of persons, or company and have obtained approval or permission for operation from the concerned government authority like local government such as Rural Municipality or Municipality or Metropolitan city (MOE, 2019). According to Education Act 2019, these schools are operated by a company or trust. Private schools in Nepal do not receive any government fund and grants. They collect fees from students with the consent of the local government body. They must follow the rules and regulations made by the government.

There are 6566 private schools (grade 1 to 12) registered up to 2018 (MOEST, 2019)). This number is 18.44% of the total number of schools in Nepal. A total of 87,012 teachers are working in private schools (grades 1 to 12). This number is 26.73% of total teachers working in schools in Nepal. Similarly, there are 1,328,693 students (grades 1 to 12) studying in private schools in Nepal. This number is 17.97% of total students studying in a school in Nepal (MOEST, 2019)).

It is said that private schools are growing in the trend of mushroom. These schools are at the center of attraction of students, parents and guardians. It is due to trust of guardians and parents upon them (Khadka, 2010).

It is important for educational institutions to recruit and retain qualified teachers. Employee retention is the ability of an organization to retain its employees for a longer period than its competitors (Johnson, 2000). Retention mostly concerns with the number of employees who are remaining within an organization in a certain period of time, whereas the turnover concerns with the number of employees leaving an organization in a certain period of time. Retention rate and turnover rate are often calculated on an annual basis. Retention rate of teachers is often calculated as dividing the number of teachers that continued in the next academic year by the total number of teachers working in the previous academic year. Similarly, teacher turnover rate is often calculated as the number of teachers leaving in a particular academic year divided by total number of teachers working in the previous academic year.

Nowadays, employee retention and turnover has become a major concern for organizations. Turnover rate of school teachers seems higher than that in other professions even in developed countries. The turnover rate of teachers was 16% in

America in 2019 (NCES, 2019), whereas it is 11% in other professions in America. Teacher turnover rate was 10.5% in the UK in 2015 (NFER, 2018). From the study of teacher turnover in industrialized countries, it was found that Germany has less than 5 percent, Hong Kong has less than 10 percent, and in France and Portugal, it is negligible (Cooper & Alvarado, 2006).

In Nepal, a number of research studies were conducted regarding retention of employees in other sectors like banks, insurances, etc. Ghimire (2015) studied factors affecting retention of employees in Nepalese Insurance Companies. In the same way, Chalise (2019) studied on the employee retention in Nepalese Commercial Banks, whereas few research studies were done regarding the retention of teachers in Nepal. A research study conducted in Butwal Municipality by Upadhyaya et al. (2013) concluded that the teacher turnover rate of private schools of Butwal Municipality was 18%. A seminar of administrators held in Chitwan, Nepal in 2008 revealed that 60% to 70% of teachers never continued their teaching profession for more than two years in the same private school (Dhungel, 2008). Thus, the teacher turnover rate is higher even in developed countries. It is more challenging in developing countries like Nepal.

Determinants of Teacher Retention

There may be various determinants for the retention and sustainability of teachers in private schools. The determinants for teacher retention may be age, the background of the study, family structure, career opportunity, working environment, pay scale, retirement benefit, qualification, support of supervisors, peer support, etc. Ingersoll (2001) claims that these determinants can be broadly categorized into financial, demographic, social, institutional, security, external and personal determinants.

Institutional Determinants

Institutional determinants like professionalism, working environment, and administrative support are more important than other determinants (Kersaint et al., 2007). Support for beginning teachers, staff involvement in decision-making processes, and teachers working as a team help for the retention of teachers. Overall, a positive working environment for teachers is a part of the school culture. Support from a school administrator or executive is also an important factor for the decision of teachers to stay or leave the teaching profession. According to Churngchow and Sittichai (2014), encouragement from school executives like principal, deputy head teachers, head teachers, or assistant principals affect the teacher retention in all schools, especially in rural areas. Teacher retention can be improved through the establishment of reciprocal relationship between the teachers and the principal.

Regular meeting with individual teacher provides the principal with an opportunity to provide leadership roles and opportunities for teacher-leaders (Morgan & Kristsonis, 2008).

Teacher retention is also affected by leadership culture within the organization. If principals cultivate teacher leaders within their schools, teacher retention may be improved with the benefits of stable school culture (Danielson, 2006). Similarly, Ojha (2016) carried out a study on the recruitment and retention of teachers in higher educational institutions of Nepal. He found that there is a lack of systematic policy and practice for recruitment and retention of teachers.

Financial Determinants

Financial determinants like pay scale, bonus, retirement benefit such as provident fund, pensions and so on are strong determinants for teacher retention (Locklear, 2005). High pay scale and bonus motivate teachers to be in the profession because they provide financial support at present, whereas pensions are different from other forms of compensation because there is a gap between the time of earning and the time of receiving. Gordon and Blinder (1980) claim that workers get inspired to work during their productive years and they leave their jobs at the age when their productivity decreases and their retirement benefits become sufficient to meet their requirements.

Ojha (2016) finds that there is lack of proper pay scale and allowances in private schools which causes teachers to leave their job. Khanal and Phyak (2021) conclude that job satisfaction and motivation of teachers is affected by policy related factors like payment, allowances, bonus, pension, gratuity, etc.

Personal or Emotional Determinants

Personal determinants like individual causes, subject of teaching, career development, and individual interest are the main determinants for teacher attrition and turnover (Giacometti, 2005). Future career opportunity is also an important element for the decision of teachers to stay in or leave the teaching profession. Those teachers who think professional learning in the schools stay in the schools longer than other teachers. This finding is supported by Buchanan et al. (2013). Another determinant for teacher turnover is the subject of teaching. Buchanan et al. (2013) state that teachers of the subjects like Maths and Science have more turnover rate than that of general subjects like geography, history, health, population, etc.

Creativity and responsibility matter in teacher retention. Teachers must be given freedom to raise and respond to critical issues in the classroom during teaching learning process. They must be given opportunities to work as problem solvers.

Charlton and Kritsonis (2009) declare that sense of self-esteem can be improved through the acknowledgement and positive recognition of teachers.

Social Determinants

There is a reciprocal relationship between school and society with mutual trust and support. Teacher retention is affected by support and attitude of government and society. The teaching profession is becoming challenging because of diversity in classroom conditions such as students of different ethnic groups, different castes, the immersion of different languages in the classrooms, state-imposed programmes, a requirement of extra knowledge and skills, varieties of assessment methods, and a variety of new instructional strategies (Inman & Marlow, 2004). New teachers feel that this profession is more challenging and difficult due to expectations made by the school administration and society. Khazei et al. (2016) found that there was a positive impact of social factors on job satisfaction and teacher retention. Parental support has an impact on job satisfaction and teacher retention (Harris & Associates, 1992). National Education Foundation for Research (NEFR, 2018) reported that there have been negative attitudes from parents and public towards teachers of private schools since 1981 in UK.

Policy Review

The educational policy documents, i.e. Education Act 2019 and Education for All programme clearly stated that private schools have to manage their fund themselves. There is no governmental funding. They can collect fees from students by taking permission from a government authority. The private schools should manage their all expenses in the course of their operations with the fees collected from their students. The Education Act 2019 and Education Rules 2002 also state that all private schools must protect and promote the service of teachers and other working staff members and provide necessary facilities as prescribed by the government. It is stated that private schools should ensure minimum pay scale as per the pay scale of teachers of community schools. According to educational rules 2002, major provisions which the private schools should make to their teachers are as follows: a) pay scale equal to the pay scale of community school, b) festival allowances equal to one month salary, c) leaves of various categories like sick leave, home leave d) health insurance. But, this direction is hardly followed by the private schools. Khadka (2021) states that majority of the private schools do not provide pay scale and other facilities as directed by the government.

The education acts have clearly specified the minimum qualification needed for teachers of private schools, but not specified the process of recruitment and

selection of teachers. Shrestha (2008) states that private schools are fully authorized to recruit and select teachers of their own. He further adds teachers are generally appointed almost on contract basis for one year. Their term is generally extended as per the interest of the school administrators. They will be dismissed from their job at any time. Thus, job security among teachers in private schools is becoming a burning issue.

According to National Education Policy 2010, school teachers either community or private should be awarded by the school, local government and even by the central government on the basis of the student achievement and teacher performance assessment. But the reward of private school teachers by the governmental level is rare in practice.

Education rules 2002 clearly state that all private schools should prepare their own rules and regulations regarding management of human resources of their organizations. They prepare these documents and submit to government authority at the time of taking approval from the concerned authority. The provisions of these documents are rarely followed in practice.

Previous Studies

Cooper and Robertson (1998), Ingersoll (2001), Walker et al. (2004), Giacometti (2005) and Locklear (2005) conducted research studies in this field from different perspectives abroad. But there is a dearth of research of this kind in Nepal as only a few research studies (Upadhyaya et al., 2013) have been carried out so far in this domain. The research studies conducted abroad revealed that pay scale, retirement benefit, provident fund, festival allowances, age, qualification, family size, administrators' support, reward system, support from seniors, prestige, and recognition from society, social support and privilege, parental support, career development, etc. are the main determinants of teacher retention. These determinants are broadly categorized as financial factors, social factors, demographic factors, school culture factors, etc.

The researcher did not come across any study conducted in Nepal to find out the determinants of teacher retention to cover the financial, social, school culture, and emotional domains. The earlier studies were carried out focusing only on the demographic domain. The earlier research studies did not focus on the predictive relation of those determinants upon the teacher retention. This research revealed determinants of teacher retention under headings of financial domain, social domain, school culture domain, and emotional domain. It also revealed the predictive relation of those determinants upon teacher retention. Moreover, the study area of this research incorporated the private schools of Bhaktapur District of Nepal and this issue has not been explored yet.

Methods and Procedures

This study adopted a survey research with correlational design and it included 498 secondary level (grade IX and grad X) teachers of private schools of Bhaktapur district. Out of 498 teachers, a random sample of 224 teachers was selected by using formula developed by Taro Yamane, 1967 after following the cluster sampling method. The formula is as follows:

$$n = \frac{N}{N e^2}, \text{ where } n \text{ is sample size, } N \text{ is population and } e \text{ is margin of error.}$$

Questionnaire as a data collection tool was developed after going through literature review and reviewing questions used by Giocemeti (2005) and Pradhan (2014). The questionnaire was divided into two different sections. Section 'A' contains 39 general information of the respondents addressing personal attributes. Section 'B' contains statements related to determinants of teacher retention. Seven statements contained the dimensions of financial domain, four statements contained the dimensions of social domain, thirteen statements contain the dimensions of school culture domain and six statements contain the dimensions of emotional domain. The satisfaction level of the respondents regarding dimensions of domains of teacher retention was measured with the help of five points Likert Scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The reliability of the research tool was satisfied by maintaining Cronbach Alpha more than 0.7 through piloting of the primary instrument. In the second pilot study, the value of Cronbach Alpha of the questions of financial domain, social domain, school culture domain and emotional domain were found 0.792, 0.766, 0.769 and 0.758 respectively. In this study, content validity was assured through rigorous literature review and incorporating the feedback and suggestion obtained after discussion with subject experts. Similarly, the constructs used in the questionnaire were developed by reviewing literature and motivation-related theories. Thus, construct validity was assured. Ultimately, the criterion-related validity was assured through comparison of the finding of this study with findings of the previous studies. The researcher has analyzed the primary data obtained from the study through statistical tools. Inferential statistical tool named correlation analysis was used to find association between teacher retention and domains of determinants. In the same way, regression analysis was used to find predictive relation of domains of determinants upon teacher retention

Results

Association of Teacher Retention and Domains of Determinants

Based on the first research question ‘what is the association between teacher retention and domains (financial, school culture, social and emotional) of determinants of teacher retention in private schools of Bhaktapur district?’, data obtained from the study was analyzed and the following findings were obtained:

Table 1

Correlation Coefficient of Teacher Retention with Domains of Determinants (N= 224)

Variable	1	2	3	4
1.Retention rate				
2. Financial domain	0.803**			
3.School culture domain	0.717**	0.685**		
4.Social domain	0.362**	0.400**	0.428**	
5.Emotional domain	0.597**	0.636**	0.696**	0.531**

** Correlation is significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed)

There is a strong positive association between teacher retention and the financial domain. The Pearson’s correlation coefficient is 0.803 with p-value less than 0.005. In other words, when the value of one variable changes by one unit, there occurs a change in the value of another variable by 0.803 unit in the same direction. The result accepts the first alternative hypothesis that “there is a significant positive association between teacher retention and financial domain of determinants”. Similarly, there is a strong positive association between teacher retention and school culture domain with the Pearson’s correlation coefficient 0.717 and p-value less than 0.05. It indicates that when the value of one variable changes by one unit, the value of another variable changes by 0.717 unit in the same direction. The result accepts the first alternative hypothesis that “there is a significant positive association between teacher retention and school culture domain of determinants”. In the same way, there is a weak positive association between teacher retention and social domain with the Pearson’s correlation coefficient 0.362 and p-value less than 0.05. This indicates that when value of one variable increases by one unit, the value of another variable also increases by 0.362 unit. The result accepts the first alternative hypothesis, “there is a significant positive association between teacher retention and social domain of

determinants”. In addition, there is a moderate positive association between teacher retention and emotional domain with the Pearson’s correlation coefficient 0.597 and p-value less than 0.05. In other words, when there occurs change in the value of one variable through unit, there will be a change in the value of another variable by 0.597 units. The result accepts the first alternative hypothesis, “there is a significant association between teacher retention and emotional domain of the determinants”.

Impact of Domain of Determinants upon Teacher Retention

Based on the second research question, ‘To what extent do domains (financial, school culture, social and emotional) of determinants explain teacher retention in private schools of Bhaktapur district?’, the data of the study was analyzed. Then the following findings were obtained:

Table 2

Model Summary of Four Domains of Determinants with Teacher Retention

Model	R	R ²	R ² change	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error of the Est.
1	0.803 ^a	0.645	0.645	0.643	0.037
2	0.717 ^b	0.515	0.515	0.512	0.043
3	0.362 ^c	0.131	0.131	0.127	0.057
4	0.597 ^d	0.356	0.356	0.353	0.049
5	0.835 ^e	0.698	0.698	0.692	0.034

There is a significant predictive relation between teacher retention and financial domain with the value of R² as 0.645, and β value of 0.108. It demonstrates that 65% of the variance in teacher retention is explained by the financial domain. Similarly, β value with 0.108 indicates that an increase in the financial domain by one unit causes an increase in teacher retention by 0.108 units when other independent variables remain constant. Since p-value of the result is less than 0.05, the result is significant. This result accepts the second alternative hypothesis, “there is a predictive relationship between teacher retention and financial domain of determinants”.

Table 3

Regression Coefficients of Determinants of Teacher Retention with Teacher Retention Rate

Coefficients						
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients			T	Sig.	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	0.360	0.023	15.534	0.000	
	Average_ F	0.108	0.010	0.586	10.933	0.000
	Average_ SC	0.045	0.008	0.313	5.423	0.000
	Average_ S	-0.002	0.005	-0.013	-0.294	0.769
	Average_ E	0.002	0.008	0.013	0.223	0.824

- a. *Dependent Variable: retention_rate*
- b. *Independent variable: financial, school culture, social and emotional domain*

In the same say, there is a significant predictive relation between teacher retention and school culture domain with the value of R^2 as 0.515 with β value as 0.045. It demonstrates that 52% of the variance in teacher retention is explained by the school culture domain. β value with 0.045 indicates that an increase in school culture domain by one unit causes an increase in teacher retention by 0.045 units when other independent variables remain constant. Since p-value associated with school culture domain is less than 0.05, the result is significant and applicable to the population. This result accepts the third alternative hypothesis: “there is a predictive relationship between teacher retention and school culture domain of determinants”. Since p-value of social domain and emotion domain is more than 0.05, the result is not significant. In addition, there is a significant predictive relation between teacher retention and overall domains including all domains of determinants (financial domain, school culture domain, social domain, and emotional domain) with values 0.692 as R^2 . It demonstrates that 69% variance in teacher retention is explained by the overall domains. In other words, this model best fits regression by 69%. The results reject the fourth and fifth alternative hypotheses.

Discussion

The findings obtained from this study were discussed with previous findings, literature review, and theories.

This study revealed that there is a significant strong positive association between teacher retention and financial domain. This study also revealed that there is a significant predictive relation of teacher retention and financial domain. These findings are similar to the finding of Gordon and Blinder (1980). Their findings stated that financial determinants like pay scale, retirement benefits such as provident funds, gratuity, pension, etc., motivate teachers to remain in the profession. The findings of this study match with the finding of Ippolito (2002). He found that financial determinants like pension, pay scale, fringe benefits are the key determinants of teacher retention. Shrestha (2008) also stated that financial factor is the main factor of employee retention in an organization.

From this study, I revealed that there is a significant association between teacher retention and school culture domain. The regression analysis also shows that there is a significant predictive relation of teacher retention with the school culture domain. When I went through the literature review, the following findings were explored: Darling-Hammond and Sclan (1996) indicated that school culture is the most dominant factor for teacher retention. Factors like administrative support to new teacher in regard to assigning duties, workload, discipline, participation, and collaborative culture are included in school culture domain. Danielson (2006) stated that collaborative leadership is one way to improve teacher retention in a school. Buchanan et al. (2013) also support the findings that the teacher retention and resignation of teachers are affected by administrators' support and care. From the above discussions, it can be pointed out that the findings of this study regarding school culture are supported by the literature review too.

This study shows that there is a weak positive association between teacher retention and the social domain. From the result of the regression analysis, we cannot say that there is a significant predictive relationship between teacher retention and the social domain. When these findings are compared with the literature review and previous findings, the findings of correlation analysis match with the findings of the literature review. Job security and the social status of the profession are considered to be the determinants of teacher retention (Tehseen & Hadi, 2015). Gomez (1994) advocated that parental support has an impact on job satisfaction, which may affect teacher retention. But, the finding of regression analysis does not match with the findings of the literature review and previous findings. Khanal and Phyak (2021) stated that socio- cultural factors affect motivation and retention of teachers in their professions. Khazei et al. (2016) found that there was positive impact of social factors on job satisfaction and teacher retention.

The correlation analysis of this research shows that there is a moderate positive association between teacher retention and the emotional domain. From

the result of linear regression analysis, we cannot say that there is a significant predictive relationship between teacher retention and the emotional domain. When I went through the literature and previous findings, the results of the correlation analysis match with the findings of the previous research studies and literature review, whereas the results of regression analysis contradict. Voke (2002) found that personal or emotional determinants like individual causes, subject of teaching, career development and individual interest are main determinants for teacher attrition and turnover. Inman and Marlow (2004) state that future career opportunity is also an important element for the decision of teachers to stay in or leave the teaching profession. Those teachers who think professional learning in the schools stay in the schools longer than other teachers (Buchanan et al., 2013). Fairman and McLean (2003) stated that teachers get satisfied when they are observed as experts in student learning. Churngchow and Sittichai (2014) claimed that future career opportunity and professional learning are key determinants for teacher motivation and teacher retention. Searby and Shaddix (2008) advocated that professional development and additional recommendation and certification are key factors for teacher motivation and retention

The findings of this study in regard to regression analysis of social and emotional domain do not match with the findings of earlier researches. The earlier researches declared that teacher retention is not affected only by social and emotional factors but by other many factors like financial, institutional, demographic, political, legal, individual factors. Financial factors and school culture factors are more powerful factors than other factors. Therefore, further study on these domains is recommended.

Moreover, it should be noted that this study was limited to the private schools of Bhaktapur district that may not represent the whole nation and cannot be generalized to that end.

Conclusion

The study reveals that there is a strong positive association between teacher retention and financial domain; and between teacher retention and school culture domain. Likewise, there is a weak positive association between teacher retention and social domain; and moderate association between teacher retention and emotional domain. The study reveals that there is a significant predictive relation of teacher retention and financial domain; and teacher retention and school culture domain. Numbers of literature and research studies have supported the findings of this study.

Based on the analysis, the study has drawn some meaningful conclusions. I conclude that retention of teachers in schools is a complex phenomenon which requires satisfaction of domain of determinants. It can also be concluded that all domains of determinants have positive and significant association with teacher

retention. Moreover, financial domain and school culture domain have powerful impact on teacher retention. Therefore, school administrators and policy makers have to put sufficient efforts for the satisfaction of financial, school culture, social and emotional domains with more emphasis to financial and school culture domain. Good management should not only focus on salary and financial benefits but also equally put emphasis on good school culture domain like collaborative leadership, working environment, and emotional domain like career opportunities, creativity, autonomy, etc.

Teacher retention is affected by satisfaction level of teachers in various domains. This study has not included all domains. Further researchers can conduct study on role of demographic factors, subject of teaching, academic background, etc. on teacher retention.

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Life Cycle Rituals among the Rana Tharus of Far Western Nepal

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Abstract

This article focuses on the life cycle rituals of the Rana Tharu community of Far Western Terai. The Rana Tharus are one of the significant ethnic groups mostly concentrated in Kailali and Kanchanpur district of Far West region of Nepal. The objective of this study was to explore the life cycle rituals of the Rana Tharus. For this purpose, the Rana Tharu community of Kalagaudhi and Kalwapur village in Shukalaphanta Municipality, Kanchanpur district was selected as a study area. The research tools of this phenomenological qualitative research design include semi-structured interview, focus group discussion, informal discussion, observation and oral histories in data collection. This study narrates the life cycle rituals performed by the Rana Tharus elucidating peculiar type of death ritual Ghada (Sharaddha) performed only by the Rana Tharus. This death ritual is organized only after the death of the family member. In this ritual, a dummy prepared for the deceased person and the relatives of the deceased mourns for the night assuming dummy as the corpse of deceased person. The various social-cultural institution, traditions and practices followed by the Rana Tharus have developed social solidarity and cooperation among the Rana Tharus and have functioned properly for the maintenance of the livelihood of the Rana Tharus. The performance of life cycle rituals among the Rana Tharus has become a structure and system among them and is becoming an instrument of identity construction.

Keywords: birth, marriage, death, Ghada, identity

Introduction

Nepal is the country with vast diversity in caste/ethnicity, religion, language and culture. According to 2011 census, there are 125 castes/ethnic groups and 123

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mother languages spoken in Nepal (Central bureau of statistics, 2012). The social system or structure of Nepal is based on the unity and diversity that integrates various caste, ethnic, religious, linguistic, and cultural groups. Each and every ethnic group has its own language, arts, norms and values, morals, belief, society, culture and economic institution which are considered to be a primary identity of ethnic group.

The Tharus are one of the ethnic groups inhabiting a number of districts stretching from east to west in the plains and inner Terai and in the bordering districts of India and Nepal (Dhakal, 2013). They live throughout the southern belt of Nepal called the Terai from the east through to the west and the adjacent valleys between the Chure Range and the Mahabharat called the Inner Terai. Most of the Tharu people are known in terms of the territory they occupy or from where they have migrated (Guneratne, 2002). The majority of the population consisted of the indigenous Tharu people who were believed to have strong resistance to malaria. The term “Tharu” is “historically endogamous groups.” These groups differ from each other in language and cultural practices (Guneratne, 1992). The Tharus were divided into two sub-groups Rana and Dangaura that were significantly different in language and customs (Odegaard, 1997). They speak the Rana Tharu language, wear traditional dress and practice the same customs. All of these make them a distinctive ethnic group (Lam, 2012; Smith, 1986).

The Rana Tharus are probably among the oldest groups to inhabit the Farwestern Terai (Bista, 2013). Rana Tharu of Far-western Terai are an endogamous population that straddle the border between Nepal’s Kailali, Kanchanpur district and adjacent district of Lakhimpur Khiri of Uttar Pradesh and Uddham Singhnagar of Uttaranchal, India (Gunratne, 2002; Srivasatava, 199). They have different languages, social structure, folk story, norms and value, living style, food, dress, house structure, life cycle rituals and culture from other ethnic groups (Bist, 2015; Gurung, 1992).

The social structure and culture of the Rana Tharus are gradually being changed and during this process, their cultural norms and values are getting lost. Sociologically speaking, a number of powerful factors like modernization, westernization, sanskritisation and globalization have contributed to bring change in their society and culture. The Rana Tharus have historically marginalized from the state’s political institution, social and economic development sectors. No significant effort has been made to involve them in the state’s power institution, mainstream and the development process. Thus, this study aims at documenting the life cycle rituals and cultural practices system of the Rana Tharus for understanding their holistic life style.

Despite having affluent social and cultural system of the Rana Tharu community, there was insufficient research work carried out among the Tharu community. There was no in-depth information about the Rana Tharus. This study explains birth, marriage and death, ritual of Rana Tharu. This is a scientific study of the life cycle rituals of the Rana Tharu community and will contribute significantly to the knowledge of the practice of rituals. The study will provide specific information on the life cycle rituals of the Rana Tharu people in general. At the same time, it also contributes to providing material in the future study of the Rana Tharu culture.

Methods and Procedures

This paper is based on earlier field work carried out in 2020 among the Rana Tharus of Sukalaphata Municipality, Kalagaudhi and Kalwapur village of Kanchanpur district, Far Western Terai. The study area was purposively selected for the field research because of the high density and cultural homogeneity of the Rana Tharu people in the area. The nature of research is qualitative with phenomenological research design. Research tools include key semi-structured interview, focus group discussion, informal discussion, observation and oral histories in data collection. Altogether twenty five key informants including Bhalmansha (Village chief), Bharra (Dhami-jhakri of Rana tharu), Chakar (information provider), teacher and social worker, leader were consulted for this study. Basically this study focuses on life cycle rituals practice of the Rana Tharus. Audio and video recorders, a camera, and a field diary were used to record information. Participant observation was utilized for data collection for information on birth, marriage and death rituals of the Rana Tharus.

Results and Discussion

Human beings celebrate deferent types of rituals in each phase of their life, starting from birth, puberty, marriage and death, concerning the occurrence of single phases or movement from one stage of life to another (Saber, 2017). According to Dhurkhiem (1912), ritual is an approach through which collective beliefs and ideals are instantly generated, experienced and acknowledged as fact within the community. The ritual is the way by means of which individual views and behaviour are socially appropriated. So, rituals play a crucial role in the collective representations of social lifestyles and persons pastime (Bell, 1992). Ritual action is seen in all areas of social life and is one of the key means. A ritual is deeply connected with the individual or collective beliefs as Shils (1968) stated that “beliefs could exist without rituals; rituals however could not exist without beliefs.”

The lifecycle ritual is that ritual pertaining to the life in different stages and its consequences. Life-cycle rituals continue to have significance in both simple and complex societies. In each society, ritual action has its own meaning which

is culturally transmitted through custom and tradition. The individual and groups solve their problems in both the sacred and profane aspects of social existence. Customs and traditions remain alive from generation to generation with the cohesive attachment with their religion. In light of religion, Durkheim argued that religions are collective representations which express collective realities; the rites are a manner of acting which take rise in the midst of the assembled groups and which are destined to excite, maintain or recreate certain mental states in these groups. So if the categories are of religious origin, they ought to participate in this nature common to all religious facts, they too should be social affairs and the product of collective thought (Durkheim, 1912). The Rana Tharus perform different rituals in different life phases. Each ritual has different connotations and carries different significances. Each ritual practice varies in term of its nature, performance and time period. The followings are the life cycle rituals performed by the Rana Tharus.

Birth Ritual

The birth ritual among the Rana Tharus is both interesting and strange. Earlier women used to give birth to the babies at their homes only. Nursing/caring mother (Dhai Maa) assists pregnant women during delivery. In Rana Tharu dialect, Dhai Maa is referred as 'Dai budhne.' As per the old custom, she used to care of pregnant women, massage her body, cut the umbilical cord of young one (newly born infant) and wash clothes of the mother. She carefully looks after the umbilical cord until it is completely dried and becomes normal as it may get infected. The sixth day of the birth is termed as chhaiti. Daai maa washes the baby and mother, dresses the baby in new outfit, ties black thread on the hands, legs and waist of the baby, puts kohl and vermilion mark on the forehead of the child. On this day (chhaiti), villagers are invited for the feast. Most of the family brings one mana (20 kg) of rice while some people provide money coming for the feast. After the feast, the child is dressed for the first time and everyone is allowed to play with the child. There is a custom of hiding the dress and naming the newly born baby by his aunt. There is also a tradition of taking money while returning the dress of child by his aunt. There is a custom of giving name to the newly born babies by their aunt in Rana Tharu community. In case of birth of a boy, boy's uncle is called for firing gunshot on the sixth day of birth (chhaiti). It is believed that firing of gunshot makes the boy strong and extrovertly clever.

Daai Maa is given three mana (60 kg) of rice in case of birth of a boy and two mana (40 kg) of rice for the birth of the girl for her nursing services of pregnant women and infant. In addition to that, when she is called for her services she is given some money and clothes such as sari. Earlier there was a practice to bury umbilical cord within the house but nowadays, it is buried outside the house. The naming ritual

is performed on the sixth day of birth. Earlier there was a custom of giving fish beast for the child whether boy or girl. In old days, the conceived mother was not provided food for three days after her delivery. However, she is provided with perfect blend of tea made from ginger, sugar, water and mustard at morning and evening but their traditional /custom has disappeared (does not exist) nowadays.

Marriage Ritual

Marriages bond two families together and lead to the formation of strong bond between husband and wife. “Marriage is the approved social pattern whereby two or more persons establish a family” (Horton & Hunt, 1968). Marriage leads to the establishment of family and it is also the means of celebrations, happiness, togetherness. Marriage not only connects the two individuals but also brings two families together. Marriage is like a bridge which connects two individual legally and creates bond between two persons and their families. Marriage is one of the important religious as well as cultural aspects along with other different cultural aspect in Rana-Tharu community (Bist & Bist, 2021). In Rana-Tharu society different norms, rituals are performed before marriage and after marriage also. In Rana Tharu caste, there was a custom of womb engagement for the marriage. In case of birth of boys ‘Dilbar’, for birth of girls ‘Gunj’ and for birth of boy and girl ‘marriage’ is performed. In case when womb engagement is not done, early age (premature) engagement is done and marriage was fixed in old days. One has to marry according to choice or selection made by the parents. Baina ceremony is also performed where boy’s side families brings mithi puri and sweets to girls house. If in case the magani is broken off then the girls side have to pay back all that they have received from the boys families (Gurung & Kittelsen, 1999).

There was no custom to know the desire or consult with the children for marriage. Nowadays, this engagement marriage custom is changing rapidly. About 50% of boys and girls in Rana Tharu tribe marry to their desired/selected partner nowadays but still an equal percentage of boys and girls follow their parents’ instructions regarding marriage. Earlier there was a custom to marry at the age of about 20 to 25 years but nowadays there is an increasing trend of marring in early age (premature age). At present, three forms of marriage are prevalent in Rana Tharu community. First marriage is engagement marriage. Second marriage is arranged engagement marriage in which boys and girls like/dislike one another for their marriage. And third one is love marriage in which boys and girls marry against the wish of their parents.

There is a custom to organize marriages only on Sunday and Thursday in Rana Thura caste. After the end of holi (festival of colours) in Chaitra, the time

period for engagement begins and their period extends upto the month of Jestha. The months of Mangsir, Poush and Magh are regarded as suitable months for marriages. Usually most of the marriage is organized in the winter months. Before the beginning of the suitable months of marriages, boy's parents or relatives go to girl's house with a marriage proposal. Negotiations are done regarding marriages and when the agreement is reached regarding marriage between both the parties, the boy party sends turmeric and oil to the girl's house before 12 days of marriage. A traditional custom to prepare cooking stove (khana pakaune chula) is followed before marriage in Rana Tharu caste. There is usual practice to prepare 5 stoves in girl's marriage and 7 stoves in boy's marriage as an omen (*sakun*). There women are appointed to prepare delicacies for marriage. There women are known as '*Bhuijan*' in Tharu language. Women clean and smear the house with red clays before three days to marriage. It is termed as '*chiya chauka*'. Before three days to the marriage, the house is again smeared with clay, this time it is referred to as '*aachho chauka*'. In the same day, stove establishing custom is performed. For this custom, village women's are invited or called for establishing the stoves and singing folk songs.

At the evening, *bhuijan* establishes stoves in the kitchen by taking seven girls and one boy for boy's marriage, and five girls and one boy in case of girls marriage. From this day, *bhuijans* cook food and serve the food to the visitors /guests. The preceding days to marriage is termed as '*bhuiya bare*'. On this day in the morning the head of family along with the children visit forest for worshipping the tree. For this they carry juggery (moulded gur, sweets), threads, scented sticks and an axe to the forest. Tree is worshipped by rolling the thread seven times around it. Firewoods are collected by cutting the trees /wood and they are brought to the house for cooking food for the marriage. In the morning, Guruba (Bharr) is called, he collects small amount of all the food items (lentils, rice, oil salt, turmeric, etc. and blows air into their goods (blears) and perform some rituals while enchanting mantra and again mix collected food items in all goods brought for marriage ceremony. It is believed that by performing this ritual, there will be no shortage of food for marriage and food would be enough for all. Before worshiping *bhuiya*, patrilineal members are called for cooking fried bread (*puri*). After that bride and grooms mother wearing white clothes goes to worship *bhuiya* cleaned by a servant before the arrival of mothers of bride and groom for worshipping *bhuiya* god.

After offering seven pairs of *puri* to *bhuiya* god and others the fried bread is given to people present at the place as gift of god (*prasad*). After that, firstly *puri* is given to *padhana* (leader of village) ruler during *panchayat* period, nowadays to *bhalmanshaa*. After that *puris* are distributed among the neighbours and clan members (*kurma*). On this night, without sleeping and singing song fried bread are

prepared on the marriage day. Head of the family after turmeric to clan deity gives it to bharra. The bharra blesses the (blows air) turmeric and speaks mantra for the protection of bride and groom. Then bride and grooms sisters grind this turmeric. A colourful figure (rangoli) is drawn from charcoal, turmeric and flour at the place drawn in front of the room where kitchen god is established (kola) and at the place close to main gate /entrance of house where lineage deity is established. Before turmeric smearing ritual, grooms brother-in-law (elder sister husband) trims his hair and then turmeric smearing ritual begins. There is a custom according to which either bride or groom is touched with turmeric by seven girls and one boy firstly in this ritual. Then sister-in-law, elder and younger sister rub turmeric, sword is held and seven puris are pierced. Groom's brother-in-law stands behind his brother-in-law with sword for protection. The bride and groom are made to sit in after bathing and decoration and make up. Then groom moves to bride's house with marriage party (barat) and bride waits for the groom in her house.

Groom bows to lineage deity and outside deity and grooms brother-in-law lifts him on the palanquin (doli). The sisters of the bride wait for the arrival of marriage party at the decorated entrance of house with sweets, praying sticks and vermillion. A ribbon barricade is prepared in the entrance gate. The groom is welcomed at the entrance with tika, oil lamp (diyo batti) and sweets. Usually three or five girls offer sweets and fruits to groom and his brother-in-law. Few jokes are exchanged between boys and girls of opposite parties. When the groom says to open the barricade, the sisters of bride demands money for opening the barricade and letting them enter the house. A bargaining for the money occurs for a while and finally when both the parties settle for fixed amount of money to be paid as a charge for opening the barricade, the girls provide scissors to cut the ribbon and groom enters into bride's house with his marriage party.

There is a custom that when bride gets ready, two colourful figures (rangoli) are drawn in front of clan deity/situated in front of the main gate of house and two cooking stoves (chauka) are placed on the rangoli and bride and groom are made to stand there and their feet are washed and money is given to bride and groom. Feet are washed with ghee (clarified butter) and water is sprinkled on the groom and his brother-in-law. A lot of water is sprinkled by bride's sisters, brothers and sister-in-laws. The groom's brother-in-law (vinaju) provides his jacket to the groom in order to protect him from cold and there is a healthy, interesting discussion between boys and girls of both parties.

After feet washing ritual, groom's feet is cleaned by his brother-in-law and bride's feet is cleaned by her younger sister. when the slippery, oily feet of groom are

not cleaned properly , the brother-in-law asks for a cloth to the sisters of bride, the girls tease them and replies “Go and buy yourself, why did not you bring the cloth from home?” The place where feet are washed, kalash and lighted oil lamp is kept. At the same place, sister-in-law and brother-in-law ties knot between the hanging cloth of the bride and groom. Then both the bride and groom exchange the garland and groom puts vermilion on the bride’s forehead. They also take seven revolutions around the fire lighted in *kalash* assuming it as winter. After revolutions and putting vermilion ritual, the knot in the hanging cloth is unfolded. Meanwhile, joking talks continues between sister-in-law and brother-in-law.

Groom and his brother-in-law are invited for food by bride’s sisters and adequate arrangement is made for their seats. A lot of jokes and franks are exchanged between sister-in-law and brother-in-law. After the food, groom shows his respects and bows to father, mother, grandfather, grandmother, uncle, aunt and sister-in-law, and all in turn. The brother-in-law along with the groom bows to show respect, everyone provides money as donation to the groom. In the marriage, groom’s brother-in-law arranges for entire expenditure. Groom’s father and elder brother has no significant role in the marriage. Brother-in-law is the potential figure for the marriage.

After the farewell of bride from her parent’s house, groom sits on his manual wooden carriage (*doli*) prepared by her parents. Bride’s carriage is lifted by her elder and younger brothers. The entire village mourns at the departure of the bride. Mother and sister-in-law and sisters follow the carriage to the midway of path. Before reaching the house, the brother worship the lamp of rice flowers and eggs brought from house. He breaks and throws these things in three directions. It is believed that by performing this custom, the evil spirits are prevented from entering in their village, i.e. this custom has symbolic meaning.

Groom’s younger sister decorates the entrance gate of the house in an artistic manner. When the marriage party reaches groom’s house, her sisters worship the couple at the entrance gate, a figure identical to betel leaf is formed which is illuminated by lights. The bride and groom are welcomed and brought to the lawn. The couple is made stand near the stove which is placed on the rangoli made close to the lineage/clan deity. Groom’s sisters offer prayers. This is termed as ‘*dalo dalwa halai*’ ritual /custom.

After that the bride groom are permitted to enter inside the house. A bag to containing rice and money is opened and emptied close to clan deity situated nearly by entrance gate of house. The couple is taken to the kitchen while entering the house. The groom’s sisters block the passage /way at the main gate of the kitchen and

demand money by singing songs and remove the block on getting money. Bride and groom bow to the house deity (kola) installed in the same room of the kitchen. They also bow to the deity outside the kola and stay in the kitchen. Cooked rice is placed in groom's hand and the same cooked rice is then placed on bride's hand and the bride put it on the plate. This process is termed as *sitkora khilaune rasam*.

Bride stays with her friends in the deity room for the nights whereas groom remains free. In the next morning, bride is taken to the brooke. After her return from the brooke, the custom to visit bride begins. People of entire village are called. The bride sits on the verandah where everyone pats red *tika* (vermillion) to her and her husband mother introduces her to everyone. During *tika* and introduction process, villagers and relatives give cloth, money and gifts to the newly married bride. Mother of husband introduces her to the relatives and explains how the persons are related to her.

After the end of bride meeting custom, the bride is bathed and dressed in cloth from her parent's house and taken to the kitchen ride assists in cooking food and outside the kitchen dancing continues in full swing. Although bride touches and works in kitchen but she is not allowed to touch water tap until water filling custom is not completed. The ritual is performed on Monday by some people whereas others perform it on Wednesday. The bride fills the water in bowl and provides it to all the members of family for drinking. From this day, she is permitted to touch the water tap. After the water filling custom, there is a usual practice in which the bride puts ghee (clarified butter) to the food in the evening. After the food, a programme is organized in which bride bows to grooms sister and brother-in-law. It is termed as *pai lagai* in Rana Tharu dialect. Husband's elder brother's wife escorts the bride and the bride gives bow to the relatives and receives money in return. This custom marks the end of marriage ceremony.

In the old days, there was a custom in which the bride returns to parents / maternal house on the next day of marriage and on the next day, brother-in-law of the groom brings the bride in buffalo cart (dunlop) in which either canvas is hanged or its is covered with cloth. This is termed as *ninaro* and the cart is termed as 'ninaro wale dunlop' but nowadays this custom has disappeared. In case of marriage of youngest son, happiness exchange programme is organized one day after marriage. This is termed as *gulta ultayaune*. In this custom, groom's sisters and sister-in-law throw sweet, chocolates, biscuits, money, cigarettes, utensils, alcohol, etc. from the roof of the house on *gulta*. Children, youth and old people sit in the lawn /verandah. Sisters and sister-in-law go to the roof of house, dance and through the above articles are thrown into the lawn. In the lawn, people collect their falling articles with enjoyment.

In this marriage, brother-in-law is assigned the responsibility to end the marriage. One of the brother-in-laws stays with the groom holding a sword and the other brother-in-law performs other duties. In the marriage, where money is required, things are needed; all these things are supplied by brother-in-laws. Groom is carried to bride's home in the wooden carriage and then again brought to his house by carriage. At the end of marriage, brother-in-law discusses the expenditure with groom's father. Brother-in-laws are in pressure and stress till marriage is finished. After the marriage is finished, the brother-in-law enjoys enough food and rests. At the end of marriage, bride's parent's provide groom with either of their animal (cow, buffalo, or ox) and cash payment as *dakshina* as religious offering.

In the marriage of Rana Tharu caste, pure and sacred food is prepared for vegetarians and meat products are prepared for non-vegetarians. The *bhagats* in Rana Tharu community eat vegetarian food. In the marriage, meat products of the goat, chicken, duck pigs, etc. are prepared for non-vegetarians. When the marriage is properly and successfully finished, *karbariya*, *bhalmansa* and groom are paid some amount of money as custom by the host family.

Death Ritual

Death, the last phase of life cycle, is a universal fact of human life. Each society has found remarkable range of response to the biological fact of human life. When anyone dies in Rana Tharu community, all the relatives and family members are informed. People get assembled and all the clothes of the deceased are removed from his body and his body is oiled and covered with white cloth. An oil lamp is lighted near dead cushion. All the clothes of the dead in the house are collected. New clothes are kept and old clothes are packed for destroying. The dead body is placed on a bed with bedding / mattress and is covered with quilt and the dead body is taken to the brook where the dead body is either buried or burned in the Rana Tharu custom. In case of burning, firstly elder son or younger son or both together give fire to dead body and finally everyone gives fire to dead body by bunch of khar stick. All the patriarchal family member (*kurma*) join the funeral and everyone shaves head. The *kurma* takes bath in the river after the funeral and returns home. Meanwhile, the dead person's house is smeared with red clay and the place where the death occurred smeared with clay and ash is placed over it and is covered with a basket.

After the funeral, there is a custom to look the basket to know what kind of rebirth is taken by the deceased. It is believed that impressions of bird, cat, human hands and legs are formed inside the basket. The dead body is lifted before the dusk for funeral. Rana Tharu people believe that if the dead body is buried or burnt after the dusk (at night), then in rebirth blind child is born. After returning from the brook

if the day light exists, purifying ritual is done. If time is insufficient, then the ritual is done on the next day. It is termed as minor *shraddya*. In the *shraddya* various types of food items are prepared and deceased soul is offered meal outside the house in east direction and food is also given to all the funeral participants.

Ghada Rituals

The Rana Tharus strongly believe that the *shraddya* of the departed must be performed within one year of his death. They refer it as Ghada. There is a custom to organize *shraddya* of an individual only once after his death in Rana Tharu community. In Rana Tharu caste, *shraddya* is only done in the month of Ashwin and Kartik, that also on Sunday and Wednesday among the whole week. In Rana Tharu community, relatives, family members, affinal kins are invited for funeral similar to marriage. It is termed as ‘din dinu’ in Rana Thura dialect. Patrilineal members visit one day before *shraddya*. They prepare a hut for departed soul in the lawn by suspending a sail (canvas piece). This is termed as *mundak*. Bedding is placed for the dead soul in the *mundak* and on the next day *shraddya* is done. It is termed as ‘prahari walo din’. On the *shraddya* day, water is filled in the earthen pot with panchada and brought to the house. Kush (holy grass) is rolled with thread and is buried near the *mandak*. Bedding is placed for the dead soul in the *mandak* and on the next day *shraddya* is done. A kurma member standing still takes water in their hand and remembers departed soul and sprinkles the water in the buried *kush* and then, they offer flowers to the buried kush in their turn. A lighted oil lamp and food items are kept at the same place. The food item is covered with the basket and a *dhakiya* is placed over the basket containing biscuits and fruits.

A dummy (puppet) is prepared decorated and placed outside. The stem of uak grass is used to prepare the dummy. 7 and 5 stems of *uak* grass are used for preparing male and female dummy and are decorated just like in marriage rituals. He looks after the dummy and distributes sweets during the night frequently. At the evening relatives, affinal kins kurma assembles and women also gather in the lawn crying loudly. The relatives used to bring vegetables, hens, ducks, cloth, etc. along with them for the dead. At the evening guests and relatives who come for the *shraddya* are served with cooked rice, lentils, vegetables, pickles, fish, meat, etc. Alcohol is also provided for those who drink. In the *shraddya* of male, he-goat and for female, goat is sacrificed.

The dummy is decorated by changing its cloth frequently. In case of *shraddya* of male, quilt, coat, pants, and sometimes dhoti and shirt are used to dress the dummy. However, in case of *shraddya* of female, churi, Sari, blouse, kurta, suruwal, bodice, etc. are used for dressing the dummy. Nobody sleeps during *shraddya*’s night

and *bhajan kirtan* is done whole night and fruits, beaten rice, puffed rice, tea, sweets are distributed from time to time. In the morning at 4 p.m., food is prepared and offered to the dead soul. At 5 am the dummy is opened and is taken to brook to flow it in water. When the dummy is taken to blow it in brook, women does not allow the sticks used to prepare dummy to take away from the house in the similar manners as they behaved when the deceased body was taken for the funeral. They used to mourn and yell loudly but the males uproot the dummy quickly and blow it in the brook. In the morning all the guests are provided with meal and are sent by giving puffed rice as prasad (religious offering). In the afternoon, as well meals are prepared for the relatives and eating is done. The relatives stay in the host (house of dead person) house for 3 or 4 days for *shraddya* ceremony as in the marriage ceremony.

The hut prepared for the dead soul is destroyed in the evening after the appearance of moon and *shraddhya* gets completed. After that the *shraddya* of the dead soul is never performed. The commodity or goods such as, cloth, fan, etc. are brought for the dead soul for the *shraddya* are given to daughters, granddaughters, and relatives as donation. One pair of sleepers and clothes are given to after the *shraddya*. Ancestral property /goods such as gold silver are equally divided and distributed among the son and daughters of the deceased. There is a custom to bury the dead body of children in Rana Tharu community. Also, there is a tradition to bury ascetic (person who lives solely on alms) and jogi under the earth.

Conclusion

The different life cycle rituals performed reveal that each ritual has specific implication to the life of Rana Tharu people. These mark a distinctive identity of the Rana Tharus. the Rana Tharus residing in Kailali and Kanchanpur district of Nepal are indigenous people of this place who are very rich in their traditional cultural practices. They have different social and culture systems. They have their own language, history, festival, social structure, norms and values, and practices. The preceding discussion marks out the rites and rituals of the Rana Tharus marked by three distinct stages of birth, marriage and death. Different socio-religious functions are associated with these three phases of life of the Rana Tharus. The celebrations of different kinds of rituals help to build strong solidarity, social unity among Rana tharu people. These types of celebration spread happiness among the people and are also sign of togetherness in spite of having cultural differences of all people coming together for celebration. This all process helps to preserve and promote different cultures along with diversity in it.

With the influence of the external world and different forces, the traditional way of thinking and perception of the Rana Tharus with reference to their birth,

marriage and death is now undergoing a change. In consequence of the impact of different factors like urbanization, modernization and sanskritization, some attitudinal changes are now taking place in the society of the Rana Tharus. Many cultural traditions and practices are on the verge of extinction, so efforts should be taken for their preservation and protection. Rana Tharu society and culture has been one of the major heritages of the Far West region with its own unique culture, it plays a vital role in social and economic development of this region.

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Junk Food Consumption Practices among the College Students in Banke District

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Abstract

Junk foods are easy to prepare and take but have low nutritional value and contain only fat, high sugar, salt, calories, and colours which adversely affect the health of college students. The objective of this study was to assess the junk food consumption practice and its causes and study the relationship between socio-demographic factors and frequency of junk food consumption among college students. This study utilized a cross-sectional research design under quantitative research. Three hundred and fifty-four students were selected by using the multistage sampling method. A set of questionnaire was used to collect the required data. The collected data were entered and analyzed in SPSS version 20 using simple statistical methods including univariate and bivariate analysis. This study found that all of the respondents consumed junk food, among them 33.1 percent of the respondents consumed doughnuts, 40.1 percent of the respondents consumed chat-pat, 37.9 percent of the respondent consumed pani-puri, 39.0 percent of the respondents consumed noodles, 22.31 percent of the respondents consumed chocolates. Likewise, 60.7 percent of the respondents consumed junk food in the afternoon and least (2.8%) of the respondents consumed junk food at night. Similarly, 30.2 percent of the respondents consumed junk food three times a day and 12.4 percent of the respondents consumed twice a day. Likewise, this study also found that there is no relationship between socio-demographic factors (age, gender, religion, fathers' education, mothers' education, fathers' occupation, mothers' occupation) and frequency of junk food consumption among college students. Furthermore, this study found that the main reason of taking junk food is it being easy to make and influence of advertisements, save time, and its taste. Therefore, this study suggests conducting junk food related health awareness programmes for college students.

Keywords: food habit, health, nutritional value, busy lifestyles, obesity

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Introduction

Junk foods are easy to prepare and take. However, they contain a low nutritional value and contain fat, high sugar, salt, calories, and colours which adversely affect the health of consumers (Bhaskar, 2012; Hassan et al., 2020; Johnson et al., 2012; Kaur & Kochar, 2019). Fried chicken, peanuts, popcorn, bagels, candies, and cookies are considered junk foods (Smith, 2011). Moreover, altered snack foods, gum, cake, candy, sweet desserts, fried fast food, and sugary carbonated beverages, hamburgers, pizza, tacos, chips, chocolate, soft drink are taken as junk foods (Kavle et al., 2015). The term “junk food” was coined in 1972 by Michael Jacobson to raise public awareness of foods (Bhaskar, 2012). People eat junk food even though they know the negative health effects of junk food. Due to globalization, urbanization, busy lifestyles, attractive advertisements, obtaining high pocket money, home and school environment (Poudel et al., 2018) and weak legal aspects of junk food, many people eat junk food (Milani et al., 2017). Likewise, changing lifestyle, new taste, easy availability, influencing of advertisement and saving time are motivating factors associate with junk food consumption (Pahari & Baral, 2020; Subedi et al., 2021).

Consumption of various types of junk food is increasing worldwide. Due to changes and transitions in people’s lifestyles and eating habits, a growing number of people of different age groups, especially adolescents and young adults, tend to consume fast food (Majabadi et al., 2016). Junk food affects the physical and mental health of its consumers. Excessive and regular consumption of junk food can cause cardiovascular diseases, weight gain, increase obesity, type 2 diabetes, heart disease, stroke and certain cancers (Abraham et al., 2018; Smith, 2011), gastritis, ulcer and digestive problems (Lamba & Garg, 2017). A large amount of junk food use alters brain activity in the same way those addictive drugs such as cocaine and heroin (Kiein, 2010). It can also lead to memory loss, learning problems and depression, increase the risk of dementia and reduce the ability to control appetite (Sharma, 2013). Likewise, the short time junk food consumption can impact blood sugar and blood pressure and increases inflammation. A diet rich in fast food could lead to issues with digestion, immunity, inflammation, allergies, heart attacks, stroke, kidney disease, heart disease, and obesity are the long term effects of junk food consumption (Jones, 2021).

In Nepali society, people have been giving priority to the taste of the tongue over the nutritional diet and healthy food. Nowadays, they use junk food as an essential food on a daily basis. Due to its excessive use, children have stopped eating basic and traditional foods like pulses, rice, vegetable, bread, rice pudding, maize, soybean, chamre, puwa, haluwa, dhidoetc (Gautam, 2021). Many people enjoy the taste of fast food at a low cost. Due to this, a large amount of money has to be

spent on health treatment. Companies use various strategies for advertising junk food targeting youth and young children (Gautam, 2021; Smith, 2011). According to adolescent nutritional survey (2014), 94 percent of the adolescents usually consume junk food. Likewise, 93 percent of the early adolescents and 89 percent of the late adolescents consumed junk food. This statistics shows that early teens consume more junk food than late teens. Among the junk food consumers, overall 22 percent of the adolescents consume junk food daily. Similarly, 25 percent of the late adolescents and 20 percent of early adolescents consume junk food daily. Similarly, 92 percent of adolescents eat junk food at least once a week (Aryal et al., 2016).

It is learned that junk food consumption among youth and adolescents is a public health problem worldwide. They consumed different sorts of junk food in different time and for different reasons. To identify the research gap of this study, I have searched different literature (e.g. google scholar, Hinari, PubMed, etc.). I found many junk food related studies conducted outside the country. In the context of Nepal, I found a few studies conducted on junk food consumption among school students. However, I did not find any study concerning the patterns and factors influencing junk food consumption among college students. So it is necessary to conduct the research. This study focused on junk food consumption practices and its causes among the college students. Likewise, this study also focused on study relationship between socio-demographic factors and frequency of junk food consumption among respondents.

Methods and Procedures

This study was based on cross-sectional research design under quantitative research. The population of this study was Bachelor's level students studying in Banke district. The study was carried out at three colleges of Banke district of Nepal. There were altogether 1920 students studying at the selected colleges. Among them, 354 students were selected by using the simple random sampling method. Sample size of the study was determined by using sample size calculating formula $n = \frac{Z_{\alpha/2}^2 \times P \times Q}{E^2}$ with 94% confidence, 5% error and 50% proportion of having junk food in college level students as no previous estimate for this proportion is available. The study population was selected by using multistage sampling method. At the first step, simple random sampling technique was used to select three Bachelor's level colleges. At this step Madhya Pashchim Multiple Campus Nepalgunj, Mahendra Multiple Campus and New Bageshwori Academy were selected out of 31 Colleges. At the second step, the researcher randomly selected three classes from each selected colleges. At the third step, all present students of the selected class at the time of data collection were taken. However, those who were absent or not interested were excluded from the study.

Questionnaire was developed as the tool for data collection. The questionnaire was divided into three parts: the first part deals with socio-demographic profile of the respondents, the second part deals with the practice of junk food, and the third part deals with the effective factors using junk food. At the Madhya Pashchim Multiple Campus, Nepalgunj Banke, the questionnaire was pre-tested on 10 percent of the total sample. After that, questionnaire was modified or edited based on the pre-test result. Those students who were selected in pre-test were not included in final survey. After getting permission from campus administration, primary data were collected from sample students. At first, researcher had taken permission from the campus chief of the participating colleges, and then the researcher took verbal consent from the college students who participated in the study. The researcher assured the respondents that the data collected would be used for purely research purposes and kept completely confidential, that information would be used and protected, and that their beliefs, values and practices would be respected in accordance with the premises of research ethics. The researcher had also informed that their participation is voluntary, and participants' identity would be kept confidential. Then, the researcher distributed a set of survey questionnaires to the students. After the students filled out the questionnaire, it was collected by the researcher. The collected data were entered into the computer and analyzed by using SPSS version 20. Then, the gathered data were checked, reviewed and prepared for completeness and accuracy. After that, all the gathered data have been analyzed with the aid of using the usage of descriptive statistical tools along with univariate, bivariate (chi-square) analysis with SPSS version 20. Chi-square test was used for determining the relationship between socio-demographic factors and frequency of junk food consumption among college students. The descriptive statistics that have been used to analyze data are frequency, percentage analysis, and crosstabs, and the vital findings of the study have been presented.

Results

Junk Food Consumption Practice

Junk foods are the ready-made food items such as biscuit, doughnuts, chat-pat, pani-puri, noodles, chocolates, chau-chau, kurkure, chips, chaumin, samosa and other fried food. Various forms of junk foods are taken by respondents presented below.

Table 1

Multiple Response Table of Junk Food Consumption Practice (n=354)

Junk Food Items	Number of Respondents	Percentages of Persons
Biscuit	105	29.7
Ice- Cream	122	34.5
Doughnuts	117	33.1
Chat-pat	142	40.1
Pani-puri	134	37.9
Noodles	138	39.0
Chocolates	79	22.31
Other junk food	5	1.41
Total Number of Responses	842	197.61

Table 1 shows that 29.7 percent of the respondents consumed biscuit, 34.4 percent of the respondents had ice-cream, 33.1 percent of the respondents preferred doughnuts, 40.1 percent of the respondents consumed chat-pat, 37.9 percent of the respondents consumed pani-puri, 39.0 percent of the respondents stated they liked noodles, 22.31percent of the respondents consumed chocolates and 1.41percent of the respondents consumed other junk foods like momo, pizza, chaumin, samosa, kurkure, etc.

Time of junk food Consumption

Respondents' responses regarding the time of junk food consumption are presented in the following table.

Table 2

Time of Consumed Junk Food (n=354)

Categories	Description	Number of Respondents	Percent
Time	Morning	73	20.6
	Afternoon	215	60.7
	Evening	56	15.8
	Night	10	2.8

Out of 354 total respondents, 60.7 percent of the respondents consumed junk foods in the afternoon and the least (2.8%) of the respondents had junk foods at night. Above data shows that majority of the respondents consumed junk food in the afternoon which is not a good thing as it causes many health problems.

Relationship between Socio-demographic Factor and Frequency of Junk food Consumption

This study also identified the relationship between socio-demographic factors such as age, gender, religion, caste, fathers' education, mothers' education, fathers' occupation, mothers' occupation and junk food consumption among respondents.

Table 3

Relationship between Socio-demographic Factor and Frequency of Junk Food Consumption among Respondents (n=354)

Variables		Frequency of junk food consumption				Total	P-value
		Once	Twice	3 times	4-6 times		
Age	15-19	59 (16.7%)	25 (7.1%)	52 (14.7%)	47 (13.3%)	183 (51.7%)	.787
	20-24	48 (13.6%)	14 (4.0%)	46 (13.0%)	29 (8.2%)	137 (38.7%)	
	25-29	10 (2.8%)	5 (1.4%)	9 (2.5%)	10 (2.8%)	34 (9.6%)	
	Total	117 (33.1%)	44 (12.4%)	107 (30.2%)	86 (24.3%)	354 (100.0%)	
Gender	Male	20 (5.6%)	13 (3.7)	23 (6.5%)	18 (5.1%)	74 (20.9%)	.386
	Female	97 (27.4%)	31 (8.8%)	84 (23.7%)	68 (19.2%)	280 (79.1%)	
	Total	117 (33.1%)	44 (12.4%)	107 (30.2%)	86 (24.3%)	354 (100.0%)	
Religion	Hindu	89 (25.1%)	22 (6.2%)	87 (24.6%)	70 (19.8%)	268 (75.7%)	.013
	Buddhist	9 (2.5%)	7 (2.0%)	5 (1.4%)	5 (1.4%)	26 (7.3%)	
	Christian	6 (1.7%)	6(1.7%)	5 (1.4%)	6 (1.7%)	23 (6.5%)	
	Muslim	13 (3.7%)	9 (2.5%)	10 (2.8%)	5 (1.4%)	37 (10.5%)	
	Total	117 (33.1%)	44 (12.4%)	107 (30.2%)	86 (24.3%)	354 (100.0%)	

Caste	Brahmin	14 (4.0%)	5 (1.4%)	11 (3.1%)	14 (4.0%)	44 (12.4%)	.412
	Chettri	30 (8.5%)	13 (3.7%)	33 (9.3%)	27 (7.6%)	103 (29.4%)	
	Janjati	45 (12.7%)	15 (4.2%)	26 (7.3%)	21 (5.9%)	107 (30.2%)	
	Dalit	9 (2.5%)	5 (1.4%)	8 (2.3%)	6 (1.7%)	28 (7.9%)	
	Terai caste	19 (5.4%)	6 (1.7%)	29 (8.2%)	18 (5.1%)	72 (20.3%)	
	Total	117 (33.1%)	44 (12.4%)	107 (30.2%)	86 (24.3%)	354 (100.0%)	
Fathers' Education	Literature	22 (6.2%)	6 (1.7%)	21 (5.9%)	12 (3.4%)	61 (17.2%)	.184
	Primary Level	45 (12.7%)	14 (4.0%)	38 (10.7%)	40 (11.3%)	137 (38.7%)	
	Secondary Level	35 (9.9%)	14 (4.0%)	39 (11.0%)	19 (5.4%)	107 (30.2%)	
	Higher Education	15 (4.2%)	10 (2.8%)	9 (2.5%)	15 (4.2%)	49 (13.8%)	
	Total	117 (33.1%)	44 (12.4%)	107 (30.2%)	86 (24.3%)	354 (100.0%)	
Mothers' Education	Literature	45 (12.7%)	8 (2.3%)	43 (12.1%)	37 (10.5%)	133 (37.6%)	.011
	Primary Level	50 (8.5%)	21 (5.9%)	40 (11.3%)	30 (8.5%)	141 (39.8%)	
	Secondary Level	12 (3.4%)	6 (1.7%)	20 (5.6%)	14 (4.0%)	52 (14.7%)	
	Higher Education	10 (2.8%)	9 (2.5%)	4 (1.1%)	5 (1.4%)	28 (7.9%)	
	Total	117 (33.1%)	44 (12.4%)	107 (30.2%)	86 (24.3%)	354 (100.0%)	

Fathers' Occupation	Agriculture	64 (18.1%)	17 (4.8%)	59 (16.7%)	41 (11.6%)	181 (51.1%)	.125
	Labor	18 (5.1%)	2 (0.6%)	13 (3.7%)	16 (4.5%)	49 (13.8%)	
	Service	17 (4.8%)	12 (3.4%)	16 (4.5%)	13 (3.7%)	58 (16.4%)	
	Business	18 (5.1%)	13 (3.7%)	19 (5.4%)	16 (4.5%)	66 (18.6%)	
	Total	117 (33.1%)	44 (12.4%)	107 (30.2%)	86 (24.3%)	354 (100.0%)	
Mothers' Occupation	Agriculture	97 (27.4%)	27 (7.6%)	82 (23.2%)	66 (18.6%)	272 (76.8%)	.389
	Labor	9 (2.5%)	5 (1.4%)	9 (2.5%)	7 (2.0%)	30 (8.5%)	
	Service	5 (1.4%)	6 (1.7%)	8 (2.3%)	6 (1.7%)	25 (7.1%)	
	Business	6 (1.7%)	6 (1.7%)	8 (2.3%)	7 (2.0%)	27 (7.6%)	
	Total	117 (33.1%)	44 (12.4%)	107 (30.2%)	86 (24.3%)	354 (100.0%)	

Table 3 shows that there is high frequency of junk food consumption among college students however, the chi-square test shows p-value greater than the level of significance (5%), in all testing socio-demographic factors. Thus there is no relationship between socio-demographic factors and time of junk food consumption. Therefore, junk food consumption time is not dependent on such socio-demographic factors; age, gender, religion, caste, fathers' and mothers' education, fathers' and mothers' occupation of the respondents.

Place of Consuming and Buying Junk Food

The place of consuming and buying junk food is as presented in the following table.

Table 4

Description of Place of Consuming and Buying Junk Food (n=354)

Variables	Description	Frequency	Percent
Place of Consuming Junk Food	College	62	17.5
	Vending shop	58	16.4
	Home	139	39.3
	On the way to school and home	95	26.8

Place to Buy Junk Food	local shop	193	54.5
	From the market	109	30.8
	brought to home by parents	37	10.5
	others (Street food seller)	15	4.2

The present study shows that 39.3 percent of the respondents consumed junk food at home and 16.4 percent of the respondents consumed it at the vending shop. Furthermore, 54.5 percent of the respondents brought junk food from the local shop and the least (4.2%) of the respondents brought from the street food sellers.

Causes of Junk Food Consumption

The responses concerning the causes of junk food consumption of the respondents is as follows.

Table 5

Description of Reason for Taking Junk Food (n=354)

Categories	Frequency	Percent
Readily available	136	38.4
Save time	103	29.1
Effect of advertisement	15	4.2
Peer pressure	16	4.5
Easy to take	36	10.2
It is tasty	48	13.6

Table 5 shows that out of total 354 respondents 38.4 percent of the respondents indicated that it is readily available food, 29.1 percent respondents indicated that it saves time, 13.6 percent respondents stated that it is tasty, and least (4.2 percent) said they were influenced by advertisement.

Discussion

This cross-sectional study has identified the practice and its causes as well as the relationship between socio-demographic factors and frequencies of junk food consumption among college students. The present study found that out of 354 total respondents 29.7 percent of the respondents consumed biscuit, 34.4 percent respondents consumed ice-cream, 33.1 percent respondents consumed doughnuts, 40.1 percent respondent consumed chat-pat, 37.9 percent respondent consumed pani-puri, 39.0 percent respondents consumed noodles, 22.31 percent respondent consumed chocolates and 1.41 percent respondent consumed other junk foods like momo, pizza, chaumin, samosa, kurkure, etc. which is similar to the study done

by Sapkota and Neupane (2017). The study found that 100 percent of respondents consumed noodles and chat pat. Similarly, 97.2 percent consumed pani-puri, 95.8 percent biscuits, 93 percent donuts, 92.3 percent chocolate, 65.5 percent ice cream and soft drinks and 18.3 percent consumed chapatti. In the same way another similar study presented that 15.5 percent of the respondents chose fast food, 27.7 percent of the respondents chose snacks, 8.6 percent of the respondents preferred soft drinks and 48.2 percent of the respondents chose chocolates (Pahari & Baral, 2020). The different contextual study shows similar results. The main reason for showing similar result may be similar demographic of study, similar cultural context of the respondents, and similarity in study country.

The finding of the present study demonstrate that 20.6 percent of the respondents consumed junk food in the morning, 60.7 percent of the respondents consumed junk food in the afternoon, 15.8 percent of the respondents consumed in the evening and 2.8 percent of the respondents consumed at night. Similarly, Sapkota and Neupane (2017) revealed that 90.8 percent of the respondents consumed junk food in the afternoon, 1.4 percent of the respondents consumed in the morning and 7.0 percent of the respondents consumed in the evening whereas the least (0.7%) of the respondents consumed junk food at night.

This study results showed that 17.5 percent of the respondents consumed junk food at college, 16.4 percent of the respondents consumed at vending shop, 39.3 percent consumed at home and 26.8 percent of the respondents consumed on the way to school and home. A similar study found that 91.5 percent of the respondents consumed junk food at school and the least of the respondents consumed it at home (Sapkota & Neupane, 2017). In the same way, Subedi et al. (2021) found that 7.9 percent of the respondents frequently consumed junk food at home, 38.4 percent of the respondents frequently consumed at college, 10.9 percent of the respondents frequently consumed at friend's house, 40.1 percent of the respondents consumed at street food stalls and the least (2.7%) percent of the respondents frequently consumed junk food at a restaurant. These studies show that most of the students use junk food at different places, junk food is popular among college students and it is found everywhere like groceries, hotel, restaurants, street shop, school and college canteens, etc.

The results of present study show that 38.4 percent of the respondents indicated that the use of junk food was due to ready-made food, 29.1 percent respondents indicated that it saves time, 10.2 percent respondents indicated that it is easy to take, 13.6 percent respondents indicated that it is tasty, 4.5 percent respondents stated peer pressure as a cause and the least (4.2 percent) indicated effect of advertisement. A similar study found that 14.2 percent of the respondents

consumed junk food to save time, 8.7 percent respondents consumed junk food due to changing lifestyle, 22.6 percent of the respondents consumed because of curiosity about new taste, 24.3 percent of the respondents consumed due to influence of advertisement and 30.2 percent of the respondents consumed due to its easy availability (Subedi et al., 2021). Another study showed that 72 percent of the respondents consumed junk food because of its delicious taste. Likewise, 6.9 percent of the respondents consumed junk food because of its attractive advertisements, 5.6 percent of the respondents consumed junk food because of its convenience and 8.8 percent of the respondents consumed junk food because of its availability in restaurants (Khongrangjem et al., 2017). In another survey, 35 percent of respondents pointed out that the main causes for using junk food is not having time to cook at home, while 33.6 percent of respondents said that they preferred junk food because it tastes better than home cooked foods, 6.4 percent of respondents said that they ate junk food as per the wishes of their parents and the remaining 6.8 percent said that they ate junk food due to peer pressure (Pahari & Baral, 2020). Furthermore, one study also concluded that 90.1 percent of the respondents consumed junk food because it tasted good, 44.4 percent of the respondents consumed junk food because it could be prepared fast, 31.7 percent of the respondents consumed junk food because of peer influence, 29.6 percent of the respondents consumed it because nothing else was available, 15.5 percent of the respondents consumed it because of TV advertising (Sapkota & Neupane, 2017). These different contextual studies show some similar and some different results. The reason may be the nature of study tools, difference in study population and location.

This study found that 33.1 percent of the respondent consumed junk food once a day. Likewise, 30.2 percent of the respondents consumed junk food 3 times a day whereas 24.3 percent of the respondents consumed 4-6 times in a day, and least (12.4 %) of the respondents consumed twice a day. Another similar study showed that 23.6 percent of the respondents consumed junk food once a day, 24.5 percent of the respondents consumed twice a day, 15 percent of the respondents consumed thrice a day and 36 percent of the respondents consumed more than thrice a day (Pahari & Baral, 2020). In the same way Sapkota and Neupane (2017) had mentioned that 13.4 percent of the respondents consumed junk food 4-6times in a day, similarly 40.8 percent of the respondents consumed once a day, 42.3 percent of the respondents consumed twice a day and 3.5 percent of the respondents did not consume junk food at all. One study found more contrasting results that 22 percent of the respondents consumed junk food once per month or less, 52. 8 percent consumed once per week and 25.2 percent of the respondents consumed twice per week or more (Alfaris et al., 2015). While calculating the relationship between socio- demographic

factors (age, gender, religion, caste, fathers' education, mothers' education, fathers' occupation and mothers' occupation) and frequency of junk food consumption among college students. Chi-square test shows p-value greater than the level of significance (5%), in all testing socio-demographic factors. There is no association between socio-demographic factors and junk food consumption among college students. This result is compared with the study result of Yarmohammadi et al. (2015). They found a significant relationship between parents' high level of education and fast food consumption among high school students. Likewise, Poudel et al. (2018) found that there is no relationship between gender of the students, parents' education and junk food consumption among school students. Those different contextual studies show the distinct result. The reason may be the different in study population, tools and researchers' research skill and knowledge.

This study shows some limitations. So further research is needed to support or reject the findings of this study given the small size of the focus group. This could contribute to extensive future research. In the future, on a larger scale or in a larger population, similar research should be conducted based on mixed methods that could be brought closer to reality.

Conclusion

The survey found junk food consumption pervasive among college students. Junk foods of all kinds were consumed by the students including biscuits, donuts, chat-pat, pani-puri, noodles, chocolates, etc. and afternoon was the preferred time of intake. The study also concluded that the students chose junk foods because it's easily available, takes short time for preparation, ease of intake, peer pressure and attractive advertising. The results of this study will help any reader to better understand the practice, cause and relationship between the frequency of consumption of junk food and age, sex, religion, caste, father's/ mother's education and their profession among other things. Understanding the determinants of a healthy diet can help policymakers, experts and families make better decision about the younger generations' eating habits and prevent potential health risks associated with fast food by designing appropriate interventions.

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Impact of Homestays on Socio-economic Opportunities of the Local Community

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Abstract

Homestays have settled current encouraging tourism becoming an important source of income for many families in rural areas of Nepal. Homestay has supported the local and external visitors to learn about the local culture, custom, traditions, and diversity among others. The objective of this study was to find out the socio-economic opportunities and its impact on local community of Dallagaon, Bardiya. This study further observed the cultural impact of homestays on the host community. Concurrent mixed-methods research design was used to understand the situation of homestay at the destination by using the questionnaire, interview and key informant information as the tools. Data were analyzed by descriptive and inferential statistics. The result shows that homestays plays the vital role to conserve the culture by increasing local product and to empower in the education by increasing the economic conditions. It helps to improve communication skills as well as reduce migration problems and hence supportive for local employment. There is no significant difference between the economic and socio-cultural impact of homestays on the host community as perceived by homestay operators in the sample according to the t-test analysis. Dallagaon may be the best destination for those tourists who seek rich, unique and firsthand Tharu culture. The local communities are becoming more aware of their cultural identity, preservation, and the creation of new local infrastructure. It will contribute the creation of more job opportunities, infrastructure development, and essentially poverty reduction.

Keywords: socio-cultural impact, community empowerment, tourism promotion, income

Introduction

The “Khata Biological Corridor Homestay” programme, referred to locals as Dallagaon homestay, was launched in March 2011 by the Shiva Community Forest Consumers’ Committee. Shiva Community Forest is a Tharu community-owned area

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in the Madhuwan Municipality's Ward No. 1, Suryapatuwa, Bardiya, located inside the Khata Corridor. Out of Dallagaon's 105 households, 11 households joined up to participate immediately (Nepal Rastra Bank, 2015). Then, with early conceptual and technical support from Terai Arc Landscape (TAL) Nepal, the homestay programme was launched. Since December 2013, there have been 22 houses taking part in the homestay. The Eco-Tourism Development Sub-Committee was established by the Shiva Community Forest Consumers' Committee to serve as the homestay management committee. The World Wildlife Fund (WWF) in Bardiya aids the committee in the early stages of managing all of the village's homestay activities. The Dalla Homestay in Bardiya has been recognized as the best by the Taragaon Development Committee of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism (Nepal Rastra Bank, 2015).

Nepal is a developing nation with a wide range of geographical circumstances. It consists of more rural areas rather than cities. In this sense, a rural area's living standard must be significantly improved (Strasser, 2003). Nepal is rich in tradition, religion, and culture in addition to natural resources. These things are the key draws for tourists all around the world. Nepal's economic and socio-cultural development depends heavily on tourism (Joshi & Dahal, 2019; Upadhyay, 2020). In rural areas with a variety of cultures and stunning landscape, the homestay concept is well-liked (Munyoro et al., 2017). It promotes tourism and attracts visitors who are interested in supporting the local economy while understanding and experiencing the culture of off-the-beaten-path areas. Tourists that travel to villages and stay in or near them are referred to as "village visitors" (Nugroho et al., 2021). Many activities have demonstrated that in order to attract tourists, the community needs to have unique traits that are also linked to tourist behaviour when visitors remain in a settlement and observe the local tradition and culture. The tourists become a part of the community for the duration of their stay, which makes this type of tourism unique called green tourism (Yfantidou & Matarazzo, 2017).

Homestay tourism is concerned with the river, the sun, the rural environment, and the household. It represents conservation, lifestyle, experience, adventure and above all the nature adventure-oriented benefits to the local people (Shrestha, 2020). The objective of such type of tourism includes helping tourist to plan a trip, choose a tour and minimize ecological impact. Homestay tourism is a planned, well-balanced enterprise with a huge scope (Shrestha, 2020). Benefits are shared by all in an equitable distribution pattern. Homestay tourism must address innovative transfers of technology, economic development and the socio-cultural environment with homestay accommodation facilities (Magar, 2021). So, without a doubt, homestay tourism is the best form of travel available, providing visitors with a variety of

lodging options. Rural tourism growth and community development are being supported through homestay tourism. It enriches the visitor's experience with real socio-cultural diversity (Acharya & Halpenny, 2013). It may be a miracle to raise the standard of life for rural residents and strengthen the rural economy if appropriate and important policies are established to develop, promote, and monitor homestay tourism in more potential villages (Pasa, 2020). Homestay activities are held to encourage the local tourism by preserving and protecting the local art, culture, custom, tradition, and atmosphere while also empowering the locals by providing the income and local employment opportunities (Magar, 2021). Local art, culture, custom, tradition, and atmosphere exhibition set up for visitors to the homestay, and different traditional dances performed in front of them. Together with the analysis of their socio-economic impact and sustainability, these programmes can be helpful in improving overall tourism sector in the national economy (Poudel, 2017).

Homestays in Nepal have the potential to evolve into a new tourism development paradigm. The idea of homestay has captured the interest of both public and commercial stakeholders due to the obvious opportunities it brings in the region's economic growth (Dahal et al., 2020). According to a study done by Ngah et al. (2010), the homestay programme in Malaysia shows how it helped rural communities progress and how its expansion created options for employment and additional revenue. The value of homestay programmes as a mechanism for fostering community growth has been recognized for a long time (Chaiyatorn et al., 2010). Bhuiyan et al. (2011) cleared on their study homestays enhance local communities' access to employment prospects and raise standard of living. To showcase the distinctive qualities of rural communities, homestays are a new kind of rural tourism. They provided a lodging and food service by locals in their own homes or in a natural setting. Homestay activity is a type of rural tourism that promotes the local tourism by protecting local culture, tradition, and environment while also empowering locals by providing income and employment opportunities significantly to the local economy (Yfantidou & Matarazzo, 2017). Homestay is a type of tourism in which the economically marginalized local communities invite the visitors to visit their community in exchange of cultural activities, and related activities have been promoted as an needed factor of tourism development (Dong, 2020). Guests (tourists) can stay with a host family and learn about their traditions and culture by participating in a homestay. Nepalese homestay tourism ought to think about emphasizing living people, undergrowth, and geographical make-up in order to win the hearts of tourists effortlessly (Adhikari, 2020). Tourists with spiritual interests, cultural investigators, scholars, students, and professors can all benefit from homestay tourism. Tourism is the most common human activity in today's world. It is

also, after oil, the second-largest export-oriented industry. Countries in this industry do not export real wealth, but rather sell their dream in order to attract more visitors (Adhikari, 2020). It functions as a stimulus for economic development, eliminating economic disparities between rich and poor countries and promoting social harmony by educating people about each other's cultures. The most prevalent human activity in the modern world is tourism. It promotes social harmony by bridging cultural divides and acting as a catalyst for economic growth (Zhuang et al., 2019).

The homestay system is a concept for living in harmony with the environment, and its long-term viability is dependent on conservation progress. Only if local people profit from tourism will it be sustainable. The sustainability of homestays depends on the dedication, teamwork, and efforts of all of its stakeholders, including the homestay operator, the local community, visitors, and the committee in charge of its management (Nepal Rastra Bank, 2015). In the COVID-19 pandemic, all sectors are closed long time. During this time, tourism sector also suffered. Hotels cannot give facility for tourists. Tourist services that contemporary hotels might not be able to offer; however, homestays are able to offer (Koiwanit & Filimonau, 2021). Dallagaon in the Bardiya district is credited with being the first settlement in the district to open a homestay facility for tourists. The concept has provided a haven for nature lovers, and scholars of various disciplines in other parts of the district. It suggests the idea of environmental protection and preservation, both natural and sociocultural.

Homestays are contributing to the expansion of ecotourism; it becomes a popular tourist attraction in recent years. One of the defining characteristics of this culture is hospitality (Acharya & Halpenny, 2013). The sociocultural attitudes are patriarchal in Nepal; men define the roles of women. However, Dalla community homestays are run by women. Rural women have benefited from these homestays because they have been able to obtain financial resources while caring for their families, particularly their children and their education. This is a significant step toward increasing women's economic participation in rural areas. The gender gap has narrowed as a result of women's increased self-worth, economic emancipation, and equity (UNWTO, 2021). The homestay sector, by its very nature, enables the passing on of traditional expertise to upcoming generations. Women and men can equally share responsibilities and benefit from social, cultural, and economic benefits if progressive values are passed down. In Dallagaon, we can find unique socio-cultural way of life. Homestay tourism has changed the Dalla community in many ways socially, culturally, and economically. It has given the improvement to local economic activities and has helped build a unique brand of Dallagaon tourism around the world. It is a component of Community Based Tourism, conducting the cultural

programme, different seminar, and training for easy to seminar hall economic support the community home stay. However, it has also given rise to some environmental issues and environmental protection. Assistant and Administration (2021) reported that the homestay operators stated on a somewhat good note about the economic, socioeconomic, and cultural impact of homestays on the local community. However, there were some worries expressed in their comments on the environmental impact. Therefore, the objective of this study was to find the socio-economic opportunities and its impact on local community of Dallagaon, Bardiya. This study further observed the cultural impact of homestays on the host community. To fulfill the objective, the researcher set the following research questions:

1. What are the socio-economic opportunities of the homestay owners after homestay launched in their community?
2. How is the socio-economic and cultural impact of homestays on the local community of Dallagaon?

This study was limited to homestays in Madhuwan Municipalities Ward No. 1 Dallagaon. The Sample size cannot represent the whole population because there were only 22 households operating homestay.

Methods and Procedures

This study was carried out on the basis of concurrent mixed methods research design. The study focused to understand the socio-economic opportunities of the homestay owners after homestay launched in their community. This study is based on primary data collection. The primary data was gathered from the field visit by using the questionnaire, interview and key information from observation. Exploratory research design was adopted to meet the objectives and extent of activity as well as the descriptive analysis. The sampling population was taken from Dallagaon which lies on the Madhuwan Municipalities Ward No.1 of Bardiya District. The total households in Ward No.1 are 1220 in which 22 households run the homestays. As a sample, all 22 households were taken. Total population of Ward No. 1 is 6420 in which 3264 are male and 3164 are female (Madhuwan Municipality Ward Profile, 2021). In this study, the selected field was 22 households' homestay owners of Dallagaon. The total population of these households is 143, out of them males are 69 and female 74. The data were analyzed by using descriptive statistics percentage, mean, standard deviation as well as inferential statistics t-test.

Results and Discussion

Homestay is a term used to describe a cultural exchange programme where a visitor or temporary foreign resident stays with a local family. Both short-term and

long-term homestays are available. Homestay programmes have been suggested as a way to accommodate the massive number of tourists planned to come to Nepal during Nepal Tourism Year 2011. On the other hand, a key objective of homestay is to promote the involvement of rural residents in the tourism industry. Homestays will be available in two types: community and private. Homestay initiatives in rural areas are also expected to provide additional money to residents. Homestay is possible occupational action for the local inhabitants. It contributes to the local community's economic development and job opportunities. This initiative can assist local communities in terms of economics, culture, and the environment. The rustic lifestyle of the area is one of the key attractions for homestay tourism. The peaceful atmosphere around the rural community, as well as the culture of the tourism region, might entice visitors. Physical, cultural, religious, and natural elements all draw travelers.

Dalla Homestay has now changed its identity to Bardiya. Due to this, Nepali and foreign tourists are now enjoying Dalla Homestay. The Yogi Tharu people make up the majority of Dalla's inhabitants. They speak their own language and have their own customs and traditions (Panta & Thapa, 2018). A homestay is a cultural exchange programme in which a visitor or temporary resident of another country stays with a local family. Home stays are available for both short and lengthy periods of time. On the other hand, the primary goal of a homestay is to encourage rural residents to participate in the tourist industry. Homestay guests are shown cultural programmes based on Tharu culture, including for entertainment. The tharu community presents the different cultural programs and dances, i.e., Sakhiya dance, Paiya dance, Jhumra dance, Hurduguwa dance, Lathi dance, Maghauta dance, and Barkimara dance, among others (Nepal Rastra Bank, 2015). More interaction with other cultures and beliefs provides more opportunities to comprehend other cultures and religions, which leads to greater respect for each other's cultures and religions, increasing global harmony. Today, we are globally facing the numerous challenges as a result of a lack of understanding of one another's trust; tourism can contribution to connection these gaps by carrying people of various cultures and religions together in one area. Guests can ample tharu food, including crabs, shellfish, local hen, ghungi and mice, local liquor as well as breakfast dhikri, egg-potch, anadi rice cake, and pickle. A homestay model to adopt as hospitality and "Athithidevobhava" are deeply established in the community's culture.

For the study, a sample of 22 homestays was selected where 100 % of them were managed by women. 9.09% of the respondents were in the age group of 26-35 years, 31.81% of people aged 36 to 45 and 46 to 55, and 27.27% of people aged 56 to 65. More than half of the respondents are literate.

Table 1*Demographic Profile of the Respondents (N=22) of Dallagaon Homestays*

	Characteristics	Total	Percentage
Gender	Male	0	-
	Female	22	100%
Age	20-25	-	-
	26-35	2	9.09%
	36-45	7	31.81%
	46-55	7	31.81%
	56-65	6	27.27%
	>65	-	-
	Literate	14	63.63%
Education	10 below	4	18.18%
	SLC/ SEE pass	3	13.66%
	+2 pass	1	4.54%
	1-5 yrs.	-	-
Number of years' experience in homestays business	6-10 yrs.	-	-
	11-15 yrs.	22	100%

Mean Analysis of Considered Variable on Economic Impact

The table 2 shows the mean analysis of the economic impact variable and socio-cultural impact. To understand the economic impact, there were 8 variables used. From the table we can conclude variable homestays increased income helps to empowerment of education's mean is 4.12 and its standard deviation is 0.93 which is closure to the variable homestay that increased local product. It clearly shows that homestays play a vital role to conserve the culture and to empower in the education by increasing the economic conditions.

Six factors were taken into account in order to comprehend how homestay operators perceived about the sociocultural impacts of their activity on the host community. According to the results in the table above, the mean scores on a 5-point Likert scale range from 3.4 to 3.97. One variables namely Homestays provides the opportunities to interchanges the culture have the mean value 3.97 having SD 0.79. Homestays encourages preserving traditional Tharu culture is closure to the first variable having 3.96 mean and 0.71 SD. Similarly the variable Homestays helped to

improve communication skills is closure mean to variable with Homestays help to increment of domestic food / reduce the market import food ranks and Homestays helped to reduce migration problems lead to employment is closure to Homestays helped to reduce social problems. The rich, unique Tharu culture, which tourists seek to experience firsthand from the host community, is one of the reasons why tourists select Dallagaon as a destination. Homestay tourism has a definite sociocultural impact because it not only offers opportunity to see and appreciate other cultures but is also considered as a way to preserve local culture, such as Sakhiya dance, Paiya dance, Jhumra dance, Hurduguwa dance, Lathi dance, Maghauta dance, and Barkimara dance, as well as traditions, lifestyles, cuisine, and rituals, for future generations. It inspires pride in the people of the local community, which leads to greater solidarity.

Table 2

Mean Analysis of Considered Variable on Economic Impact

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Economic Impact		
Homestays provides opportunity for their communities	3.67	0.81
Homestays helps to increased income for their family	3.58	0.97
Increased income helps to empowerment of women	3.35	0.85
Increased income helps to empowerment of education	4.12	0.93
Homestays helps to changes on their lifestyles	3.45	0.85
• Homestays have increased local product food like; crabs, shellfish, local hen, ghungi and mice, local liquor, dhikri, egg-potch, anadibhat, cake, and Chatani.	4.23	0.94
Homestays have improved public facilities like seminar hall/ communication media/and so on.	3.21	0.75
Homestays have helped to minimize poverty	3.33	0.96
Socio-Cultural Impact		
Homestays provides the opportunities to interchanges the culture	3.97	0.79
Homestays encourages to preserve traditional tharu culture	3.96	0.71
Homestays helped to improve communication skills	3.71	0.71
Homestays helped to reduce social problems	3.4	0.70

Homestays helped to reduce migration problems lead to employment	3.5	0.81
Homestays help to increment of domestic food/reduce the market import food	3.76	0.62

Independent Sample Test of Socio-economic Impact

According to the t-test analysis presented in Table 3, there seems to be no significant differences between the economic and socio-cultural impact of homestays on the host community as perceived by homestay operators in Dallagaon in the sample.

Table 3

Independent Sample Test

	N	Mean	SD	Calculation value	Tabulation value at 5% level of significance	Significance
Economic impact	22	3.6175	0.8825			C.V< T.V hence Null hypothesis accepted.
Socio-cultural impact	22	3.1857	0.62	0.932	1.721	

Conclusion

Homestay has supported the rural community's livelihood by providing local entrepreneurship and employment opportunities at local level. Despite the low number of foreign visitors and limited economic benefits of tourism, residents in the study area remain enthusiastic about the future benefits of tourism. Thus, the study is able to show that Dallagaon has basic infrastructure facilities, which must be upgraded as well as protected that will attract tourists in the future. The Dallagaon homestay community has a lot of potential for tourism growth. As a result, the government should give all residents with adequate infrastructure, facilities, education, awareness, and training and development programmes in order to empower them from the ground up. This also contributes to the country's enhanced economic growth. This type of homestay business also contributes to the government's goal of developing Nepal's tourism economy. There seems to be no significant differences between the economic and socio-cultural impact of homestays

on the host community as perceived by homestay operators in Dallagaon in the sample.

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Examining the Psychological Sense of School Membership among the Basic School Students

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Abstract

Studies on Psychological Sense of School Membership (PSSM) have been widespread globally for three decades. However, it has not been discussed in the context of Nepali schools' education. A positive sense of belongingness to schools among the students is essential to foster their good academic achievement as well as their mental health. Furthermore, it also increases students' motivation and peer adjustment. This study uncovers the sense of school belongingness of grade eight students in community schools in Nepal employing a descriptive survey design under quantitative research. The five points PSSM scale, a valid and widely used measurement scale, has been used to examine the students' perceptions about their school membership. Four major concepts have emerged from the data analysis: sense of attachment with school, sense of acceptance, sense of school ownership, and sense of respect and honour. Results revealed that students lack a strong sense of membership towards their school although they have feelings of attachment with their school. While students have a strong perceived sense of school ownership, they feel of being a weaker relationship with their teachers. Therefore, the study has immediate application to create awareness about the psychological sense of school membership among students and PSSM into academic discourse so that the Ministry of Education can initiate the necessary measures for improved students' learning.

Keywords: PSSM, attachment, perception, belongingness, community schools

Introduction

Psychological Sense of School Membership (PSSM) scale (Goodenow, 1993), a valid and reliable scale to assess the adolescent students' sense of school belongingness, has been widely accepted and used for around three decades. After

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developing the PSSM scale by Goodenow (1993) in the United States, many other studies (also in different countries/geographical regions) such as Cortina et al. (2017), Craggs and Kelly (2018), Slaten et al. (2016), St-Amand et al. (2020), St-Amand et al. (2017) have confirmed its validity and reliability. Primarily the PSSM scale is developed for adolescent students. However, it has been equally used to study primary school students (Wagle et al., 2018). Besides the original English version, the translated versions of PSSM are tested and used in different languages. For instance, a French version of the PSSM scale (St-Amand et al., 2020) is tested to ensure its validity. Although the Open and Distance Learning Centre, Tribhuvan University, has been surveying PSSM as a part of a larger study on gender-inclusive pedagogy recently, no study of PSSM has been conducted yet in Nepal.

Besides students' individual differences such as abilities, interests, skills, and learning capacities, the 'school or the classroom contextual factors' (Goodenow, 1993) affect their school/learning success or failure. The study confirms (Goodenow & Grady, 1993) that students' sense of school belongingness or psychological sense of school belongingness is a major contextual factor for PSSM. As Goodenow (1993) defines it, the "psychological sense of school membership is the extent to which students feel personally accepted, respected, included, and supported by others in the school social environment" (p.81). While students' sense of belonging is a prerequisite to active engagement/participation in the teaching-learning process and better academic achievement (St-Amand et al., 2020), it is neglected in Nepal. Although some focus has been paid to creating inclusive pedagogy with the existing pedagogical practices (Bista et al., 2016; Sharma, 2019), none of the efforts are existent to foster the PSSM of Nepali school students. Therefore, studying the PSSM in the context of Nepal is imperative.

Since the discussion on PSSM is in the very beginning state in Nepal, this descriptive study can contribute to examining students' sense of school belongingness from the Nepali perspective so that the study findings could help to understand students' sense of school belongingness in order to create "motivation, engagement, and participation, especially among students from groups at risk of school dropout" (Goodenow & Grady, 1993, p. 60). This article aims to examine the PSSM of basic level (primary level) school students using Goodenow's (1993) scale.

Literature Review

Students' sense of school belongingness gained momentum in 1990 after Goodenow (1993) developed the PSSM scale. Among the various studies, Goodnow's (1993) scale became popular; as a result, many studies adopted this scale to study students' perceived sense of school membership. PSSM is a valid

and widely used five-point Likert-type scale (1 = not at all true, and 5 = completely true) containing 18 self-reported statements. After that, the PSSM become a major tool for studying the relationship between the school environment (context) and the students' "motivational and achievement outcomes" (Ye & Wallace, 2014, p. 202). The PSSM becomes a major aspect of student engagement in the school's activity and building relationships with peers and teachers. Students' feeling of acceptance, respect, and other support plays an essential role in their learning, motivation, and achievement. For instance, a study in the US found that the relationship between peer and teacher shape their sense of school belongingness (Ballard, 2017). In addition to assessing a sense of school belongingness, PSSM is equally valuable for examining primary-level students, as reported by various studies (Craggs & Kelly, 2018; Wagle et al., 2018; Wagle, 2021). As such, in her doctoral research in the US primary [Elementary] school context, Wagle (2021) stated that "female students were more likely to experience high school belonging levels than male students" (p. 12). Similar to these findings, other studies such as Cortina et al. (2017), Sari (2012), and St-Amand et al. (2020) also reported that female students have a higher sense of school belongingness than male students. The literature indicates that gender difference is a significant impetus factor in determining the students' sense of school membership.

Students' sense of school membership has multiple stimulus effects: their engagement at school, feeling of acceptance and affinity with peers, and harmonious relationship with the teachers. Moreover, peer relationships significantly affect the children's balanced social and emotional growth both inside the school and in their lives in society. Concerning peer rejection, in a comprehensive study, Van der Wilt et al. (2019) states that meaningful peer relations offer unique interpersonal relationships and get acquainted with social norms. They further argue that peer rejection has "devastating effects on a child's future development. Compared with children their peers accept, rejected children have been found to experience higher levels of anxiety, loneliness, and depression" (Van der Wilt et al., 2019). Similarly, a closer and harmonious student-teacher relationship significantly affects the students' sense of school belongingness and well-being. While considering school belongingness is a positive construct (Wagle et al., 2018), "it is assumed to contribute to academic motivation constructs, such as engagement and self-efficacy which, in turn, improve academic achievement" (Cortina et al., 2017, p. 1). Several studies, such as Evans et al. (2019), Riley (2009), Wagle (2021), and Ballard (2017) have discussed the importance of students' relationships with the teacher not only on their emotional and social development but instead, on their sense of school belongingness. From the adult attachment perspective, Riley (2009) reported that elementary teachers were found to have higher attachment with the students compared to secondary teachers.

Given that students' sense of belongingness is significantly affected by the student-teacher relationship, reciprocally, teachers' well-being is closely dependent on such a relationship (Evans et al., 2019). Moreover, as Riley (2009) argues, the teacher-student relationship "offers teachers new ways to inform and improve their classroom practice" (p. 626). While students' perceptions of attachment with peers and teachers significantly affect their social adjustment and academic achievement, it is also closely related to their school misconduct. A study has identified that "while higher perceived teacher support and school belonging related to less school misconduct, higher peer attachment was associated with higher rates of school misconduct" (Demanet & Van Houtte, 2012, p. 499).

For instance, a study reported that "school belongingness is essential to improve students' life satisfaction" (Ahmadi & Ahmadi, 2019, p. 8). For instance, a study of Nepalese adolescent students found that family factors related to psychological dysfunction are alarming (Bista et al., 2016). Generally, it has been assumed that students with higher academic achievement have a strong sense of school membership and a lower feeling of rejection from the school. Another study of elementary students in the Turkish context reported similar results to female students, and the students with higher academic achievement have a strong sense of school belongingness (Sari, 2012). As the above discussions suggest, understanding the complexities that exist in the construct of the psychological sense of school membership is important for the student's mental and physical health.

Methods and Procedures

The study employed the descriptive survey design under quantitative research for examining the PSSM of the Basic Level students. This design intends "to describe what exists concerning the individual, group, or condition" (Edmonds & Kennedy, 2016, p.161) to uncover the phenomena of PSSM. Additionally, the researcher describes the PSSM from the field data without "manipulating the natural setting" (Siedlecki, 2020, p.8) of the existing school classroom. The researcher is very cautious about his presence with the students, so students' responses will not be affected. Nonetheless, he made it clear even reading repeatedly to clarify the items. As the researcher experienced, grade eight students understood the items of the PSSM scale, while grade six students became confused.

The study is carried out in a community school in the Kaski district. The school was selected using the 'convenience sampling' method (Ary et al., 2014) since the school was closer to the researcher's house and was easily accessible. Thirty students out of forty-six from Grade eight of the sample school were selected using a simple random sampling method. The five-point PSSM scale of Goodenow (1993) was used.

The PSSM scale was used once with a group of grade eight students. The sample students were requested to gather in a library room, and the printed questionnaire was distributed to them. Students responded to the questionnaire within thirty minutes after the researcher described each statement and procedure to respond. Data were tabulated first and analyzed descriptively in percentage.

Results and Discussion

Analysis of the data generated the four major concepts. Generally, the previous studies presented the findings separately, like in the original PSSM scale. However, this study presents the findings as the studies (Craggs & Kelly, 2018; St-Amand et al., 2020; Ye & Wallace, 2014) allow the researcher to present the result in the following four dimensions.

Sense of School Attachment

In a larger context, school attachment is related to the students' connectedness or belongingness, generally known as "school membership" (Wagle, 2021, p.1). In a broader sense, school attachment is also understood as a student's relationship with their teachers and peers. Besides, school attachment is influenced by parental involvement in school. In addition, a study (Ahmadi & Ahmadi, 2019) found that students' sense of school attachment/belongingness is also essential for their life satisfaction. As shown in Table 1, respondent students have no strong sense of school attachment/belongingness.

Table 1

Students' Sense of Attachment to School

Statements	Not at all true 1	2	3	4	Completely true 5
I feel like a part of my school	-	13.33	23.33	30	33.33
People at my school notice when I am good at something	-	23.33	40	33.33	3.33
It is hard for people like me to be accepted at my school	50	20	20	10	-
I can really be myself at my school	-	13.33	36.66	16.66	33.33

Source: Field Survey 2022. Note: Figures in the table indicate the percentage

Only one-third of students (33.33%) have a strong sense of attachment to school.

Most students do not feel that other people in their school notice them when they are good at something. Although 50% of the students do not find it difficult to be accepted at their school, the other 50% felt it hard to be accepted to some extent. As data indicate, it is striking that none of the students (no response) are confident about their acceptance within the school. As such, 33.33% of students felt that they could be themselves at their school. These findings are consistent with the previous studies of the global north (Goodenow & Grady, 1993; St-Amand et al., 2020; Wagle, 2021). Besides, Goodenow (1993) claims that “when young people begin to consider who they are and wish to be, with whom they belong, and where they intend to invest their energies and stake their futures” (p. 81). The data analysis indicates that students did not feel like a part of their school due to their poor sense of school membership/attachment/belongingness.

Sense of Acceptance

This study has examined the student’s attachment to their peers and teachers. Such acceptance plays a pivotal role in their active engagement in the teaching-learning process and school activities. Table 2 indicates students’ perceptions of their attachments with their peers and teachers.

Table 2

Students’ Sense of Acceptance from their Peers and Teachers

Statements	Not at all true 1	2	3	4	Completely true 5
Other students in my school take my opinions seriously	13.33	40	26.66	10	10
Most teachers at my school are interested in me	16.66	16.66	26.66	16.66	23.33
There is at least one teacher or adult I can talk to in my school if I have a problem	10	13.33	26.66	23.33	26.66
Teachers here are not interested in people like me	43.33	43.33	6.66	-	6.66
Teachers at my school respect me	16.66	13.33	16.66	20	33.33
Other students at my school like me the way that I am	2.66	3.33	36.66	36.66	16.66

Source: Field Survey 2022. Note: Figures in the table indicate the percentage

While a majority of students perceived that their opinions are taken seriously to some extent, only 10% of students strongly agreed with it. Likewise, while many students (36.66%) perceived it to be quite true, other 36.66 % perceived it with certainty when asked about other students liking them the way they are. Considering the peer acceptance of one's opinion, studies (Van der Wilt et al., 2019; Wagle et al., 2018) conclude that it has profound effects not only on students' immediate school connectedness but also damage their future development, such as on creations of anxiety, loneliness, and depression. This notion of peer acceptance indicates that it creates several multiplier effects concerning the students' school belongingness, impacting their achievement and social adjustment (Slaten et al., 2016). Moreover, other studies (Craggs & Kelly, 2018; St-Amand et al., 2020; Wagle et al., 2018; Wagle, 2021) have also confirmed the critical role of peer support in gaining a sense of school belongingness. Similarly, as Slaten et al. (2016) said, there is a positive correlation between school belongingness and support from peers, teachers, and parents. Besides, they further note that the school type, location, and school year also affect the students' sense of belongingness. This finding directs toward the notion of developing unsocial behaviors with the students. School belongingness not only their learning progress in the school, but it can also mitigate students' sense of alienation (Craggs & Kelly, 2018). Regarding the relationship with teachers, students responded diversely. Like this finding, studies, such as Cortina et al. (2017), Wagle (2021), and (St-Amand et al., 2020) conclude that the higher the teacher support, the more the students' sense of school membership, while the lower teacher support contributes to loose students' sense of school membership.

Contrary to this, most of the students (33.33%) perceive that they are getting respect from their teachers. The notion of teacher support has several positive effects in increasing the students' sense of school belonging and is closely related to the teacher's good mental health (Riley, 2009; Slaten et al., 2016). Given that life satisfaction is one of the major concerns related to school belongingness, "satisfaction is one of the essential missions of education" (Ahmadi & Ahmadi, 2019, p. 1). As such, students' sense of school belongingness is indispensable for increasing the conditions of their life satisfaction. Findings in this study reveal that the teacher's support and acceptance are relatively moderated and do not adequately contribute to increasing students' sense of school membership.

Sense of School Ownership

School ownership is a 'feeling of connectedness' (Cortina et al., 2017) with the school community in a sociocultural context. Existing 'cultural constructs' (Cortina et al., 2017) in a particular school context influence school belongingness. In the western setting, several studies have demonstrated the critical role of school

ownership in contributing to the students' sense of school belongingness (Goodenow & Grady, 1993; St-Amand et al., 2020; Wagle et al., 2018; Ye & Wallace, 2014). Table 3 shows that students' sense of school ownership is relatively higher on average.

Table 3

Students' Sense of Ownership of their School

Statements	Not at all true 1	2	3	4	Completely true 5
Sometimes I feel as if I don't belong in my school	43.33	26.66	10	10	10
People at my school are friendly to me	3.33	13.33	16.66	33.33	33.33
I am included in lots of activities at my school	16.66	20	50	10	13.33
I wish I were in a different school	50	16.66	16.66	3.33	13.33

Source: Field Survey 2022. Note: Figures in the table indicate the percentage

As this study reports, students (43.33%) have a sense of school ownership and are satisfied with being a student at their school. This finding indicates the students' positive sense of school attachment. Such an attachment motivates students to move ahead in many ways: it contributes to their positive sense of psychological development; builds a strong bond with their peers, teachers, and parents. In the broader school context, the feeling of school ownership contributes to harmonious social, psychological, and emotional development. As a result, students sense themselves as strongly affiliated with the school community, which ultimately prevents 'academic failure' (Van der Wilt et al., 2019).

Additionally, 33.33% strongly perceive that people in their school (peers, teachers, staff) are friendly to them. While most of the students (50%) perceive their inclusion in the school activities, a small number (13.33%) do not feel the same. Importantly, students (50%) do not wish to be in another school currently, while a few (13.33%) wish to be in a different school. It is assumed that school is supposed to earn the trust of their students. When the school loses or gradually loses the students', trust is a serious matter, although it is a perceived sense of a small number of students. The findings above allow the researcher to conclude that the students' perceived (strong) satisfaction regarding school ownership.

Sense of Respect and Honour

Given that students' sense of respect and honour shapes their school membership, it indicates the perceived sense of trust and security gained "through relationships with others in the school setting" (Craggs & Kelly, 2018, p.13). At the same time, students gain the feeling of dignity through the "positive social relationships with members of the school environment" (St-Amand et al., 2020, p.20), which helps them achieve a higher sense of school belongingness. Table 4 indicates the moderated sense of students' respect and honour.

Table 4

Students' Sense of Respect and Honour

Statements	Not at all true 1	2	3	4	Completely true 5
I am treated with as much respect as other students in my school	6.66	13.33	26.66	36.66	16.66
I feel very different from most other students at my school	-	36.66	33.33	13.33	16.66
People at my school know that I can do good work	3.33	16.66	16.66	16.66	13.33
I feel proud to belong to my school	6.66	13.33	30	6.66	43.33

Source: Field Survey 2022. Note: Figures in the table indicate the percentage

A small number of students (16.66%) were completely satisfied with the treatment they received from teachers, peers, school management personnel, and parents, while a majority of them (36.66%) did not seem fully satisfied. Studies such as Wagle et al. (2018), Goodenow and Grady (1993), and Ballard (2017) have similar findings. For instance, when the students perceive as he or she is recognized, particularly by the teachers and peers inside and outside the school, they feel proud of being a member of a school. While the students feel they are fitted with the school environment, it tends to motivate them for better achievement through engaging activities. As a result, such school belongingness also reduces the chances of being a victim of peer bullying. As the findings indicate not a strong perceived sense of teacher's favorable treatment, other studies, such as Cortina et al. (2017), have similar findings. Cortina et al. (2017) further said that "the experience of belonging at school requires that the students feel that the teacher respects them and has positive expectations of them" (Cortina et al., 2017, p.2). It is generally assumed that teachers, critical aspects of school belongingness, are vital catalytic

agents for facilitating students' better learning progress since teacher support is influential at adolescent and pre-adolescent stages. Empirical studies confirmed that positive teacher affective support significantly influences school belonging levels (Wagle, 2021). Regarding recognizing students' good work from people at school (peers, teachers, school staff, parents), they showed weaker belief (13.33%). While considering students' closeness is the indicator of the quality of learning, as the findings report, it indicates the serious situation of students' perception of their sense of security and honor. In addition, strikingly, the majority of the students (43.33%) feel proud to be a student in their school, which shows (a firm) feeling of belongingness towards their school. These findings are consistent with Goodenow (1993) and (Wagle, 2021) that students' sense of mutual reciprocity with their teachers and peers is fundamental for their psychological development, which has a closer relationship with the student's perceived sense of school belongingness.

Moreover, as the data reports, a more significant portion of schools feels a sense of respect and honor from their school. As such, it indicates that the school promotes comparatively a good sense of respect and dignity, particularly from their teachers and peers; in the larger context of the local school, people/community belonging is related to gaining a perceived sense of broader school community. This scenario promotes a respectful environment with the students and plays a fundamental element in creating the inclusive, socially constructivist teaching-learning practice within the school. More importantly, in a study, Goodenow and Grady (1993) reported that school sense of belongingness and motivation do have reciprocal relationship

The relationship between a sense of school belonging and motivation is undoubtedly far more reciprocal than suggested by these analyses. Just as students who feel themselves to be full and valued members of the school are more motivated and engaged, they are also accorded more acceptance and respect from others in the school, especially school adults.

Conclusion

This study examines the PSSM of Grade eight students at Basic level Schools in Nepal using Goodenow's (Goodenow, 1993) scale. Students' sense of school belongingness has several positive consequences for adolescent and pre-adolescent (puberty stage) students. As their feeling of school membership increases, students are motivated and engage in learning. They gain overall well-being and sound mental health, leading to academic success. The data analysis of this study revealed the existing situation of students' sense of school belongingness/connectedness/membership in four broad areas.

The perceived sense of school attachment among students is moderate and mostly poor. Further, they are not fully confident about their teachers and peer support care. Students' perceived acceptance from their peers and teachers is moderate, which does not fully contribute to earning the feeling of support from other people at school. Likewise, students' perceived sense of school ownership is strong, increasing their sense of school membership. Finally, as the findings revealed, students have an average belief of respect and honor from other people at school. In addition, students are not fully recognized (identity shaping) by their teachers and peers as they wish, which does not indicate a strong sense of dignity.

This small-scale study identified that the existing school context does not adequately promote and foster the students' sense of school membership. The findings from this study have immediate applications in understanding the complexity of PSSM in the context of school education in Nepal. While studying PSSM is pivotal for the student's academic progress, balanced mental health, and well-being, it is being ignored in the Nepali school education system. A large-scale longitudinal study of students from different Grades on PSSM is imperative in the future.

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Appendix

Psychological Sense of School Membership Scale

S. N.	Statements	Not at all true 1	2	3	4	Completely true 5
1	I feel like a part of my school					
2	People at my school notice when I am good at something					
3	It is hard for people like me to be accepted at my school					
4	Other students in my school take my opinions seriously					

5	Most teachers at my school are interested in me					
6	Sometimes I feel as if I don't belong in my school					
7	There is at least one teacher or adult I can talk to in my school if I have a problem					
8	People at my school are friendly to me					
9	Teachers here are not interested in people like me					
10	I am included in lots of activities at my school					
11	I am treated with as much respect as other students in my school					
12	I feel very different from most other students at my school					
13	I can really be myself at my school					
14	Teachers at my school respect me					
15	People at my school know that I can do good work					
16	I wish I were in a different school					
17	I feel proud to belong to my school					
18	Other students at my school like me the way that I am					

Source: Goodenow, C. (1993). The psychological sense of school membership among adolescents: Scale development and educational correlates. *Psychology in the Schools*, 30(1), 79-90.

Scales: 1 = *Not at all true*; 2 = *Partially/ Little true*; 3 = *Quite a lot true*; 4 = *Certainly true*; 5 = *Completely true*



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Experiences of Teachers and Students in Multicultural Nepalese Classrooms

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Abstract

This article explores the teachers' behaviour and students' experiences in multicultural classrooms in Nepal. Applying the phenomenological qualitative research design, we selected two schools from the study area that have a more diversified population. Data was collected through in-depth interviews with the teachers and students, and a focus group discussion with the students. We used a thematic data analysis procedure to analyze the data. This study found that the schools' policies are unable to address the needs of culturally different children. The schools have focused on providing economic support to the students rather than addressing their cultural needs. We found that the traditional training packages for teachers were insufficient to deal with multicultural classrooms. Because of a lack of knowledge of cultural, language, and feelings of students' and families' background, teachers were unable to deal with the students properly. Although the teachers were sincere on cultural issues nowadays, at the beginning of their career, their practices were not child-friendly. At the same time, we found that the experiences of students were also disgraceful in the school related to culture and language. They had difficulties in classroom adjustment because of being a different culture, they had problems in proper pronunciation and tongue in the Nepali language.

Keywords: Multicultural education, multicultural pedagogy, cultural diversity, cultural gap

Introduction

Society is becoming "super-diverse" (Tatham-Fashanu, 2021) because of migration and globalization. Nepali society is also being diversified in culture,

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religion, language, economic status, ethnicity, and indigenouness. There are 10 different religions, 125 castes, and 123 languages (Central Bureau of Statistics [CBS], 2012) in Nepal. Migration is also widespread in Nepal. The main movements are from rural to urban; from hills to Tarai, and from mountains to hills and Tarai. The migration rate from mountains is 17.1%, from hills is 68.9%, and from Tarai is 14% (Sharma et al., 2014). This type of internal migration is making society more diversified and varied in nature. Such diversity is worldwide, in either developing or developed countries. The population of ethnic, racial, linguistic, and religious minorities in the West is growing faster than the population of mainstreaming people. The effects of globalization and migration have diversified western society, including the United States (Banks & Banks, 2010).

The super-diversity of society affects education and classroom activities because it changes the students' composition by caste, culture, religion, economic background, ethnicity, and physical characteristics. In such a context, the teachers have to be familiar with multicultural education.

Multicultural education in general is a provision that ensures educational equality for all students, regardless of caste or culture. It ensures an equal and equitable learning environment for all the students. The focus of multicultural education is usually on explicit or overt aspects of culture such as religion, language, dress, food habits, and so on. But these aspects of culture are like an iceberg. The implicit or covert aspects of culture such as behaviour, feelings, experiences, emotions, physical conditions, etc. are not addressed and focused on in schools (Erickson, ed. on Banks and Banks, 2010). So, multicultural education is the practice and behaviour that is focused on enabling, emancipating, and empowering students who are not in the mainstream.

It is noticed that due to a lack of proper training and skills, teachers' behaviour is prejudicial and discriminatory towards culturally different students. Most teachers have a "cultural eye" (Irvine, 2003). They see the students through their own culture rather than their own culture. Such "cultural blindness" and "cultural eye" are the results of a lack of proper knowledge and skills in pedagogical practices (ibid.). Such practices by teachers cannot improve the learning environment of the school or create the feeling that school is for all. In the Nepali minority, marginalized, ethnic, and culturally backward communities are not yet mainstreamed, and children from such groups feel learning difficulties in the classrooms. They feel difficulty in language and classroom interaction, and as a result, they become unable to achieve the same academic performance as mainstreamed children. My assumption and claim are that teachers are not trained and prepared for multicultural education in Nepal. The traditional training packages are insufficient for the teachers.

The curriculum and textbooks are unable to address the needs of the students, and the schools do not focus themselves on making proper policies to address the diversity of culture.

The modern era of the 21st century demands culturally aware, sensitive, and competitive citizens, and this is only possible through proper education and cultural knowledge. The students of today need to feel a fair atmosphere in schools and classrooms. This is only possible through proper pedagogical practices in the classrooms. In such a context, the purposes of the study are to analyze the cultural diversity of the schools, to evaluate the schools' policies regarding cultural diversity, and to explore teachers' experiences and behaviour in a multicultural classroom.

Literature Review

Theoretical Consideration

The study is based on Vygotsky's (1982) sociocultural theory. The theory asserts that children learn from their family and society, and the theory also suggests that human learning is largely a social process (Cherry, 2019). Sociocultural factors include language and everyday thoughts, which affect the learning of a child. What a child sees, feels, experiences, perceives, and believes affects his/her learning, and this is everyday knowledge. Vygotsky (1982) terms curriculum knowledge as scientific knowledge and home knowledge as everyday knowledge, and the differences between these two types of knowledge create learning problems (Hedegaard, 2003). Everyday knowledge can be characterized as concepts that are connected to the domain of daily family and community life. The teacher should have to know what the students possess from their family and community as cultural heritage (Hedegaard, 2003). She has to use that knowledge to extend their learning and she has to respect their daily life experiences and should utilize them in teaching-learning activities.

According to Vygotsky (1982), children learn from their family and more knowledgeable others (MKO). There is a level of learning which is 'Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)'. Vygotsky defines ZPD as "the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Pathan et al., 2018. p. 233). The culture and family help them to reach the ZPD, the capacity of the children. This is the actual level that they want to reach (Hedegaard, 2003). The teachers have to identify the actual level of students and help them to reach a higher level, which they create from their daily life experiences and their culture. In easy terms, the teachers have to foster cultural knowledge rather than reject it.

Empirical Review

The school is known as a social system. If society is diverse and multicultural, then the school will be diverse and multicultural as well. Traditional curricula, textbooks, and pedagogical practices address only the mainstream children, leaving other children from minorities, ethnic groups, marginalized communities, and disadvantaged groups untouched and unaddressed. Sleeter (2001) says that teachers possess stereotypical beliefs about urban students and they have little knowledge of racism, discrimination, and structural aspects of inequality (as cited on Irvine, 2003). The prejudice and presumptions of teachers have a negative impact on students' learning. This prejudiced assumption and belief says that many teachers are not properly trained to teach in the multicultural classroom.

Multicultural education is multidimensional and multifaceted. It has different areas in teaching-learning and teachers' attitudes and behaviour. It deals with equality, equity, and justice. In the simplest sense, multicultural teaching means bringing children's everyday knowledge arising from community and family life into the classroom (Hedegaard, 2003). Mio et al. (2006) say, "It (multicultural education) is the systematic study of all aspects of human behaviour as it occurs in settings where people of different backgrounds encounter one another" (as cited on Lott, 2010, p. 10). Here, human behaviour signifies the behaviour of teachers, students, school leaders, and policymakers.

Multicultural education, in its broadest sense, refers to all educational practices that take place in schools, including curriculum, pedagogy, and other educational policies and plans; in a narrower sense, it refers to pedagogical practices and teacher behaviour in multicultural classrooms.

Multicultural education is multidimensional and it covers a wide range of study and research. So in this study, we have focused on teachers' behaviour and pedagogical practice in the classroom. Thus, multicultural education is to enhance the learning of culturally marginalized children. It helps to change the attitude of teachers towards other cultures. Studies have shown that even in developed countries like the USA, teachers are "colour blind" and they have a certain "cultural eye". The "colour blind" concept is to look at the students' own colour or discriminate against others' based on colour.

"Cultural eye" (Irvine, 2003) is another concept which is the discriminating behaviour of teachers based on culture. As Sleeter (2001) found, "White pre-service teachers bring very little cross-cultural knowledge, experience, and understanding to teaching, they possess stereotypical beliefs about urban students and they have little knowledge of racism, discrimination, and structural aspects of inequality" (as

cited on Irvine, 2003, p. xvi). This scenario is not only in America and Europe; it is worldwide even in Nepal. Nepal is a developing country and the proper training packages are not sufficient to address the cultural issues of the classroom.

Multicultural education helps to create teaching strategies that are meaningful for the children, contribute to their acquisition of skills and knowledge, and foster positive identity and acceptance of their cultural background. If there is no proper interaction between teacher and student, the students will become weaker in their performance. Clewell (2002) and Francis (2000) found “In the early grades, girls and boys achieve equally in mathematics and science. However, the achievement test scores of girls fall considerably behind those of boys as children progress through the grades “(as cited on Banks & Banks, 2010, p. 3). This is because of the decreasing interactions of the students with the teachers and colleagues. Hesitation and shyness lessen the interactions of female students.

Another serious problem that Irvine has discussed is how an unfavourable school environment becomes a nightmare for many students. Irvine (2003) says that nightmares come both day and night for many children in the form of poverty, violence, hunger, poor health, drug addiction, inferior schools, and insensitive policies. To draw the children from the nightmares, cultural sensitivity and proper cultural knowledge are needed by the teachers.

Teaching in a multicultural environment or diversified school is a more responsible and sensitive function of a teacher. Gay (2013) names it “culturally responsive teaching.” According to him, “Culturally responsive teaching emphasis on “teaching to” cultural diversity helps students acquire more accurate knowledge about the lives, cultures, contributions, experiences, and challenges of different ethnic and racial groups” (Gay, 2013, p. 49). Culturally responsive teaching aims to widen the knowledge of students of their own culture as well as raise a feeling of respect towards others’ cultures. It is also an issue of equity and social justice.

Diversity is the beauty of society. It is a cultural mosaic that makes it perfect and complete. Each culture has its own importance and value, which is cultural capital. So, culturally responsive teaching uses the social and cultural capital of different cultural groups in the classroom. It is valuing and respecting all the cultures that the students possess. Gay (2013) says, “Culturally responsive teaching is the behavioural expression of knowledge, beliefs, and values that recognize the importance of racial and cultural diversity in learning” (p. 50).

Students and teachers who understand the value of different cultures develop positive feelings and attitudes toward cultural others. Gay (2013) further asserts, “It cultivates cooperation, collaboration, reciprocity, and mutual responsibility

for learning among students, and between students and teachers” (p. 51). So, multicultural education is to ensure mutual understanding, cooperation, and collaboration. It is to share a culture of mutuality among the students and teacher-students.

Multicultural education further makes students able to analyse, challenge, and alter inequity, injustice, domination, and abuse of power. It also helps students to raise their voice against the cultural hegemony that educational institutions have been holding for a long time (Gay, 2003). The cultural hegemony is in the form of language, teaching methods, teaching materials, curriculum, and textbooks, which are practiced in the schools. All these have to be challenged and questioned.

Hedegaard (2003) has discussed the methods of multicultural education. Children bring a lot of knowledge from their home and culture. When a teacher becomes able to fit homely knowledge with curriculum knowledge, children learn easily what the teacher wants to teach. He says, “One of the difficulties faced by teachers is the need to connect subject concepts to children’s everyday concepts in ways that widen and develop children’s abilities” (Hedegaard, 2003, p. 135). Such a difficulty is the difficulty of multicultural pedagogy that the teachers face in the classes, including Nepal.

Teaching is not just telling and selling information; it is caring relationships. As Martin (1995) said, teachers who know the importance of multicultural classes turn “schoolhouses into school homes” with the “3Cs”- care, concern, and connection (as cited on Irvine, 2003). Here, care is building a relationship with all students equally, concern is taking an interest in the culture of students, and connection is establishing a relationship between home and school knowledge. Thus, the “3Cs” concept is a useful method in the multicultural classroom.

Multicultural pedagogy is a challenging task. The teachers should be more skilled and sensitive to it. Banks and Banks (2010) have suggested six dimensions to follow for multicultural education. The dimensions are content integration, the knowledge construction process, prejudice reduction, equity pedagogy, and empowering school culture and social structure. All the dimensions are concerned with the school policies and teachers.

Multicultural education is not only related to teaching methods and strategies; it is related to the whole curriculum, including the assessment system of the students. Assessment is one of the major parts of the teaching-learning process. The instruments, procedures, methods, and processes that are used for assessment are said not to be culturally biased and partial.

Methods and Procedures

In this study, we have applied the qualitative research with the phenomenological design. Our research paradigm is critical (Mack, 2010), and we believe in multiple realities (as ontological position).

Study Area

This study was conducted in Dhangadhi Sub-metropolitan City, Kailali of Sudur Pashchim Province, Nepal because Kailali district is a highly migrant district in Nepal and is highly diversified in culture, caste, economy, religion, and language (District Development Committee Kailali, 2015).

Participants

The headteachers, teachers, and students were the participants in this study, and we selected two schools, two headteachers, four teachers, and eight students to fulfill the purpose of this study. We purposefully selected two schools which had the most diversified societies. We selected the social studies teachers who have long experience in teaching and we selected the students from Dalit, Madheshi, Tharu, and Rana Tharu communities based on quota sampling.

Data Collection Tools and Procedures

By applying in-depth interviews, Focus Group Discussion (FGD), and document analysis, we have tried to make the research more authentic and reliable. We interviewed the head teacher, teachers, and students. Furthermore, we conducted FGD with the students to reach a conclusion. We studied the policy documents of the schools, mainly the minutes of the school management committee, to see whether the school had addressed cultural diversity or not.

Data Analysis Procedures

At the beginning, the data we collected was as thick as a description. To make the data more meaningful, we went through different stages. We had recorded the voices of the interviewees and FGD participants. We transcribed the verbal data into written symbols, generated initial codes, searched for themes from the codes, refined the themes, defined the themes, and selected some themes for the title and sub-titles. The thematic analysis was deductive (Braun & Clarke, 2006). We also analyzed the information comparing it with the policy documents available in the schools' records. Finally, we concluded the discussion by comparing the theory with previous studies.

Results and Discussion

We have analysed the data based on the purpose of the study. The findings are organized into different topics and sub-topics to fulfill the purpose. The previous studies and the theory are our guidelines for the discussion and findings in this study.

Composition of Students by Caste and Culture

Kailali is one of the most migrant districts in Nepal. While Kailali district has 240 people per square kilometer, the average density in Nepal is around 180 (District Development Committee, Kailali, 2015). The migration rate decides the diversification of society. The schools that we selected for this study are also known for being diversified in culture and caste. The majority of the students at both schools were Tharu students, who are known as the ethnic caste of Kailali district.

The majority of students were ethnic in each class in school 'A' - mainly Tharu community students, including Rana Tharu and Chaudhary Tharu. These two castes are also different in language, culture, and traditions. These are the ethnic people of the Kailali district with their own language, culture, religion, clothing, festivals and traditions. They speak the Tharu language. They celebrate Maghi as a main festival. Females used to wear their own dresses - Lenhanga and Choli - and males used to wear Lagauti and Bheguwa. They worship nature although they are Hindus.

Dalits are traditionally an untouchable caste and an oppressed group. The endangered caste is Raji, and it has its own culture and traditions. Others include Brahmins and Kshatriyas, and these are mainstream castes.

In the school 'A', the first majority (80%) of students was ethnic caste. The second position was held by others (14%). The third position was held by Dalits (5%). Finally, endangered castes held (1%). In school 'B', the majority of the students were others (58%). This category embraces Brahmins, Kshatriyas, and other so-called higher castes. The second majority was of the ethnic group (29%) and the last, the Dalits (13%).

School Policies for Diversity Management

The data shows that the composition of students at both schools is varied in culture and language. We noticed that the ethnic and minority children were poor in their performance. The headteacher of school 'A' said, "Especially children from Muslim and Madheshi communities are poor in learning, and migrant children from Indian communities are also poor performers." In such a context, to ensure social justice and equity and to address the academic needs of the children, the schools have to make some policies and plans. When we asked the headteacher about it, he replied that there is a provision for school dress, scholarships, and other provisions for minority and ethnic children. But we could not find any pedagogic policies and plans for the targeted community. The headteacher of school "A" said,

We have distributed school dress and learning materials to Tharu, Dalit and other marginalized students with the support of a non-government organization (NGO). The main objective of this effort is to create an environment for enrollment, retention, and learning. This program helped us to increase enrollment. But we do not have any special policies for teaching and learning in our school.

He further said, “To empower the parents of marginalized and backward children, we make school plans in a participatory approach. The parents, teachers, and school management committee (SMC) prepare plans jointly, and this process helps to create ownership towards the school.” We noticed from observing the documents that the school prepares annual instructional plans involving the parents.

To solve the lingual problems of the non-Nepali-speaking children, the school has a bi-lingual training program for some primary-level teachers. The need for such training is for all teachers, but only two teachers were given language training. To address the different cultures and languages, the school organizes cultural programmes. The headteacher said, “To create harmony among different cultures and languages, the school organizes different cultural programs twice a year, and we have collected and prepared different types of dresses and ornaments from different cultural groups surrounding our society.” This statement shows that the school has focused on tangible and materialistic views of culture and intangible cultural aspects such as values, norms, behaviour and meaning-making processes that are left unaddressed. According to the headteacher, culture is only the material objects and tangible aspects of culture and this view is a partial and overt view of culture. The whole view of culture is not covered yet by the school policies.

The headteacher of school ‘B’ also said that minority group children like Dalit and Raji are poor in learning. Rana Tharu community children are also weak in classroom performance. He said, “Nearly 2/3 of the children are from Rana Tharu and Mukta Kamaiya (released bound labour) community. These children are poor in classroom performance. He said that the main cause was absenteeism in the classroom. Such children make up nearly half of the population. The causes of higher student absenteeism are: a lack of interest in school activities; a lack of classroom instruction; and a lack of cultural context. Although the headteacher of a school asserted that, “Our school policy is mainly focused on three areas: school access, school retention, and classroom success.” However, no policy to promote a culturally friendly environment was observed, and access, retention, and success of culturally backward children are less likely than the school had anticipated.

The teachers have to know what the students possess from their family and community as cultural heritage (Hedegaard, 2003). If the school is unable to

link the heritage in pedagogy, there will be a gap, and this gap will certainly create learning problems. Another challenge for the school is to fit home knowledge into curriculum knowledge. As Vygotsky (1982) says, the schools have to recognize what the students know and what they want to know, but we found that there was no such practice in our context.

The schools prepare a school improvement plan (SIP) annually, but there is no space given for multicultural education. Neither the school management committee (SMC) nor the school administration pays attention to such a burning issue. The causes of students' absenteeism and poor academic performance are a lack of a child-friendly environment and a problem of cultural adjustment in the school. We found that the policies and strategies for students' diversity management in the schools are not proper and the policies are unable to emancipate and empower the culturally backward children. The school policies were only focused on economic grants and support. There were no policies for content integration, equity pedagogy, and empowering school culture. We could not find any provision linking community knowledge to school knowledge. The school activities were limited to the curriculum, which was provided centrally.

Teachers' Behaviour and Experiences

As already discussed, the teachers were not well prepared for the multicultural classroom because there was no training package for teachers in Nepal to address the cultural issues. A teacher's sensitivity, sincerity, and skills are meaningful in culturally responsive teaching. The teachers whom we selected for this study were experienced and had a long journey in teaching. But it cannot be said that all the teachers are experienced. The teachers were experienced in terms of teaching, but they were not aware of proper practices in multicultural classrooms. For them, multicultural education means treating all the students equally.

The students whom we interviewed and discussed had no bad experiences from the teachers' side. They claimed that the teachers were treated equally, but they said that the teachers use the Nepali language all the time and do not prefer students' mother tongue. The students said that this practice creates learning difficulties. When we asked the headteacher about the causes of not using students' mother tongues in the classroom, he said, "The parents do not want it." The parents want their children to learn Nepali and English in the classroom, not their language. They say that they can teach their children the mother tongue at home. But the experiences of the teachers in the multicultural classroom are notable, which we will discuss in the following subheadings.

I Used to Abuse Students' Culture

Many teachers are not culturally aware and lack understanding of students'

family background and their parents' occupation. This misunderstanding can sometimes cause issues with classroom learning and adjustment. If the teachers hate certain occupations or customs related to the students, they will not feel at ease in the classroom and cannot be friendly with the teachers. If a teacher uses examples and illustrations without being sincere, it may be harmful to the students and the classroom activities. One of the teachers, 'Sudha', told her story similar to this one. When she was a beginning teacher, she used to teach moral science to grade six students. She used to believe that killing animals was a sin that God would never forgive. In her class, there was a student who belonged to a butcher family. When she used to tell stories about non-violence, the student used to turn red and feel uneasy in the classroom. Sudha explained,

I used to teach moral science in grade six. Based on the text, I had to say that killing animals is a sin. If we kill animals the god will never forgive us. We will be punished by God. One of a student, sitting on the first bench, used to listen to me carefully and silently. One day I noticed his restlessness and red face when I was teaching the topic of nonviolence, I asked the causes but he did not reply any answer. Later, I asked his friends about it and found that he belonged to a butcher's family. Killing animals and selling meat was his family's profession. I felt that I was abusing and attacking his family profession regularly. A few days later, he left school and never came back to it again. I think that I was the cause of his dropout. I think he became my victim. I will never forget that incident or ever forgive myself.

This is an example of a teacher's behaviour with the students in the classroom. Many novice and untrained teachers harm the students unknowingly. What the teachers say, do, and behave with the students affects the students forever. So the teachers should have proper knowledge and understanding of the students' culture, customs, family background, and knowledge.

I Slapped on a Student's Face

Language is a component of culture. Proper knowledge of the language makes teaching easy and it brings the students closer to the teacher. Usually, the teachers do not understand the students' mother tongue, and it creates a misunderstanding. One of the teachers, 'Purna', told his story of how he reacted to a lack of understanding of the student's mother tongue. He said that he was appointed as a teacher at a Rana Tharu community school. It was a primary school and there were a majority of Rana Tharu children, and he did not understand their language. One day, a student addressed him as 'ta', and he slapped him on his face because in the Nepali language, 'ता' (ta) is used to juniors and it is known as a dominating

word. There are many words in the Nepali language which are used to address different levels of people, such as 'तँ' (ta), 'तिमी' (timi) 'तपाईं' (tapaai) 'हजुर' (hajur) etc. But in the Rana Tharu language, 'तँ' (ta) is used for all people, either senior or junior, like the English word "you". Purna did not know these differences, and the misunderstanding occurred. Purna said,

At the beginning of my teaching profession, I was appointed to a school in the Rana Tharu community. I did not know the Rana Tharu language. One day, I was checking home work for a class. One of Rana Tharu's students had made mistakes in his work. I asked him who told him to do it this way. He said, (tailebhaneko) "तैले भनेको" (you told). I felt domination while he addressed me तँ (ta) (as 'thou' in old English) in front of the whole class. I slapped his face, saying not to address the teacher तँ (ta). Later, I told my headteacher about the incident. The headteacher laughed and said that in the Rana Tharu language तँ (ta) is a common word to address all the people, either the senior or the junior. The word is used as 'you' in the English language. I felt ashamed and realized my misbehaving with the student, due to a lack of proper understanding of the student's language.

This is one of the stories of Purna that tells how language creates problems in the classroom. Usually, the majority of teachers are from the mainstream in Nepalese schools. They do not understand the culture, language, religion, customs, traditions, and values of the local community. The teachers whom we chose for this study were experienced in cultural issues and sincere in their duty. They accepted that teachers' experience, training, proper cultural understanding, responsibility, and professional honesty are the main themes for good pedagogical practices in the multicultural classroom. However, the majority of teachers in Nepal do not have access to a proper cultural training package, and they do not know how to deal with a multicultural classroom. In such a context, good teaching-learning cannot be expected.

Students' Experiences in the Schools

The students who we interviewed and discussed had no culturally biased behaviour or experiences from the teachers' side. They said that teachers' behaviour was equal to all. They had no prejudicial or cultural bias behaviour towards the students. But there was no special treatment for culturally backward children. One of the notable facts the schools accepted was that certain community children, like Tharu and Rana Tharu community children, were poor in academic performance. It was considered an economic factor in the family and had nothing to do with cultural factors such as language, customs, or belief systems. Some of the significant stories that the students shared are discussed in the following topics.

I Cannot Interact with the Teachers

Classroom interaction is the main foundation of learning. If the teacher and students interact in the class, many confusions, misunderstandings, and misconceptions become clear. It makes the teacher and student closer. Good interaction between the teacher and the students promotes higher learning achievements. However, because of their language and tongue, many students are unable to interact with their teachers or even their peers. They think that if they ask questions in the class, their classmates will laugh at them. They sit at the back of the class, silently and timidly, and they adopt a culture of silence forever.

We noticed the same case here. One of the Rana Tharu students, 'Pyare', told his story after my deep efforts. He said,

"Many times, I try to ask questions to the teachers, but I feel hesitant and shy because my tone is different than others' and I can't speak like other students. I can't differentiate the sounds like "ठ" (ta) and "ट" (ta). When I try to ask questions or want speak, my friends laugh at me. So, I sit silently in the classroom even when I do not understand the teachers."

The student is only a representative character. Many students, who belong to the minority culture, feel ashamed in the classroom because they cannot speak fluently and have language problems. This lessens classroom interaction and causes a weakness in academic performance. In such a case, the school and the teacher must use equity pedagogy to help students achieve academic success (Banks & Banks, 2010).

The Colour of my Skin Humiliates me

Sometimes students' physical structure and disabilities hamper their learning abilities. Physically different students think that they are not similar to their classmates. This feeling reduces classroom interaction. Lack of classroom interaction pushes them away from learning activities. One student, 'Sharawan', of grade eight, shared his experiences as:

The colour of my skin is darker than others. My friends dominate me by addressing me as 'Deshi' (this informal word is used in Nepal for Indians). Although I am not 'Desi' (Indian), I am from Madesh (eastern Tarai). When I try to interact with the teachers, I feel frightened and hesitant. I think that my friends will laugh and shout at me. So, I do not ask any questions to my teachers in the classroom.

As Irvine (2003) has noticed, in western society, teachers are 'colour-blind' and they have 'cultural eyes', but we could not notice such prejudices in the schools from the teachers' side, but students were not very sincere in such cases. Although

this case may be exceptional, students' prejudiced behavior cannot be ignored. So, the schools have to prepare the children to live with harmony and respect all castes, culture, colour, language, and other types of cultural differences. If the students do not find the proper environment in the schools, many effects might be seen in teaching and learning. Drop out, absenteeism, low performance, a bunk of the class, etc. are the causes of the unfair school environment.

Stereotypic Assumptions

The school administration (headteacher), teachers, and students have stereotypical assumptions about certain castes and cultural groups of students. We asked them whether certain caste or cultural group students were weaker than mainstream students or not. Nearly all replied that Tharu, Rana Tharu, and Dalit students are weaker than others. This is a stereotypical assumption towards certain castes and groups, and we think this was a prejudice. Prejudice reduction is a dimension of multicultural education, but such prejudice is widespread in schools.

Conclusion

From the beginning of its history, Nepali society was diversified and multicultural. Nowadays, it is becoming more diversified and varied because of internal migration. In such a diversified society, the schools and classrooms also become diversified and multicultural. The schools have to deal with different cultural, ethnical, indigenous, and marginalized children similarly and equally to create equity and social justice, which is challenging and difficult for many teachers because of their lack of proper skills and knowledge of multicultural education. The prejudice and discriminated behaviour of the teachers is also an issue of multicultural education. Irvine (2003) gives the 'cultural eye' and 'colour-blind' concepts to such a context.

Mainly, the function of multicultural education is to increase the students' learning efficiency. But it is not limited only to teaching-learning processes. Multicultural education is a social justice perspective that focuses on enabling, empowering, and energizing students against cultural hegemony by emphasizing mutual understanding, collaboration, cooperation, and coordination among students. It also aims to protect the culture, language, and identity of the cultural other. Multicultural education holds that students have certain homely knowledge, skills, and attitudes that should be utilized by the school and teachers in their learning. School education and home/family education should be tailored to each other so that students can easily learn and feel at ease in schools.

The school policies are focused on financial support for students. Little attention is paid to managing cultural diversity in schools, and it is limited to overt

culture. Covert culture is still unseen and untouched in schools. In the same way, schools are unable to integrate cultural or social heritage with school learning. The schools are just disseminating a centrally loaded curriculum.

The teachers are not prepared for multicultural education. They do not have the proper training to deal with multicultural classrooms. For them, multicultural education means treating all the students equally. For lack of a proper understanding of culture, sometimes the teachers misbehave with the students. There is no application of the '3Cs'-care, concern, and connection (Martin, 1995, as cited on Irvine, 2003). There is no effort to tailor home knowledge to curriculum knowledge. The teachers are unable to find out what the students know and what they want to know. In such a context, the 'dream keeper'(Ladson-Billings, 1995) concept of the teacher is just a dream. The teachers have to shift their paradigm from a traditional one to a modern and more humane one.

For many students, learning comes as a nightmare in the night and daytime (Irvine, 2003), as poverty, language problems, and physical problems dominate their lives. Students are unable to interact with the teachers because of hesitation, fear, and lack of self-confidence. We think multicultural education is possible through "care", "share" in a "fair" environment, and all these go towards the teachers' side. So, the teachers must be caregivers rather than instructors for good practices in the classroom.

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Nature as the Time Teller: Indigenous Mathematics of Time Calculation in Nepal

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Abstract

Mathematics of time calculation has remained an indigenous asset of different Nepali societies since time immemorial. In this work, we aimed to discover the indigenous ways of time calculation in Nepal in terms of time telling, estimation of time, estimation of seasons, and the way people transferred their indigenous knowledge to their further generations. Employing the phenomenological design of qualitative research, we used unstructured interviews as the tool for data collection. We interviewed seven people from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds using an interview guideline. We also used folk song called 'Sita jee ko bhalaalo' popular in district Baitadi of Sudur Paschim Province. We analyzed the information retrieved from those open-ended interviews. From the analysis, we concluded that people in Nepal used to observe the natural entities in their vicinity to estimate the time. While doing so, they used to observe the celestial bodies, shadows cast by the sun, and the visible changes in nature, as well as behaviours of animals. Likewise, they depended upon astrological calculations, and some provisions made by the state to inform people about time.

Keywords: astrological calculation, observation, time-keeping in Nepal, time zone, vedic evidence

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Introduction

History of time calculation dates almost 30 thousand years back when early human groups recorded phases of the Moon. Later, about 20 thousand years ago, people gained the idea of a month by observing the repetition of the lunar phases (Atkins & Koth, 2020). Later, Babylonians developed the idea of 24 hours a day (Roy, 2003). They divided the Sunlit portion of the day into 12 intervals and the remaining dark portion into 12 as 12 is mystically significant in the ancient Babylonian culture (Atkins & Koth, 2020). Babylonians developed a sexagesimal (base 60) system for astronomical counting which was later adopted by the Greeks who divided each of the 12 equal intervals of a day into 60 smaller units (Dame, n.d.). Almost four hundred years ago, the concept of minute was gained and almost half a century ago, the human race became able to count a billionth of a second (Atkins & Koth, 2020).

A sophisticated system of time calculation was developed in the Indian subcontinent also. The ancient manuscript that mentions the concept of time calculation methods was *Vedanga Jyotisha*, which was orally transferred for a long in *Guru-Shishya* tradition and formalized during 1200 to 600 BC (Hariprasad, 2018; Sarma, 1991). This book introduces the mathematics of calculation of a day and year. According to the text, a civil day counts the time from one sunrise to another sunrise, and the year was divided into two *Ayanas* one from the brighter half of the month of *Magha* to the end of the darker half of the month of *Ashadha*, and other from the brighter half of the month of *Sravana* to the darker half of the month of *Pausha* (Sarma, 1991).

In the ancient texts of Hindus, such as *Vedas*, *Puranas*, and *Upnishads*, several examples of time calculations are found. People used to use sundials and water clocks. Further, they used to observe the celestial bodies at night. In the treatise of astronomy, the expansion of time is compared to the infinite expansion of the universe (Kak, 1999). Some of the Vedic evidences show that people started meteorological observations and estimated three seasons in a year to ease agricultural practices (Roy, 2009). In the Vedic scriptures, the significance of tripartite time dimensions as past, present, and future have been significantly marked. This markedness is depicted in the ancient architectural structures where designs were influenced by the Vedic time calculation method. Many of such architectures, building blocks depict the *yuga cycles* (cyclic repetition of the Yugas [world ages], i.e.; *Satya*, *TretāDwāpara*, and *Kali*), the solar year, the lunar year, the *mandalā* (the circular representation of universe), and its transformation of time, and, the solar year and lunar time cycles with reference to the *Mount Meru* (Kak, 2002).

Regarding time calculation, the Vedic scriptures mention micro level time unit, smaller than a second to the unit that consists thousands of years. The categories of time calculation in the Vedic texts range from a *Paramānu* (equivalent to 16.8 microseconds) to a day, which comes as the 16th category of time calculation (Sanskriti, 2015; Sharma & Agarwal, 2021). A very large unit of Vedic time calculation is a *Manvantara* (equivalent to 306,720,000 years). In a *Manvantara* 71 *Chaturyugas* repeat, *Kalpa* is even the bigger unit, which is made up of 14 *Manvantara* (Sanskriti, 2015; Sharma & Agarwal, 2021).

Similarly, in the ancient Greece too, water-clock or clepsydra was a common tool for time measurement. Apart from it, they also used to use the sun-dials. They had a twelve-month year like in the other parts of the world. However, the names of the months were different in the different city states (Lahanas, n.d.). Almost similar were the practices in Egypt, Rome, and other parts of the Near East, where people mainly used three methods of time calculations; i.e.; using sundials, using water-clocks and observing celestial bodies (Cartwright, 2012).

Time-keeping in Nepal: The Historical Overview

The first historical evidence that officially mentioned date is the inscription of Mandeva at Changu Narayan dated, 464 AD (Gautam, 2019). It contains the details of the year, day, and the auspicious hour (muhurta) the inscription was placed; i.e.; on the auspicious hour (muhurta) ‘*Abhijiti*’ with the constellation *Rohiṇī* accompanied by the moon on *JyēṣṭhaŚuklaPratipadā*, *Samvat 386* (Bajracharya, as cited in Rajopadhyay, 2014). This shows that astronomy was well developed in the early days of the Lichchavi era. Some folk tales of different indigenous groups (DR, 2015) also show that the concept of time, the difference between day and night had been depicted in the myths in the antiquity which are still orally transferred via generation to generations. The Tamang story of genesis (Dangbo Serab) has a beautiful portrayal of creation of the day and night. According to the story, the God created some of the animal before he created the sun and the moon, therefore, these animal can see in the night too (DR, 2015). This mythological explanation shows that people noticed the difference in the nature of life due to the differences of the day and night.

Use of the sundials and water-clock was common in the past for the astrological purpose too. During the Malla period, residents of Kathmandu developed their own mathematics for telling the time. They used the pond near *HanumānDhokā* for the purpose of time calculation. Government officials kept *palas* (bowl shaped pottery used to light the oil lamp) with small hole at the bottom in such a way that a *pālā* would submerge in water exactly in 24 minutes. People went there to see how many *pālās* have submerged since the dawn. There was an official

assigned the duty of the time keeper and s/he had to tell people the exact time. In 1884, Nepal adopted the Western time keeping system. At that time, Nepal used Indian Standard Time zone, used in India and Ceylon. In 1956, Nepal set watches to Nepal Standard Time, setting its meridian to Mount Gauri Shankar (Gurung, 2003). The wrist watches were not so common as those are now in the past, thus, it was difficult for the common folks to know the time. Therefore, in 1901, the then Prime Minister Dev Shamsheer started a tradition of noon cannon firing to remind the citizens that it was afternoon (Pokharel, 2018).

Even after the watches came, people kept using their indigenous concept of time keeping because it was not only an integral part of their lives but cost efficient too, hence watches were expensive luxuries. Participant A shared his interesting experience, “When a baby was born in the village, people had to run to find one who wore a wrist watch to know the time because the exact time of birth was necessary to make exact horoscope of a baby”.

Before people had watches, they used the indigenous knowledge of time keeping. Though people have been practicing the methods of time calculation that their ancestors invented in the distant past the indigenous mathematics of time calculation has not particularly been studied. Thus, this study aims to explore some ways of time calculation used by Nepali people. For that, we basically focused on the research questions such as the way of estimating time by indigenous people when watches were not in frequent use, the way of estimation of the seasons especially focused on agriculture and other necessary works, and the way they transferred their indigenous knowledge to the coming generations.

Methods and Procedures

We, with the epistemological positioning that people’s perspectives contain data, tried to explore their experiences regarding time calculation in their respective communities. For this, we opted phenomenology, a qualitative research methodology, which is concerned with the lived experiences of people on particular phenomena (Fochtman, 2008; Given, 2008) as it is experienced by human beings (Brinkmann et al., 2014). As we come from the clusters our participants do from, we have embedded our personal experiences too to make meanings of the data we retrieved. Thus, we adopted the Heideggerian perspective of phenomenology which believes that as human beings, our meanings are co-developed in the collective life experiences through our experiences in the world we live in (Byrne, 2001).

We collected data from seven individuals selected using purposive sampling it ensures the selection of people appropriate for the study (Gill, 2020). We used in-depth unstructured interviews for data collection. Considering the ethical issues,

we have concealed the identities of our participants and denoted them here by pseudonyms. Participant A, Participant B, and Participant C represent from Bahun-Chhetri community and come respectively from Sudur Pashchim, Gandaki, and Bagmati provinces; Participant D and E are from the Newar community. Similarly, Participant F and Participant G were respectively from the Limbu and the Gurung community. Due to the corona-virus restrictions, we took telephone interview and one interview on Zoom. We transcribed the data and coded them. After this we organized the codes into categories and finally drew themes from the categories to draw the meanings of the data. Apart from this, we used a time related folk song, *Sitājee ko bhalaulo* (The morning song of Sita), from the Sudur Pashchim province as secondary data.

Results and Discussion

We organized the information acquired from the data into four themes. Though the locality of the informants stretches from the far eastern hills to the far western ones, there is a significant commonness in the information regarding the time calculation in all the areas. Therefore, we have blended the information together to make the data meaningful.

Observation of Celestial Bodies

People used to observe the position of celestial bodies. At day time they observed the position of the sun, and at night they observed the moon and the stars. All the participants said that there was a practice of observing the sun, the moon, or the stars to guess the time in their locality, when watches were not common. This observation not only provided the time of a particular day but they also could estimate the season or the month. According to Participant B, observing the height of the sun in the sky was a common practice to estimate the time of the day. Similarly, she said that people watched constellation in the sky to guess how much night had passed.

Measuring a Shadow in the Sunlight

It was a common practice in the villages to measure the shadow of a previously set fixed signpost such as a house, a hill, or a tree to measure the maturity of a day. Seniors kept noticing the shadow's location and determined whether it is time for taking the cattle for grazing or sending daughters-in-law to the grass meadows to cut the grass, or to go to the field to plough or to reap the crops. Participant B said, "We usually took the shadow of our house as the indicator of time. My grandmother used to measure the shadow with her steps and then said other people whether it is late for going to a particular place or not." The similar

information was given by Participant A and Participant F. Participant A noticed that people used to guess the time observing the shadow of a *Peepal* tree in the village and Participant F said he too has heard about people observing the shadow to guess time.

Women who had to travel hours to get grass for the cattle used to notice the shadow of a particular hill to know that it is the time now to return home. Participant A said, “There was a *Peepal* tree down to the hill, it remained sunny there all day long, and it used to be late if the tree comes under the shadow of the adjacent hill. We had to hurry then to return home.”

Sometimes, people watched their own shadow to estimate the time. Participant F said, “Shadow watching was easy way to see the time. In the morning it is long and extended westward, at the noon it is shortest, almost beneath your feet, and as time passes in kept stretching eastward until the sunset. After the sunset you could not use this trick!” Measuring time by observing shadow is a widely practiced time calculation technique in the world. It is a simple science that the length and direction of the shadow changes as per the sun advances over the sky. People still use this technique when they do not have a watch (Sloane, 2017). This practice is evidence that people have the concept of the position of the sun in the sky and this indigenous knowledge is being transferred from generation to generations. In the ancient Greece, Rome, Egypt and India, the methods of the sun observation reached to further advancement (Cartwright, 2012; Kolivand et al., 2011; Tatavarthy & Lanka, 2016) where the observation further leads to the astronomic calculations.

Observing the Altitude of the Sun

People observed the sun in the sky to estimate the time. Normally when the sun advents high enough above the head, it is the midday. It is scientifically proven technique to estimate time, season, and geographic regions (Jenkins, 2012). Participant B said, “I remember mothers and aunties saying “Oh my God! The sun is high enough to go to the *Melā*, when will we cut grass, and when will we return?”

Apart from this, the sun’s changing spectrum, bright to pale is also an indicator of the time for indigenous people. Still people rely upon the solar observation for time estimation. It has great significance in people’s lives, this may be the reason that in many of the old religions of the world, the sun has been exalted to the level of gods. Participant C said that she heard people referring the pale spectrum of the sun to indicate the sunset. The same is the experience of Participant A.

Observation of the Moon and Stars

Another practice of estimating the time by observing the celestial bodies is observation of the moon and the stars (Sarma, 1991). As per the responses of the participants, people observed the position of Jupiter, Venus and *Tin-Tārā* in the sky to estimate the time in the night. As Participant B said, “we used to watch the sky. If the *Teen-tārā* constellation was over the head, it is time to go to bed, and if it was inclined westward, the night has almost passed and the dawn is near.” Another observation was related to the Jupiter, which appeared as big star in the sky. People took it as a signpost to estimate the time (Rogers, 2008).

Similarly, observing the Venus, which is called the morning star in the morning and the evening star in the evening, is another technique for the estimation of time (Rogers, 2008). Participant A and Participant B said that is called *Bihānitārā* (the morning star) in their communities and people estimate the daybreak or falling of the night from it. Participant A who keeps some knowledge in astrology explained that it appears as the brightest star in the sky and appears in the evening sometimes after the sun sets, when other stars are not visible. In the morning also when other stars have disappeared it keeps shining in the sky. Watching this too people estimated the time.

The moon is another celestial body people watch to estimate the time. Participants said that they estimated the lunar day as well as the time in the night observing the phases and position of the moon. Further, people knew whether it was the dark half or bright half of the month. It gave them sign to the seasonal changes too. For different seasons, the brightness and spectrum of the moon keep changing.

Observation of Animal Behaviours

People estimate time observing animal behavior too. Four of the respondents (Participant A, Participant B, Participant C, and Participant F) expressed that in the past, people estimated time by observing the behavior of animals, birds and insects. This topic has been discussed in the following sub-themes.

Behaviours of the Birds

Different birds also give the hint of time and seasons. People took help from the behaviours of such birds to know the time. Interpreting a cockcrow as the signal of the dawn is a common practice in Nepal. All the respondents agreed that they had heard that people still take a rooster’s crow as the signal of daybreak. Both participant A and Participant B mentioned that in the past, poultry was not kept at Brahmin family homes, even though they said they noticed rooster crow from the neighbouring *Toles* (settlements). People call it a *Ghadicharā*, (a clock bird) as it

tells time like a clock. Participant B said, “We did not have one at our house, but our mothers said — when the rooster of the neighbouring family gave the third crow, it was the time to get up now!” Participant G also said that people in the Gandaki region have given a name ‘*Ghadi Chara*’ to a rooster

Another interesting fact was disclosed by Participant B and Participant F about the behaviours of *Karyāngkurung* (migrant cranes). They said the appearance of these birds signals the beginning of the rainy season. Participant B said, “In our childhood we used to chant ‘*Karyāngkurungāye, kānkrāpharsiropa*’ (Migrant cranes have come, sow the seeds of cucumber and pumpkin)”. According to Participant F, in Limbu community of the Eastern hills, the appearance of the migrant cranes was seen as the beginning of rituals like *SisekpāTamnāng*, the festival of Chasing the famine away. This falls on the first day of the month of *Saun* and celebrated as *Sāune Sankranti* by majority of Nepalis. Similarly, owls signal night, cuckoos spring seasons and, the migrant cranes, the coming of monsoon. Participant A, Participant B, Participant D and Participant F verified this.

Behaviours of Livestock

According to Participant A it was the defection time of a cow or a buffalo in the morning that gave hint to housewives that it is the time to get up. Similarly, milking cows moo when it is the time to milk them. He disclosed a very interesting fact that cattle behave abnormally when some natural calamities are to hit. Calves playfully jump and run when it is either going to rain or there is a storm upcoming. Animals such as dairy cattle some insects indicate seasons.

Similarly, Participant A said that apart from signalling of the morning by a rooster, people used to observe the behaviour of their cattle which indicate the crack of dawn. A bell is worn around the neck of cattle in Nepal. When it is right before the first light cattle get up from their inactive rest and shake their body giving the cowbells a ring. This was used as the signal of the daybreak specially in the families where cockcrow not a facility. There have been studies to explain this type of behaviour shown by animals.

Participant A commented, “The morning is indicated by a cockcrow but having chicken at home was considered a taboo for we Brahmins, so we rarely heard a cock crow”. He added, “If the village host families from different communities, one is not restricted to listen a cock crow. But we lived at a village which only have Brahmin houses, so my grandfather said they guessed the time listening the bulls shaking its body in the morning and making the bells ring”.

People associated the concept of time with the biological clock of animals, a routine that is supposed to regulate diverse rhythms in the body such as body temperature, sleep, hunger etc. (Jiang & Turek, 2018). A study found that due to change in the flow of nitric oxide synthase (NOS) in the blood during the active and resting period of animals causes contraction of blood vessels causing dip or rise in their blood pressure which cause them behave particularly (Denniff et al., 2014). Animal husbandry is an inseparable part of Nepal's country life as animal count outnumbers the human. This fact is supported by the argument by (Bhatta et al., 2018) that about 25.68 per cent of the total population is still directly involved livestock and it covers 32% of agricultural GDP and about 11.5% of the national GDP. People have accustomed their lives with the routine behaviors of the domestic and non-domestic animals living in the human proximity.

Observation of Insects

The chirp of *Jhyāukiri*, a sub-species of cicada in the evening is the indicator of evening. This becomes more significant on a clouded day when the time calculation is impossible by measuring the shadow or the altitude of the sun. Participant E said “still in the villages chirp of *Jhyāukiri* is understood as the beginning of evening.”

Bee keeping is a common part of the pastoral life in Nepal. Bees also indicate time. Participant A said, “You can easily observe their lunch time”. They indicate spring season too. Participant A added bees split in different colonies in the spring season. Participant F tried to clarify “it is their mating time too”.

Colonies of ants indicate the rainy season. People use it as a major indicator of weather and season. Similarly, nuptial flights of the ants can be observed at the end of monsoon. Participant A said, “We call them *Dhan Putali*. I remember- how enthusiastically we chanted a song—*Dhan putalidhān de, kodegadobān de!* (Oh, flying ant give us paddy, and let us sow millet in the fields)”. Similarly, appearance of leech in the swampy area indicates maturation of the monsoon season. Participant A said leeches are seen in the rainy season.

Apart from these animals, fishes also indicate seasons. According to Participant F people in the eastern hills take swimming downward stream of *Tite māchhā*, a local species of stone carp, as the termination of the monsoon and beginning of the winter. He said, in rivers like the Arun, when *Tite māchhā* start swimming downwards people begin preparation for the winter season. He added, “People interpret the downstream swimming of *Tite māchhā* as the end of the rainy season and beginning of the winter, the season of festivals”. Similarly, appearance and disappearance of snakes is also taken as the indicator of winter and non-winter seasons. Participant A said, “Snakes hide in the winter and appear when the winter ends”.

Astronomical Calculations

Astronomical and astrological calculations are common mostly for the auspicious occasions such as marriages and festivities. However, mainstream astrological practices are not the integrated part of all the indigenous cultures. Basically, in Hindu and Buddhist communities, astronomy was on advent and astrological calculations are commonly practiced since antiquity (Mohan, 2015). Auspicious hours and moments are calculated through the observation and interpretation of the fixed stars, the Sun, the Moon, and the planets (Pingree, 2019).

Participant A and Participant B from Brahman-Chetri community and Participants D and E from Newar community said that there is a practice of *Jyotisha* consultation for the festivals and auspicious occasions. In the eastern tradition of astrological calculation, the day counts from the sunrise to the next sunrise (Sarma, 1991). Similar was the practice in Harranians from the ancient Mesopotamia (Pingree, 2019). Participant A, who hails from Brahmin said, “For the calculation of propitious time, astrologers count *barsa*, *ayan*, *mahinā*, *paksha*, *tithi*, *haptā*, *bār*, *prahar*, *ghadi*, *pala*, *bipala*, and set the time for the auspicious rituals”. Participant B and C added that those astrologers used some devices like water-clock and the sun-dials to calculate the time.

Other Observations

People calculated time of a day or a year by observing several entities in the nature as well as other various things. Participant A shared an interesting information that women in the past estimated the morning time when they felt their jewelries or clothing cold. He told, “There were no watches, yet women got up early in the morning. They used to wear jewelries like ear rings, bangles, or nose rings. In the morning temperature goes down and these jewelries feel colder than in normal times.” This is depicted in the folk song *Sitājee ko bhalaulo* too. The song depicts that Sita gets up early in the morning to bring water from the well/spring, Ram asks her, “Great! Like an owl, how did you know the secrets of a night? (*Dhanna bijāikhānikosedi ki jāṇerāt ki bāt*)” On this Sita answers, “When the *Nathiyā* (nose ring) of my nose felt cold, I knew the secrets of the night, when the metal bangles of my wrist feel cold, I knew the secrets of the night! (*nāk-ki nathiyā meri thannalāgitabajānyārāt ki bāt, bauli-kākhadu wāmerāthannalāgi tab jānyārāt-ki bāt*)”.

In Newari culture also people used water clocks (*pānighadi*) to calculate time. Use of water clock at night and the gnomon (sun-dial) have been popular in India and Mesopotamia since antiquity. (Pingree, 1973) estimates this method of time calculation was imported to India from Mesopotamia sometimes in the first

millennium BC, however, this theory has been denied and countered by Falk (2000) pointing at the methodological flaws in the observations of Pingree. However, regardless of its origin, it had become an integrated part of human life in different societies and so is in Nepal. Apart from it, people estimate the season by observing the leaves of trees. Participant A, Participant B, and participant F said that when trees sprout new leaves it is the spring season and when the leaves of the trees get pale or fall, it is the autumn.

Another method of estimation of season is the observation of the stones at the bank of rivulets. Participant F said “people estimated time observing the things around them. Even the stones at the bank of the rivulets show the season. When the winter begins the stones get black as the water level of the rivulets descends and the algae on the stones began drying”. This was verified by Participant A too.

Flowers and other plants also indicate time. Blossoms of rhododendron, marigold, cherry or peach or other flowers indicate specific time. Participant A pointed out, “even the pine pollen with blowing with wind gives symbol of Holi festival coming”. Not only this, even diseases are season specific. One can guess the season by observing breaking out of the diseases. Participant A added, “in the summer skin infections, in the monsoon water-borne diseases, and in the winter influenza; diseases also tell time”. Participant B and Participant D and F also verify this.

The findings of people’s observation have been orally transferred to the new generations. Such knowledge has been transferred from generation to generations mainly in two ways. The first is transfer from the senior members of family or society to the junior members. In this regard, mainly grandparents and parents seem to transfer knowledge to their siblings and Mother in laws transfer it to their daughter in laws. Participant A told us that he got a great deal of information from his grandfather and grandmother. Similarly, Participant B said she knew about such information from her seniors in the family and society. She got the idea of time associated with shadow from her grandmother and mother. She used to chant the song “*Karyang-kurung aye...*” in her childhood and she learned it from her peers and seniors of the society. Mothers and mothers-in-law taught them about such duties which also included time keeping.

Likewise, folk literature is another strong means of such transfer. In the districts of Far Western hills people have two specific folk narrative songs to indicate the start of the day and the night. They sing *Bhalaulo*, the song of dawn and *Sanjhyāwāli*, the song of the dusk. Housewives had to get up early in the morning in the past as they had several domestic responsibilities. In the folk song *Bhalaulo*

of Sudur Pashchim the features of dawn are depicted in the poetic form which have been transferring generation to generation (Bhatta, 2017).

Conclusion

People have their own methods of time calculation which are not only common throughout the country but in the far away countries too. For example, observation of the celestial bodies, shadows, water-clocks have been a common practice in ancient Greece, Egypt, or in Mesopotamia. However, the units and practices are identical to a particular religion and culture. From their consistent observation of the nature for centuries people drew the conclusions for the symbols indicating time in societies like in Nepal.

From the study, majorly four ways of time calculations have been found; i.e.; observation of celestial bodies, observing animal behaviour, astrological counting and observing other miscellaneous things in the surroundings. From the study it is concluded that, people have drawn conclusion after generations of observations and shared those findings beyond their cultural, ethnic boundaries. Because of this there is a great deal of commonness in the methods of time calculations in various cultures.

The indigenous time-keeping skills of people have not become an academic issue yet in Nepal. It has not been embedded to any discipline specific research. Thus, there is plenty of scope for the further research in this field. Scholars of history, anthropology, history of mathematics, and even education can find several researchable issues in this field.

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