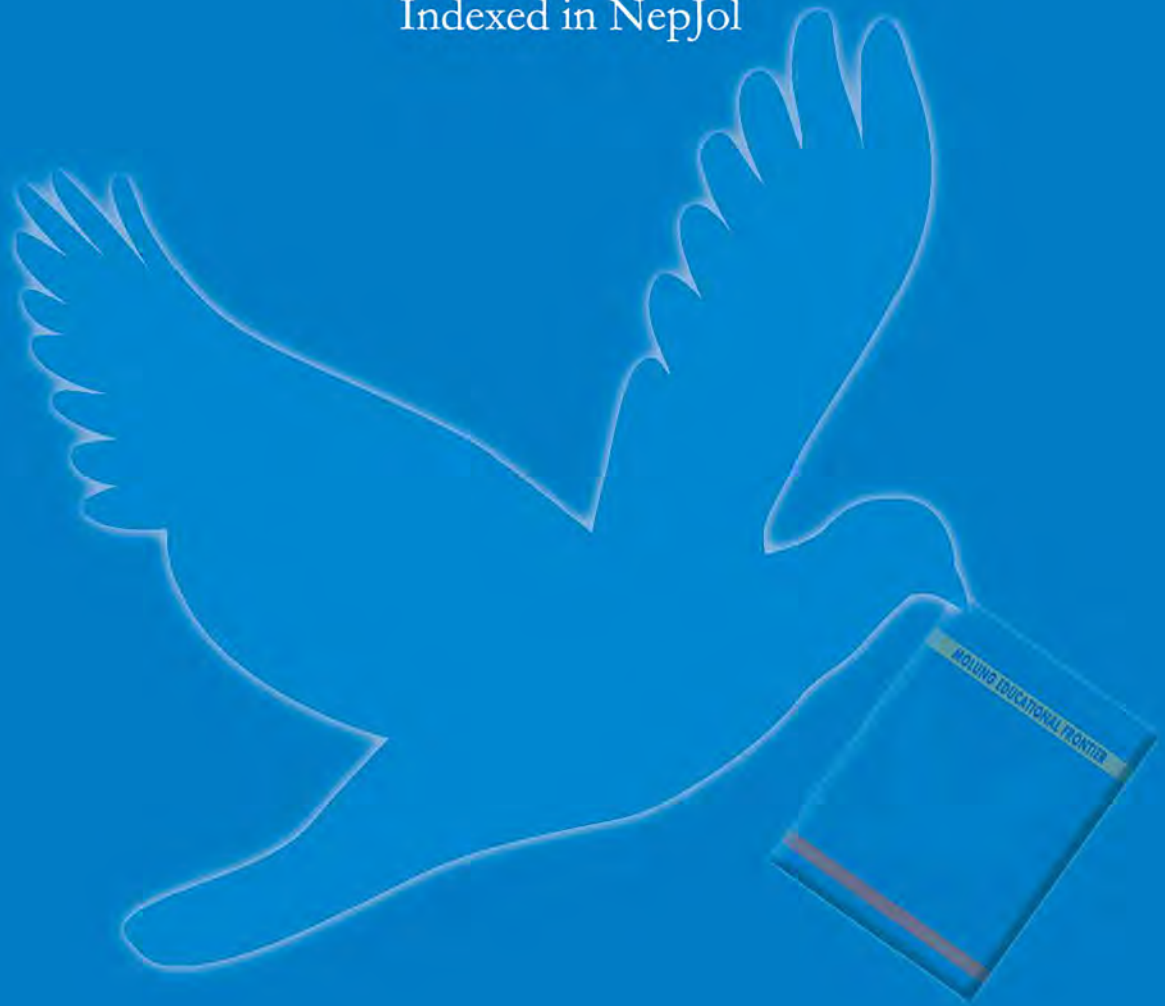


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#### **Contact Address:**



**Molung Foundation,**

Koteshwar, Kathmandu, Nepal

Tel: +977-1-4155331

E-mail: [molungfoundation@gmail.com](mailto:molungfoundation@gmail.com)

Web: [www.molung.org.np](http://www.molung.org.np)

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**Research-based Education for Development and Social Change**

Prof. Bhupa P. Dhamala, PhD

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The formal education system has brought about tremendous changes and is still mainstream educational activity in almost every corner of the world. Further, with the rapid development of technology and the fast communication system, education has not remained confined to formal educational institutions. New communication technology has made access to knowledge and scholarship easy, increasing the extent of education accordingly. Today we can learn things and events about the universe through the web by sitting at a desk and browsing the computer and other means of communication.

Countless schools and universities have opened. Thousands of teachers and millions of students have been engaged in teaching and learning activities. A large number of books and articles have been written on methods of teaching. Teachers have been trained. States spend a huge amount of money on education. The parents spend no less for their children at private schools hoping for better education. Today consciousness about the significance of education has grown more than ever before.

However, education through formal educational institutions alone is not enough to cater to the growing needs of students in the changed context. Since we live in a rapidly changing world, the knowledge transmitted through teachers to the students through the formal education system is inadequate. We have known many things about the universe through formal educational institutions, but we still have to know much more through other means of education. In this regard, Richard I. Arends (2012) says:

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We don't know exactly how schools will look by the middle of the twenty-first century. The futurists, however, have argued that the formal schooling as currently conceived and practiced will be out-of-date in the system of learning as horse and buggy are in the modern transportation system. (p. 9)

This speculation suggests that only formal educational institutions are not enough to provide education in the changed context.

Despite tremendous achievement in knowledge and scholarship through teaching-based education, we need extensive research-based education for development and social change. Therefore, higher education institutions have been working hard to improve the quality of education through research activities in addition to teaching in the classroom.

However, it may be misleading to think that research can only be done in the university for a higher degree. More surprisingly, some societies still think doing research is only for pursuing a Ph.D. Research, however, is not entirely the business of a Ph.D. pursuing student. Nor is it exclusively the task of a gray-bearded professor engrossed in reading and thinking in a silent library. Research is done to find a solution to academic and practical problems of life. As Booth et al. (2008) say, "We do research whenever we gather information to answer a question that solves a problem" (p.10). In this sense, even the simplest problems can be solved through research. It can be used to answer questions as simple as "where has my neighbor migrated to?" and find a solution to the problem as profound as "How has the present universe come into existence?" John Creswell (1994) also says that research is important because it is a focused study "that may emerge through an extensive literature review, be suggested by colleagues, researchers, or advisors, or be developed through practical experiences (p. 4). In either case, research can be a reliable method of finding a solution to the problem.

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Whereas the higher education institutions have introduced research-based activities in their curriculum and teaching, governments of many nations have also established some research centers and allocated budgets for their operation. Like elsewhere, Nepal has made significant progress in education which has contributed quite a lot to the development and social change with the establishment of the democratic republic. Education has helped increase consciousness for good governance and development, but it has still to go a long way to make the country prosperous and its people happy. We assume that it can be done only through quality education by means of research.

In this context, it is essential to understand that research done only by higher education institutions or by the research centers is not adequate. As has already been mentioned in the earlier paragraph, research is the business of any person who wants to know anything at any time. In matters of limitations of the government institutions, non-governmental research institutions also can contribute to this endeavor.

Molung Foundation is a research institution that has set its vision, mission, and goal to contribute to developing a self-sustained and equitable society. Among the various tasks to achieve these ends, it regularly publishes a scholarly journal entitled *Molung Educational Frontier (MEF)*, aiming to contribute to good governance, development, prosperity, and social change. Unlike a disciplinary journal that focuses on a particular discipline, *MEF* is a multidisciplinary journal that accepts manuscripts from scholars based on the original study of different themes and issues in various disciplines that can be connected to the broad rubric of education. Indexed in NepJol system, this journal has significantly contributed to the academic and other institutions for the country's overall development and social change.

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We have incorporated ten articles and two book reviews in the present volume. These articles explore different issues from different sectors of nature and society.

Out of the ten articles included here, four deal with education, two with social problems, two with media issues, one with culture, tourism, and development, and one with literature and arts.

Among the articles that directly deal with education, the second article, entitled “An Analysis of Student Assessment Practices in Higher Education of Nepal,” deals with the unsatisfactory assessment practices in Nepal; the eighth article, “Perceptions of Pre-service Teachers on Impact of Language Learning Strategies for their Academic Performances” deals with the teaching methods and practices regarding linguistic strategies; the ninth article “Policy Implementation Challenges of Special/Inclusive Education in Nepal” explores the policy issues on education; and the tenth article “Decentralization of Corruption in the Education Sector: An Analysis of Anti-Graft Reports” examines the malpractices of education in the local level.

Among the other articles that deal with social issues and still are contributory to education indirectly, the first article, entitled "Migration and Spousal Violence: A Study on Returnee Women Migrant Workers in Nepal," and the seventh article, "Labour Migration in Nepal: Policy, Institutions, and Governance" articulate the issue of labor migration as one of the major problems in Nepal. The third article, "People for Peace and Republic: A Fantasy Theme Reading of the Representation of ‘Nepalis’ in Movement Time Editorials,” and the fourth article, "The Role of Artificial Intelligence in the Evolution of Brand Voice in Multimedia," delineate the role of media in social change. While the former deals with the relation between media and political change, the latter with the role of artificial intelligence in multimedia evolution. These two articles belong to the group of media issues that are no less important for social change.



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Then the fifth article, "The Role of Natural Heritage for the Promotion of Tourism in Ilam," contributes to developing tourism in Nepal while promoting some tourist sites as cultural heritage. The sixth article, entitled "American Indian Ideologies in *The Round House*," albeit dealing with a literary text, still deals with the social issue in American society that is in some way hooked to the social inequality in Nepal. All the articles in this volume are thus oriented towards contributing to good governance, development, prosperity, and social change through education directly or indirectly.

Furthermore, here are also two book reviews, the first of which is on the book entitled *Give a man a fish: reflections on the new politics of distribution*, and the second one is on the book titled *Participatory Research: Working with Vulnerable Groups in Research and Practice Book*. Of the two books, the first deals with a social issue in Africa, and the second deals with research and its practice issues. Both books thus contribute to education and development.

In addition to the general contribution to education, these articles can also contribute to the nation's good governance, development, and prosperity. Furthermore, they can contribute to formulating appropriate policies for the country's overall development and equitable society.

I express my sincere gratitude to the writers who contributed their articles in respective disciplines, reviewers who offered their valuable comments and suggestions, editors and guest editors who contributed to the editing process, and advisors who provided significant advice for the improvement of the quality of this journal. Finally, I express my sincere gratitude to Sanjeev Dahal for his valuable support in correcting the APA style sheet and Shyam Giri for his technical support.

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**Women's Participation in Foreign Labour Migration and Spousal Violence: A Study on Returnee Women Migrant Workers in Nepal**

Arjun Kharel<sup>1</sup> and Amrita Gurung<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Tribhuvan University, Nepal

<sup>2</sup>Concordia University, Canada

**Author Note**

Arjun Kharel (<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0053-5473>) is an Assistant Professor of Sociology at Tribhuvan University and a research fellow at the Centre for the Study of Labour and Mobility at Social Science Baha, Kathmandu. His research focuses on migration, labor, social change, and development. He holds a Ph.D. in sociology from Kansas State University, USA.

Amrita Gurung is a Ph.D. student in Social and Cultural Analysis at Concordia University in Canada. She is currently a researcher for the Montreal Waterways project based in Montreal. Her doctoral research project is on student mobility, diaspora, and transnationalism in Canada.

The data used in this paper was initially collected for a comprehensive study on gender-based violence against Nepali women migrant workers. The study was funded by VSO-Nepal and carried out by the Centre for the Study of

Labour and Mobility (CESLAM) with the involvement of both authors. The authors would like to thank Ratna Shrestha, Programme Implementation Manager for Gender and Inclusive Governance at VSO-Nepal, for her support while conducting the study. We are thankful for the field facilitators of Pourakhi Nepal for their support in the data collection process. We acknowledge the support of researchers at CESLAM, namely Ratna Kambang, Bhim Kala Limbu, Anisha Bhattarai, Sabir Ansari, Nilima Rai, and Binod Dulal in conducting the fieldwork, and of Preeti Giri and Dogendra Tumsa in survey programming.

Correspondence concerned in this article should be addressed to Dr. Arjun Kharel, Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu. Email: [arjun.kharel@gmail.com](mailto:arjun.kharel@gmail.com)

### Abstract

While existing studies point to a high degree of physical and sexual violence<sup>1</sup> against women in Nepal, there is a lack of studies assessing the extent of violence among women who participate in foreign labor migration. This paper tries to fill this research gap by assessing the prevalence of spousal violence against women in overseas employment by using survey and interview data from a non-probability sample of 138 returnee women migrant workers (WMWs). The data used in this paper was collected in Dhading and Rupandehi districts in 2017 by a team of researchers, including the authors of this paper, for a comprehensive study on gender-based violence against WMWs. The study found the rate of lifetime physical violence among WMWs ten percent higher than the national average of 22 percent (MOHP 2012). This rate was highest among Dalit women and women above 35. The physical and sexual violence rates were lowest among women with secondary or higher level of education. Similarly, the rates of physical and sexual violence were lowest among the WMWs whose husbands had secondary or higher levels of education, and the rates were highest among the WMWs whose husbands did not have a formal education. The study found only a weak relationship between women's participation in labor migration and violence from their husbands and family members. For many WMWs, the violence prevailed in the pre-migration and post-return phases, and some women had participated in labor migration due to the violence in the family itself.

*Keywords:* physical violence, sexual violence, gender-based violence, spousal violence, female labor migration, foreign employment

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<sup>1</sup> 'Physical violence' in this study includes any form of beating, hitting with the hand or an object, kicking, or hurting someone physically. This definition is consistent with the description of physical violence offered in Domestic Violence (Offense and Punishment) Act, 2009 of Nepal. 'Sexual violence' by husband in this study refers to involuntary/forceful sexual relation.

### **Women's Participation in Foreign Labour Migration and Spousal Violence: A Study on Returnee Women Migrant Workers in Nepal**

Despite the Nepal Government's recognition of GBV as a serious issue and its declaration of the year 2010 as a 'Year against Gender-Based Violence' and preparation of a 'national plan of action' in 2009 (Government of Nepal, 2009), the occurrence of gender-based violence (GBV) is still extremely high in Nepali. The types of GBV Nepali women experience range from physical, economic, and sexual to psychological (Paudel 2007). In a national health survey, more than a fifth (22 percent) of Nepali women aged 15-45 reported physical violence at least once from age 15 upwards (MOHP, 2012). In the same study, around 9 percent of women from the same age group reported having experienced violence in the year prior to the survey.

The rate of GBV varies in terms of geographic location and women's socio-economic status. Available studies indicate a higher rate of GBV among women in rural areas and women from underprivileged groups. In a study of married women aged 15 to 24 in the rural areas of Dang, Dolakha, Sindhupalchowk, and Kapilvastu districts, more than half the women (51.9 percent) had experienced either physical or sexual violence in their lifetime (Lamichhane et al., 2011). More than a third (about 36 percent) of the women had experienced such violence within a year prior to the survey in the same study. Studies also point to a higher rate of GBV among women from lower socioeconomic status and with lower education (Atteraya et al., 2014; Lamichhane et al., 2011; MOHP, 2012). Tarai women of systemically underprivileged castes and ethnicities are at the highest risk of violence by their intimate partners (Atteraya et al., 2014).

Women are also at a high risk of GBV in the workplace as women workers are concentrated in unregulated low-paying jobs. Studies find workplace

violence strikingly pronounced in the cases of women migrant workers and those employed in informal sectors (Kim et al., 2007), where workers have limited individual and collective bargaining power. A study finds women in informal sectors in Nepal, especially the construction and entertainment sectors, more vulnerable to verbal and sexual violence than those employed in formal sectors (Bradley & Sauvanet, 2017). A study on young migrant workers in carpet and garment factories in Nepal found one in ten young women experienced sexual coercion in the workplace (Puri & Cleland, 2007).

The perpetrators of the violence are usually familiar people. GBV against married women is usually perpetrated at home by husbands, husbands' parents, and other family members, while parents, siblings, and grandparents are the perpetrators of GBV against unmarried female adolescents (Paudel, 2007). Workplace violence is usually perpetrated by employers, supervisors, and co-workers (Bradley & Sauvanet, 2017; Pandey et al., 2018). In a study conducted with 200 nurses in Nepal, two-thirds (64.5 percent) of the respondents had faced some workplace violence within six months of the survey at the hands of relatives of patients, followed by in-house employees (Pandey et al., 2018). More than half the respondents (61.1 percent) faced verbal abuse, while 15.5 percent suffered from physical violence, and 9 percent faced sexual violence. Another study also indicates the prevalence of verbal harassment against female workers from their senior colleagues, even in formal sector jobs (Bradley & Sauvanet, 2017).

### **Context: Spousal Violence against Nepali Women Migrant Workers**

While there have been some studies on violence against women in Nepal in general, studies exploring the issue of violence against women migrant workers (WMWs) who have returned from foreign employment are negligible. Most Nepali women migrant workers travel to Malaysia and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, Oman, Bahrain, and the United Arab Emirates for employment, and most of them are engaged in domestic

work (Kharel, 2016). This employment sector has a high incidence of abuse and exploitation. The informal nature of work, staying with the employer and providing round-the-clock services, and lack of support services are some factors that increase the risk of violence against women migrant workers (Kharel, 2016). Women domestic workers are at the risk of limited freedom of movement, lack of social protection, excessively long working hours, poor living and working conditions, harassment, violence, and mental illness (Simkhada et al., 2018). A study finds Nepali housemaids working on average for 15 hours a day while 29.3 percent of the respondents were physically abused and 5 percent were sexually abused in Saudi Arabia. Likewise, 54.4 percent of the respondents in Lebanon reported having experienced physical abuse, and another 5 percent had been sexually harassed (Simkhada et al., 2018).

Women workers' experience of violence is not limited to the workplace in foreign countries. Studies indicate spousal violence against women workers as a cause and consequence of migration. Many women participate in labor migration to escape violence from their husbands and husbands' family (Belanger & Rahman, 2013). The risk of violence against women increases with their participation in foreign employment due to the stigma associated with women's travel abroad. A few studies conducted on the issue highlight that WMWs experience violence in the family and community upon their return (Bhadra, 2013; Kharel, 2016). To make the matters worse, some WMWs face heightened violence after migrating for labor (Bhadra, 2013). Husbands and families of WMWs are likely to abuse WMWs, considering them 'impure' and 'damaged' due to their stay abroad (Kharel, 2016), particularly since they find it difficult to deal with societal norms that question the honor of WMWs due to their migration. Further, the stigmatization of WMWs is often exacerbated by the absence of a distinct boundary between migration and trafficking, which results in associating women's migration for work abroad with sex trafficking (Sijapati et al., 2011).



Studies conducted elsewhere also suggest a relationship between women's participation in labor migration and spousal violence (Belanger & Rahman, 2013; Rocca et al., 2009). Women's enhanced socio-economic resources, with earnings from foreign employment including exposure to employment programs and trainings, are noted to have repercussions; the change in traditional gender roles puts women at the potential risk of violence (Belanger & Rahman, 2013; Rocca et al., 2009). A study of left-behind men in Vietnam stressed that with the change in women taking up new roles of breadwinners as migrants, notions of masculinity, including their roles in household and care regime, are also subject to change (Hoang & Yeoh, 2011). The study also points out that men had to strike a balance between taking care of their children and household, on the one hand, and maintaining 'locally accepted masculinity ideals', on the other hand (Hoang & Yeoh, 2011). The change in gender roles at home but without it being socially acceptable can create conflicts and lead to spousal violence.

Thus, within this context, the paper explores: i) What is the prevalence of spousal violence among Nepali WMWs? ii) What factors are associated with women migrant workers' experience of violence? iii) What is the relationship between women's engagement in foreign labor migration and their experience of violence at home?)

#### **Factors Associated with Spousal Violence against Women: A Review of Literature**

This section discusses the major factors associated with spousal violence against women using studies conducted in and outside Nepal. The section specifically discusses the relationship of women's education, employment, and empowerment with the perpetration of violence against them and the role of social norms in normalizing violence against women.

### **Women's Education, Employment and Empowerment**

Studies suggest some relations between GBV and women's education, employment, and empowerment, although the nature of relationships is not always clear (MOHP, 2012; Rapp et al., 2012; Sida, 2015). A national survey finds an inverse relationship between women's education and GBV against them in Nepal (MOHP, 2012). Women without formal education are more likely to experience physical violence than those with at least some schooling, and women with higher levels of education (School Leaving Certificate and above) are least likely to experience physical violence (MOHP, 2012). The power imbalance between men and women is considered the main cause of GBV, and women's education contributes to balancing the power by increasing women's employment and socio-economic status (Sida, 2015). However, other studies (such as Rapp et al., 2012) indicate a positive relationship between women's increased education and the likelihood of violence. A study in Bangladesh finds women with an education higher than their husbands' to be more likely to experience violence as compared to equally educated couples (Rapp et al., 2012).

Studies conducted in and outside Nepal indicate an association between the occurrence of violence against women and their employment and economic empowerment, although the relationship between them is mixed: women's employment and consequent economic empowerment have reduced the occurrence of GBV in some contexts while it has increased the rate of violence in others. Women often face backlash at home and in society when they engage in economic activities to provide for themselves and their families. Some studies find women's income largely determines their exposure to domestic violence (Desilets et al., 2019). A study on gender-based violence in Nigeria finds economically-empowered women at a higher risk of violence from strangers as well as family members than those not engaged in employment (Qasim & Vemuru, 2020). Women who earned higher than their male counterparts faced a

higher risk of violence, and the situation would exacerbate if the husbands were unemployed: husbands were more likely to inflict violence upon their wives, considering the alteration in the gender roles as a threat to their manhood and existing patriarchal social norms (Desilets et al., 2019). The NDHS survey of 2011 found a similar trend in Nepal, with a higher rate of spousal beating reported among women with employment (37 percent) than those who were not employed for cash (30 percent) (MoHP, 2013). Women are also subjected to intimate partner violence (IPV) as their partners try to control finances and maintain economic dependencies (Camey et al., 2020).

However, a study in South Africa finds a negative relationship between women's employment (and economic empowerment enhanced through micro-finance support) and the rate of spousal violence against them (Kim et al., 2007). Micro-finance support provided a source of empowerment to women by giving them confidence and self-esteem to resolve conflict, make household decisions and build social networks, and this led to the eventual reduction in violence by men (Kim et al., 2007).

The relationship between women's empowerment, which is generally measured as women's involvement in decision-making, and the likelihood of violence against them is not always clear. Nepal Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS) of 2011 finds no connection whatsoever in the relationship between women empowerment and spousal violence in Nepal; spousal violence was inflicted upon women even though they were active in decision-making (MoHP, 2013). Studies from elsewhere also suggest that women's empowerment through employment does not always contribute to reducing GBV, and more importantly, employment taken outside the home followed by informal and seasonal employment tends to increase women's likelihood of GBV (Dalal 2011; Vyas et al., 2015).

Women's challenge to the prevalent gender norms increases the likelihood of them experiencing GBV. Vyas et al. (2015) point out that women who own their businesses are more likely to face domestic violence compared to those who co-own businesses with their partners, as the former group of women more openly confront non-traditional gender roles. The economic empowerment programs, thus, will need to take into account the norms, roles, and sociocultural expectations pertaining to gender and work and address them in order to counter the negative impacts of such programs (Desilets et al., 2019).

### **Normalisation of Violence**

Gender-based violence is normalized in society. Many women consider GBV as normal due to exposure to and internalization of violence, and this tendency increases the risk of violence against them. Women who are unaware of their rights are more vulnerable to GBV (Hawkes et al., 2013). Men and women in many societies justify wife-beating for reasons such as going out without telling their husband, neglecting children, arguing with their husband, refusing to have sex with their husband, etc., and a study conducted in 49 countries found higher acceptability of wife-beating in Africa and South Asia than in Central and Eastern Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean (Sardinha & Catalán, 2018). The acceptance of wife-beating coincided with the countries ranking lower on Human Development Index and higher on Gender Inequality Index. Wife beating in Nepal is usually justified by respondents from disadvantaged backgrounds, such as belonging to the lowest wealth quintile, living in rural areas, and having limited formal education (MoHP, 2013).

Justification of violence contributes to the perpetration of violence on the one hand and discourages the victims from reporting on the other (MoHP, 2013; Sida 2015). Many women consider wife-beating as a 'legitimate reprisal' rather than 'violence' and essentially necessary to discipline women to serve men's best interest, thus further inciting GBV against women (Sardinha & Catalán, 2018).

Nepal Demographic Health Survey of 2012 found that 23 percent of men and even a higher percentage of women (29 percent) justify wife-beating under the conditions such as burning food, arguing with the husband, going out without the husband's permission, neglecting children, and refusing to have sex with husband (MoH, 2017). Another study in 2012 found even a higher rate of respondents (more than 50 percent) approving of wife-beating in the cases where the wife had been unfaithful (Office of the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers, 2012).

### **Research Methodology**

This paper is based on 138 surveys and 14 qualitative interviews conducted with returnee women migrant workers in Dhading and Rupandehi districts of Nepal. Snowball sampling, a non-probability sampling method, was used to reach the targeted number of the respondents as it was deemed implausible to prepare a comprehensive list of the WMWs in each area to draw a sample from. The criteria for the participation in the study were that the respondents had to be: i) women; ii) married at any point in their life; and iii) returned after working for any period of time in countries other than India. The data was collected in February-March of 2017.

Dhading and Rupandehi districts were selected for the study as they represented two geographically diverse districts - Dhading is a hilly district, while Rupandehi is in the plains of Tarai. Furthermore, an urban/semi-urban area and a rural area from each district were selected in order to make the sample more representative of both conditions. Furthermore, as per the 2011 census data, the female absentee population (i.e., female migrants traveling abroad) was high in the selected districts and local units. The data collection was facilitated by Pourakhi, a non-government organization working with WMWs in Nepal, which had information about WMWs and their families in these areas.

### **Discussion of the Findings: Prevalence of Physical and Sexual Violence from Husbands**

This section discusses the findings of the study based on the analysis of survey and interview data collected from the returnee women migrant workers.

#### **High Rate of Spousal Violence among WMWs**

There was a high degree of physical violence from husbands among the WMWs. About one-third of the WMWs (32 percent) had experienced physical abuse from their husbands in their lifetime, which is nine percentage points higher in comparison to the physical violence from husbands among all married women in Nepal (MOHP, 2012). This further suggests that WMWs are more vulnerable to spousal violence. Ten women (7.8 percent) reported having experienced violence in the year prior to the survey, which was slightly lower than the national average of 10.4 percent (MOHP, 2012) as seen in Table 1.

**Table 1**

*WMWs' Experience of Physical and Sexual Violence in Nepal (N=128)*

Experiences	Lifetime		A year or less ago	
	Count	%	Count	%
Physical violence	41	32.0	10	7.8
Sexual violence	22	17.2	7	5.5

Five WMWs had experienced physical violence from their husbands' parents in their lifetime, and all of them had experienced it more than a year prior to the survey. The women whom their husbands abused seemed to be at a greater risk of violence from their in-laws: three women (out of five) who had experienced violence from their in-laws were also physically abused by their husbands. The experience of Sarala,<sup>2</sup> who was frequently abused by both her husband and in-laws, emphasizes this point further:

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<sup>2</sup> Only pseudonyms of the respondents are used in this paper to maintain confidentiality.

Unfortunately, I have faced physical violence from my husband and his parents. I will never forget that incident when my husband and his parents beat me very badly when my younger son was only 11 days old. They all beat me badly and broke my backbone. Then my mother came and took me from there and admitted me into a hospital...And, now, I am living in my mother's house.

It was also due to the violence from husband and his family that Sarala had participated in labor migration.

The rate of sexual violence from husbands was also significant among the women returnees. Seventeen percent of WMWs – slightly higher than the national average of 14.3 percent (MOHP 2012) – had experienced sexual violence from their husband in their lifetime, and nearly 6 percent of them had last experienced such violence a year or less ago. About 5 percent of the respondents had experienced sexual harassment from other family members, while 2 percent had also been sexually abused. Altogether, about a fifth (19.6 percent) of the women migrant workers had experienced at least one occurrence of sexual violence from their husbands or family members in their lifetime.

### **Higher Rate of Spousal Violence for Women from Underprivileged Socioeconomic Backgrounds**

The study finds the highest rate of physical violence from husbands among Dalit women; over half of the respondents (8 out of 15) from this group had experienced physical violence, and they also reported a high rate of sexual violence by husbands (20 percent).<sup>3</sup> It is also to be noted that Dalits rank the lowest on Human Development Index (GoN & UNDP, 2014),<sup>4</sup> and they also have a significantly higher share of the population living below the national poverty

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<sup>3</sup> See Appendix for more detailed information on the caste and ethnicity classification used in the study.

<sup>4</sup> The Human Development Index (HDI) is prepared on the basis of three indicators of human development: *a long and healthy life, knowledge and a decent standard of living.*

line compared to other caste and ethnic groups in Nepal (CBS 2011; GoN & UNDP, 2014).

Although it was the lowest in comparison, a somewhat significant 24 percent of Hill Caste women suffered physical violence from their husbands, as seen in Table 2.

**Table 2**

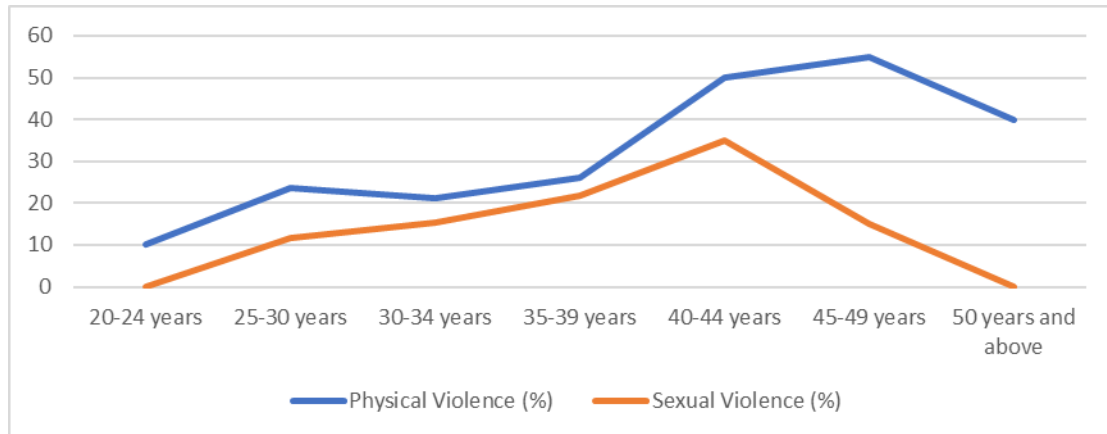
*Women's Experience of Violence from Husbands by Caste/Ethnicity (N=128)*

Caste/Ethnicity	Physical Violence (%)	Sexual Violence (%)	Number of Respondents (N)
Hill Caste	24.0	16.0	25
Hill Janajati	30.7	14.7	75
Tarai Janajati	27.3	27.3	11
Tarai Caste	50.0	50.0	2
Dalit (Hill and Tarai)	53.3	20.0	15

### **Correlation of the Occurrence of Violence with Age and Conjugal Life Duration**

The occurrence of physical violence from husbands was highest among the age group of 40 to 49 years: half of the women in this age group had experienced at least one instance of physical violence in their lifetime. The experience of physical violence from husbands was lowest among the age group 20-24 years, followed by 25-34 years, as detailed in Figure 1.



**Figure 1***Occurrence of Violence from Husbands by WMWs' Age (N=128)*

The duration of conjugal life could partly explain the relationship between women's age and physical violence by husbands. The younger women's general reporting of the lower rate of physical violence can be attributed to the likelihood of them being married for a shorter period of time. The only exception is the highest age bracket of 50 years and above, which reported a lower rate of physical violence than the preceding two age groups.

In terms of the rate of sexual violence from husbands, women from 40-44 years of age ranked at the top, followed by the age group of 35-39. No cases of sexual violence were reported by women aged 20-24 years or 50 years and above, as expressed in Figure 1.

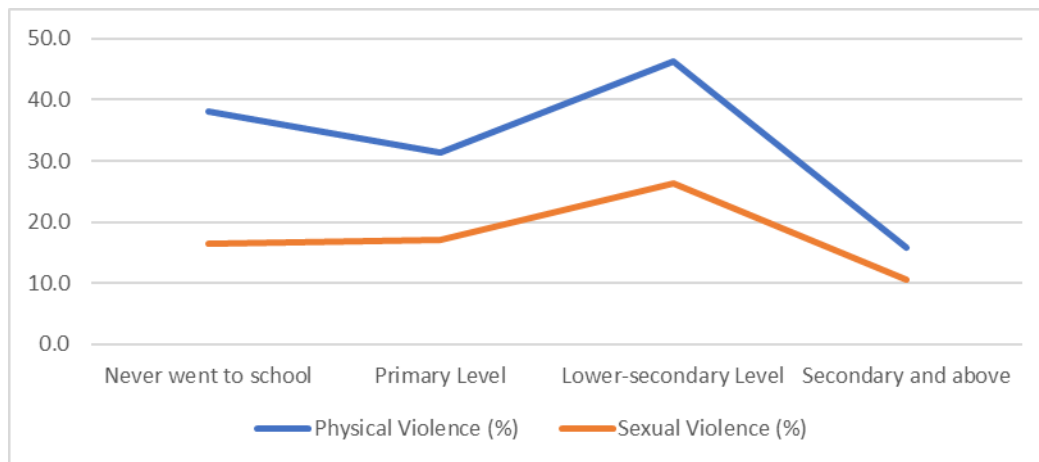
### **Education of Women and Their Husbands can Reduce Violence against Women**

Women's education seems crucial in minimizing violence against them, but only if they have received at least a secondary level of education. The physical and sexual violence rates were lowest among WMWs with secondary-level education or above. The rate of physical violence among women with secondary level education or above was 16 percent –half the rate of violence in

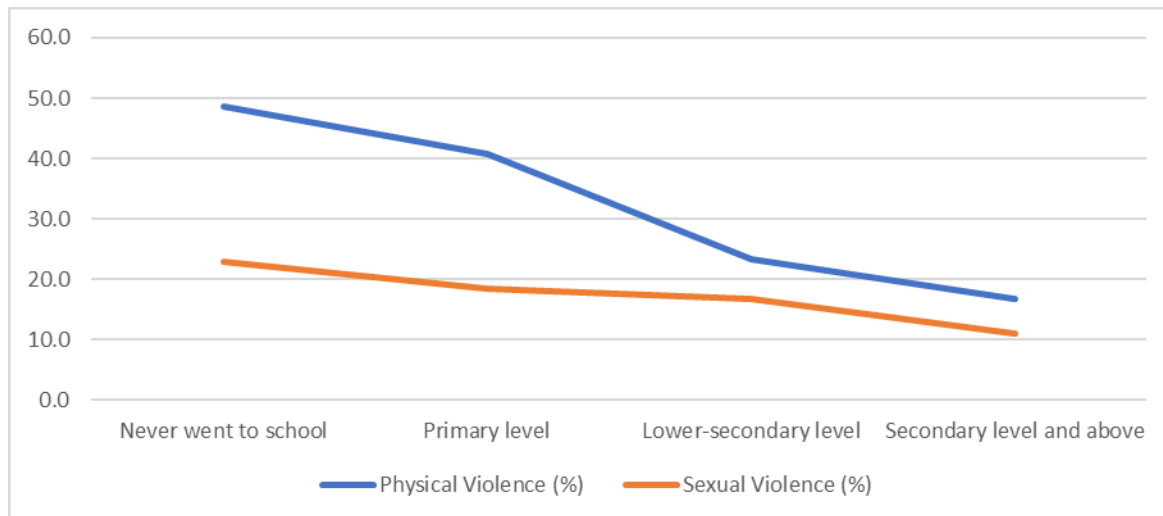
the study population. A similar relationship was also observed between women's education and sexual violence; the rate of sexual violence was lowest (10.5 percent) among women with a higher secondary or higher level of education, and this figure is about 7 percent lower than the average (17.2 percent) in the sample population as shown in Figure 2.

**Figure 2**

*Occurrence of Violence from Husbands by WMWs' Education (N=128)*



The level of husbands' education appears to have an even stronger role in reducing violence against women. The physical and sexual violence rates were lowest – 16.7 percent and 11.1 percent, respectively – among the women whose husbands had secondary or higher levels of education. The physical and sexual violence rates were highest among the WMWs whose husbands were illiterate as shown in Figure 3.

**Figure 3***Occurrence of Violence from Husbands by Husband's Education (N=128)*

WMWs whose husbands had received some education (formal or informal) did fairly better than the women whose husbands had never been to school or were illiterate. Women with a higher level of schooling are also likely to marry a man with similar levels of education. Bivariate and multivariate analyses showed that among the 19 women who had completed at least a secondary level of education, 14 (about three quarters) had married a man with a similar education level. Only one of them experienced physical violence from her husband. Hence, the education of a husband and wife jointly, rather than in isolation, appears to significantly reduce the probability of violence against women.

#### **Positive Relation is Observed Between the Number of Children and the Likelihood of Violence from Husbands**

A positive relationship is observed between the number of children in the family and the violence from husbands. No case of violence was observed among WMWs without children. Women with a single child also had a lower rate of violence. With an additional child in the family (from one child to two children), the rate of both physical and sexual violence increased dramatically – doubling

the rate of physical violence and almost tripling the rate of sexual violence among women as expressed in Table 3.

**Table 3**

*Women's Experience of Violence from Husbands by Number of Children (N=128)*

Number of Children	Physical Violence (%)	Sexual Violence (%)	Number of Respondents (N)
0	-	-	6
1	18.8	9.4	32
2	40.5	26.2	42
3	30.0	10.0	30
4 or above	50.0	27.8	18

Contrary to general assumptions, not giving birth to a son did not increase the likelihood of physical violence against women from their husbands. The rate of violence was much lower for women who only had girls (20 percent) than for women who only had boys (39.3 percent).

### **Relation Between Physical and Sexual Violence**

The WMWs who had experienced sexual violence were also very likely to experience physical violence from their husband. Most of the women (86.3 percent) who had experienced sexual violence from their husbands had also faced physical violence from him. These women reported that their husbands forcing them to have sex on many occasions would lead to physical violence. Shanta, who had been frequently forced into having sex by her husband, explained her difficulty in living with her husband these days:

Just a day ago, my husband tried to force me to have sex with him. I am not so much interested in it. But, he wants it most of the time.

When he gets drunk, it becomes difficult to sleep near him in a shared bed – how can one expect to fulfil somebody's desire every night?

Before we started quarrelling last time, I left the room, went to another room, locked the room, and slept with my sister's daughter.

### **Inter-Caste/Ethnic Marriage and Violence**

Although the rate of violence was not significantly different between women marrying a husband of the same caste/ethnicity versus a husband of a different caste/ethnicity, some women viewed their inter-caste/ethnic marriage to be the main reason for the physical violence from their husband and his family. Meena, a returnee migrant who had married a man from a different social group and initially experienced abuse from her husband's family and later from her husband, explained:

We had an inter-caste marriage. I am Magar and he is Bahun. We married at a very young age. I was something like only 14-15 years of age when we eloped. When he brought me to his house, my mother-in-law and sister-in-law were against our marriage and treated me very badly. They even thrashed me and slapped me. They used very bad words...that I had trapped their son and so on. I was not even allowed to enter the kitchen. I could only eat if they gave me food to eat. Even when my children were hungry, I could not go to kitchen and prepare milk for my children. It was a very bad situation at that time ... it is ironic that when I was in my own country and my own house, I was not allowed to enter the kitchen because I belonged to a different caste.

### **Husbands' Extramarital Affair Contributes to Violence**

A man's engagement in extramarital affairs was also likely to increase violence against women. The rate of both physical and sexual violence was about 50 percent for women who reported that their husband was in a relationship with or was married to another woman. Sajana's narrative describes the scenario of violence in a family when men are engaged in multiple relationships:

Once my husband got married to another woman, he did not come home. Sometimes, unexpectedly, he used to come home and then he used to fight and beat me and take all the money I had. He fought and beat me several times, even before I went abroad for work. Once, during a fight with my husband's second wife, she hit me with an axe from behind. Luckily, my nephew held it and so it touched me with only its tip .... The day before my flight for the second migration my husband beat me again and broke my finger ... when I called my husband from abroad he scolded me with foul words.

Sunita's experience was quite similar:

My husband had relation with another woman and lived with her. One day, he came home drunk from the village. I don't know what he had thought, but he came to where I was sitting and kept saying, 'I won't stop without killing, I won't stop without killing' [implicitly referring to me]. He was carrying a khukuri with him. I managed to get away from him somehow and ran to where his brother was.

### **Association between Women's Participation in Labour Migration and Violence from Husbands**

There seems to be an association, although weak, between women's participation in labor migration and violence from their husbands and family members. For many WMWs, the violence prevailed in both the pre-migration and post-return phases. Some women participated in labor migration due to the violence in the family. For all five WMWs who had experienced physical violence from their in-laws, this was true only for the period prior to their migration. A similar trend is also observed in terms of the relation between women's participation in labor migration and the perpetration of violence by their husbands. Five of the 41 WMWs to have experienced physical violence from their husbands had experienced such abuse only after their return. For the other 36

women, physical violence by the husband was also present in the pre-migration phase.

Still, a larger number of WMWs perceived a connection between their labor migration and violence by husbands and other family members. Twenty-three WMWs believed that the violence perpetrated by their husband or other family members was in some way related to their prior employment in a foreign country. Fourteen WMWs reported that their husband talked unfavorably about their participation in labor migration while inflicting physical violence. As Ritu, a returned migrant worker, narrated:

Someone in the community told my husband that the returnee women are not good in character. They might have slept with someone else, and because of that, my husband beat me once I returned.

The social stigma relating to female labor migration was strongly prevalent, and many WMWs had to deal with it in their everyday lives. Sakuntala, who had returned recently from a non-Gulf country, said:

When I returned from abroad people started talking about me, saying that I might have done some immoral work abroad, and that's why I had lost a lot of weight. And, I went through such humiliation in society because I lost weight, which is directly related to the work and my living conditions [abroad]. I heard people saying, 'What work Mr. X's wife did abroad that she returned so thin?', and some even asked me, 'Did you really do good work abroad?'

The support of family, both in the emigration process and after return, was crucial in contesting the prevalent discourse that questioned women's honor. Karuna, who had returned after working for a couple of years in Saudi Arabia, explained:

When I got married, I was just 17 years old and my husband was working as a driver ... My mother-in-law was working abroad, so

when she came back she asked me to go abroad. She thought it was good for me to go abroad to get exposure and work and see how the outside world was. That's why I went abroad. Even my husband was abroad at that time. But we couldn't meet there. I stayed there for two years but we never met there but only talked on the phone...I don't think people look at me in a negative light, it is maybe because I was sent with the consultation and full support of my family, and people have not been able to say anything to me directly at least.

### **Many Women Still Approve of Violence by Husbands**

Women are likely to consider violence as normal due to their living in a society that approves physical violence such as beating, as a means of disciplining women. The internalization of violence as normal is believed to contribute to the perpetration of violence as well as discourage the victims from reporting it.

In the present study, many respondents approved of different acts of spousal violence, while a substantial percentage of women held neutral views. The proportions of women who could not express their disagreement (i.e., 'agreed' or 'neutral') towards different acts of violence against women fluctuated between 10 to 40 percent (Table 4).

**Table 4**

*WMWs' Perception of Different Acts of Violence (N=138)*

	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Okay for a man to sometimes beat/slap his wife	5.8	14.5	79.7
Justifiable for a man to beat his wife if she argues with him	21.0	11.6	67.4
Justifiable for a man to beat/slap his wife if she neglects children	30.4	8.7	60.9
Justifiable for a man to beat/slap his wife if she refuses to have sex with him	2.9	7.2	89.9



Women were most likely to approve of violence by husbands when children are deemed to have been neglected: 30.4 percent of the respondents found the beating by the husband justifiable in this case, while 60.9 percent of women disagreed.

### **Conclusion**

The paper examined the prevalence of spousal violence against women who had participated in foreign labor migration using survey and interview data. The study finds only a weak relationship between women's participation in labor migration and spousal violence. While a small number of women workers had experienced spousal violence only after their participation in foreign labor migration, the spousal violence prevailed in both pre-and post-migration phases for a larger number of women. Many women migrant workers participated in labor migration due to the violence in the family itself, and the violence continued even after their return. Yet, many women migrant workers attributed their experience of violence from their husbands to their participation in foreign labor migration and its social stigma. Many women reported that their husbands cited their travel abroad and associated it with their supposed 'unfaithfulness' while perpetrating violence. Women workers had to deal with the prevalent notion of 'impurity' after their return from abroad, and it is even more challenging for the women who do not have a supportive family.

The study finds that the education of both women and husbands can play an important role in reducing spousal violence. The rates of both physical and sexual violence were lowest among women with a secondary or higher level of education. The husbands' education had an even stronger influence in lowering the incidence of violence against women: a gradual decline in the rate of violence is observed for a gradual increase in husbands' level of education. The programs designed to target and promote women's education are still relevant, but a stronger result could only be attained with men's participation in such programs.

The study suggests that any programs related to lowering the incidence of violence against women should also consider men as an important partner of the initiative. The programs should also focus on challenging the social stigma associated with female labor migration and the prevalent gender norms that justify husbands' perpetration of violence against their wives.

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## Appendix

**Caste and Ethnic Groups**

This study's caste and ethnic groupings are consistent with the caste and ethnicity classification suggested in Pitamber Sharma's book *Some Aspects of Nepal's Social Demography: Census 2011 Update* (Sharma 2014). This categorization was used because it provides an integrated ethnic map of Nepal's diverse caste and ethnic groups by categorizing them into clusters based on shared social, ecological, linguistic and religious attributes.

1. **Hill caste:** bahun, chhetri, sanyasi/dasnami, thakuri
2. **Hill dalit:** badi, damai/dholi, gaine, kami, sarki
3. **Hill janajati:** aathpariya, bahing, bantawa, brahmu/baramo, chamling, chepang/praja, chhantyal/chhantel, dura, ghale, gharti/bhujel, gurung, hayu, hyolmo, jirel, khaling, khawas, kulung, kusunda, lepcha, limbu, loharung, magar, mewahang/bala, nachhiring, newar, pahari, rai, sampang, sunuwar, tamang, thami, thulung, yakkha, yamphu
4. **Inner tarai janajati:** bote, danuwar, darai, kumal, majhi, raji, raute
5. **Mountain janajati:** bhote, byasi/sauka, dolpo, lhomi, lhopa, sherpa, thakali, topkegola, walung
6. **Tarai castes:** badhaee, baraaee, bin, brahmin tarai, dev, dhunia, gaderi/bhedihar, hajam/thakur, haluwai, jain, kahar, kalwar, kamar, kanu, kathabaniyan, kayastha, kewat, koiri/kushwaha, kori, kumhar, kurmi, lodh, lohar, mali, mallaha, marwari, nuniya, nurang, rajbhar, rajdhob, rajput, sonar, sudhi, teli, yadav
7. **Tarai dalit:** bantar/sardar, chamar/harijan ram, chidimar, dhandi, dhankar/dharikar, dhobi, dom, dusadh/paswan/pasi, halkhor, kalar, khatwe, musahar, natuwa, sarbaria, tatma/tatwa
8. **Tarai janajati:** amat, dhanuk, dhimal, gangai, jhangad/dhagar, kisan, koche, meche, munda, pattarkatta/kuswadia, rajbanshi, satar/santhal, tajpuriya, tharu

9. **Other (specify):** bangali, musalman, punjabi/sikh, churaute
10. **Unspecified:** adibasi/janajati, dalit others, tarai others, undefined others, foreigner



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### **An Analysis of Student Assessment Practices in Higher Education of Nepal**

Devi Ram Acharya

Ministry of Education, Nepal

#### **Author Note**

Mr. Devi Ram Acharya is a government employee under the Ministry of Education Nepal. He is also a research-level student at the School of Education, Kathmandu University. His scholarly contributions are mainly found in student assessment, learning achievement, and girls' participation in education. He is also the visiting faculty of Kathmandu University School of Education and a course facilitator at Nepal Open University.

Correspondence concerned in this article should be addressed to Devi Ram Acharya, Education Review Office, Sanothimi, Bhaktapur. Email: [deviramacharya@outlook.com](mailto:deviramacharya@outlook.com)

### Abstract

Student assessment is an integral part of the teaching-learning process of the formal education system. It is collecting, evaluating, analyzing, and documenting students' progress using various assessment devices, tools, and strategies. Various assessment practices in higher education, such as oral test, paper-pencil test, practical test, project work, group work, and other non-testing devices, but paper-pencil test seems to be the most commonly used tools in Nepali higher education. Most of Nepal's universities do not seem to have adopted assessment tools other than the traditional paper-pencil test. So, the assessment in higher education has now become an issue of discussion and debate. This paper attempts to analyze student assessment practices and their problems in higher education in Nepal. For this purpose, data were collected from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data were collected from the media's teachers' opinions, cases, and issues coverage. Secondary data were collected from the reviews of both archive and digital documents. The major findings of this paper indicate that there are so many problems in the assessment system. As a result of the inappropriate assessment system, higher education quality has been deteriorating day by day compared to developed countries. It is mainly due to lack of accountability (examiner, examinee, and exam authority), time allocation, lack of digital technology to assess student progress, lack of item analysis, and lack of the alternative use of the paper-pencil test. The present assessment system is not liable for ensuring the quality of higher education. This paper explores some issues related to assessment practice which could be the starting point for the assessment reform.

*Keywords:* student assessment, paper-pencil test, item analysis, assessment quality, quality of education

### **An Analysis of Student Assessment Practice in Higher Education of Nepal**

The term '*assessment*' derives from the Latin word '*assess*', which means 'to sit beside'. Its *root* meaning is deeply integrated with teaching and *learning*. In education, the term assessment refers to the wide variety of methods or tools that educators use to evaluate, measure, and document the academic readiness, learning progress, skill acquisition, or educational needs of the student (The Glossary of Education Reform, n.d.). More specifically, higher education is intended to provide broader skills and knowledge to the students for the job market and academic degree. The main objective of higher education is to help students become more professional and lifelong learners with a wide range of skills. So, the assessment process of higher education needs various tools and approaches. In this case, the assessment supports whether the purpose of higher education has been fulfilled. The debate about student assessment practices in higher education has expanded over the past decades and has emerged as a hot issue after COVID-19.

It has been recognized that universities play a pivotal role in promoting sustainability principles, contributing to the paradigm shift to develop more suitable assessment tools that can be applied in higher education institutions (Caeiro et al., 2013). But during the COVID, most the higher education institutions faced pathetic problems. The traditional paper-pencil test is insufficient to contribute to making quality higher education and faces emerging challenges like the job market. In addition, Bryan and Clegg (2006) discuss problems with traditional assessment methods and rationales behind different kinds of innovation in assessment practices in higher education. Similarly, Sullivan et al. (2012) attempt to analyze institutional behavior related to the incentives embedded within measurement systems in higher education institutions. Coates (2018) mentioned that it is surprising that much assessment in

higher education has not changed materially for a very long time. Technology innovation provides numerous opportunities to change, transform or adopt the different assessment approaches, but the scenario seems not to change significantly, especially in Nepali higher education.

Furthermore, Boud and Falchikov (2007) argue that assessment affects students' academic lives. Largely, the students' future directions depend on university assessment frames, such as formative assessment provides several fruitful directions for choosing a career and learning. Hogan (2020) presents two valuable opportunities for educators from assessment; gaining a deep understanding of trends and instructional strategies for enriching students' strengths and applying multiple approaches to assessing the student. In this context, formative and summative assessments can be applied to evaluate academic achievements during and after instructional activity. The formative assessment practice is almost absent in Nepali higher education (B. K. Adhikari, personal communication, May 30, 2021). Sekolsky and Denison (2018) reveal some common issues related to student assessment practices in higher education, such as standard-setting, placing the appropriate passing score, bias in test construction, item writings, item analysis, reliability, validity, and developing appropriate measures of student learning outcomes. Thus, the assessment has played a vital role in the higher education system's effectiveness and efficiency.

Higher education providers are responsible for ensuring equitable access to education, integrating higher education with skills, and ensuring excellent educational quality by increasing opportunities for technical and scientific education. There are currently 17 universities (including six deemed universities) operating in Nepal. However, about 78 percent of students study at Tribhuvan University (University Grant Commission, 2021). On the other hand, National Planning Commission (2019) estimated that about 15 percent of students have enrolled in higher education, which will be expected to be 22 percent in 2022. So,

higher education issues and challenges are more related to Tribhuvan University. In many cases, other universities also practice the same curriculum, examination system, and teaching-learning process adopted from Tribhuvan University except Kathmandu University.

With the pace of globalization and liberalization, higher education providers have not been able to produce skilled manpower to compete in knowledge, skills, and technology (UNESCO, 2018). Therefore, most of the manpower produced from higher education is far from access to the labor market, and they have only theoretical knowledge. To ensure the quality of higher education by making the curriculum time-relevant, conducive to the purpose of higher education, research, innovation, and a wide range of student skills, the examination system also plays a vital role.

Teaching is not successful unless student assessment is conducted correctly. Learning is incomplete if students do not acquire the knowledge, skills, and competencies they need and are expected by the curriculum and job market. An incomplete learning experience cannot develop a student's full personality (Pandey, 1994). Therefore, higher education institutions need to make the examination system standard and flawless. Various assessment strategies like project work, mini-research, case study, term paper, group work, field work, presentation, portfolio, and learning profile can advance student learning. However, few scholars have researched this issue in Nepal. In this context, this paper attempts to analyze the present assessment practices, weaknesses, and issues in Nepali Higher Education. Most universities lose their academic year just the cause of not being able to take student examinations. Acharya (2020) states it is not acceptable to wait to end the COVID before taking the examination.

### **Methods**

This paper is prepared based on document analysis using primary and secondary data sources. Primary data were collected from the discussion of selected teachers and students. Moreover, secondary data have been analyzed. Few quantitative data have been presented, and other qualitative information has been collected and analyzed. Various journal articles, books, reports, and publications were thoroughly reviewed to obtain secondary data. Thus, the paper has used the mixed approach to collect data and analysis as well.

The paper has been prepared based on journal articles, newspaper manuscripts, monographs, personal experience, examination question papers, informal and formal conversations, reports, and books. Individual discussion has been made with some teachers and students from higher education institutions. Some news, reflection, and cases are also analyzed. Various question papers and items of the examination are also reviewed and analyzed. Working in the field of student assessment and being a faculty member in higher education, I have also mentioned my reflection and observation. To collect the primary data, open-ended questionnaires were asked to the university teacher and students. To collect the secondary, I went to the library, searched online, and collected the publication from various organizations.

### **Results and Discussion**

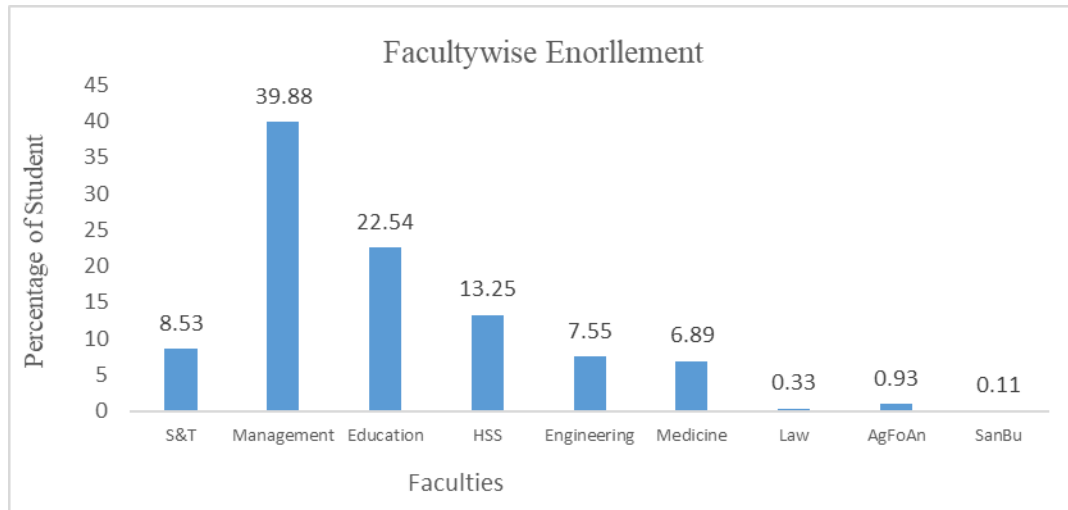
This section presents the results of the various cases, data, and document analysis. Similarly, the current student assessment practice in higher education has been discussed. Before analyzing the assessment practice in higher education, it is important to explore the university autonomy and teacher autonomy regarding the student assessment. Teacher autonomy is a very important factor in improving the assessment system in higher education. Teacher academic autonomy can enhance the formative assessment during the teaching-learning activity, which improves student learning and skill development. It is almost

impossible to reform the present assessment system without teacher autonomy and capacity development.

Student assessment systems have a pedagogical, administrative, and technological legacy. The concept regarding assessment for learning and learning can only be applied in the true sense by the teacher. So, the teachers' capacity, empowerment, teacher-student ratio, and academic autonomy are affecting factors in implementing an effective assessment system. Similarly, the university governing body and academic council have to change the existing norms and procedures to provide autonomy for the teacher. In the past and present Nepali higher education examination system, many problems and gaps are prevailing. So, the reform in the assessment system influencing by multifaceted factors.

### **Higher Education Status in Nepal**

Over the period, priority has been given to access rather than quality in higher education. Not only the government but other stakeholders of higher education were/are more interested in establishing a new university rather than improving the quality of the existing university. The establishment of a new university has become political agenda rather than an academic one. The new education policy 2019 mentioned research base higher education broadly but did not state how the higher education reform initiatives move toward research and innovation (MOEST, 2019). Numerous criticisms have been seen about the quality of higher education in Nepal. The main criticism is that university graduates do not have the knowledge and skill per the labor market requirement. The employers are not convincing graduate students they have a skill as their requirement. Student enrollment in general subjects was higher than in technical subjects. The student enrollment in science and technology was found to be less than in the other general subject stream. The enrollment trends in different faculties are presented in figure 1.

**Figure 1***The Enrollment Trends in Different Faculties*

(Source: MOEST, 2075)

Enrollment in general education like management, humanities, and education covers 75 percent of the total enrolment. The nature of the course, the subject teacher, and the other various aspect of the course has low employability skill and market demand. It is of utmost known that general education objective and essence is not providing the employability skill specifically but in general knowledge. The oldest and largest university Tribhuvan University offers general education all over the country (more than 1100 campuses) with inadequate infrastructure and teachers. Access to higher education has increased only in general education.

Some courses offered by the faculty of management can be considered professional courses. Though, the newly established university is also concentrating on offering general education. It is a known fact that general education has not been able to develop qualified human resources. Lumbini Bouddha University was established with the prime objective to educate the people of Nepal and enrich the global learning community through applying core



Buddhist values and promoting World Peace. However, they have only 142 students on the faculty. Nepal Sanskrit university has only 251 students in Sanskrit faculty, but they have more students in Education, 950 students.

Nepal's higher education development is mostly focused on providing affiliation to the college/campuses. The affiliated college was increased from 2001 to 2012 is 475 percent (University Grant Commission, 2001 and 2012). The weightage of affiliation is more in TU than other, but the other new university is also more interested in providing affiliation for the college. Mid-western, Far-western, Purbanchal, and Pokhara universities are providing the affiliation east to west in the country to the college without any rationale. They have followed the almost same assessment system practiced by Tribhuvan University. Thus, it can be concluded that most of the university's priority is not providing quality and innovation in the sector.

### **Assessment and Teaching Learning Status in Higher Education**

Assessment is an integral part of the teaching-learning process at all levels of education. The structured, reliable, and valid assessment is the basic condition of higher education quality. To support the student's deep learning, various assessments can contribute in various ways. Bloxham and Boyd (2007) emphasize the importance of assessment in higher education as a learning activity. Without integrating the formative assessment practice in the teaching-learning activity, the high education quality cannot be assured. The assessment practice can help the teacher and student both engage in the lesson and teaching activity more. According to Marton and Saljo (1997), students' learning approaches consistently emerge surface and deep. The assessment practice can encourage students to take a deep approach to learn in any course. If the assessment practice does not demand deep learning, the students only engage in surface learning. The surface learning results and the assessment use short notes, "guess papers", and a guide to passing the exam. While analyzing the exam question paper, our higher education

assessment system demands only surface learning. The majority of the questions have asked only the definition. As blooms domains of learning, the questions have only focused on the lower order thinking skills (Bloom, 1956). A big issue has been observed about the validity of the test as well.

To enhance the student's deeper learning, analytical skill, and higher-order thinking skill, the diverse assessment practice could contribute to it. Higher education is not only the learning; after graduation, the attained knowledge and skills should be used in the world of work. So only certifying the knowledge of the students cannot show higher education effectiveness and quality. In many cases, employers blame the education system and are not getting the right person for the job. While the higher education institution assesses the student's knowledge and skill perfectly, the job market just screens the other factor. However, the job market has not trusted the higher education assessment system, so they again take the exam, checking their knowledge and skill. It is the kind of challenge for the higher education institution and assessment system.

### **Assessment Practice in Higher Education**

The assessment system in higher education in Nepal largely follows the paper-pencil test. Various models and tools have been developed in the field of assessment, but the paper-pencil test is the oldest, less practical, and easiest assessment method and tool. Using the paper-pencil test in assessment, it is not necessary to give more attention to the assessment activity by the teacher. From the teacher's perspective, it is mostly the easy assessment approach to student evaluation. Yorke (2003) argued that the significant problem of assessment in higher education is that measurement instrumentation is often ad hoc and lacks a theoretical base. The concern about the quality of higher education is always criticized, but nobody is interested in reforming the assessment and exam system. The global development of education is shifting from paper-based to electronic media/e-assessment. During the covid pandemic, the transformation of the

assessment system is highly demanded. The classroom teaching-learning practice is going narrow only to certify the student knowledge and provide the certificate. In this regard, Bennet (2002) stated rapid change in the mechanisms, nature, and organization of education must also come with changes in educational assessment. Without changing the assessment system, learning quality cannot be ensured in any form. Changing in assessment demands changes in curriculum and pedagogy simultaneously. So, it has not been prioritized by the higher education institutions in Nepal.

The semester system has followed the same pattern as the yearly examination system. Questions about the assessment and quality of the Faculty of Education have been critiqued. Similarly, the faculty of Humanities/Management has been asking questions from unauthentic cheap notes and have repeated the same questions from the previous year. Various assessment issues are similar in TU and other universities as well. The newly established universities, such as Purvanchal University, Pokhara University, Mid-western university, and Far-western University, have not yet developed new courses and assessment modalities. So, the assessment system and issues are similar to the TU.

### **Assessment Practice**

The practice of formative assessment and providing feedback to the students seems almost absent in Nepali higher education. Up to the Master's level in general education, students never get the chance to prepare any report, or term paper and present the idea in a group, project work, or paper presentation. They only take the lecture class and sit in the exam. They buy a different textbook, guide and guess paper, and old question solutions to prepare for the exam. Some of the students prepared for the exam only one week before the exam by purchasing photocopy notes and guess paper from university premises. The researcher asked book shops on university premises questions: Which materials

will buy all students? They replied, "no doubt, guess paper and old question solution" (N. Aryal, personal communication, June 1, 2021).

Further questions why? Oh! Can students get pass marks only by reading the guess paper and old questions a week before the exam? They replied, "Students who want more grades buy both the textbook and guess paper. The next question was asked to the students, Are there different textbooks in the same course, and how do they select them? It was also a straightforward answer by the student; if the textbook written by the central department teacher's priority is given to them, if not, then the book writer from the valley has prioritized. Then, the followed question was asked? Why? They elaborate that it is known that the teacher who teaches in the central department is mostly involved in the question-making process. Very rarely do the chances get by the other teacher to make a final question. For these reasons, some books are written by other teachers, but they just insert the teacher's name from the central department. Responded teachers opined they never experienced different assessments in the university when they studied, so they are not ready to change it now by own initiation.

The opinion of the book shop confirmed the incident, which occurred in 2075 B.S. All questions were asked from the textbook written by a professor in the Foundation of Education. The practice is that each textbook mentions the sample question in the last part of the book. The examinees were blamed for the politics of selling textbooks and earning as well as no accountability of the professor. Similarly, the issues were found asking the question in Educational Psychology from the Educational Foundation. These kinds of incidents are frequent and normal incidents for the TU. Likewise, Gaulee (2014) stated that cheap course notes in the market could be sufficient for passing the exam. Some senior students and teachers have been involved in making the short note, and the photocopied note has been sold on university premises.

On the subject Administrative System of Nepal, all the 50 marks questions were asked from questions were asked in 2074 B.S. In 2076 B.S., the questions were asked from the previous year in Master of Public Administration. They only change the year at the top of the questions. Nobody is accountable and responsible for this. The lethargic so-called professors are involved in this activity, said one young teacher from the university (P. Khanal, personal communication, March 8, 2020).

When TU started the semester system, the teaching-learning and assessment practice had not been improved. In the year 2074 B.S., the questions were asked Master of Public Administration (Planning and Project Management), only changing full marks of the question. The questions asked in semester ten full marks are the same ones in the yearly system (private) 20 marks. Questions asked for 15 full marks in the semester, and the same question asked for 25 marks in the yearly examination system. Tribhuvan University had also allegedly repeated the same questions of 2020 in 2021 in the exam of Economics at the master's degree level (Acharya, 2022).

The internal assessment system has been practiced in various courses and semesters. There are so many issues regarding the internal assessment in the semester as well. Lack of strong guidelines and procedures, the student sits for the written exam for the internal marks as well. Without any theoretical base, the paper-pencil test is practiced in the semester for internal assessment. Without any study and rationale, the internal assessment system was applied in 2007 in the Master's Degree course. So many malpractices have been seen in the assessment practice. There was no clear direction and procedure. Teachers are independent in providing the marks to students. Due to the lack of an accountability system in higher education, particularly in TU, it had not implemented after three years.

### **Assessment Issues**

Any assessment system has essential characteristics like objectivity, reliability, validity, and relevancy. In higher education, the reliability and validity of the assessment are most crucial. The reliability of the assessment represents the consistency of the measurement. It is focused on how accurately the tools measure the knowledge. Reliability is necessary for validity, but validity is not necessary for reliability. At the same time, the validity concern is measurement tool quality. The measurement tools are succeeding or not to measure supposed to measure.

It is already stated that the paper-pencil test largely dominates the assessment practice. One of the respondent assistant professors from TU (P. Acharya, personal communication, March 7, 2021) argued that our teaching-learning practice has focused on only passing the exam. We start each class with the importance of content from an exam perspective. We learned this from our professor, so we have followed it till now. If the content is not most important for the exam, the students are not attentive, and we are not focusing on the content. Another respondent (R. Parajuli, personal communication, March 10, 2020) says there is no difference between the assessment system school and university; both are focused on getting the pass mark rather than learning. In this regard, Koirala (2020) mentioned that teacher teaching and student learning have been focusing on the exam. It takes a long time to publish the result, and the pass percentage of the student shows system inefficiency and poor learning.

To scrutinize the student's answer sheet, each teacher's judgment can be found to be different; scoring rubrics are not practiced in the higher education system in paper-pencil tests.

The question pattern is unrealistic from the perspective of full marks and content reliability. From researchers' own experiences, there is no item for measuring the higher-level thinking skills. Questions are asked defining the terms

with 15 marks. It is a kind of noise to asking the definition of higher education and marks allocation. Faculty of humanities and management have practiced asking the definition (low order skill) with 20 marks. The pattern of the question framework is also very irrelevant and illogical. The single questions carry 25 marks and are unreliable and less valid.

Many scholars and writers have mentioned that Nepal's higher education big problem is that the curricula have not changed for decades. While the curricula have not been changed in decades, it would be wrong to expect reform in the assessment system. Simultaneously, if the assessment system has not been changed, then no need to change the curriculum from time to time. The assessment system incorporated the new and changed concept in the teaching-learning process rather than only taking the assessment.

Cheating is another most prominent issue in higher education assessment. The media have raised some issues during the time of examination every year. If we visit the exam center, we can easily find cheating practice in the exam each time. While the questions asked from the textbook, guess paper and note, then it is the apparent practice by the students. Researchers have seen cheating practice in a Master's Degree in private courses in different years. As a private examinee, I felt the cheating practice increased yearly.

Reliability and validity are challenging issues regarding assessment. Reviewing the questions of the Master's level, the quality of the questions is similar to basic education. The long questions having 25 marks asked for definition, concept, and character. For example, what do you mean by social theory? Elaborate. This kind of question cannot evaluate student learning and analysis skill. Bloom's taxonomy is popular in cognitive science, but university teachers do not care about it. Almost all the questions asked from lower-order thinking skills.

Similarly, asking fewer questions with full high marks can always not cover the content and curriculum objectives. Our education system as a whole not only focuses on lower-order thinking skills or rote learning. Definition, characteristics, concept, and understanding are the knowledge that has to measure but is given less priority.

### **Implications**

Assessing the student's knowledge and skill in a particular subject matter is complex. Although various assessment tools and procedures could help the teacher assess student learning. The assessment system is a core part of any educational program. It should have maintained the quality standard and fair judgment. Similarly, it should be reliable, valid, and trustworthy.

The assessment system has big questions about reliability and validity. Only asking the 4 or 5 questions with 25 full marks is a kind of meaningless idea that exists till now in Nepali higher education. So many reforms are needed in the assessment system to make it reliable and valid. There is some debate among scholars regarding prioritized assessment or learning. Certainly, assessment and learning are interrelated. Assessment can boost effective learning. Kathleen (2010) opined that if you have time, resource and system reform should start from classroom learning, if not reform in assessment, the assessment itself drives the classroom learning improvement.

To establish a strong and systematic assessment system, the formative assessment (assessment for learning and as learning), rubrics as assessment tools, deep learning, research, and innovations are the things to consider. Similarly, the autonomy should be not only for the university, but it should have to the teacher. In the same way, providing the responsibility to the teacher will create more accountability. Reform is a complex phenomenon through which the assessment system should reform to survive the university in today's tech-led education. The rapid advancement of new technology demands new approaches to assessing



knowledge, skills, and abilities. New assessment practices should help students compete with the 21st-century global workforce. It is already delayed reform in assessment practice in Nepali higher education. That is why the covid pandemic affects university exams and assessments.

Reform in the assessment system in higher education, mainly Tribhuvan University, demands re-engineering the course design, student enrollment, course delivery, and assessment policy. The assessment system should reform, as recommended by Bearman et al. (2020), in three ways; "reimagining the status quo, reimagining the assessment design to take into account the digital world, and reimagining the assessment for new ways of knowing" (p. 9). Higher education is facing big challenges now due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Nepali higher education assessment system should be reformed without delay to address these problematic circumstances and compete with the global market.

### **Conclusion**

Technological advancement, globalization, and economic liberalization create complexity in student assessment practices. The importance of cognitive knowledge will decrease daily, and skills like collaboration, problem-solving, social-emotional, critical thinking, and communication are in high demand. Technology has undoubtedly changed the curriculum, teaching-learning, and assessment. So, we need to move the paper-pencil to keyboard/tech-led assessment practices. Delaying the reform in our assessment system, we will lag behind the global tech advancement. Our assessment of inefficiency proves by halting the different examinations of higher education in one hear. The University Grants Commission of Nepal can lead the debate about the assessment reform in higher education on a large scale. Similarly, the university itself can initiate the reform activity on its own level. Only the reform is insufficient to make assessment reliable and valid in the tech era; it demands transformation.

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### **People for Peace and Republic: A Fantasy Theme Reading of the Representation of ‘Nepalis’ in Movement-Time Editorials**

Hem Raj Kafle

Kathmandu University

#### **Author Note**

Dr. Hem Raj Kafle ( [0000-0001-8616-9576](https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8616-9576)) is an Associate Professor of English and Communication at the School of Education, Kathmandu University. He specializes in rhetoric and communication and keenly works across rhetorical studies, leadership communication, and creative writing. Dr. Kafle has to his credit a co-authored anthology of poems, two translated books, a collection (book) of reflective essays, a collection of Nepali poems, several research publications on literary and communication discourses, and dozens of newspaper columns on socio-political issues.

This article is an update of a part of the Ph.D thesis submitted to and evaluated at Kathmandu University in 2015.

Correspondence regarding this article should be addressed to Dr. Hem Raj Kafle, Kathmandu University. Email: [hrk@ku.edu.np](mailto:hrk@ku.edu.np); [hemraj@kusoed.edu.np](mailto:hemraj@kusoed.edu.np)

**Abstract**

Newspapers' editorializing exigencies as a mere publication of spot news would not be enough. Editorials clarify, explain, interpret, or integrate the news based on events, incidents, situations, or trends. Events of and during political movements are the main subjects of newspaper editorials. Editorial coverage of everyday exigencies builds up and helps represent narratives of various actors directly or indirectly involved in the events. In the public texts in Nepal, including newspapers, 'Nepali people' feature as principal actors and participants in socio-political transformations. Through Fantasy Theme Analysis of editorials on political subjects, this article explores how *The Kathmandu Post* and *The Himalayan Times* covered 'Nepali people' as the participants, actors, and agents of political transformation during the people's movement in 2005-2006. The article inductively concludes that with a principal rhetorical vision for establishing peace and republic, 'Nepali people' performed the agency of transformation in the country.

*Keywords:* movement, fantasy theme, rhetorical vision, transformation, peace, republic

### **People for Peace and Republic: A Fantasy Theme Reading of the Representation of 'Nepalis' in Movement-Time Editorials**

In most public textual representations in Nepal, Nepali people or *Nepali Janata* feature as metaphors. Broadly, they signify a force for validating political actions and establishing political philosophies. The expressions like 'people are watching,' 'people would like to know,' 'working for the people,' 'people's own party,' 'straight conversation to the people,' are perennial catchphrases among the media and political actors. Former governments, even the autocratic monarchs, accorded 'people' with some agency as determiners and followers of every socio-political transformation in the country, apart from being their compliant subjects.

This paper seeks to explore the representation of 'Nepali people' in editorials of the mainstream broadsheet dailies in drawing the context of the political movement. The article is a Fantasy Theme Analysis of newspaper editorials covering the events of the people's movement, popularly referred to as *Jana Andolan II* in Nepal, which was concluded in April 2006,. The article explicates how *The Kathmandu Post* and *The Himalayan Times*, the two broadsheet English-language newspapers, from Kathmandu portrayed 'Nepali people' in their editorials. The editorials between 22 November 2005 (following the signing of the Twelve-Point Agreement) and 30 May 2006 have been reviewed to examine the portrayal of the Nepali people. This period involved the crucial days of the 'People's Movement' organized against the monarch-led government by the then Seven-Party Alliance. In particular, the article addresses this research question: How did the leading newspapers represent Nepali people in their editorials? And, in line with the key concepts of Fantasy Theme Analysis, it concentrates on answering what attributes of Nepalis as movement actors are presented in relation with their actions and settings of movement. Moreover, it is inquisitive towards the knowing visions for change that are highlighted in the narratives related with the Nepali people as the main agents of change.

### Fantasy Theme Analysis

Fantasy Theme Analysis (FTA) is a method of rhetorical criticism considered appropriate in the study of movement-related artifacts. Cragan (1981) calls it “a method for sorting out and evaluating public discourse which may provide parameters and a rhetorical structure for the phrase, ‘the rhetoric of’” (p. 69). In this respect, this paper aims to explore ‘the rhetoric of Nepalis as significant change agents’ in the context of political movements. The word “fantasy,” in FTA is used with its etymological root in Greek, *phantastikos*, as a referent to a symbol “which is able to present or show to the mind, to make visible” (Ball, 2001, p. 218). In an even broader application of the term, fantasy theme involves “the creative and imaginative shared interpretation of events that fulfils a group’s psychological or rhetorical needs” (Griffin, 2011, p. 250). In relation with the study of public texts such as newspaper editorials for their coverage of real events, a fantasy theme refers to “a shared story that is believed and internalized by many people” and is expressed frequently as “a particular interpretation of some significant aspect of our world” (Nelson, 2017, p. 548). FTA follows two basic steps. The primary interpretive phase involves a close reading of an artefact or a number of artifacts for signifiers representing personae, plotlines, and scenarios embedded in interpretative expressions that tell of events in the past or aspirations for the future. This phase, in other words, focuses on finding character, action, and setting themes accompanied by making sense of symbolic cues, which speak of a presence and recurrence of metaphors and allusions identified by a context-specific discourse community. The second stage of FTA includes inferring rhetorical visions from the character, and action, setting themes and allusions from the symbolic cues, and analyzing the rhetorical visions in connection with sanctioning agents and rhetorical communities.

Table 1 presents an operational definition of each of the key concepts used in Fantasy Theme Analysis in this paper.

**Table 1***Operational Definitions of Concepts in Fantasy Theme Analysis*

Key Concepts	Definitions
Fantasy theme	Any signifier representing a persona, action, or setting; an interpretative expression telling of events in the past or aspirations for the future.
Character (Dramatis persona)	Actors in a narrative representing certain emotion or traits of character, either positively portrayed as a hero/protagonist or negatively as a villain/antagonist, or neutral.
Action (Plotline)	Act or deed of a character. Action reflects the nature of happening, intensity of change, traits of characters, and the extent of decisiveness.
Setting (Scenario)	Place or space where actions take place; seen both as a physical location or a political, cultural space.
Symbolic cue	A cryptic signifier, metaphoric/allusive/connotative expression typical for a cultural/political context and group of people; reminds of one or more stories and personae.
Rhetorical vision	A composite of shared goals, which the members of a (discourse) community own as a guiding principle; a reason to come together; a cluster of semantically proximate themes involving identical and mutually convergent dramatis persona
Rhetorical community	A group of people; characters that share rhetorical visions. Members in a rhetorical community show identical traits, and present similar emotional responses



	on external triggers.
Sanctioning agent	An idea or a person, stated or implied, understood to authorize and endorse certain actions; bases to establish that certain rhetorical visions are valid and sustainable

(Source: Compiled by the author from the references included in this article)

### Discussion

#### Broad Representation of the Nepali People

In the backdrop of the transition through the Twelve Point Agreement (TPA) between the CPN (Maoist) and the Seven-Party Alliance of November 2005, the movement of April 2006, and the aftermath till May 2006, the newspaper editorials broadly portray Nepali people in at least three facets. First, the post-TPA editorials show the people of Nepal as suppressed, victimized, and too weak to raise their voices against autocracy. Then, some time close to the municipal elections held by the royal government in February 2006, Nepalis assume the persona of a demanding, uncompromising citizenry. Third, during the protests in April 2006, Nepalis take the face of the mass of protestors – defiant and victorious against the autocratic regime. In the aftermath of the protests, the defiant and victorious Nepalis appear to subside into neutral, anticipating, and forgiving people.

Wolfsfeld (2011, p.3) discusses the political environment and states that it refers to everything people are doing, thinking, and saying about an issue at a particular place and time. Nepalis in 2005-6 were represented in the then context of the political environment in the editorials of the broadsheet dailies. Thus, the principal narrative on the Nepalis can be summed up in a simple plot involving a generic collectivity slowly woken up to courage and defiance to topple an autocratic system and later gone into the back seat to wait and see how the fruits of their labor would be managed by the political representatives.

### The Dramatis Personae

Character (dramatis persona) fantasy themes embody the personal attributes of actors involved in a narrative. The themes describe the agents or actors in a communicative context and “ascribe characters and motives to them” (Foss, 2018, p. 108). In other words, character themes portray individuals “doing certain things or manifesting certain behaviours” and also “place them in a given setting or scene” (Shields, 1981, p. 6).

Nepalis as actors of the political movement during 2005-2006 are presented by *The Kathmandu Post* and *The Himalayan Times* in a number of character attributes. The first of these involves generic categories such as the people, the general public, and the mass. The second persona takes such denominators as Nepali citizens, the Nepalis, the people of Nepal, and the Nepali people, thereby fixing their status of the citizenry within the Nepali nation. Yet, another persona presents Nepalis in terms of temporality as the “twenty-first century citizens” (*TKP*, “Ordinary Mind,” 2005, p. 4) and “today’s Nepalis” (*THT*, “The Razor’s Edge,” 2006, p. 6). The fact of being in 21<sup>st</sup> century or today juxtaposes the citizenry with the historical anachronism of active monarchy ruling the country then. Such persona also confirms their image as the protestors during the movement.

The Nepalis become metaphors at times. They are the “sea of humanities that swarmed the streets” (*THT*, “New Dawn,” 2006, p. 6), “the mass encircling the Ring Road” (*TKP*, “People’s Power,” 2006, p.4), “rising tide of protestors” (*THT*, “Love Me Tender,” 2006, p. 6), and “those defying curfews and braving bullets” (*THT*, “New Dawn,” 2006, p. 6). They become anybody without fixed political identity but Nepalis, such as “most Nepalis including those in the political parties” (*THT*, “Missing Magic,” 2006, p. 6) and “youths chiefly belonging to the middle- and lower-class families” (*TKP*, “On the Threshold,” 2006, p. 4). Above all, they take the respectable persona of the “worthy sons and

daughters of Nepal” (*THT*, “New Dawn,” 2006, p. 6). And they are the subjective ‘we’ representing the sentimentality of Nepalinness, sometimes attached with the fate of being losers, and other times with gallantry of victors.

The dramatis persona of Nepalis, which is essentially that of a protagonist, appeared fairly unheroic at the outset. As stated above, their transition was from victims to victors to a peaceful public. As victims, Nepalis suffered a feudal system backed by a monarch, which denied them basic needs as simple as a cover against the cold wave in the Terai. In general, Nepalis lived through a long-drawn social structure marked with “inequality, poverty, and illiteracy,” as a consequence of unfettered corruption by a handful of feudal fiats (*TKP*, “Corrupt System,” 2006, p. 4). Also, they were unlucky, “reeling under absolute poverty,” being “devoid of a statesman” who would prioritize their well-being (*TKP*, “Poor Show,” 2006, p. 4) during the “deteriorating security and political situation in the country” (*THT*, “No Ordinary Time,” 2006, p. 6). A broader reality was that Nepalis carried a painful memory of their history, that of the denial of democratic aspirations by generations of Shah Rulers, including the then king Gyanendra (*TKP*, “Eluding Democracy,” 2006, p. 4; “Int’l Community,” 2006, p.4).

The Nepali people are shown to have been critical towards other popular actors of the time. They were not fully happy with the political parties for their failure to ensure good governance in the past. Only the parties’ promise to restore democracy and peace with tacit support from the then Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) had evoked some hope that the political parties had redeemed into competence from inaction and stagnation. The people were skeptic about the Maoists as well. The reason was that the Maoists could not be expected to adapt to the multiparty system overnight after a decade’s war against the government. The king knew well that people were “not fully convinced of the Maoist commitment to multiparty democracy.” Thus, ironically, this awareness had given him enough ground to disbelieve the parties’ potential for bringing change

through a mass movement (*TKP*, “King’s Open Door,” 2006, p. 4) and thus to tighten his hold in the power against the clamor for democracy. People were critical against the regime much earlier than the mass protests of April. They had shunned the February municipal elections showing that they were “aware of the royal regime’s tactics to earn legitimacy through forceful elections” (*TKP*, “Poor Show,” 2006, p. 4). Because people had lost faith in the royal regime for its failure to carve a way towards peace and economic prosperity, the parties on their part could cash this loss of faith towards a mass uprising.

The movement-time persona of the Nepali people reveals an image emboldened to tussle with the regime’s forces. The people were apparently uncompromising, defiant, resultant and sovereign. They were not in a mood to compromise with a system of constitutional monarchy such as that of 1990 (*THT*, “The Age of Change,” 2006, p. 6). Consequently, they shunned “any advocacy on royal supremacy” (*THT*, “Ordinary Mind,” 2005, p. 6). They would not accept if the movement culminated in “anything less than Loktantra” (*TKP*, “King’s Open Door,” 2006, p. 4), or any adjustment that ignored “popular sovereignty and representative democracy” (*THT*, “Sunset Boulevard,” 2005, p. 6). The new terminology *Lokatantra* was used instead of the earlier terminology *Prajatantra* for the English word Democracy. Transition from *Praja* to *Lok* itself indicated the transition of personae of the Nepali people. The people by now were aware that an autocratic system would not seek a logical end to the Maoist insurgency and be willing to establish peace and good governance. As a result, they turned defiant to such an extent as to withstand the unconstitutional and autocratic regime, which was virtually under the tutelage of the Royal Nepali Army. Towards the end of the movement, the situation developed to such intensity of rebellion that “no military, political party and foreign power [could] make the people loyal towards the royal regime” (*TKP*, “On the Threshold,” 2006, p. 4). The regime’s fall was imminent since Nepali people were fully prepared to topple it.

The defiance made Nepali people resultant and sovereign. They overwhelmed the government by exerting “unconquerable power ... defying curfews and braving bullets” (*THT*, “New Dawn,” 2006, p. 6), and forced the king to reinstate the House of Representatives. The change was the result of the “courage, strength and endurance” of the Nepali citizens, of their “unparalleled love for their freedom, nationality and identity” (*TKP*, “Crucial Support,” 2006, p. 4). People’s defiance was, therefore, the cause of the king’s political disaster. With defiance and resultant struggle against the autocratic regime, Nepali people became sovereign and free. With the restoration of the parliament, they achieved the right to decide their own fate and that of the monarchy.

Another very important character of Nepalis in general is that they were equally the forgiving people. They forgave the political parties for their past mistakes and came to the streets on their call for a movement. They were prepared to ignore the intra- and inter-party hassles on power sharing during the post-movement time. They could only wait and punish the party leaders another time if the latter did not act sensibly. The people were also ready to forgive the Maoists now that the latter were willing to join the political mainstream. They were ready to forget the Maoists’ violence-filled past, and to welcome them as a political party prepared to abide by the multiparty and pluralist culture.

### **Actions**

Actions, also called plotlines, refer to the deeds performed by characters. These are about personae (heroes and villains) on whom the message is crafted, and which clarify where the characters are engaged. The main actions/plotlines associated with Nepali people take a number of frontline acts in a rough chronological sequence. These include people’s rejection of the regime, defiance and rebellion against the regime and victory over it. Rejection meant not only the dislike for autocracy, but the monarch himself (*TKP*, “Curfew State,” 2006, p. 6). With an urge to do away with the rejected autocratic government, people defied

the municipal elections held in February 2006, and later the curfews and security crackdowns in April. The act of rebellion then involved the demand for a change in the government system, a forward-looking agenda for republic through the election of Constituent Assembly (*THT*, “Ameliorative Approach,” 2006, p. 6; *TKP*, “Int’l Community,” 2006, p. 4). Finally, the actions related to victory meant “braving the bullets and baton charges,” forcing the king to return power to people (*TKP*, “People’s Power,” 2006, p. 4), and winning back “freedoms and sovereign powers” (*THT*, “New Dawn,” 2006, p. 6). In a nutshell, victory entailed doing away with the monarchy itself.

### Settings

Settings or scenes show “where the action takes place, the place where the characters act out their roles” (Shields, 1981, p. 6; Foss, 2018, p. 108). In some narratives, the scene becomes crucial as it “appears to influence both the qualities attributed to the actors or characters and the plotlines” (Shields & Preston, 1985, p. 107). The representative settings for the narratives about Nepali people included Nepal, the country as a whole, apart from a number of other locations. In the setting of the country, Nepalis were portrayed in a state of submission, exploitation, and poverty. In a later phase, the setting of Nepal took the image of a grand location where an unprecedented mass of protestors toppled a monarch-led regime through a bloodless movement. Then the setting of Kathmandu, especially its streets and the 27 km Ring Road, formed the most important point of convergence. From there the people could make the royal palace realize being under siege and to make timely decision to return power to the people’s representatives. There were also a number of specific locations like Janakpur, Biratnagar, Pokhara, Chitwan, and Nepalgunj marked for huge turnout of people during the movement. Then the House of Representatives functioned as a setting where people’s aspirations were respected, and from where the paths for a peaceful Nepal could be carved out by people’s elected representatives.

### Symbolic cues

A symbolic cue is a verbal allusion. It is a “cryptic” reference to certain stories that have chained out or that a community have shared common experiences and discursive traits (Bormann, Cragan & Shields, 2011, p. 283). In other words, a symbolic cue functions as a “shorthand indicant or code” embedded in an intimate sign or an inside joke or anecdote identified only by a specific group (Bormann, Cragan & Shields, 2011, p. 283). In case of public texts like newspaper editorials, a symbolic cue refers to such widely-circulated signifiers that the readers conveniently recognize as implying certain shared narratives or beliefs.

*TKP* and *THT* use a number of symbolic cues defining the Nepali people in both low and grand identities. The cues that project Nepalis in a low image relate to “the century old feudal system,” (*TKP*, “Cold Wave,” 2006, p. 4), “few feudal fiats” (*TKP*, “Corrupt System,” 2006, p. 4) and “the trap of civil war” (*TKP*, “Desist Blockade,” 2006, p. 4). The feudal system was blamed for driving Nepalis into the state of poverty and deprivation. The feudal fiats, mainly identified as the royals and royalists of Nepal, are signified as those controlling majority of resources and ruled over the majority population. The trap of civil war explains the state of fear and uncertainty amid Maoist insurgency, which also deterred the growth and prosperity of the Nepalis.

The cues suggesting grandeur include ‘worthy sons and daughters’ and martyrs. The first refer to both the people who had made the 1990 anti-Panchayat movement resultant, and those who forced king Gyanendra to give up power in April 2006. Apparently, those who were killed in the nineteen-day movement were referred to as the martyrs to accord honor as done to those who sacrificed their lives during the anti-Rana and anti-Panchayat struggles in the past.

### **Rhetorical Vision: Nepalis for Peace and Republic**

The rhetorical vision is a shared ideal comprising a number of identifiable narratives embedded in characters, actions, settings and symbolic cues. The rhetorical vision of a large group of people is represented in public discourses, and frequently transferred to people through the mass media and other forms of public artefacts (Bormann, 1972, p. 398; Ball, 2001, p. 217). Widely shared visions constitute the main guiding beliefs for people, which encourage them to keep alive their “sense of community” in the form of strong actions enacted through “heroes, villains, emotions, attitudes” (Bormann, 1972, p. 398).

Rhetorical visions constituted by *TKP* and *THT* in the portrayal of Nepali people idealize peace and republic as the essential savior for and promoter of Nepal and Nepalis. The people’s participation in the protests implies a hope for a peaceful future, not necessarily their sympathy for the political parties, neither their readiness to adjust entirely with the insurgent Maoists. The Twelve-Point Agreement between seven political parties and the Maoists epitomized this hope. Nepali people risked their lives by joining the seven-party alliance’s protest. They knew that protests would be bloody in the government’s shoot-at-sight response to the Maoist bogey and subsequent imposition of curfews. Subsequently, the vision for peace, delineated in Point 3 of the Agreement, to which the Maoists had lent commitment, earned people’s forgiveness to them. The vision of republic in this sense surpassed the alliance’s primary goal of restoring the parliament, which did not necessarily visualize a position for monarchy but presupposed the abdication of power by the monarch.

Outscoring the target for parliament and voicing the demand for republic, the people were least concerned about how the political parties regarded the value of monarchy as a national institution. By adherence to republic, Nepali people were not giving the Maoists a benefit of prominence. In fact, the vision of republic was the ideal of a larger rhetorical community apart from the Maoists.



The rhetorical community primarily comprised the ‘sea of humanities,’ which was largely unidentified but could be said to include people from sectors as diverse as civil society, professional groups, independent media, marginalized communities and, above all, population of young Nepalis.

The main sanctioning agent of the rhetorical vision, the factor that justified the adoption and dissemination of the vision (Shields 1981, p. 7; Shields & Preston, 1985, p. 108), were the Nepali people themselves. A movement of such scale as that of April 2006 could hardly take place without the endorsement and participation of the mass. But one can discern both contextual and universal factors guiding the people’s participation. Among the contextual factors were the norms that Nepali people’s verdicts were final, and that the Constitution of Nepal protected the rights of Nepalis. Nepalis’ rebellion against autocracy respected the norms of constitutional assurance for the right to live without fear and pressure. The universal warrants involved such factors as freedom, territorial integrity, identity, sovereignty, and representative democracy. These also provided the rationale for convergence between the Nepali people and the political parties and their sympathy to the Maoists.

### **Concluding Remarks**

The fantasy themes and rhetorical vision about Nepali people constitute their identity as an invincible force in the light of being resultant in political transformation of April 2006. The image assumes conspicuity for its evolution from subjection to poverty and voicelessness to assertion of agency and force. The vision of peace and republic features as both righteous and pragmatic in the sense of being very contextual and congruent with the agenda of political parties of the time.

Besides, more than echoing the common parlance that Nepalis are determining agents, the editorials accord justifiable and resultant attributes to the Nepalis. This is to say, *TKP* and *THT* succeed in asserting the role of the only

independent print outlets of the time by advocating the primacy of people in country's sovereignty and good governance.

Finally, because this paper is delimited to studying the portrayal of Nepali people in movement-time editorials, the editorial representation of several other movement actors has apparently been shadowed. This rather implies the prospect of a number of in-depth studies focusing on the same exigencies. Also, with Fantasy Theme Analysis as the main critical lens, this study is expected to present a model of analysis for any media coverage of the exigencies of national significance, such as the Madhesh movement, the process of constitution drafting and state restructuring, in which the rhetorical representation of one or more actor/agent can be analyzed in samples of diverse rhetorical artifacts.

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### **The Role of Artificial Intelligence in the Evolution of Brand Voice in Multimedia**

Jūlija Surikova, Sati Siroda, & Bharat Bhattarai

Turība University, Riga, Latvia

#### **Author Note**

Jūlija Surikova (ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2345-5206>) is a Ph.D. student of Communication Management at the Turība University and a CMO in a branding agency. Her academic interest lies in branding.

Sati Siroda (ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3803-3281>) is a Ph.D. student in Communication Management at the Turība University and a founder of a marketing communication organization. Her research interests are in integrating leadership and communication studies with technological advances.

Bharat Bhattarai (ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2379-6067>) is also a Ph.D. candidate in Communication Management at Turība University and a Lecturer at CJMC in Nepal. His research area is the integration of multimedia as a relational agent.

Correspondence concerned in this article should be addressed to Bharat Bhattarai, Graudu Iela 68, Rīga, LV-1058, Latvia. Email:

[bharatbhattaraimphil@gmail.com](mailto:bharatbhattaraimphil@gmail.com)

### **Abstract**

Digital automation and artificial intelligence (AI) have transformed over decades as more organizations communicate with audiences utilizing multimedia platforms globally. With digitalization, brand voice has become necessary in brand communication with users, and conversational AI interprets inputs. The aim is to explore how AI has evolved brand voice in multimedia and its interdependencies. Qualitative research design is applied based on content analysis of various multimedia applications. Initially, the role of AI in the evolution of brand voice, AI in multimedia, and the role of brand voice in multimedia were reviewed, highlighting the research gap. By drawing implications from shared study areas, the interdependence of these three notions was determined. This paper finds that AI plays a crucial role in evolving, developing, predicting, and analyzing brand voice in multimedia, resulting in the current life cycle of the brand voice. The interdependence diagram and brand voice life cycle reveal that AI defines brand voice's effectiveness and helps evolve it by offering suggestions. AI-powered engines are crucial to the success of multimedia platforms, and thus the paper introduces AI-powered two-way integration architecture.

*Keywords:* artificial intelligence, brand voice, multimedia, branding, brand voice life cycle, prediction analysis, brand communication

### **The Role of Artificial Intelligence in the Evolution of Brand Voice in Multimedia**

The current branding and marketing landscape, including that in multimedia platforms, is being transformed by technological advancement (Varsha et al., 2021). The widespread use of the internet has brought product or service marketing online, asserting a brand's acknowledgment and identification in the global market and its brand image (Davenport et al., 2020). Artificial intelligence (AI) is widely used in the current scenario to deploy operational marketing, which also includes risk identification, customer targeting, brand advertising, and pricing to increase profitability (Varsha et al., 2021). Big data analysis, machine learning, social media analysis, algorithm decision making, simulation modeling, prediction analysis, and other techniques used by AI for brand visibility in the global market, according to industry practitioners and academics, are gaining traction (Singh et al., 2019; Syam & Sharma, 2018). As a result, AI significantly alters brand preferences, marketing strategies, and customer attitudes towards the brand (Varsha et al., 2021).

Artificial intelligence (AI) is a collection of algorithm-based machines designed or coded to learn from data to make predictions and perform exceptionally well using artificial neural networks, machine learning, robotic process automation, and text mining (Varsha et al., 2021). Furthermore, AI works intelligently with the integration of businesses and marketers to construct, assemble, and use expertise to sell their brands worldwide (Varsha et al., 2021). In recent years, AI's impact on branding has attracted increasing attention (Varsha et al., 2021). Brands are invented by wrapping ordinary products with emotional and social affiliations and using AI to drive organizational success (Galloway, 2017). Recent AI breakthroughs have completely altered brand search via keywords or voice search (Yoganarasimhan, 2020).

Traditional marketing techniques cannot match the needs of brand interactions with multimedia dissemination, as users connect with brands in a variety of different ways that are frequently uncontrolled by organizations (Edelman, 2010). In today's world, marketing is all about making choices (Keller, 2010). Brands are no longer regarded as static objects but rather as collections of qualities that an organization symbolizes (Delin, 2014). Brands are users' mental interpretations of these projections (Delin, 2014). Due to the distinctive nature of branding, the brand voice, verbal identity, and language or language identity have lately emerged (Delin, 2014). Because of the expanding role of interactive technologies in the digital world, persuasion and marketing are becoming increasingly entwined (Keller, 2010). Thus, marketing communications that leverage brand voice establishes a dialogue with the user and foster brand relationships (Keller, 2010).

Earlier studies explored the recommendations of AI on brand products, but the literature stating the impact of AI on various sectors of branding is still at an infancy stage (Kumar et al., 2021). Thus, it has also created a space for research on effective and efficient branding (Kumar et al., 2021). Many marketers are still unaware of the role of AI in effective brand development (Varsha et al., 2021). Since AI is still in its infancy, there is no single framework for determining how AI should be integrated into branding research (Varsha et al., 2021). Despite the rising reliance of branding on AI, the academic field is still unaware of the importance of brand voice being an integral part of the branding and its association with AI. However, like the Grammarly application, practitioners have used AI to deploy brand voice, stating that one's brand voice is the language and tone they use to influence how their brand looks, sounds, and feels to their client or customer base (Grammarly Business, 2021). Furthermore, there is no evidence of research on the systematic (bibliometric) analysis of brand voice in branding to



date. Besides that, a preliminary study has been performed to deploy AI in multimedia platforms to generate or maintain a brand voice.

This necessitates the creation of frameworks for brand voice to be used across AI-powered multimedia platforms. Consequently, understanding how to employ AI systems in branding to accomplish marketing objectives is crucial. Thus, this research is significant because it illuminates the potential of AI to drive multimedia and assist brands in establishing stronger and more appealing brand identities on digital platforms.

This study covers the role of AI in the evolution of brand voice in multimedia, to make academics and professionals aware that brand voice in multimedia plays a critical role in branding these days, with its efficiency relying on AI. The authors derived a brand voice life cycle based on AI simulations in multimedia, which is a novel approach in academia. The novel concept of the four phases of the brand voice life cycle allows for a complete assessment of brand voice and has practical implications in that it enables anyone to address each phase separately and commit to future research. This study then discusses the integration of brand voice using a two-way model developed by the authors based on the brand voice's life cycle. Furthermore, it depicts an interdependence diagram designed by the authors to represent the conclusions between AI, brand voice, and multimedia.

### **Conceptual Background**

Until the mid-1990s, AI development was uneven. However, a new era for AI began during that time, and the AI flourishing epoch has continued as the business received considerable investments. As a result, AI technology and start-ups began to surface in the media (Zhai, 2020).

According to a poll conducted by Ericsson in the 1920s, users were not interested in the technology. Instead, they were interested in the advantages these solutions offered consumers, such as calling on the move, taking a photo,

listening to music, or utilizing it as an entertainment tool (Mathieson, 2005). AI's practical implications were presented before their marketing or branding effects. Many anticipated that digitalization and AI would affect outdoor advertising (Mathieson, 2005).

During George W. Bush's first term, one American dream was to implement a total information awareness system (Mathieson, 2005). In the ensuing decade, AI marketing achieved many advances. Later, Amazon utilized AI in marketing and sales by launching delivery drones in 2014, and Google, Lockheed Martin, Northrop Grumman, and AeroVironment followed suit (Egan, 2014).

A year later, AI became mainstream and a key marketing tool. Einstein by Salesforce provided information on leads to follow and next-product ideas (Hardy, 2016). Oracle AI was launched the same year to evaluate large amounts of data (Hardy, 2016). Deep learning was used to examine the past and forecast the future in marketing. AI started to serve marketing needs but was not employed to evolve the brand voice.

In 2016, AI-based conversational computing appeared. Apple iPhone incorporated AI-based technology and introduced 'Hey Siri,' followed by Amazon's 'Alexa' (Hardy, 2016). Text-to-speech (TTS) technology became computers' new input and output modes (Hardy, 2016). That is when AI got close to brand voices.

McKinsey's Global Survey on AI in 2020 says organizations use AI to generate value, especially in marketing and sales. Advances in marketing technology have brought products online (Davenport et al., 2020). This has enhanced the brand's recognition and image in the market (Davenport et al., 2020). Creating a brand image with branding was first widely explored in the early work of Cherington, who regarded branding as a rising phenomenon effectuated by both salesmanship and advertising (Bastos et al., 2012).

Thus, marketing encompassed the idea of branding and later encouraged the construction of a brand's voice to reach potential customers. Bloomstein Margot's book "Trustworthy: How the Smartest Brands Beat Cynicism and Bridge the Trust Gap" cites brand voice as a foundation for organizations to create trust. She defines brand voice as the consistent way an organization engages users across all media (Bloomstein, 2021). She believes a consistent voice and appropriate content may help an organization stand out.

Brand voice using AI-based technologies has not been studied by academia but rather by practitioners. AI has been widely employed in digital marketing, branding, and pricing (Kumar et al., 2021). Digital marketers use AI modeling and tools to develop advertisements and boost online brand presence. Little research has been done on how a brand should integrate a brand voice in multimedia sectors using AI to enhance branding.

### **Applied Methodology**

AI-generated brand voice lacks a framework for synchronizing brands across digital channels. This study shows how AI evolves brand voice across multiple channels. The subsequent research questions are:

How has brand voice evolved with the use of AI in multimedia?

How are brand voice and AI interrelated in today's multimedia scenario?

This research paper aims to investigate how brand voice has evolved with AI in multimedia. It intends to investigate the interdependencies between AI, brand voice, and multimedia. As part of the preliminary work, it became apparent that there is a lack of prior study on the relationship between brand voice and AI in multimedia. Therefore, this research is exploratory in design and is founded on inductive reasoning and qualitative data analysis techniques. A qualitative research design was applied based on a content analysis of the numerous multimedia applications available to users. Initially, the roles of AI in the

evolution of brand voice, AI in multimedia, and brand voice in multimedia were examined. By imposing the drawn inferences from revealing the common research areas, conclusions were established about interdependence and fusion between these three concepts, and the related area of branding that has led to the evolution of brand voice was defined.

### **Role of AI in the Evolution of Brand Voice in Multimedia**

#### **Brand Analytics using AI**

According to a focused bibliometric analysis for the years between 1982 and 2019, 117 publications were published, and there was a sudden surge of AI-based papers in social sciences (Kumar et al., 2021), which gradually crept across disciplines like business and management. The overall assessment could not establish a comprehensive academic study between AI and brand voice, resulting in a research gap.

Using reviews, ratings, and other content-based data analysis, AI is employed to determine a brand's usage analytics, image, positioning, and importance (Colladon, 2020). The semantic Brand Score (SBS) application is used to compute and measure brand visibility (Colladon, 2018) over numerous platforms. Big data analysis is used by this application and other AI-based applications to analyze patterns and modify them depending on the positives and negatives (Colladon, 2020). The marketing managers use the patterns and perceptions of those patterns to monitor and build the report on the brand's progress (Colladon, 2020).

#### **AI Analytics Used to Develop Brand Voice**

AI allows organizations to process and analyze big data and draw conclusions about customer preferences and behavior, adapting further actions accordingly. Evolving the brand voice can enhance brand recognition and profitability.

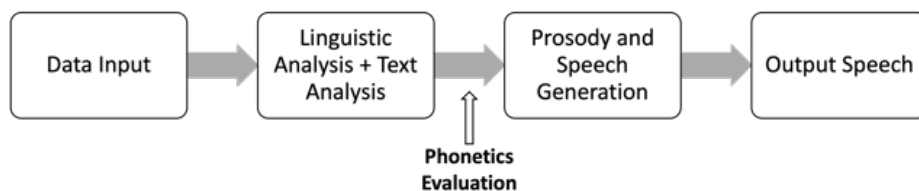
As a set of algorithm-based engines programmed to learn from web traffic data, AI calculates and predicts using artificial neural networks, machine learning, robotic process automation, and text mining (Akter et al., 2021). This technology is constantly being researched and upgraded to address the requirements of organizations. For example, AI uses a system that produces synthetic speech based on user inputs called text to speech synthesis technology (Nwakanma, 2014). When the input data is plain text without phonological information, the system is called a basic text-to-speech system (Nwakanma, 2014).

When the input involves arbitrary phonetic components, the TTS system acquires a string of symbols representing sound units as phonemes and allophones, borders or spaces between words, phrases and sentences, annotations, and patterns, and receives a set of prosody markers representing the input's speed, intonation, and other tone values (Nwakanma, 2014).

The input is matched using big data analysis with this system, and the inventory is searched to provide output signals (Nwakanma, 2014). Such an output signal can be compared to synthesized human speech and to human-expert systems (Nwakanma, 2014). For example, Amazon uses expert systems to create TTS synthetic goods like Alexa (Nwakanma, 2014). Figure 1 shows the basic schematic diagram of a TTS system as proposed by Nwakanma (2014).

**Figure 1**

*The Basic Schematic Diagram of a TTS System*



Nowadays, TTS systems are built by AI-based organizations and media channels that utilize deep learning technology, and a computer architecture called a deep neural network (DNN) to get the most accurate outcomes after computing

big data (Klabbers, 2021). These produce human-like voices for brands. Based on input, it determines the tone and modifies output. With additional similar inputs, the system maintains the tone in memory and generates a voice with that tone that can be opted-in by the user. For example, if AI-based output tones are usually hilarious, the user can be categorized to use more of a humorous tone. This sets the user's voice as amusing and friendly. This may be applied to brands that use those applications, thus generating brand voice using AI.

### **Case Study: Amazon's Alexa Detects Humor in Product-related Questions**

Amazon's recommendation engine was optimized and updated to identify users' tone in inquiries Carmel (2020). The research department strives to distinguish between creative and genuine inquiries to improve chatbots usability (Carmel, 2020). According to Carmel (2020), humor is often subjective and might be product-, emotion- or sentiment-based. Identifying humor with AI is challenging but necessary to maintain the system's effectiveness. This is done by creating data sets and saving the results for future reference (Carmel, 2020).

Using the aforementioned case study, we may reflect on the fact that if a number of queries about a product are humorous, the product itself may have a humorous and pleasant headline in the product section or description that is generating these questions from the user. If this occurs in other products, the brand may be deploying humor to attract customers. The tone establishes a distinct image of the brand having a humorous brand voice, so users expect the same while dealing with brand updates across multimedia platforms. Hence, AI helps in determining a brand's voice. For example, while Grammarly notes adjustments made in a product description on one platform, it autocorrects the voice tone on others since the AI recognizes the voice in the description unless manually altered. This detection and pattern setting is done by AI involved in the backend of the systems. Though scholars and practitioners question its accuracy, it helps set a brand voice.

### **Role of Brand Voice in Multimedia**

Multimedia has provided professionals exceptional insights into the customer decision journey, while social media has given people reason to trust brands as they must be accountable (Esber et al., 2020). The engagement between brand and customer does not end after the purchase, as multimedia engages customers in brand relationships through multiple digital channels, starting with social media and concluding with e-marketing (Edelman, 2010).

Social media and other multimedia platforms like email marketing, websites, direct mail, etc., have raised user expectations, and they want captivating brand endorsements to make buying decisions (Kumar et al., 2021). This consumer-brand relationship can be established through chatbots, user comments, likes, and preferences. This segment is highly influenced by firm-generated content (FGC) and user-generated content (UGC) (Kumar et al., 2021). When companies use social media as marketing platforms, the content generated is FGC, while when users interact with the content and generate web activity, it is UGC (Kumar et al., 2021).

Brands must make a notable marketing strategy and synchronize it across platforms to maintain equanimity and sustainably in a market. The way organizations communicate before, during, and after the consumer decision process is crucial because FGC and UGC determine a brand's voice based on the enormous volume of content produced by the user interaction with the brand. This may impact the strategic voice of the brand if UGC is higher than FGC.

Brand voice is adopted based on product content analysis. In multimedia, brand voice is essential at every digital touchpoint with potential or existing customers. The voice they use on one platform and maintain in all others during marketing and promotions meets customers' expectations after building a brand personality. This content analysis encourages brands to define their identity, integration, and social collaboration with customers, strengthening brand

sustainability (Smith et al., 2012). Like human tone, brands' social-media tone of voice impacts customers' purchasing inclinations (Barcelos et al., 2018).

Strong and coherent brand voices across multimedia platforms that mastered digital channels and better understand customer preferences generated friendlier digital experiences (Edelman, 2010). They also improved social platforms and gained a competitive technological advantage (Bughun, 2015). Multimedia is more than a platform to communicate and engage new customers (Bommel et al., 2014). They have become platforms for marketing, sales, and market share gains (Bommel et al., 2014). This shift in responsibilities raises brand voices' impact on organizations.

**Case Study: How the Tone of Voice Used by Irish Government Agencies and Semi-state Bodies Impacts Their Relationship With the Public (Mullan & Kidney, 2020)**

According to Mullan and Kidney (2020), when brands, particularly government organizations, use a humanized brand voice when connecting with the public on social media, they enjoy a higher level of trust, satisfaction, commitment, and control mutuality among their followers. This has a favorable impact on the parties involved (Mullan & Kidney, 2020). In these circumstances, system-generated recommendations, such as those from social media platforms, are beneficial (Mullan & Kidney, 2020).

Thus, a consistent brand voice and humanly-toned interactions help in reaching out to more users. Though, there might be a difference in using general phrases depending upon the platform that one uses. For example, the general phrases used on Twitter may differ from the ones that are used on LinkedIn (Nicholas, 2021). However, the principles and ideas should be consistent. This leads to using brand voice to integrate the branding across platforms.

Establishing a solid and consistent brand voice through multimedia is challenging. Multimedia channels make it difficult for marketers to build a

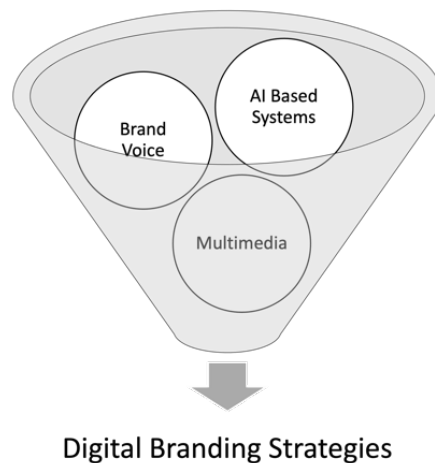


consistent brand voice across both digital and offline channels, such as examining a product online or in a storefront, following posts on Snapchat, or calling customer service (Gandhi et al., 2017). Consumer interaction with a brand begins well before the initial purchase and may persist much longer afterward, developing a strong retention relationship. The strategy of integrating and consolidating multimedia in building a brand voice with the assistance of AI has become a solution and a necessity.

### **Interdependence between AI, Brand Voice, and Multimedia**

Digitalization is approaching a new height as automation gets ingrained. AI is now being used to create user interfaces and data validation tools. AI contributes to knowledge-based marketing through multiple multimedia platforms (Kumar et al., 2021). AI engines these days help digital platforms expand, allowing practitioners to engage target audiences. Thus, AI can analyze the data it obtains from brands and organizations' communication channels, certify the data as credible or inaccurate, and curate ideas depending on brand and customer behaviors (Kumar et al., 2021). This helps design and recommend how branding can be done across various multimedia channels, what customers to target, and what tone of voice is suitable to target those customers (Barcelos, 2018). AI determines the right brand voice across platforms.

Today's multimedia platform uses AI-based technology in the backend to analyze data and create user suggestions. AI has become a practitioner's operational tool to predict risks, target customers, ensure branding campaigns, maximize profit, enhance brand awareness, and strengthen brand relationships (Kumar et al., 2021). AI is a game-changer in marketing since it helps organizations create engaging visuals, text, tone, and voice for digital branding. Thus, branding strategies use a homogenous mix of brand voice, AI-based technology, and multimedia as shown in Figure 2.

**Figure 2***Development of Branding Strategies***Defining Brand Voice in the Scope of AI**

To understand the brand voice phenomenon and the role of AI in its evolution, it is worth identifying what brand voice is and what elements it consists of. Thus, it can be identified that the brand voice is a crucial element of brand communication that determines the connotation of a message, its intonation, strength, emotional coloring, and encoded signals for communication transmission. Therefore, brand voice is a set of marketing, linguistic, and stylistic parameters that influence brand communication based on the communication channel, intended receiver, and desired effect.

**Development of Brand Voice using AI**

Recently, brands have migrated to multimedia brand communication. Brand voices are now digital and cross-platformed. With the rise of digital media platforms, Kotler et al. (2017) note that user retention time has dropped from 90 seconds to 30 seconds in the last five years. Brands must capture users' attention (Benabdelouahed, 2020), and brand voice is the key.

These platforms use AI for predictive data analysis (predictive intelligence) to make the user's experience more intuitive and intelligent each day

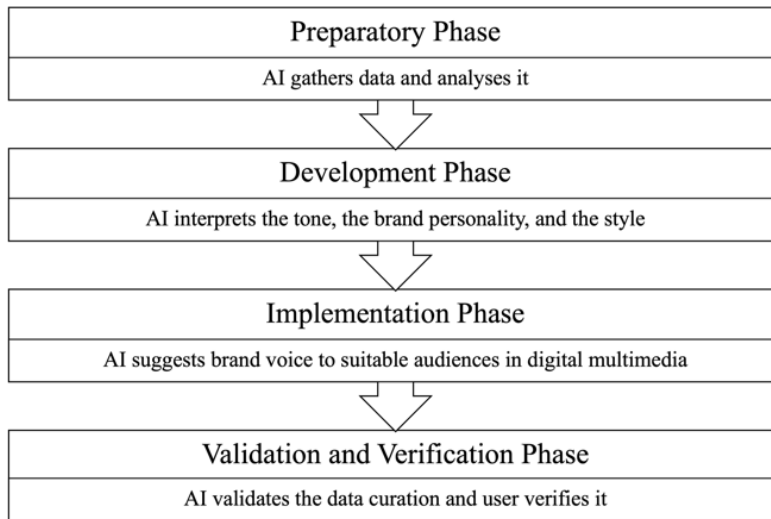
(Benabdelouahed, 2020). AI analyses data in-depth and helps it reach the right users at the right time with the right product (Benabdelouahed, 2020). Branding utilising AI in marketing communications is no longer restricted to dialogues or sales; rather, data develops solutions in real time using AI technology and predictive intelligence (Tjepkema, 2018). AI allows marketers to strategically monitor users (Tjepkema, 2018). This simplifies strategy prediction. In a similar way, AI is used to forecast and analyze brand voice. This analysis helps brands choose a tone and voice that will retain users. Thus, the brand voice goes through several phases before being implemented. These phases are a life cycle of brand voice employing AI analysis.

**Life Cycle of The Brand Voice using AI in Multimedia Platforms**

The brand voice life cycle consists of four main phases; preparation, development, implementation, and validation and verification phase, wherein AI plays different roles in each phase and enables users to learn from the data. Figure 3 shows the life cycle of brand voice, figure 4 shows two-way integration model and table 1 shows life cycle of brand voice explanation.

**Figure 3**

*Life Cycle of Brand Voice*



The explanation of the life cycle of brand voice has also been shown in Table 1 below.

**Table 1**

*Life Cycle of Brand Voice Explanation*

AI's engagement at each phase of the brand voice life cycle			
Preparatory Phase	Development Phase	Implementation Phase	Validation and Verification Phase
AI gathers data and analyzes it. It allows various digital marketers and communication experts to better determine factors and choose components to address audiences more effectively.	AI relies on data analysis and conclusions made from its analysis. It analyzes the tone, brand personality, length of sentences, choice of female or male voices, etc., and then suggest an output.	AI allows brand voices to be heard and addressed to target audiences. It allows AI-based applications to show brand voice in multimedia to the target readers.	AI validates the measurable effects of the communication performed, learns from the data what principles succeeded, and stores them for further usage. AI gathered feedback helps users to modify their brand voice.
Analyst	Suggester	Implementer	Validator
AI analyzes the big data that is generated by digital activities	AI applications help produce press releases, prepare media reports, turn	AI unifies content across multimedia and hard-to-track	AI monitors the content around and about the brand and the reaction to

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<p>on various multimedia platforms and makes predictions. The existence of big data motivates various AI organizations to develop more advanced AI solutions to extract insights from it based on predictions.</p>	<p>texts into appropriate speech, complement text with visual content, translate audio or written text files into multiple languages for wider coverage, and build chatbots to cater to client support searchers and the like.</p>	<p>ones like call data. It ensures that users get the intended messages and measures their reactions. If it is not adequate, AI changes its patterns to deliver more efficient performance to practitioners.</p>	<p>brand communication in multimedia. By collecting data, AI identifies whether the reaction in digital media is positive, neutral, or negative. It validates and verifies parallelly with the user to optimize the results.</p>
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Examples of AI-based solutions and applications

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AI's engagement at each phase of the brand voice life cycle			
Preparatory Phase	Development Phase	Implementation Phase	Validation and Verification Phase
AI gathers data and analyzes it. It allows various digital marketers and communication experts to better determine factors and choose components to address audiences more effectively.	AI relies on data analysis and conclusions made from its analysis. It analyzes the tone, brand personality, length of sentences, choice of female or male voices, etc., and then suggest an output.	AI allows brand voices to be heard and addressed to target audiences. It allows AI-based applications to show brand voice in multimedia to the target readers.	AI validates the measurable effects of the communication performed, learns from the data what principles succeeded, and stores them for further usage. AI gathered feedback helps users to modify their brand voice.
Analyst	Suggester	Implementer	Validator
AI analyzes the big data that is generated by digital activities on various multimedia platforms and makes predictions. The existence of	AI applications help produce press releases, prepare media reports, turn texts into appropriate speech, complement text with visual	AI unifies content across multimedia and hard-to-track ones like call data. It ensures that users get the intended messages and	AI monitors the content around and about the brand and the reaction to brand communication in multimedia. By collecting data, AI identifies whether

big data motivates various AI organizations to develop more advanced AI solutions to extract insights from it based on predictions.	content, translate audio or written text files into multiple languages for wider coverage, and build chatbots to cater to client support searchers and the like.	measures their reactions. If it is not adequate, AI changes its patterns to deliver more efficient performance to practitioners.	the reaction in digital media is positive, neutral, or negative. It validates and verifies parallely with the user to optimize the results.
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Examples of AI-based solutions and applications

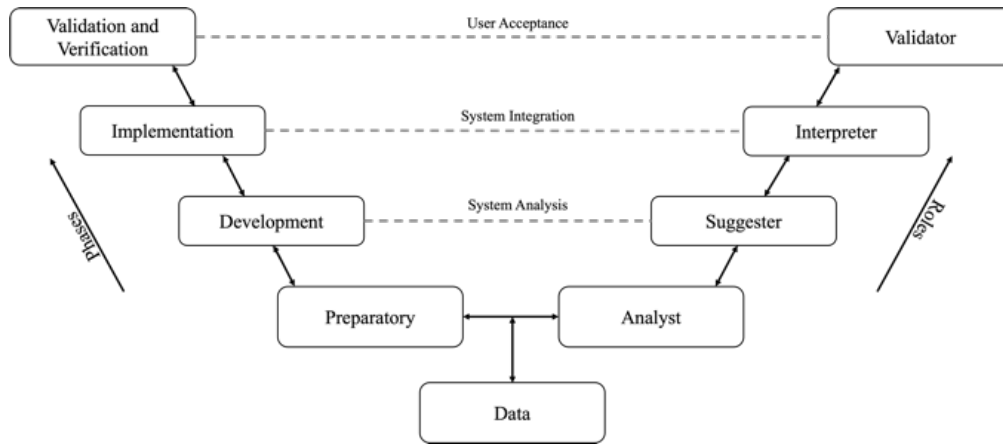
• Google Analytics	• Beautiful.ai	• Chatbots	• Brand24.com
• Facebook Analytics	• Grammarly	• Google AdSense	• Talkwalker
• LinkedIn Insights	• HyperWrite	• Meta Business Suite	• Semantic Brand Score
• Instagram Insights	• Instoried Application	• LinkedIn Campaign Manager	• Diib.com
• Twitter Analytics	• Mnemonic		• Statista

**Integration of Brand Voice using AI on Multimedia Platforms**

The Figure 4 below shows an instance of a two-way integration model regarding the use of AI on multimedia platforms.

**Figure 4**

*Two-Way Integration Model*



Based on the current systems and Table 1, the following two-way integration model of brand voice using AI in multimedia can be constructed. This model indicates that each phase is directly linked, and the next phase commences only after the previous one.

The first phase of this model starts with preparing and analyzing the data received. It moves on to system analysis and development of predictions and suggestions from the same. After then, based on the user’s interaction, it implements its concepts using system integration and interprets the right choice of options. Finally, after post interpreting, it sends its output to the user for verification after validating the options. If the user accepts, then the system marks it as a positive choice; else, it marks it as a negative choice and goes back to the previous phase. If an error or discontinuity is found, then also it gets back to the previous phase. This process continues until the user verifies the validated output generated.

Advantages of this model:

1. It is a disciplined interrelationship model.
2. It can be used when requirements and specifications are clear.



3. With specific requirements, review of the data inserted is easy.

Disadvantages of this model:

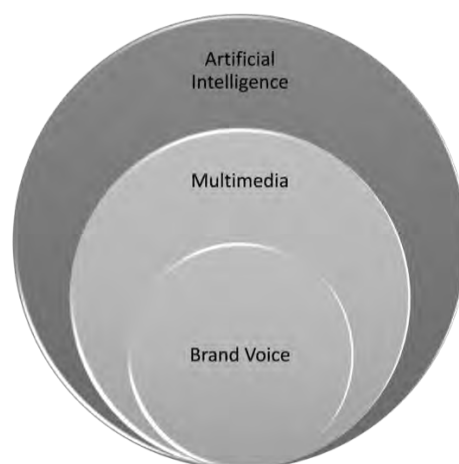
1. The input data is uncertain.
2. It is not suitable where requirements and specifications are not clear.
3. Glitch in technical resources cannot be understood by the end-user.

### **Interdependence between AI, Brand Voice, and Multimedia**

By understanding the brand voice's life cycle in multimedia, it can be deduced that AI, brand voice, and multimedia are interrelated in today's scenario and are dependent on each other, as shown in figure 5.

#### **Figure 5**

*AI, Brand Voice, and Multimedia Interdependence Diagram*



From the above figure, it can be concluded that AI drives multimedia platforms where branding is done using brand voice as the core. Only after combining the three major concepts: AI, brand voice, and multimedia, can one find that success in branding can be achieved. This integration aids digital business transformation since all digital applications rely on AI for data management and analysis.

### **Discussion, Contribution, and Future Scope**

#### **Discussions and Theoretical Contributions**

This research used AI to examine brand voice recognition and positioning in multimedia. Similarly, the findings focus on brand voice dimensions that apply AI to assess current market scenarios, strategic planning, new product creation, existing user applications, and integrated communications.

AI advances allow multimedia platforms to offer stakeholders tailored brand voices and services based on selected products. Customer interactions reinforce brand reputation. AI assists organizations in identifying customer data through speech recognition, online networking, physical gestures, and facial expressions. Emotional appeal helps organizations comprehend customer needs and wants, strengthening their brand voice to communicate with them. AI promotes customer purchases with tailored user applications. AI applications that leverage brand voice improve customer satisfaction and brand value. AI has created a significant opportunity in integrated marketing communication to improve brand visibility through keyword bidding, ad testing, contextual ad targeting and re-targeting, and product personalization (Campbell et al., 2020). Similarly, AI has played a significant role in developing the brand voice and maintaining the same across multimedia platforms. This has helped enhance the brand's reputation. AI can help predict income, attract new customers, increase brand awareness, and streamline product pricing (De Bruyn et al., 2020). Long-term, this improves consumer engagement, retention, brand values, and perceived value (Kumar et al., 2019).

This paper examines how AI helps evolve brand voice in multimedia and how brand voice and AI are interrelated in today's multimedia scenario using bibliometric and user application analysis. To the best of the authors' knowledge, this is the first attempt to derive an interdependence model diagram, a brand voice

life cycle, a relevant definition of brand voice, and a two-way integration model of brand voice using AI on multimedia platforms.

Thus, AI plays a key role in evolving, developing, predicting, and analyzing brand voice in multimedia. AI currently analyses content and helps with decision-making, sorts content, and predicts and analyses brand voice by maintaining a strategic eye on users. AI enables multimedia platforms and helps brands communicate more effectively through brand voice by offering quantified data.

The analysis of various research papers and current digital applications shows that AI, brand voice, and multimedia have blended in branding and are interdependent. This paper suggests the current life cycle of the brand voice that evolved from merging the three concepts.

### **Managerial Contributions**

Technological breakthroughs are the most interesting and promising branding area, and AI can revolutionize commercial scenarios. The authors emphasized key managerial consequences. AI helps brands flourish by employing the right brand voice, and managers can promote transparency, loyalty, and brand image synchronicity with multimedia interaction. Using the same brand voice across all platforms enables the organisation customise products and provide quality customer experiences. Automation helps managers understand client behavior through brand voice, brand reach, content-based ads, and new product creation. AI can build predictive analytics with big data, and algorithm recommendations help review branding data and brand voice for retargeting and brand sustainability.

### **Limitations and Directions for Future Research**

The future scope of this research is to explore user experience and brand voice functionalities using AI engines in multimedia. Future research can focus on AI intervention in brand voice, brand experience, and customer-brand

relationships. Academics can investigate AI's visual analysis in product differentiation, empathetic advertising, and brand voice-based business models. Several case studies can be utilized to highlight the strategic evolution of an organization's brand voice implementing AI and its consequences on the brand's profitability.

The study was restricted to AI and branding and secondary data from the Scopus database. Academics have not extensively studied brand voice or its AI-based implementation. However, it is relevant to practitioners who seek to make their branding consistent throughout multimedia channels. As a result, the bibliometric analysis was limited.

### **Conclusion**

This research analysis introduces a unique and interesting topic of brand voice for studying the concepts of AI and its applications in branding. New findings in the field of branding that includes brand voice with the interface of AI technology have been found by using a bibliometric study and analyzing technological applications. The derivative of this study has primarily taken the interdependency between AI, brand voice, and multimedia with the interconnection of their individual and collective scopes. Furthermore, this research assists academia and practitioners in remaining aware that in today's scenario, the three intertwined concepts have a significant impact on branding. The novel research thus encourages the organizations to align the technological and theoretical advances according to the strong interrelationship of the same. The brand voice has comprehensively advanced with the evolution of AI, and so does multimedia. Hence, AI has been tangibly instrumental in preceding brand voice on multimedia platforms. This research article intends to bring awareness and urges scholars to initiate exploring the dependence of brand voice on AI in the future across different multimedia platforms.

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### **The Role of Natural Heritage for the Promotion of Tourism in Ilam**

Lok Nath Dulal

Tribhuvan University

#### **Author Note**

Dr. Lok Nath Dulal is an Associate Professor of Nepalese History Culture and Archaeology (NeHCA) at Padma Kanya Multiple Campus, Tribhuvan University, Nepal. He is also a member of the subject committee of Nepalese History Culture and Archaeology (NeHCA) and BPSG (Bachelor of Public Service and Governance), an autonomous academy program run by Padma Kanya Multiple Campus. He has contributed as Team Leader to over 20 research studies on history, culture, tourism, archaeology, and social issues and presented papers in more than 15 venues in Nepal. He has published four research-based -books and more than 50 research papers in National and International Journals.

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Correspondence concerned in this article should be addressed to Lok Nath Dulal, Department of Culture, Padamakanya Campus, Bagbazaar, Kathmandu.

Email: [dulaloknath@gmail.com](mailto:dulaloknath@gmail.com)

### **Abstract**

Heritage refers to those commodities which can be observed in their tangible and intangible forms. It is said that heritage is a raw material that authenticates and fabricates the past and the present for touristic consumption. It is a socially constructed and negotiated concept which evolves through time and across space. Mainly, heritages are classified into two categories: local and world heritage. Nepal is enriched in its different types of heritages. They are found in different parts of the country. Among them, the Ilam district is an important tourism destination of Nepal, located in Mechi Zone, Province no 1. It possesses archaeological, historical, cultural, religious, natural, and agricultural importance within its small territories. It has been safeguarding plenty of natural and cultural heritages from the beginning until this 21<sup>st</sup> century. However, the proper study regarding exploring and analyzing its natural tourism products is still seemed behind, which is considered a considerable research gap in academia. Realizing a strong need for a study, this article entitled " Role of Natural heritage for the promotion of tourism in Ilam" has been prepared for fulfilling two specific objectives such as to explore the important natural tourism heritages of the Ilam district and to examine the role of natural heritage for the promotion of tourism in the site. It has been prepared by using questionnaires as a tools and field survey method. It is based on a descriptive research design.

*Keywords:* Ilam, world heritages, natural heritage, tourism, tourism promotion, accommodations, facilities

### **Role of Natural Heritage for the Promotion of Tourism in Ilam**

Heritage is a powerful word in its own right, for it is at once extraordinarily suggestive and ideologically charged but simultaneously vague enough to be applied to nearly everything across any space and time. It is a word whose significance changes with its myriad invocations, designations, or legislations (Di Giovine, 2009, p. 91). Heritage means the collective cultural and built inheritance and history of a group of people (or of a place) that can be used to construct an identity through telling stories. Heritage is often seen as the selective presentation and interpretation of elements of history (Hannam & Knox, 2010, p. 192). Heritage encompasses a broader scope of meanings ranging from cultural and historical significances, political implications, and spiritual and intellectual connotations to communications. Increasingly, culture becomes an ephemeral and vague concept, which is a state of constant flux (Park, 2014, p. 7).

In tourism, development heritage is classified into three main categories: built heritage, scientific heritage, and cultural heritage. The built heritage can be described as historical and artistic heritage, such as relics, forts, and modern towns, whereas the scientific heritage encompasses the elements such as plants, birds, animals, rocks, and natural habitats. The third one, cultural heritage, comprises folk and fine arts, customs, and languages (Park, 2014, p. 25). As of 2013, 962 World Heritage Sites are enlisted in the UNESCO World Heritage List (Park, 2014, p. 119). Nepal holds only ten out of them:

Pasupatinath, Swoyambhunath, Boudhanath, Changu Narayan, Patan Durbar Square, Bhaktapur Durbar Square, Hanuman Dhoka Durbar Square, Lumbini, Chitwan National Park, and Sagarmatha National Park (Satyal, 2000, pp. 14-15).

In the context of Nepal, there are ample natural and cultural heritage sites. According to the survey of 1975, the Kathmandu Valley holds 888 heritage of

global significance (Kunwar, 2017, p. 401). IUCN Nepal and Nepal Heritage Society documented 1262 heritage sites in 72 districts outside the Kathmandu Valley. Ilam is also considered one of the important natural heritage sites with several natural places within it.

Ilam is located about 675 k. m. far from Kathmandu, the capital city of Nepal. Ilam derives from *the Limbu* dialect, meaning *Li* means twisted and *Lam* means road (Dulal, 2017, pp. 31-32). Geographically, it is a hilly district that is elevated from 610 meters to 3679 meters high above the sea level and lies between 26°42' to 27° 8' north latitude and 87°42' to 88° 7' east longitude of an area of 1703 square kilometers. It stretches from *Terai* to the upper hill belt in this Himalayan region (Rai, 2063, pp. 49-51).

The district area stretches from north *Panchthar* to *Jhapa* district to the South as well as *Darjeeling* district of India, and *Dhankuta* and *Morang* district of Nepal lies in the east and west respectively (Dulal, 2017, pp. 32). Jogmai, Puwamai, Sunmai, and Deumai are the main four rivers in the districts. Therefore, sometimes it is called Charkhola, meaning a district of four rivers (Dulal, 2013, p. 78). It possesses a sub-tropical climate with a cool temperature as a whole, is dry and cold in winter, while it is hot and rainy in summer (NTB, 2008, p. 5). It is also known as the land of endangered species of the red panda, which attracts many researchers who come here to research rare birds and the red panda.

### **Problem of the Study**

Ilam is a beautiful district decorated with tea gardens and the other six cash crops. There are ample natural heritages on the site. Therefore, it can be developed as an essential eco-tourism destination in Nepal. Regarding the tourists and tourism perspectives, some studies have already been conducted. However, the detailed study and exploration of its natural heritage have still not been carried out properly, which is identified as the research gap in this paper. Hence, raising

the following two questions: What are the major natural tourism heritages of the Ilam district? And how far natural heritages are responsible for promoting tourism to the site? This paper has tried to fulfill the research gaps.

### **Objectives of the Study**

Normally, this study has focused on fulfilling two types of objectives, i.e., simple and complex. Simple or general goals lay in reviewing the geographical description, geological condition, and ethnic groups, whereas exploring the significant natural tourism heritages of Ilam district and examining the role of natural heritage in promoting tourism in the site are the specific objectives of this study.

### **Review of Literature**

A theoretical foundation is an important tool for any research work because it will be the lens through which a researcher evaluates the research problem and research questions. Reviewing the literature is only one approach to constructing a solid theoretical foundation. Thus, in social science research, it is one of the major components that help determine what theories might be used to explore the questions in a scientific study. Based on the above-mentioned doctrine, the following pieces of literature have been reviewed in this paper.

Regarding the heritages, tourists, and tourism perspectives the, studies such as Satyal (2000) Nepal and Exotic Tourist Destination, Di Giovine (2009) The Heritage-scape: UNESCO, World Heritage, and Tourism, Hannam & Knox (2010) Understanding Tourism: A Critical Introduction, Park (2015) Heritage Tourism, Kunwar (2017) Tourist & Tourism have been reviewed which help to generate the theoretical foundation for this paper.

From the tourists and tourism perspectives, especially about Ilam, there are some studies such as Dulal (2013) Folk dance: A Cultural Tourism Product of Ilam District, (2017) Folk dance an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Nepal: A Case



Study of Ilam District, Lekali (2063) Ilam ka Gufaharu, Ilameli Bidhyarhi Samaj (2063) Chinari, (2064) Chinari, Paryatan Bisesanka, Gadtaula (2063) Jashbire Vanjyang ko Bibidhata, Ghimire (2063) Antuo Ko Gramin Paryatan ka Chunauti Haru, Gurung (2063) Chiyako Chintan Chautari, Baral, R. (2063). Kasari Bhayo Ilamma Paryatan Bikash, (2064) Ilam ka Paryatakiya Sthalharu, Khadka (2064) Paryatakiya Sthal Sriantu, Chapagain (2019). The number of tourists up by 42.06% in Ilam, Khanal (2064) Ilamako Paryatakiya Sthal Jhyaupokhari, Rijal (2064) Bibidhata Bichako Maipokhari, Sapkota (2064), Potentiality of Eco-tourism in Ilam have already been conducted and reviewed in this paper for generating information about natural heritages of study areas.

Finally, the previous literature mentioned above are quite useful for this research work. Although only a very few have studied the natural heritage in Ilam, many have been unable to explore and highlight the role of natural heritage in promoting tourism in a particular destination. Such pieces of literature that have not been able to explore the issues are also helpful in generating conceptual ideas and theoretical knowledge regarding natural heritages, tourists, and tourism.

### **Methods and Materials**

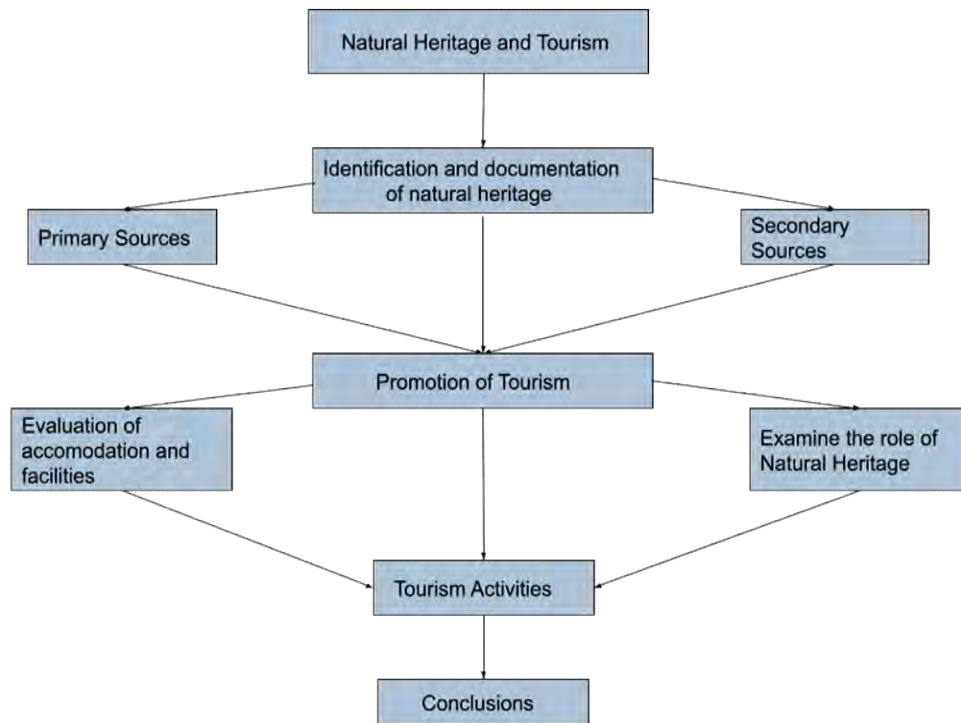
This article is based on a field study conducted in 2008 and 2018 as well. In totality, two weeks have been taken to perform the fieldwork. Meanwhile, the researcher has applied a descriptive research design. The secondary data have been collected through the published and unpublished literature. Similarly, primary data has been collected through the field survey by using general observation, interview, and questionnaire tools and techniques. During the field survey, 50 local people and 25 visitors, including four international tourists, were selected as the key informants for filling out the questionnaire.

**Conceptual Framework**

Along with the identification and documentation of natural tourism products of Ilam this paper helps to explore the significant natural tourism heritages of Ilam district and to examine the role of natural heritage in the promotion of tourism on the site. To address the above mentioned research gaps and problems and fulfilling the determined objectives, this paper has been prepared by applying the conceptual framework developed by the author, presented in figure 1.

**Figure 1**

*Conceptual Framework for the Paper*



Due to its natural heritage, Ilam has gradually become one of the important natural tourism destinations in the tourism market for the eastern part

and entire Nepal. However, till now, concerned stakeholders have not succeeded in utilizing its potential. Despite some studies and publications, no analytical research work has been carried out from the perspective of nature tourism in Ilam. Therefore, keeping it in mind, this research paper has been carried out to partially fulfill the above-mentioned queries based on the above-mentioned conceptual framework.

### **Findings and Discussion**

In this paper, the researcher has applied observation and interview methods to collect primary data. Based on research objectives, the researcher has asked questions such as the major natural heritages of Ilam? How far are they considered responsible for the promotion of tourism? What is the situation of tourism activities of Ilam? to the local people while conducting fieldwork? Finally, after completing the field survey, the discussion and findings of this paper have been presented, including the natural tourism heritages, the role of natural heritage in the promotion of tourism, available accommodations, and tourist and tourism activities in chronological order.

### **Natural Heritages of Ilam**

As mentioned above, there are several tourist heritage sites in Nepal, including *Ilam*. Because of its different heritages, *Ilam* is known by different names such as "Queen of the Hills" and "City of Beautiful tea Garden," District of Greenery Hill, "Capital of Agro- tourism," Home of Red Panda," District of Charkhola (four rivers)," "District of Six Cash Crops," "District of Sunrise and Sunset," Heterogeneous Cultural Park," "City of colorful Wooden Houses." Apart from the cultural beauty, it provides opportunities to observe the natural heritage of the visitors. The following are known as the outstanding natural heritages of Ilam.

### **Antu Danda**

Antu Danda lies in Suryodaya Municipality, 35 kilometers from Ilam Bazaar, with an elevation of 2328 m above sea level (Sharma, 2063). Shri Antu Danda and adjoining areas, renowned for the splendor of their lush green hillocks, spectacular landscape of tea gardens, and cultural and historical uniqueness, hold great cultural and eco-tourism potential. It is an unspoiled site that beguiles tourists coming to the *Ilam Bazaar* of Nepal and Darjeeling of India (Dulal, 2069).

The significant attractions of *Antu Danda* are its natural, cultural, religious, and historical dimensions. The landscape and biodiversity include pine forests, terraces, slopes, flatlands enriched with varying vegetation, cash crops, lakes and ponds, sub-tropical NTFPs, and wildlife, including some of the world's endangered species. It is also famous for its views of the Himalayas to the north and the flatlands of the *Terai* to the south. Tourists can enjoy sunrise and sunset on the mountaintop, especially during the month of *Kartik* and *Mangsir* (October-December). However, *Aswin* (September) and *Falgun* to *Baisakh* (February-April) are also favorable seasons to visit the area. Tiger Hill of *Ilam* is another attraction for tourists. It has a long cave with a carved image of Lord Buddha (Khadka, 2064).

Mountain biking, pony riding, camping sites, angling, boating, rock climbing, village tour, jungle safari, bird watching, skiing, and paragliding are possible tourism products developed in the area. In terms of existing facilities, *Antu Danda* has electricity, a communication facility, camping grounds, simple tea stalls, simple accommodations, seasonal bus service, dirt roads, and trails (Sapkota, 2064).

### **Sandakpur**

Sandakpur is situated in Sandakpur Rural Municipality at an elevation of 3650 meters above sea level. Its height and its slope provide opportunities for skiing. Its natural aspect seems highly promising for eco-tourism development in the area. Due to its height, sunrise and sunset are the most exciting time to spare in the area (Sapkota, 2064; Baral, 2064a). *Chhintapu* is famous for the finest rhododendron & other picaresque scenes of the Himalayas; Todke Jharna in Maimajhuwa (Todke falls; 280 ft. High); Guranse for sightseeing, rhododendron (different varieties in colors); Tarunpani famous for the natural phenomenon; Sandakpur peak (3636 meters') famous for sunrise and panoramic scene of nearly all the snowcapped mountains (Sagarmatha to Bhutanese Himalayas); Bio-diversity like Kandevyakur, Red Panda, Yak and medicinal herbs (Panchalua, Bikhma, Cardamom, etc.) and tea farming; Gumba (Monasteries) in Mabu, Chitre, and Meghma; Kuivir for Rock climbing; Jaubari for Sherpa village and Hangetham for watching different varieties of birds and butterflies are the major tourist attractions and products of the site:

Siddhithumka hill is famous for sunrise and sunset sightseeing and Siddhdevi temple; Devi Dhanda or Ratna Gufa for rocky area as one can find natural but unique shapes in stone of different things like the shape of the Sun; Ajambare Danda for sightseeing and Jeetpur for a pond Jhaunpokhari are the major tourism attractions and products. Siddhi Thumka is located in the Deomai Municipality, the western part of the Ilam Bazaar, at an elevation of 1800 meters height above the sea level. It is ideal for a short trek and panoramic views of the mountains and plains wrought in sunset and sunrise colors. It takes a 4-hour trek to reach Siddhi Thumka from Ilam Bazaar. It can also be reached by road from Ilam Bazaar (Ghimire, 2063, pp. 155-156).

**Mirmiredanda**

Mirmiredanda lies in Suryodaya Municipality 2300 m in height, 40 Km east from headquarters city of Ilam, surrounded by Kanyam Tea Garden. The most exceptional opportunity of this mount is the chance to view the rising sun. The picture is the result of the reflective light of the rising sun toward the Bay of Bengal and the Bengal Sea (Subhechhu, 2064).

**Kuti Danda**

Kuti Danda is located in Rong Rural Municipality, about three hundred meters North West through the Jasabire George. Headquarters of Ilam district was there in the same place before a hundred and fifty years ago. According to the legends, Kuti danda had selected as headquarters by the surveyor Ram Kunwar at the same time. Then, GajarajThapa, the first senior district officer daughter-in-law of Janga Bahadur Rana, had made the district headquarters to the same hill. After Gajaraj Thapa, Harka Jung J.B.R. was appointed as the senior district officer and maintained Kuti Danda as the district headquarters. However, after Harkajung J.B.R, Bhoga Sumsher, who was appointed as the senior district officer, changed headquarters from the same place to the Ilam Bazar in his ruling time. Thus, Kuti Danda is a natural and historical place.

**Jasabire Bhanjyang**

Jasabire Bhanjyang is located at the Ilam Municipality, about 1700 meters above sea level, and situated between 27° to 27°25' north latitude and 87°56' to 87°09' east longitude. It is famous for the Sunuwar community and various agricultural products where the visitor can get an opportunity to observe the seven things initiating from the same vowel sound 'A' in Nepali.

**Maipokhari**

Maipokhari is located Sandakpur Rural Municipality ward no. 1, at the height of 2150 m from the sea level about 2 km northeast of *Ilam* bazaar. This

place is vital from natural, religious, cultural, and archaeological perspectives. Maipokhari is one of the essential watersheds of this region, covering around 450 hectares of land surrounded by dense forest. Its 2.5 hectares of land exclusive to the pond area have been conserved as a natural forest with a proper fence (Dulal, 2069). The forest harbors various valuable species of plants like ground orchids, white rhododendron, and other precious plants. It still preserves some rare animals and three hundred species of birds such as red panda, musk deer, leopard, porcupine, jackal, *kalij*, Tibetan duck, and so on (Rijal, 2064).

Naturally, Maipokhari having nine corners, has a circle with about 188 hectares. The pond's edges are supposed to be the symbols of nine goddesses of Hindu mythology named *Shailputri*, *Brahmacharini*, *Chandraghanta*, *Kusmanda*, *Eskandhamata*, *Katyayani*, *Kalratri*, *Maha Gauri*, and *Siddhidhatri*. According to the local legend, in the ancient period, God *Shiva* and Goddess *Parvati* disguised their form as Swans. They used to stay in this beautiful pond by taking full enjoyment, love, and romance. It is believed that *Shiva* and *Parvati* visited the place once a year during *Kartik Ekadashi*. As a result, there is a big fair of *Shivaratri* and *Haribodhini Ekadashi*, where people from surrounding villages and distant places, even from India, come to take a bath and worship God and Goddesses. The folk dances like *Chandi* and *Maruni* are demonstrated during the fair (Baral, 2064b). In this area, there is a Shiva temple, *Bhagawati* temple, and a *Vedic* hermitage, which provides the knowledge of *Vedas*, *Upanisads*, *Smritis*, Mythology, and other religious scriptures as a center of education. At this very holy place, there is a historical place called *Satthalde*, where seven people had got martyrdom while fighting for the national freedom campaign in the 2018 BS.

### **Jhayun Pokhari**

Jhayun Pokhari is situated at Deomai Rural Municipality, the west part of the Ilam district. It looks like Mai Pokhari, but it remains in shadow due to its lack

of proper management. In the evening in the provinces, one can hear the beautiful sound of insects called Cricket or Jhayunkiri. Due to this event, the pond is called Jhayunpokhari. There is a small hill in the lake's center and a temple on the top of the mountain. The temple was made under the leadership of Pramila Chapagain, a teacher at Jeetpur Secondary School (Khanal, 2064).

### **Chulachuli**

Chulachuli region is located Chulachuli Rural Municipality, the southwestern part of the district. It is the name of the hill where several small hills can be found, including Mainachuli. It is famous for horticulture production, where various orange family fruits are produced. Likewise, this site is famous for bio-diversity where animals and birds like leopard, bear, deer, wild boar, wild buffaloes, golden monitor, porcupine and monkey, Kalis, Danesh, parrot, maina various species of butterflies, etc. can be found. It is believed that on the night of *Laxmi Puja* festival, the jungle of the *Chulachuli* hill is fully lit by the supernatural light.

### **Teenkhutte**

Teenkhutte of Suryodaya Municipality is another natural tourism product of the site. The hill's height is believed to be more than that of Shree Antu. Through the top of the mountain, visitors can observe the beautiful sunrise views in the winter season. Likewise, the visitors can quickly get an opportunity to see the indigenous culture of the Yolmo ethnic community, the principal inhabitants of the site. Of course, if Teenkhutte can be developed as a tourist destination, the visitors can get two types of opportunities: observing Yolmo culture and sunrise views (Sharma, 2064).

### **Todke Jharana**

Todke Jharana, or waterfall, is located in Sandakpur Rural Municipality, 20 meters north of the Ilam municipality, the headquarters city of the district



(Sapkota, 2064). This is a long and high fountain of Ilam, which is decorated by the tea garden and other natural and planted plants. The fountain falls from a 285-meter height, where visitors can see one and more beautiful scenes of the rainbow in a single sight.

### **Deurali Jharana**

Deurali fountain is located Deomai Rural Municipality, about 2 to 3 miles western part of the main market. The fountain closely lies with the Setidevi temple. The fountain falls from 12-meter height, considered a beautiful natural gift of Ilam (Dulal, 2064). This is a source of attraction to plenty of domestic and international visitors, uniquely Indian tourists, every year.

### **Charkhola**

Ilam is also known as the district of four rivers: Deomai, Puwamai, Jogamai, and Sunmai. Deumai flows from the western part, whereas Puwamai and Jogamai flow from the west and east, respectively. Likewise, the Sunmai moves from the eastern lap of the headquarters city. Due to the ever-flowing four rivers with fresh spring water, the beauty of Ilam is increased.

### **Khandrung Cave**

Khandrung cave is located in Deomai Rural Municipality near Sidithumka Hill. One can easily enter the cave, and there is a big room; then, there are several rooms one after another with an entrance gate in each room. Another important feature of this cave is that there exists on the top of the cave. The length of the cave hasn't been noticed yet.

### **Chitre Cave**

Chitre Cave is located in Phakaphokathuma Rural Municipality, an important historical cave of Ilam. It was not a natural cave, and it was built by the freedom fighter Ratna Kumar Bantawa. At the time of the revolution against the

Rana ruler in 2007, B.S. Martyr Ratna Kumar was made the cave to gate save from the administrators.

### **Pyang Cave**

One new cave has been found in Maijogamai Rural Municipality, in the northeast of Ilam bazaar. It is situated about 5000 meters above sea level. Visitors can see a black hole after walking ten minutes inside the cave. It is wonderful that one can hear the sound of water when throwing a stone through the black hole. It suggests that there is a well in the inner part of the cave. Nobody has declared the fact of the cave yet. Many surprising thoughts about the cave have been collected, but it would be better if we could advertise the cave among tourists (Lekali, 2063).

### **Puse Cave**

It is one of the important caves located between Sukrabare and the New Bazaar of the Ilam district. One can reach up to Puse Cave after crossing the Jogmai River, and it is ahead of Sukrabare Bazaar. On top of the cave, there is a beautiful village with a new market. There is also a beautiful jungle between the villages.

### **Caves of Mangmalmung**

Three beautiful caves are situated in Mansebung Rural Municipality of Mangmalung hill in the west part of Ilam. The hill and caves are named Mangmalmung as the name of the stone God. The meaning of the word Mang is God, and Lung is stone. According to legends, there is a big stone weighing two tons, which a little figure of general people can move. From a very early, people of the *Rai* community have been worshipping the stone god on this hill.

### **Beautiful Tea Garden**

Ilam is a beautiful district decorated with tea gardens and the other six cash crops. So, it is considered an important agro-tourism destination in the

country. Kanyam, Sri Antu, Fikkal, Panchkanya, Pashupatinagar, Irautar, Samalbung, Maipokhari, Sangrumba, Mangalbare, Jitpur, Sankhejung, Fuatappu, Phakaphoka, and Ilam municipality are famous for tea garden. These sites can be developed as natural tourism destinations as well.

### **Role of Natural Heritage for the Promotion of Tourism**

As a whole, *Ilam* district is a beautiful tourist destination, where there can be found several natural heritages as mentioned above. Tourists can observe magnificent natural tourism products in this destination during their excursions. During the field survey, the researcher asked a question regarding the role of natural heritage in promoting tourism to the local people. The local respondents have provided the perceptions are given below in the table 1 below.

**Table 1**

*Opinion of Locals on the Role of Natural Heritage in Tourism Promotion*

S. N.	Level of Opinion	Resp. No.	%
1.	Very high	7	14
2.	Medium	9	18
3.	Satisfied	12	24
4.	Not satisfied	19	38
5	Not state	3	6
	Total	50	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2018.

Table 1 shows the level of the opinion of local people on the roles of natural heritages in the promotion of tourism in Ilam. The statistics presented in the table indicate that among the total 50 respondents, the maximum number of 19 (38 %) who evaluated the role does not seem satisfied. In contrast, the lowest of 3 (6 %) respondents did not have any ideas regarding the issue. Similarly, 12 (24 %) mentioned being satisfied, 9(18%) seemed to have a medium level of satisfaction,

and the remaining 7 (14 %) seemed very high satisfied through the role being played by the natural heritages for the enhancement of tourism in Ilam. During the field survey, the respondents who stated not being satisfied mentioned that there is a huge potential for promoting tourism, but the concerned authorities and stakeholders have not been able to utilize it to the extent possible.

#### **Accommodations and Facilities Available in Ilam**

Available accommodations and facilities such as hotel and resort, food catering, transportation, communication service, guide service, souvenir center, and hospitality of host people can play a vital role in the proper enhancement of tourism in Ilam. Among them, hotel accommodation is considered more important from the tourism perspective. Padma Lodge, Summit hotel, Chiyabari Cottage, Hotel Green View, Green City Guest House, The Paradise Cottages, Panorama Hotel & Lodge, Hill Hoods Resort, Omega hotel & Lodge, Hotel Darbar, Almost Heaven Farms Antu Cottage, Mirage Resort, and Hotel Fikkal Kanyam Inn, Rinchen Hotel & Lodge, Habre's Nest, Singalila Jungle Lodge, Hotel Chamu, Kulung Family Tea Farm, Deurali Hotel & Lodge, Bidyasagar Homestay, Dhotrey Homestay, Gopal Homestay, Druk Homestay, Chintapu Home Stay, Santi Home Stay are the main hotel, lodge, resorts and homestay of Ilam which have been providing hotel accommodations to the visitors. Apart from the hotel accommodation, other facilities such as transportation, communication service, guide service, souvenir center, and hospitality of host people are considered equally important for promoting tourism. Therefore, in this paper, local people's satisfaction level regarding tourist accommodation and facilities has been measured and discussed. The researcher discussed this issue with 25 visitors during the field survey, including four international tourists. The following responses have been collected in table 2.

**Table 2***Local Visitors' and International Tourists' Opinions on Facilities*

S.N.	Facilities	Evaluation				Total
		Excellent	Good	Moderate	Not good	
1.	Hotel accommodation	3 (12%)	14(56%)	6(24%)	2(8%)	25
2.	Transportation facilities	7(28%)	8(32%)	6(24%)	4(16%)	25
3.	Communication services	13(52%)	6(24%)	4(16%)	2(8%)	25
4.	Guide service	4(16%)	9 (34%)	7(28%)	5(20%)	25
5	Hospitality	14(56%)	5(20%)	4 (16%)	2(8%)	25
6	Souvenir centre	4(16%)	4(16%)	11(44%)	6(24%)	25

Source: Field Survey, 2018.

Table 2 deals with the level of evaluation of available accommodations and facilities such as hotel and resort, food catering, transportation, communication service, guide service, souvenir centre and hospitality of the host people. The statistics show that regarding on hotel accommodation out of 25 respondents 3 (12%) response excellent, 14 (56%) good, 6(24%) mention moderate and 2(8%) reply not good. Similarly, towards transportation facility rest of total respondents 7(28%) response excellent, 8(32%) good, 6(24%) mention moderate and 4(16%) reply not good. Likewise, on the communication services among the 25 respondents 13(52%) response excellent, 6(24%) good, 4(16%) mention moderate and 2(8%) reply not good. Similarly, regarding on guide service, rest of 25 respondents 4 (16%) have responded excellent, 9(34%) good, 7(28%) mention moderate and 5 (20%) reply not good. Likewise, on the hospitality, among the 25 respondents 14(56%) have responded towards excellent, 5(20%) good, 4(16%) mention moderate and 2(8%) reply not good. Similarly,

towards souvenir centre rest of total respondents 4(16%) response excellent, 4(16%) good, 11(44%) mention moderate and 6(24%) reply not good.

### **Tourism Activities**

There is no authentic evidence that provides the history of travel and tourism in Ilam. On the basis of literary sources, the antiquity of *Ilam* can be traced to the historic period. *Srimadbhagawat Geeta*, a tremendous religious text of Hindu, there is a description of *Ilam* and *Maipokhari*, which helps to trace the antiquity and significance of such destinations. This statement suggests that *Ilam* and *Maipokhari* were the famous and popular religious places today and from the very ancient time. Several holy saints are also said to have visited during different periods. The travel of Maha Prabhu Kapilananda from Sworgadwori in 1947 CE and the visit of Balaguru from India in 1998 BS are a few noteworthy illustrations of the tourism activities of Ilam. Later on, the visit of Swamy Somesworananda from Godawal, India, in 1949-50 BS is also noted.

It is believed that before the unification, there were not any tourism activities in Ilam. After the Treaty of Sugauli, the famous Botanist Sir Joseph Hooker traveled to Ilam and Darjeeling of India and Kathmandu. Likewise, a famous scholar, H.A. Oldfield, visited Ilam during his field survey, which is considered an important event in tourism in Ilam. Similarly, Rana Priminister Deva Shamser visited Ilam with his five women servants in 1958 BS. After establishing democracy in 1951 CE, Nepal was formally opened to foreigners. At the same time, the then Home Minister B.P. Koirala, President of Nepali Congress Mr. Matrika Pd. Koirala and Mrigendra Shumser of Gorkha Parisad paid their visit to Ilam. Likewise, King Mahendra and the then Prince Birendra traveled to Ilam in 2020 BS and 2028 BS, respectively (Baral, 2063, p. 84-85). All these events are quite considered essential landmarks for the tourists and tourism perspectives in Ilam.

The number of tourists visiting the hilly eastern district of Ilam has increased by 42.6 percent in the last fiscal year. According to the Tourist Information Center based at Jarekalash between Ilam and Jhapa districts, the number of tourists coming via Jhapa has been increasing drastically. As per the information center, 134,077 tourists visited Ilam in the Fiscal Year 2018/19, which increased to 40,000. Most of them are domestic tourists (Chapagain, 2019). However, the exact number of tourists coming to the district may be higher than the above-mentioned statistics because many do not enter their information with concerned authorities.

### **Implications**

These are the fundamental attraction of tourism in *Ilam* with green forests, snow-capped mountains, and hospitable people. *Ilam* quickly draws the attention of the tourists. It is evident that *Ilam* holds various valuable natural tourism products such as *Sriantu, Sandakapur, Kothidanda, Siddhithumka, Todke Jharana, Jasabire Bhanjyang, Charkhola, Khhandrung cave, Chitre cave, Pyang cave, Puse cave, caves of Mangmalung hill*, beautiful tea garden, flora and fauna within its small territory. These are its indigenous identity, core attractions, images, and authenticity, which should be commoditized in tourism markets. But the available statistics regarding tourists' inflow cannot assure proper utilization of its potentiality. Therefore, the government, concerned authorities, and stakeholders should be made appropriate plans, policies, and programs to develop the site as an important tourist destination in Nepal. In this circumstance, the researcher believes that this paper might be useful for future planners, concerned authorities, and stakeholders.

### **Conclusion**

Ilam is regarded as the Queen of Hills of Nepal. It might be addressed with the same adjectives because of its charming scenery, along with a perennial

view of greenery and enhancing scenes of nature. No doubt, it is the richest in its natural assets. Visitors must visit Ilam to enjoy its natural beauty. Hills covered with green tea gardens, wonderful rivers, waterfalls, ponds, caves, the views of the sun rising and the sun setting, snowy mountains, beautiful and romantic sceneries, and so on are the natural tourism products of Ilam. On the solid platform of above mentioned natural heritages, Ilam could be welcomed and attract thousands of local and international tourists every day in a season. The natural heritages of Ilam can generate several opportunities for different tourists following their interests. The researcher, investigator, and explorers can study and explore new things regarding the heritages of the destinations. The recreational visitors can also fully enjoy and pleasure themselves by observing the products. Similarly, for the tourists who visit to experience a homely environment and specific hospitality, this destination can serve typical *Ilameli* hospitality such as smiling faces, food, drinks, dresses, ornaments, etc., in every step of their journey. Likewise, it provides opportunities to those visitors who want to purchase curios like Dhaka productions, bamboo crafts, metalwork, orthodox tea, and other things within the market.



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**American Indian Ideologies in *The Round House***

Niran Khanal

Tribhuvan University

**Author Note**

Niran Khanal is an Assistant Professor of English at Tribhuvan University, Nepal. He is a Ph.D. scholar at present. He teaches Literary Theories, Philosophies, and Writing courses at the postgraduate level at Padma Kanya Campus, Tribhuvan University. His areas of interest are creative writing, philosophy, yoga and meditation, and research. He has published a number of research articles and poems in journals and periodicals.

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Niran Khanal, Tribhuvan University. Email: [nirananda22@gmail.com](mailto:nirananda22@gmail.com)

### Abstract

This paper focuses on the ideologies in the Native American context as represented in Louise Erdrich's *The Round House*. In this paper, I intend to examine the connection between the change in the belief system and its effects on the socio-cultural practices of indigenous communities. I argue that behind the ethical crisis and change in indigenous ideologies, these elements play the key roles: the imposition of foreign values in the interest of colonial authority, intercultural interactions, and the rise of individualism due to the loss of indigenous cultural memory. One of the key elements that keep the indigenous ideologies alive is folklore. Traditionally, the indigenous folklores work as effective means to circulate the ideologies that shape the lifestyle of the Native American people. However, due to the external influences, the story listening culture has declined, and its impact surfaces as ecological crisis and changes in their way of living. The consequences of the ethical crisis manifest in the key principles that guide the tribal lifestyle. For instance, ecological sustainability, collective responsibility, and social welfare influence the shifting belief system that promotes individualism, materialistic gain, and competitiveness. Similarly, colonial intervention promotes capitalism by exploiting natural resources and adopting other unethical means. To testify to my assumption, the ethical degeneration in the Native American society as the effect of the loss of indigenous ideological impact, I have examined *The Round House* and the folklores narrated within it.

*Keywords:* ideologies, indigenous, colonialism, Ojibwe-culture, folklores, windigoo

### **American Indian Ideologies in *The Round House***

I intend to study the relationship between the Native American ideologies and the socio-cultural practices in the Native American societies, as Louise Erdrich (2012) presents in *The Round House*. I argue that the ideologies of the Native American people play key roles in shaping the relations between humans and nature. The sense of collective responsibilities of the indigenous people comes from the view that all living beings share connectivity. Therefore, these people are ecologically sensitive and try to maintain their balance. As depicted in *The Round House*, the indigenous ideologies lose their grip on the new generations as they come in contact with the colonial ideologies and intercultural interactions occur. So, the indigenous people have seen a radical shift in the socio-cultural organization. Some unwanted changes surface among themselves and their relationship with the environment. Such changes reveal the changing belief system.

In *The Round House*, Erdrich (2012) attempts to represent the context of the North Dakota Reservation of the Native American families. She offers the narrative perspective of Joe, a boy from an American Indian family. The narrative foregrounds the problem of the rape of Joe's mother, who works as a clerk entrusted with the responsibilities of collecting the genealogical data of the Native American families on the reservation. Through Joe's mother's problem, the author exposes the challenges Native people have to face in the context of the increasing presence of external forces in the indigenous societies. The long-held beliefs of the Natives undergo erosion due to the pressure of the new socio-political organization regulated by the federal laws.

#### **Circulation of Ideologies through the Indigenous Folklores**

Erdrich (2012) projects the contrasting situations in the Indian reservations focusing on the times of the 1880s and much earlier than that with the help of

indigenous folklore. She juxtaposes the distinct cultural values by shifting the narrative positions. In Joe's narrative that concentrates on seeking justice for his mother, other metanarratives of folklore are embedded, which offer glimpses of the ancestral world of the Native American and their relation with the natural world. For instance, Mooshum, an indigenous old man, narrates the tales in his sleep. Joe observes that Mooshum rises during his sleep and unconsciously lets the story flow.

Though unconsciously delivered, Mooshum's narratives make sense. These narratives reveal how the indigenous people interpreted the interconnection between the events. By learning from the traumas caused by unethical living, they would try to uphold the ethical principles. Joe enjoys these stories. Especially, long folklore about Akiikwe, the Earth woman, who turns into windigoo, captures the human-nature relationship of earlier times. As per Mooshum's interpretation, during the famine, a person may be possessed by the spirit of wiindigoo as Akiikwe does. She preys on humans as a cannibal during the scarcity of food. This rise of the cannibalistic spirit is connected with the disruption of the ecological balance. As food becomes scarce, the native people face the hard times for survival. The reckless hunting by the colonizers dwindles the number of animals. Similarly, the agro-products do not get a supportive environment during the harsh winter.

Consequently, chaos prevails. It invites the possibility of a human turning into an instinctual beast, wiindigoo. Akiikwe-story holds the warning message to the indigenous people to use their wisdom to balance the ecological chain to minimize the possibility of windigoo spirit's rise. Jacob Bender and Lydia Maunz-Breese (2018), in their "Louise Erdrich's *The Round House*, the Wiindigoo, and Star Trek: The Next Generation," view, "The wiindigoo provides a potent metaphor for contextualizing and cautioning against self-indulgence, selfishness,

and similar behavior that threatens the harmony of the community. . . The Wiindigoo, then, is a personification of the very form of violence that threatens to consume communities whole” (p.147). As Bender and Breese view, Wiindigoo spirit is against the community's welfare since it manifests the brutal act of murder of its own people. It means an individual holds the possibilities for both constructive as well as destructive acts depending on which side of energy is invoked. Wiindigoo is the dark side of selfish indulgence that tries to satisfy its appetite at the cost of social welfare.

In the context of Joe’s present society, the wiindigoo spirit manifests the act of violence and exploitation. For instance, Linden lark, the white man, rapes Joe’s mother and intends to murder her along with another woman, Mayla, whom he loves but fails to get in return. This brutal action of Lark can be interpreted as possessing an evil spirit that harms others. So, Lark is a symbolic figure who undergoes ethical degeneration as his evil spirit rises. This illustrates how the indigenous folklores guide its people to take precautions against the possible violence from the fellow human beings who become wiindigoo-like.

Like Akiikwe-story, Mooshum tells the narrative about liver-eating Johnson, who comes from a white racial background and hunts the native American people for flesh. Johnson is another cannibal possessed by the wiindigoo spirit. Like Linden Lark, he perpetrates violence against the natives. In these stories, the choice of the White characters to commit violence against the indigenous does not seem to be merely a coincidence but rather a purposeful depiction of the colonial incursion of the European Whites into the Native American Societies. The projection of the invader as the evil expresses the hatred of the natives. The invasion invites the confrontation between the indigenous and the intruder. For instance, Joe’s quest for justice for his mother makes him commit to punishing Linden Lark. As the Federal Judiciary fails to give justice to

the native victim, Joe pursues it by revoking the tribal legacy of destroying the evil spirit to protect community members. Based on this principle, Joe attempts to justify his revenge of killing Linden Lark. In this case, the white man commits a crime against the Indian woman but goes unpunished by the federal laws. This shows which force operates to disrupt the social peace of the indigenous people. These people have to fight the invader to restore peace, as Joe does. As the native people lose their trust in the federal system's legal practices due to the discriminatory regulation, the victim, like Joe, resolves to seek justice through his own efforts.

The folklores circulating among the Native Americans pass the ideologies to the new generations. About ideology, Terry Eagleton, in his text, *Ideology: An Introduction*, views that ideology refers to the ways signs, meanings, and values maintain social power (p. 221). In the Native American context, the impact of old ideologies is less intense on the later generations due to their interaction with different cultures and the new political organization. Yet, in some ways, the new generations also live in their cultural ideologies. For instance, in *The Round House*, Joe narrates that his mother painted the wall yellow during her pregnancy “because it would be right for either a girl or boy, but halfway through the painting, she knew I was a boy. She knew because each time she worked in the room, a crane flew by the window, my father’s doodem, as I have said” (p. 459). Joe’s mother finds the connection between a Crane flying by the window and the birth of her son, Joe. She seems to have upheld the belief of the tribal society.

### **Colonial Incursion and Indigenous Cultural Erosion**

Erdrich portrays the picture of how colonization causes social unrest and cultural erosion. The tribal people face critical times as they struggle to preserve the cultural heritage that shapes their practices. The outsiders invade the places they regard as the sacred sites of ceremonies. For instance, the sacred site, the



Round House, which symbolically stands to protect the Ojibwe American Indians, is used by the non-Indian, Linden Lark, as a site of rape and the attempted murder of two women. He feels no guilt but instead declares, “I have no fear. Things are the wrong way around, . . . The strong should rule the weak. Instead of the weak, the strong! It is the weak who pull down the strong. But I won’t get caught. (p.504). In the context of disclosing Linden’s crime, Joe’s mother reveals that Linden hates the Indians since they confront the white colonialists. Linden’s crime is just one example of violence committed against the natives. The assault is both physical as well as cultural. Therefore, the colonial incursion leaves a deeper impact on the social organization as it threatens cultural values.

Another serious problem is injustice since the perpetrator, Linden openly defies the laws. In addition, the Federal law does not punish him as the US legal system operates in a complex way if the case is related to the natives as the victim and the perpetrator is the non-Indian. Julie Tharp argues, “Indeed the legislation makes it difficult to protect all Native people from crimes committed against them by non-Indians, but the complication arising from combined sexism and racism make it even less likely that crimes against Native women will be tried” (“Erdrich’s Crusade: Sexual Violence in *The Round House*”, p. 26). The impunity exposes how the Native Americans remain as ‘other’ in the eyes of the Federal laws. To address this problem, the natives have to invoke the traditional justice system. Ideologically they view that the evil force that commits the crime must be destroyed to safeguard the peace of the community. For instance, Joe examines the failure of the government legal system to give justice to his mother. Therefore, he makes his own mission to destroy the culprit, Linden. Finally, he succeeds in getting justice his way. Joe builds his confidence for this mission, deriving insight from indigenous folklore. He attempts to justify his action against the criminal though he does not directly take responsibility for Lark's death. To his father, he

expresses, “Dead? I wanted him dead, okay? . . . I’m happy. He deserved it. Mom is free now. You’re free. The guy who killed him should get a medal” (p. 920). With the support of the tribal belief, Joe justifies the destruction of evil for the sake of good. In the case of his mother, he can destroy the wiindigoo-evil, Lark. Through the issue of Geraldine, Joe’s mother, the author portrays the complicated legal system of the USA, where the natives, like Joe’s family, face legal hurdles to get justice since violence committed by the whites against the Natives is hardly punished. To support this, it is relevant to mention Erdrich's citation regarding the Amnesty International report, which states that eighty-six percent of sexual crimes against Native women are committed by non-native men. However, only a few are punished. (*The Round House*, p.1004). Such scenarios invite the intervention of the tribal judicial practices so that the perpetrators do not escape justice. Therefore, as Joe views it, the killing of Linden Lark fulfills the requirements of old indigenous law.

### **Ojibwe Culture: Ethics of Human-Nature Relationship**

Ojibwe culture respects ecological principles as it stresses the ethical use of resources to maintain ecological balance. Mythically, the Round House narrative survives as an epitome of Ojibwe culture. According to the Ojibwe old man, Mooshum, the Round House represents the buffalo woman who protects Nanapush by allowing him to destroy her body so that he can survive by eating her flesh and taking shelter inside her body against the snow. The buffalo woman leaves her body, but her spirit lives. This spirit instructs Nanapush to build a Round House that represents the buffalo herself that protects him and his relatives during the starvation as they get the flesh of this buffalo. Like the buffalo woman, the Round House, as prophesied by her spirit, shall protect Ojibwe Clan. Following this ideology, the tribal people sanctify this place and gather under its roof to perform ceremonies.

Another key aspect of Buffalo woman's narrative is the human-animal relationship. Her spirit narrates the history of the man-animal relationship in tribal societies. It is the relationship of sustainability and spiritual connectivity between humans and animals. Based on this principle, animals were hunted as per their needs. The practices of the tribal laws respected the natural laws. For instance, the Buffalo woman says that once there were adequate buffaloes to hunt for the tribal people. However, due to the violation of the hunting laws, the number of buffalo dwindle. They become scarce.

Which elements work to cause such imbalance? As illustrated in The Round House, external interferences play the role primarily. The colonial invasion can be held accountable to a great extent. With capitalistic interest, the invaders slaughter the animals in mass. Consequently, starvation prevails in the hunting communities. So, colonial capitalism damages the indigenous belief system since it imposes its values on the tribal communities. The colonizers' reckless exploitation of resources in the name of development and civilization in the wilderness drastically harms sustainability. To illustrate this, Erdrich (2012) writes, "The United States is forty-seven years old, and the entire country is based on grabbing Indian land as quickly as possible in as many ways as can be humanly devised" (p.717). Such incursion destabilizes the relatively stable socio-cultural organization of indigenous people. Therefore, the deeper impact of assault surfaces in the multiple sectors, like change in cultural practices, loss of animals and plants, division of land for individual ownership, and the pollution of rivers. The new laws and the outer culture both contribute to the change in human-nature relationships regarding the indigenous lifestyle.

The politically motivated implementation of European ideology over the indigenous people attempts to suppress their values. With the help of modern technology and knowledge, the outsiders belittle the tribal practices. For example,

the narrator presents the colonial perception, “We savages living off the forest, and to leave our land to us was to leave it useless wilderness, that our character and religion is of so inferior a stamp that the superior genius of Europe must certainly claim ascendancy and on and on” (p.720). The intruders fail to understand the native religions and their connection with the material practices of life, or possibly, they deliberately denigrate the spiritual values of the indigenous people. For instance, the respect for animals and plant species by the natives is deep-rooted in their beliefs. Accordingly, their actions are oriented. It is like, Louis Althusser’s (2001) ideas about the relationship between ideologies and actions. For him, “the ‘ideas of a human subject exist in his actions, or ought to exist in his actions”. (*The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, p.1501). The American Indians, like other indigenous people, live in ideologies consciously or unconsciously through the cultural practices. This way, they make sense in real life.

The Ojibwe tribal people respect animals. They associate animals with spirits and take them as their clans. Therefore, animals are an integral part of their lives. Erdrich (2012) writes, “People were parts of these clans and were thus governed by a special relationship with one another and with animals” (p. 479). The Indian folklores presented in *The Round House* narrate the events of animals saving human beings. For instance, the infants whose parents die are nursed by the wolves. Likewise, Erdrich (2012) brings the allusion to Arion’s story. Arion of Methymna was a famous harp player who invented dithyrambic measure. Once, he decided to go to Corinth. For this purpose, he hired a boat that Corinthians used. He trusted them, but they betrayed him since they wanted to take his wealth into their possession by drowning him into the sea. However, Arion persuaded them that he would play his harp then they could do as they wished. The power of his music could not change their decision. Therefore, he

had to jump into the sea. As he was about to drown, a dolphin rescued him and left him at Taenarum. Like Arion, in another story, a girl was saved by a big turtle in the sea where she was struggling for life due to the exhaustion of swimming to reach her homeland. These narratives reflect the harmonious relationship between animals and humans in American Indian societies. These people accept the coexistence and interdependency between humans and animals. So, they respect the principle of sustainability. However, in modern times, the animal world is taken for commodification to earn due to the capitalistic mode of the economy. *The Round House* depicts it as an impact on the colonial economy.

The ideologies of the American Indians program the new generations to respect the elements of nature. They spiritually perceive them. For them, folklores are the effective means to circulate ideologies. Through the folklores, they reinforce that a body dies, but its spirit survives. For instance, in the context of *The Round House*, after the dissolution of her body, as the buffalo woman offers it to Nanapush, her spirit speaks to him. She not only saves the starving Ojibwe people but also suggests ways to build a roundhouse as the symbol of a buffalo woman's body that protects the natives. Here, the body's material aspect connects to spirituality since the spirits of the dead forefathers continue to guide and protect the living tribal people. Therefore, they associate themselves with animals as clans. For example, Joe's mother's clan is a turtle. These long-held beliefs face the challenges in the changing situations driven by intercultural negotiations and exposure to imperial politics.

Ethics plays a key role in guiding indigenous communities. It guides the need-based consumption of natural resources, which follows the principle of sustainability. They do not kill the animals to earn money as the capitalists do. Instead, use animals for survival. In the context of the 1880s, as represented in *The Round House*, this principle was violated due to the external invasion.

Therefore, most of the animals have disappeared. The narrator reveals, “Some old men said the buffalo disappeared into a hole in the earth. Other people had seen white men shoot thousands of train cars and leave them to rot (p. 581). Mooshum narrates that in Akiikwe-folklore, Nanapush driven by hunger and counseled by the spirit of the dead rabbit sets out in search of an old buffalo since others have been killed. The drastic loss of buffaloes indicates that erosion occurs in human-animal relations maintained by the indigenous ideologies. The white men slaughtering thousands of buffaloes violates the traditional tribal laws of hunting that are sensitive to ecological balance. What is the purpose of the mass slaughtering of buffaloes? Do the white need them for consumption or for what? It shows how reckless and insensitive they are about ecological sustainability.

Women hold respectable positions in Native American society. They get regarded as the source of nourishment and protection. It is reflected in the ways they organize their families. For them, it is no surprise that women work as the head of the family. Matrilineal traditions are common in indigenous communities. To cite from the story of Akiikwe, the buffalo woman sacrifices her body for the survival of starving people. Nanapush sings to make her hear; she follows it to be hunted. He attacks her and makes his way into her body for protection from the snow. He “crawled into the carcass. Once there, he swooned at the sudden comfort. . . And while unconscious, he became a buffalo. This buffalo adopted Nanapush and told him all she knew” (p.585). Here, the role of the female buffalo spirit as the savior can be associated with indigenous women who play the protective role by preparing food and caring for children, the sick, and the elderly. For example, Joe’s mother and grandma Thunder pay particular focus on offering delicious food. Erdrich projects the images of food repeatedly in the narrative to foreground this nourishing aspect. She seems to value the ethics of respecting those who offer food as a significant feature of the Native American society. In

contrast to the respect given to females of both humans and nonhumans in the tribal societies, the non-Indians assault the tribal women since they are raped and sexually abused. So, Native American culture values women as the source of life and love, but outsiders fail to understand these values and limit them in terms of sexual relations.

### **Interconnection between the Material and the Spiritual Spheres**

The American Indian belief system connects material with spiritual. They stress the balance between these realms for the ideal society. They believe that the dead person's spirit manifests in various forms based on his/her deeds while alive. For instance, Mooshum interprets the appearance of the ghost as “Someone’s throwing their spirit at you” (p. 414). However, the ghost does not always appear to harm or signal a negative message. It may have a positive message too. For example, a ghost appears to Joe. So, he enquires about its possible indication to Mooshum. Mooshum hints at the possible luck to unfold, and Joe feels, “I was getting impatient for the luck to show itself” (p. 417). Later, he gets a doll full of money floating in the lake where Mayla’s car disappeared along with herself, an act perpetrated by Linden Lark. These instances reveal that the long-held belief in ghosts exists among the Native Americans. For them, it indicates the past relations and actions and possible future occurrences, like in the case of Joe. For the non-Natives, such belief may seem to be superstitious due to the ignorance of the natives. However, this belief has a meaningful role in alerting the Natives about their actions and possible consequences. It serves as a way to hold the people accountable for their actions and relations with the living beings. So, the spirits have a meaningful role in guiding the indigenous communities.

To cure the physical and mental ailments, the American indigenous people blend material and spiritual practices. Rather than isolating the material from the spiritual realm as modern medicine does for the treatment, they seek the solution

through the integration of material and spiritual. For the psychic treatment, they use spells and make offerings to Gods. Sometimes, they get a positive result. For example, Joe says, “His mother, my grandmother, was from a medicine family. She’d said a lot of things that would seem strange at first but come true later in life” (p. 259). The combination of the natural treatment with the herbs and other ingredients of nature and shamanism for the psychic treatment helps maintain the health of mind and body of these people. It illustrates the ways indigenous people maintained their overall health.

The tribal people value community welfare highly. Individuality is placed under the community. Accordingly, they set the social rules and regulations. They believe that natural resources, like land, forest, animals, and others, belong to the whole society. Rather than having individual ownership, they own it collectively. However, the colonial political intervention challenges this belief. The Europeans promoted individual ownership and commodified the resources for money. Erdrich (2012) illustrates the context of 1823 in *The Round House* on the land issue. She writes, “The United States is forty-seven years old, and the entire country is based on grabbing Indian land as quickly as possible in as many ways as can be humanly devised” (p. 717). The socio-cultural organization is affected by encroachment, land ownership, and resource changes.

The individualism promoted by capitalism harms the welfare of the community as it brings a conflict to the community. Consequently, it changes the beliefs and values of indigenous communities. Consequently, social connectivity and unity are broken.

The colonial incursion impacts the religious sphere also. The missionaries employ religion as a means to have political control. They try to detach the natives from their own spiritual practices through the religious conversion to Christianity. For example, Cappy’s girlfriend comes to North Dakota from



Montana to convert the Native Americans into Christian. Though the Native Americans follow their own religions, attempts are made by the outsiders to derail them from such ideologies. In various ways, the Natives integrate spirituality into their living. This is reflected in cultural ceremonies. For instance, the Shaking Tent Ceremony gets special regard from the Ojibwe people. They believe such a ceremony heals people and helps answer spiritual questions (p.171). During this ceremony, drinking alcohol is prohibited because it violates sacred etiquette. They try to maintain social peace and discipline through spiritual practices. Unlike the institutionalized Christianity that spreads through the missionaries, the spiritual practices of the Native Americans are contextual and practiced based, which aim for social harmony.

Spirituality connects the Indians with the animal world through the clan system. They believe that humans and animals depend on one another. Animals' spirits are connected to humans'. To illustrate, Buffalo woman's spirit speaks to Nanapush and tells the story of the declining buffaloes and their relation with other animals. Not only animals, the American Indians believe that all livings and non-livings connect each other. In this regard, K. L. Walters et al. (2013), in their "My Spirit in My Heart': Identity Experiences and Challenges among American Indian Two-Spirit Women", argue that indigenous communities accept the interdependency among human and nature, physical and spiritual, ancestors and future generations. They get connected in spiritual ways (p.627). Therefore, spirituality is a part of indigenous life. The colonial missionaries crusade to break this type of spiritual understanding by imposing their own religious values so that they could gain political control in the name of religion and civilization.

Oral tradition serves as the lifeline for the survival of indigenous ideologies and cultural practices. The folklores and other narratives connect the generations. Despite their continuation, significant erosion takes place in the

lifeline since the colonial invasion infiltrates into the indigenous narratives. So, the folklore listening culture is declining gradually. Paula Gunn Allen (2001), in her “Kochinnenako in Academe: Three approaches to Interpreting a Keres Indian Tale,” argues, “if the oral tradition is altered in certain subtle, fundamental ways if elements alien to it are introduced so that its internal coherence is disturbed, it becomes the major instrument of colonization and oppression” (p. 2110). So, due to the incursion, the challenge for the American Indians is how to give continuity to the oral narratives that guide their cultural practices.

### **Conclusion**

After exploring *The Round House* on the issue of the American Indian ideologies, I conclude that ideologies play a prime role in shaping indigenous societies' socio-political organization and cultural practices. The guiding principles that pave the way to indigenous life, like ecological sustainability, collective responsibility, and community welfare, seem to compromise under changing ideologies. The problem with the tribal societies in the context of *The Round House* is that ethically held social organizations and practices are facing a crisis since the beliefs that shaped these societies have been losing their effects on the new generations. Behind the cultural erosion and ethical degeneration, the intercultural interaction, the imposition of foreign values and the rise of individualism have a major share.

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### **Labour Migration in Nepal: Policy, Institutions, and Governance**

Padma P. Khatiwada<sup>1</sup>

Keshav Basyal<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Tribhuvan University

<sup>2</sup>Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security

#### **Author Note**

Dr. Padma P. Khatiwada is a full-time Faculty/Instructor for PhD, MPhil, and MA students at Tribhuvan University (TU). Renowned as a social and political demographer, he is also a human rights activist in the social sector and policy contributor for TU, National Planning Commission, Ministry of Health and Population, Ministry of Women, Children, and Senior Citizen. Served as a Vice-Chairperson of the Social Welfare Council, Dr. Khatiwada has contributed as a Team Leader to over 100 research studies on social sciences, many of which are published as policy papers and as journal articles by the national and international institutions. Dr. Khatiwada has presented these research papers in various forums/venues both inside Nepal and abroad (universities, CSO platforms and events organised by inter/governmental agencies). Dr. Khatiwada also serves as a Core Committee Member of the South Asia Alliance for Poverty Eradication (SAAPE), Vice-President of

Human Rights Alliance, and a dozen other similar social and professional organizations.

Dr. Basyal has a Ph.D. from Jawaharlal Nehru University, India. He is a teaching faculty of the Department of International Relations and Diplomacy and Labour Studies Program, Tribhuvan University. He has over 15 years of work experience in labor, cross-border migration, employment, labor market analysis, and policy reviews. He has substantial work experience with Government, employer and worker organizations, NGOs, and other academic institutions. Currently, he is an advisor to the Ministry of Labour, Employment, and Social Security. He has significant publications in national and international journals and book chapters in labor, diplomacy, bilateral relations, migration, and other issues.

Correspondence concerned in this article should be addressed to Dr. Padma P.Khatriwada, Tribhuvan University. Email: [padmapd70@gmail.com](mailto:padmapd70@gmail.com)

### Abstract

The annual reports of the Commission for the Investigation of Abuse of Authority (CIAA) point out that complaints related to the education sector for financial misuses occupy the largest share consistently in the past few years. Nepal's labor migration has a colonial connection, although the country never experienced its direct invasion. Due to the historical legacy of the British India Company as *Lahure* culture, India became the primary destination for Nepali unemployed youth. The decision of the youths to go abroad as labor was a strategy to escape from the potential threat, livelihood options, and get new country experience which ultimately became the major source to bring back remittance. Though low-skilled, foreign labor migration has been the major phenomenon for the country, which is now fully dependent on the remittance economy and counts for over one-fourth of the total national income. The phenomenon of female migration is not still through a formal channel to major destination countries. Due to it, there is a greater room to choose illegal migration channels, and thus the scope of female migration is becoming more vulnerable. Nepal has undertaken several policy measures to overcome these anomalies. Although the implementation aspect is fragile to meet the ground reality, and from the notion of strategic intervention, it is necessary to revisit the policy measures to make foreign labor migration safe, secure, and informed choice based.

*Keywords:* labor migration, Nepal, colonial legacy, neoliberalism, governance

### **Labour Migration in Nepal: Policy, Institutions, and Governance**

Labor migration in Nepal is considered a livelihood strategy (Seddon, 2007), male-dominated (Sharma, 2007), and has a colonial legacy (Bashyal, 2014). The cultural and economic status motivates out-migration (Gardner, 2004). The notion of ‘Kamaune’ [earning] is the social reality of the migration process (KC, 2014). As a result of the way system built in Nepal, foreign labor migration has turned out to be low-skilled, less educated, and a livelihood strategy for families. This phenomenon has created many vulnerabilities as the migrants fall prey to uncertain promises, recruitment fraud, abuse, wage theft, human trafficking, and similar risks.

Historically, Nepal used to be known to the rest of the world as the country of *Lahure*, *that is*, a tradition of Nepali muscular youth recruited to serve in the British Army and then British India as a part of livelihood for their family in the remote Nepali living with abject poverty (IOM, 2019; Kangsakar, 2003; Seddon et al., 2002). The scarcity of jobs and opportunities continues in Nepal even after the promulgation of the Constitution, which guarantees the right to employment (Article 33), the right to labor (Article 34), and the right to live with dignity (Article 16) (Nepal Law Commission, 2015). Seven years have elapsed since the promulgation of the Constitution, and even today, Nepali youth are pursuing better labor work in India, Gulf countries, Malaysia, Korea, Japan, and different parts of the European and American countries. An estimated five million Nepali are employed in foreign countries. The last population census of Nepal held in 2011 showed that around 40% of migrant workers leave for India, while the other 60% leave for the third countries (Khatiwada, 2014). Although Nepal has witnessed an increase in the number of Nepali women seeking work abroad and being gradually recognized as important economic actors, the percentage is

quite below, close to 9% (IOM, 2019; Khatiwada, 2014). IOM (2019) further elaborates:

The risk of exploitation and abuse of women migrant workers is high, particularly in largely unregulated sectors such as domestic work, and the Government has put in place a series of measures seeking to protect women migrants. To date, these measures have met with limited success and there is still evidence that many women migrants are in situations of risk.

Existing research pointed out that, like in other South Asian countries, Nepali migration is also considered a masculine phenomenon (Sharma, 2007). It is because of the traditional belief that males are breadwinners and females are housewives, and the culture of mobility is also limited for them in public places. In 1985, the Government of Nepal started to formalize the migration process abroad except in India, and the process is highly dependent on private recruitment agencies.

Every day about 1500 Nepalis officially leave the country to work abroad. About 2 to 3 million Nepali men and women are currently working abroad, other than India, mainly in low-skilled jobs and mostly on time-limited contracts. Nepali workers working abroad are about 10% of Nepal's total population. Since 2000, more than 8,500 Nepali migrant workers have died in Gulf Coordination Committee (GCC) countries and Malaysia (MoLESS, 2020).

### **Theoretical Context**

Presumably, migration has taken place in the world since the origin of human beings. However, its studies, concepts, and theories date back late 19<sup>th</sup> century only. The 'laws of migration' first defined by Ravenstein (1885) and later elaborated and critiqued by Stouffer (1960) and Lee (1966) are known as the outcomes of classical studies. Ravenstein concluded in 1885 that migration and



distance; migration by slopes; stream and counter stream; the urban-rural difference in the propensity to migrate, and the predominance of females among short-distance migrants. Later in 1989, he added technology and migration and the dominance of economic motives as the primary laws of migration (Ravenstein, 1889). These facts hold to even today. Whereas Stouffer (1960) introduced the concept of intervening opportunities and competitive migrants, Lee introduced migration relationships between origin and destination, associated with the area of origin, destination, intervening obstacles, and personal factors (Khatiwada, 2014). Lee elaborated and revisited Ravenstein's theory and emphasized the context of push-pull factors and intervening obstacles during the migration process. He argued that distance and physical and political barriers could impede or prevent migration.

The framework of human movement suggests two categories of migration: 1) complete spatial displacement and displacement of only part of the everyday reciprocal movements, that is, partial displacement migrations). Zipf (1946) elaborated on this concept and stressed inverse distance law based on mathematical statistics, which refers to the fact that many types of migration data studied in physical and social sciences can be approximated.

Migration creates positive vibes and vulnerability, especially in the case of being unemployed among those involved in the informal sector. The Harris–Todaro model (Todaro, 1969) stressed the rural and urban wage rates and the probabilities of obtaining employment. Migration as a social process defined by Zelinsky (1971) stresses the 'hypothesis of mobility transition' developed as a five-phase model of mobility transition: 1) pre-modern traditional society, 2) early transitional society, 3) late transitional society, 4) advanced society, and 5) future super-advanced society.

Migration is an outcome of the differential characteristics of streams regarded as the consequences of social and cultural constraints upon the head of a household. It has become a significant concern for policymakers. DaVanzo (1981) stated that population flows could significantly affect local political, social, economic, and ecological structures for both sending and receiving areas.

Regional economists, demographers, sociologists, and geographers have made numerous similar contributions to the patterns and trends of migration. (Greenwood,1969; 1975) stressed that early economic studies used aggregated data to treat migration as an equilibrating mechanism that minimizes geographic wages and employment differentials, while later studies have shifted to a microeconomic approach to study why individuals and families move, which was later also approved by DaVanzo (1981).

The Decision-making model of migration came into discourse in the 90s when Judson (1990), who attempted to develop a formal theory of decision-making in human migration, indicated several shortcomings, such as examining residential preferences without reference to other constraints impacting the migration decision, which are addressed in this chapter. Hampton later (2007) concluded that "many actual decision-making problems incorporate higher-order structures, involving interdependencies between stimuli, actions, and subsequent rewards. It is not known whether brain regions implicated in decision making, such as the ventromedial prefrontal cortex, employ a stored model of the task structure to guide choice (model-based decision making) or merely learn action or state values without assuming higher-order structures, as in standard reinforcement learning (Khatriwada, 2014).

### **Theoretical Construct in Nepali Context**

Migration is not only the solution but also a problem that depends on the policies and programs of both the origin and destination countries. The personal

characteristics of migrants regarding knowledge, choice, skills, and resources determine their outcomes. The more vulnerability it may appear, the more incidences of intolerance and crime may appear. Nepal is a sending country with fewer skilled migrants; the vulnerability issues in the origin and destination have been witnessed. The overall facts and narratives available so far further justify that Nepalese migration trends did not remain within the limited scope of classical push and pull factors; it got a paradigm shift from the traditionally economic motive to a 'voluntary forced dichotomy' (Shanmuguratnam, 2003) to the post-conflict relative deprivation, decision-making and livelihood approach.

### **Colonial Legacy in Nepal's Migration**

With motives for expanding territory and resources from land, colonial ruler British India started to enroll the Nepali youths in their army. Rana regime of Nepal was also influenced by the British and praised them in their favor. They used Nepali youths to fight decisive battles to suppress the Indian uprising in 1857. The British established the Gurkha Brigade, which was developed as an institution for trading the Nepalese hill-youths. The total number of Gorkha soldiers who died in the wars is still unknown. Neither the Government of Nepal nor the British government attempted to ascertain the exact figures of the war casualties. It could be more than 200 thousand (Sangraula, 2018).

### **Nepali Migration to India**

Contemporary migration between Nepal and India has resulted from various formal and informal ties based on the two countries' historical, cultural, and social legacy. These historical legacies facilitated the unrestricted movement of people across the border, except in some conflict-ridden areas. Keeping the border open between Nepal and India is the legacy of the colonial regime in India, the product of the shared culture of the colonial past (Bashyal, 2014). The historical migration trend between Nepal and India started with the recruitment in

the Indian Army during the time of the British India Company. This tradition continues, and according to the Indian Ministry of External Affairs, there are over 32,000 Nepali citizens in the Indian Army service (Ministry of External Affairs of India, 2017).

Migration of Indian citizens to Nepal has also been a common phenomenon with the provision of reciprocal treatment of citizens of either country by the state stated in the Nepal India Treaty of Peace and Friendship 1950. The Articles VI and VII quoted in the Treaty are mostly related to explaining the status of both countries' migrants, which read:

Article VI: Each Government undertakes, in token of the neighborly friendship between India and Nepal, to give to the nationals of the other, in its territory, national treatment with regard to participation in the industrial and economic development of such territory and to the grant of concessions and contracts relating to such development.

Article VII: *The Governments of India and Nepal agree to grant, on a reciprocal basis, to the nationals of one country in the territories of the other the same privileges in the matter of residence, ownership of property, participation in trade and commerce, movement and other privileges of a similar nature* (Bashyal, 2014)

The continuation of the open border between Nepal and India to date has been attributed to the security needs, socio-political as well as cultural ties, and historical legacy. The cross-border movements along the 1,870 km-long open border with India have resulted in an undocumented situation of the migrant workers in both countries (Bashyal, 2014).

The Population Census of 2011 indicated that nearly two-fifths (37.6%) of the total 1,921,494 absentees from Nepal were in India. This percentage looks like a heavy reduction from the 2001 Census (77.3%) out of 762,181 (CBS, 2012).

Since the country witnessed massive labor migration to Gulf countries and Malaysia afterward in 2001 in Nepal, the percentage of Indian migration reduced, but the volume increased from 520,500 in 2001 to 605,869 in 2011. India thus looks still a popular destination for Nepali people as wage earning activities. Going to India as seasonal migrants or long term is easier for Nepali people due to the 1950 Treaty signed between Nepal and India on Peace and Friendship. This Treaty allows population mobility between these countries on political, social, and cultural grounds and now is taken as the basis of the relationship between the two countries (Khatriwada, 2014).

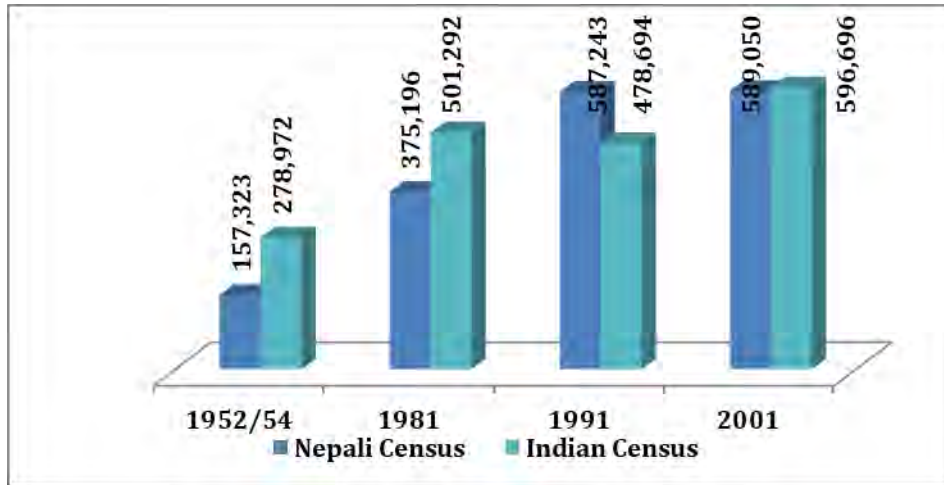
The Nepal Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS - 2011) showed that men primarily migrate to India for employment (87% of those who had gone to India). The reason for the migration was found to be quite different for women who mainly migrated to India as dependents or for marriage (MoHP, 2012). As the border is geographically long and culturally porous, it remains with a proper mechanism developed for border data registration system, it is difficult to track movements, including seasonal migration between Nepal and India. No records are available to say categorically how many Nepalis work in India or where they are (IOM, 2019).

IOM (2019) has further indicated a variation in census data of Nepal on absentees and from India on Nepali migrants living in India. For example, Nepal's census put the proportion of women migrants at 12 percent in 2001, whereas the Indian census indicated that it was 55 percent. This wide divergence indicates that the figures cannot be relied upon. Unofficial estimates also vary widely, from 3 to 4 million at one end of the scale to under one million at the other. The variations may be attributable to a large number of Nepalis working in the informal sector, trafficked, or migrating seasonally or even more frequently. It is also worth noting that if whole families migrate to India, they will not be shown at all on the Nepali

population census. Additionally, if people leave on a seasonal basis for only a few months at a time, they will not be counted as absentees. Figure 1 shows the number of Nepalis in India.

**Figure 1**

*Nepalis in India as per Indian and Nepali Censuses*



*Source:* Sharma & Thapa (2013).

Nevertheless, there are frequent movements across the border, long-term, short-term, seasonal, and even more frequent, with some workers living near the border crossing for work daily or weekly (Sharma & Thapa, 2013). It is unknown to everyone how many Nepali seasonal migrants are in India. However, seasonal migration for Nepali to India is an essential aspect of the livelihood, not only from the hills but also from the Tarai. IOM (2019) states:

Nepalis leave for India during the off-season, usually from January to June, and may return to Nepal for planting and harvesting. This is a means to bridge the off-season with some, albeit meager, income. Other Nepali migrants going to India for contract work may be able to return to Nepal with small savings in cash and/or clothes or cooking utensils. As there is no official Nepali survey that tracks

absentees who are away from home for less than six months, there is little reliable data on the extent of seasonal migration. Some researchers have, however, conducted studies (IOM, 2019).

Many Nepali migrants work in the informal sector in India, in restaurants, as domestic workers, as guards or porters, and in brothels, meaning that they are potentially exposed to exploitation with no legal recourse. Trafficking women and girls into prostitution, children into circuses, and men for body part harvesting are all known to exist, but the lack of data means that the extent and volume of these crimes, while presumed to be significant, are largely unknown (NHRC, 2018).

India has become the main route for many Nepali migrant workers to the third countries. Previously, Nepalis did not need to show labor permit documentation when traveling to a third country via India. However, given a rise in Nepalis going abroad without proper documentation and the risk of human trafficking, the Nepali Government has put in place a procedure whereby Nepalis who wish to depart India need to obtain a No Objection Certificate (NOC) from the Nepali Embassy in New Delhi (Department of Immigration, 2019). This NOC needs to be shown to Indian airport authorities to obtain clearance to leave (IOM, 2019).

While some migrant Nepalis work in government offices, police, or the army, most young migrants work in menial and low-paid informal services, including security, construction, manufacturing, and agricultural jobs. Nepalis working as chowkidars in factories is declining, although there is an increasing demand for Nepali workers in hotels/restaurants (Bashyal, 2014). Social networks and cultural tradition have played a crucial role in sustaining the migration circle between the original villages in the western hills and specific destinations in India. Nepalis' most common destinations in India are Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore,

Pune, Ludhiana, Amritsar and Almora, Nainital, Shimla, and Pithauragadh (Thieme, 2006).

As the number of Nepalis who work in India is significant, a considerable portion of the labor migration sector is “outside” the sphere of Government influence, policymaking, and protection. Nepal’s migration landscape is an issue that deserves a careful review (IOM, 2019).

**International Migration (Other than India)**

Over the past 60 years, Nepali migrants to international destinations beyond India have increased significantly from about 200,000 in the 1950s to approximately two million by 2011. The most visible change occurred between 2001 and 2011 when Nepali migrants increased twofold.

**Table 1**

*Population Absent from Households Abroad by Sex, Nepal, 1981–2021*

Census	Absentee Population	Migration to Abroad (Except India)	Male	Female
1981	402,977	27,781	20,277	-
1991	658,290	40,481	32,477	7,120
2001	762,181	173,131	158,989	-
2011	1,921,494	1,178,926	1,062,755	4,865
2021	2,169,478		1,763,315	406,163

Source: CBS (2014; 2022)

In terms of the proportion of the migrants, the ratio of females going to the West (USA, Canada, and the European Union) is higher than those going anywhere else. Of the total migrants in the ‘USA and Canada’ and ‘European Union countries, about 33 percent and 37 percent, respectively, were females, with those going to ‘Other Asian’ countries (at 21.9 percent) a distant third



(Khatiwada, 2014). After enacting the Foreign Employment Act (FEA), 2007, the trend of labor migration from Nepal concentrated in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries and Malaysia. There is a greater demand for migrants in GCC countries. From 2008/09 to 2014/15, labor migration to these countries accounted for 85 percent of all migration activities.

Similarly, among them, labor migration is highly male-centric, and it is more than 95 percent of all those obtained labor permits. The Department of Foreign Department database shows that over 3.5 million labor permits had been issued in nine years till 2016/17 since the enactment of the FEA Act in 2007.

Table 2 presents the top destination countries for foreign employment.

The number of Nepali migrants abroad is estimated to be bigger than government records. This has been attributed to the Nepal government's lack of an effective monitoring system and controlled permit mechanism. Agents very often mislead Nepali youths to go abroad through illegal channels. In this process, agents generally do not provide original agreements and contracts to the migrant workers and send them through unrecorded routes. In this process, even if migrants successfully land in the destination countries, they remain undocumented. In such cases, they will experience difficulties in receiving legal and institutional support from the government agencies of Nepal (Bashyal, 2019).

Similarly, migrants undergo several bad experiences during the migration process, putting their physical, mental, and social well-being at risk. Upon reaching the destination too, migrants often face various forms of exploitation, low income, and social exclusion, which negatively impact the family and their health, especially in their countries of destination and at home.

**Table 2***Top Destination Countries for Foreign Employment, 2008/09–2016*

Destination Countries	Percentage (%)
Malaysia	29.88
Qatar	21.57
Saudi Arabia	20.37
UAE	10.62
Kuwait	2.54
Republic of Korea	1.32
Bahrain	0.86
Oman	0.63
Japan	0.35
Lebanon	0.21
Other countries	11.65

Source: DoFE (2018)

The labor permits are acquired either through recruitment agencies or personal initiatives. There is a variation in the proportion of labor permits issued. More than two-thirds of the labor migrants sought permits via recruitment agencies, and there is a corresponding decline in the labor permits issued at the individual level, which stood at about 25% in the year 2008–2009 and declined to almost 8% in 2016–2017 (MoLE, 2016/17).

In July 2015, the Nepali Government adopted the ‘free visa, free ticket’ policy, but the amount migrants can pay recruitment agents at about USD 170. However, this policy has been flouted with the full knowledge of the government of Nepal<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> Diana Eltahawy, Gulf Programme Manager, Annie S. Khan, South Asia Researcher & Representative, and Alex Janczenia, Development Officer, at Business & Human Rights Resource Centre, 2020/2/11

### Women Migration

Due to a lack of livelihood options to sustain their family, women are also forced to migrate. Among women, there is a very low level of awareness of legal provisions and necessary documentation for foreign employment (Pourakhi, 2017). Women constitute a significantly lower percentage of international migrants, a ratio that has remained almost the same even in the inter-census decade between 2001 and 2011 shows a slight increase in international migration, registering only 12 females for every 100 males abroad in the 2011 census, a marginal increase compared to 11:100 in 2001. Eighty-six percent of women who migrated from their original places moved to Nepal. Eight percent migrated to India and very few to other countries. About one-third of women who migrated for work moved to countries other than India. Women were less likely to migrate to other countries for non-work-related reasons. Region-wise, women from the far-western Tarai were more likely to migrate to India due to cross-border marriage practices. India was the second common destination for women migrants from the lowest wealth quintile, while those in the highest wealth quintile were more likely to migrate to other countries (NDHS, 2016).

Lebanon was a major destination for women migrants until 2009, when the Nepal government banned women from working as domestic workers. The ban brought a drastic decrease in the number of labor permits issued to Nepali women going to Lebanon. In the fiscal year 2007/08, 2,490 women were issued permits to work in Lebanon; this number reached 3,696 in 2009/10, but in 2010/11, it decreased to 84, with a marginal increase to 369 in 2012/13. Later, the UAE became the prime designation for Nepali women migrants, followed by Malaysia, Kuwait, and Qatar. As stated earlier, the government's ratio of permits

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<https://www.business-humanrights.org/en/nepalese-migrant-workers-in-qatar-face-exploitation-companies-employing-them-should-take-action>

issued to males and females indicates a huge difference in the labor migration from Nepal. Women are assumed to be more vulnerable in terms of the risk of sexual assault in a foreign land (Oishi, 2005; Piper, 2009). In 2012, a temporary ban on migration to the Gulf region was placed for women younger than 30 years of age, and this ban was extended to women of all ages in 2014. Though this restriction was partially relaxed in 2015 by reducing the minimum age for migration to 24, women's migration to most destinations still requires strict oversight (ILO, 2015).

In 2010, the government revoked the ban, and data shows that the number of female migrant workers in the GCC countries soared thereafter. According to the records maintained by the Department of Foreign Employment, there was a threefold increase in Nepali women migrants employed in the GCC countries between FY 2008–2009 and FY 2011–2012. The numbers of women migrants in two primary destinations stood in Kuwait (12,495) and the UAE (4,523) in FY 2011–2012, absorbing nearly 90 percent of all registered female labor migrants in the GCC. The number indicates that there is a demand for women migrants in the domestic work sector in Gulf countries. Women seek these avenues as a way of improving their livelihood options. The government instituted an age-restrictive ban for women in the domestic work sector in 2012. The government policy of restricting women seeking to work aboard contributed to the increased irregular migration. Research conducted by Paurakhi says that out of 15 women returnee migrants, seven of them used India as a transit because of restrictions on migration from Nepal. A few of them reported that the Indian route was quick, easy, and economical. Recruitment agents often take advantage of ignorant and powerless migrants.

### **Neoliberalism and Migration**

The structural adjustment program (SAP) brought by the IMF and World Bank was implemented in Nepal in the mid-1980s. The World Bank and the IMF, unlike in the past, have given priority to the internalization of ownership of policies and programs in developing countries (Khanal, 2015). Despite implementing SAP and neoliberal policies for more than two decades, Nepal is still experiencing a low level of human development ranking (Shrestha & Prakash, 2010). Nepal has liberalized external accounts financial sector and privatized some public enterprises, dismantled industrial policy intervention, and allowed a more significant private sector role in economic activities by downsizing the role of the government. However, all of these IMF-supported structural adjustment programs failed to focus on generating employment to reduce the unemployment problem in Nepal (ibid). The widening gap in unemployment occurred during the 90s as the then government decided to disinvest, dissolve and liquidate public enterprises in Nepal (SAAPE, 2016). Due to financial deregulation, the number of banks and financial institutions (BFI's) exploded between 1992 and 2011 – from 8 to 31 commercial banks (often joint efforts with foreign investors), from 4 to 87 development banks, and from zero to 80 finance firms (Sapkota, 2011). While Nepal's massive remittance economy ensures that deposits in the capital's private banks continue to grow due to the flow of remittances, those financial institutions have emerged in large numbers. It benefited very few persons involved in these financial activities (ibid).

USA and Australia are an attraction for thousands of Nepali students each year. However, remittance inflow to Nepal has a long history, and it began with the entry of Nepali youths into the British Indian Army in the nineteenth century and has continued to date. Likewise, the increased number of Nepali migrant workers in India also brought substantial remittances from India (Bashyal, 2014).

This initial phase of foreign employment came to a change in the second stage in the 1990s when a large number of Nepali opted for jobs in Malaysia and Gulf countries. Foreign employment of Nepali youths is still concentrated in India, Malaysia, Gulf nations, and South Korea.

According to the World Bank reports (2017), recruitment and transaction costs are the major bottlenecks of the remittance regime. The report concludes that recruitment costs paid by low-skilled workers are often more than a year's worth of income. This happens to be true in Nepal's case, too, in important remittance corridors. Despite the "free-visa-and-free-ticket" provision of the Government of Nepal, the deceitful manpower agencies in Nepal are charging huge fees to the poor migrant workers, mostly from rural communities. Migrant laborers are generally compelled to pay such a high amount of money to the manpower agents. This policy supported dismantling the industry-based economy, created more dependency, and made society more unequal (SAAPE, 2019).

#### **State Response to Migration (Policies and Institutions)**

While the growing number of Nepali migrants has contributed substantially to the National economy through remittances, it has also created various issues in Nepal as well as in the destination countries. As reported earlier, the issues of vulnerability and lack of safety and security systems, frequent incidents of injuries and deaths are common. At the same time, the restrictions and conditional restrictions placed on women migrants and limited options to migrate through official channels have compelled women to take unofficial routes to migrate. In order to tackle these issues, the government of Nepal has enacted laws, policies, rules, and regulations to guide migration, thereby influencing the pattern and flow of Nepali migrants.

The Nepal government's first legislation for foreign employment was the Foreign Employment Act of 1985. The Act aimed to regulate the migrant workers

leaving for foreign employment abroad other than India. During the time until the 1990s, the volume of migrants was relatively low. However, after restoring democracy in 1990, the government adopted a liberal approach to address labor migration. It opened the doors for private sectors to engage intensively in the migration process. Since then, out-migration flow has been steadily increasing. Table 3 presents a timeline of key events in the foreign employment governance.

Under Article 51 (i) (5) of the Constitution of Nepal 2015, “Policies relating to labor and employment”, it is recognized that the government would work “to regulate and manage the sector in order to make foreign employment free from exploitation, safe and systematic and to guarantee employment and rights of the labourers.” (Nepal Law Commission, 2015).

**Table 3**

*Timeline of Key Events in Foreign Employment Governance in Nepal*

Year	Description
1985	Enactment of the first law on foreign employment: Foreign Employment Act
1992	Final amendment of the Foreign Employment Act
1998	The second amendment of the Foreign Employment Act
1999	Enactment of Foreign Employment Rules, 1999
2003	The Nepal government becomes a member of the Colombo Process – a regional consultation forum on the management of foreign employment and contractual labor
2007	Enactment of the new law: Foreign Employment Act, 2007
2008	Establishment of Foreign Employment Board Establishment of the Department of Foreign Employment Enactment of Foreign Employment Rules, 2008
2010	Establishment of Foreign Employment Tribunal

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2011	First amendment of Foreign Employment Rules, 2011
2012	First Foreign Employment Policy, 2012
	Development of the five-year National Strategic Action Plan on
2015	Foreign Employment Act, 2007
	First SAARC level regional consultation on labor migration held by
2016	Government of Nepal together with SAARC secretariat
2017	Nepal becomes the Chair of the Colombo Process

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Source: IOM, 2019

Almost two decades after adopting the first FEA, the government was inclined to govern the issues of migrant workers and shifted most of the responsibilities to private sectors and individuals providing services for foreign employment. There is a significant gap in the policy and implementation of complaint mechanisms, which currently leaves migrant workers without adequate means of protection from vulnerabilities and fraud to seek redress for rights violations during recruitment and employment.

**Table 4**

*National Instruments Guiding Nepal's Foreign Labor Migration*

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Foreign Employment Acts	Other National Instruments
Foreign Employment Act 1985	Nepal's Constitution 2015
Foreign Employment (First Amendment) Act 1992	Labor Act 1992
Foreign Employment (Second Amendment) Act 1998	National Labor Policy 1999
Foreign Employment Rules 1999	Labor and Employment Policy 2005

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Foreign Employment Act 2007	Trade Union Act 1992
Foreign Employment Rules 2008	Child labor (Prohibition and Regulation) Act 2000
Foreign Employment Policy 2012	Children Act 1992
	Human Trafficking and Transportation (Control) Act 2007
	Immigration Act 1992
	Passports Act 1967
	Nepal Citizenship Act 2006
	Non-Resident Nepali Act 2008

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Source: SAAPE (2019)

**International Instruments Governing Labour Migration**

Nepal is a party to core international human rights treaties, which provide normative standards and protect all human rights, including migrant workers. Such international treaties and conventions, which Nepal has ratified, are equally applicable in Nepal as per Section 9 of the Nepal Treaty Act, 2047. In addition, Nepal has ratified several other relevant international instruments, including (a) the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime; (b) the ILO’s Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182); and (c) the Constitution of the WHO and the International Health Regulations as well as the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Convention on Preventing and Combatting Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution.

**Table 5***International Instruments Governing Labor Migration in Nepal*

Convention name	Ratified
International Labour Organization (ILO)	
Migration for Employment Convention (Revised), 1949 (No. 97)	No
United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, 1951	No
United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Stateless Persons, 1954	No
United Nations Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, 1961	No
ILO Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975 (No. 143)	No
United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989	Yes (1990)
United Nations International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, 1990	No

Source: SAAPE (2019)

Despite being involved with numerous ILO Conventions, Nepal has yet to ratify the two major ILO Conventions governing the rights of migrant workers, namely the ILO Convention, 1997 - Migration for Employment Convention (Revised) and the ILO Convention 143- Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975. Ratifying these Conventions is necessary since it provides important provisions regarding undocumented migrant workers.

The assessment of governance of compliance with the provision of the foreign employment Act in 2009 carried out by the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) found that the degree of compliance with the law is moderate. NHRC identified foreign employment as the weakest part of monitoring, investigation, and persecution of crimes was related (NHRC, 2009). Foreign Employment Act has not governed the employment of Nepali workers in India, although more than one-third of Nepali migrants work there. It also does not guarantee and is responsible for all employment documents and authenticity.

### **Conclusion**

Nepal's out-migration has a long history, which dates back to establishing the modern state. For a long time, India remained the primary destination for labor migration, unregulated and lacking official documentation. Although migration from Nepal to Gulf countries and Malaysia is comparatively a recent development, they are becoming an important source for the low-skilled Nepali workers. Due to the conditional restrictions for women migrants, there is a greater chance that women might choose illegal migration channels, and thus women migrants to these countries are becoming more vulnerable.

There is a gap in the policy and implementation of complaint mechanisms, which currently leaves migrant workers without adequate means to seek legal support and redress their grievances. Generally, effective mechanisms do not exist for resolving cross-border labour-related disputes, such as contract substitution, delay in payment and compensation and redressal of grievances of migrants, and taking action against abuses by the recruiting agencies and employers in the destination countries. National policies on labor migration need to be seen in the context of the goals of development and from the perspectives of migrants.

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## **Perceptions of Pre-service Teachers on Impact of Language Learning Strategies**

Purna Bahadur Kadel

Department of English Education, University Campus,  
Tribhuvan University

### **Author Note**

Dr. Purna Bahadur Kadel is an Associate Professor at Central Department of Education, Tribhuvan University. He has been teaching at the department of English Education for more than two decades. Dr. Kadel has supervised M.Ed. and Ph.D. theses at Department of English Education and Dean's office, Faculty of Education respectively. He has served as an editor of Nepal English Language Teachers' Association (NELTA) Journal for a long time. He authored the book entitled Basic Education Research Methodology (2022) and Academic Writing (2018). He has presented dozens of research papers at home and abroad.

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Dr. Purna Bahadur Kadel, Tribhuvan University. Email:

[kadelpurna@yahoo.com](mailto:kadelpurna@yahoo.com)

**Abstract**

This study attempts to identify pre-service teachers' perceptions on the impact of language learning strategies to achieve their academic performances and to find out the importance of language learning strategies to be self-regulated learners. This is a narrative inquiry research design in which an in-depth interview was used as a tool to collect data. Six pre-service teachers who have been studying in Master of Education English fourth semester were selected using a purposive, non-random sampling procedure. The findings of this study show that language learning strategies help second language learners be self-regulated learners; they help them learn quickly, fast, and effectively and help them encounter complicated tasks. Furthermore, language learning strategies help them to develop their self-assessment skills and enhance cooperation and collaborative learning.

*Keywords:* pre-service teachers, language learning strategies, academic achievement, narrative inquiry, self-regulated learners

### **Perceptions of Pre-service Teachers on Impact of Language Learning Strategies for their Academic Performances**

Every parent expects that the academic performance of their offspring should be satisfactory at the college level. However, due to various reasons, the result of the pass-outs at the master's degree cannot always be 'A' and 'A-' grades. One of the causes of poor performance in the English language of the foreign language learners at this level is that they are unlikely to keep on learning without using language learning strategies. Most of the students studying at the master's level are not experienced in applying language learning strategies compatible with their learning styles and personalities. The subject teachers who have been assigned to teach the particular course are basically accountable for finishing the course within the stipulated time (Shamim, 2008, as cited in Javel, 2017).

The teachers who have been assigned to teach at the master level follow the traditional methods and techniques like teacher-centered techniques to finish the courses in the stipulated time. If the students adopt language learning strategies, they can learn the target language much better and more easily and smoothly. The language learning strategies help them be aware of new information's learning process. The learning strategies help them internalize new techniques and skills to enhance learning proficiency in the target language.

Language learning strategies play a pivotal role in language learning success (Cohen, 1981; Oxford, 1990). They are any mental and physical necessity that helps learners attain learning to some extent. There is a dire need to apply language learning strategies by English teachers to facilitate them to increase the language learning performance of foreign language learners effectively. Macaro (2001) argues that language learning strategies are the system of decisions to put into action, consciously or subconsciously, appropriately and inappropriately. Language learning strategies are a special type of way of learning which is

consciously employed in the course of learning. Chamot (1987) argues that language learning strategies accelerate learners' language acquisition. Javel (2017) asserts that instruction training for language learning strategies should be incorporated as a part of the English teachers' training program. The main goal of learning strategies is to make them efficient and strategic learners to be aware of personal characteristics and their influences on the choice of learning strategies. Language learning strategies assist them in identifying self-knowledge. If the learners are educated with the learning strategies, they can develop task knowledge and content knowledge. As such, they can be strategic self-regulated learners.

Unless the learners are sensitized to the appropriate language learning strategies by their personalities, learning style, learners' needs, levels of proficiency, and learning styles of the second language, learners fail to attain competency in their learning. Language learning strategies support the learners in solving any complicated task. They work as a milestone for them to promote learning. To make the learners' learning successful, there should be a fine-tuning between learning tasks and learning strategies that the learners undertake (Oxford et al., 2004).

Learning strategies facilitate the learners to make their learning more comfortable, easier, and more effective. Successful and unsuccessful learners can be differentiated in terms of employing learning strategies in comprehension and production. Successful learners are very efficient in employing learning strategies compatible with their needs, level of proficiency, and nature of task accordingly. Second language learning strategies are specific actions, behaviors, steps, or techniques that learners often employ to improve their progress in internalizing, storing, retrieving, and using in second language acquisition (Oxford, 1990). For instance, memory, cognitive, and affective strategies are covert and unobservable,

and note-taking, metacognitive, and social strategies are overt and observable. Some learners use linguistic and paralinguistic strategies when they have difficulty remembering the appropriate words in the course of conversation.

Successful learners can become autonomous and self-regulated owing to the learning strategies. Many successful learners become what they are due to applying learning strategies in learning to some extent. Most of the research studies show that there is a positive association between the use of language learning strategies and second language learning. Learning strategies play a vital role in the process of second language learning. Thus, second language learners are to be made aware of learning strategies to promote their proficiency in the target language and to achieve success in learning.

Learning strategies are very significant for second and foreign language learners in developing listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. It would be easier for successful learners to find out the gist or specific information from the text through skimming and scanning strategies. Likewise, highly proficient learners employ different types of effective strategies as much as possible to get information from the text.

### **Literature Review**

Hymes's components of communicative competence were traces of the historical origin of language learning strategies in the 1970s. Hymes (1972) critiques Chomsky's description of communicative competence and performance detached from social language functions. There are four components of communicative competence: grammatical competence, sociolinguistics competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence (Canale & Swain, 1980; Hymes, 1972).

The birth of language learning strategies in ELT commenced when Rubin (1975) wrote an article entitled "What the good language learner can teach us?"

Since then, the concept of language learning strategies has been in vogue in ELT formally. Language learning strategies have become a burning issue in second and foreign language learning since the 1990s. Rubin states that some language learning strategies facilitate the learners to promote learning, such as clarification, verification, monitoring, memorizing, guessing, inductive inference, deductive reasoning, and practicing. According to the prominent theoretical founders of language learning strategies (Chamot & O'Malley, 1990; Cook, 1991; Oxford, 1990; Stern, 1983), they are to be studied by teachers to implement in schools, colleges, and universities.

Oxford (1990) argues that language learning strategies are very crucial for the enhancement of second language learning. Moreover, language learning strategies support them to foster their academic achievement. Learning strategies are special plans for self-directed learning. The appropriate learning strategies boost up language proficiency and self-confidence of the learners. Learning skills, learning to learn skills, thinking skills, and problem-solving skills are also used alternatively with learning strategies. According to Oxford (1990), the characteristics of learning strategies are contribute to the main goal; communicative goal; allow the learners to become more self-directed; expand the role of the teacher; problem-oriented; the specific action was taken by the learners; involve many aspects of the learners, not just the cognitive; support learning both directly and indirectly; are not always observable; and are often conscious and flexible.

Likewise, there are six types of language learning strategies, viz. memory strategies, cognitive strategies, compensation strategies, metacognitive strategies, affective strategies, and social strategies (Oxford 1990). These strategies are categorized t under direct and indirect strategies.

The language learning strategies which are directly associated with the target language are called direct strategies, such as memory, cognitive, and compensation strategies. There is a direct connection between memory, cognitive, and compensation strategies to mental processing. However, the indirect learning strategies are not explicitly connected to mental processing in the course of learning.

Cook (1991) argues that good language learners share six learning strategies: memory, cognitive, compensational, metacognitive, social, and effective strategies. Good language learners are always aware of second language learning strategies. They can modify their learning behaviors to be compatible with the second language learning strategies. Stern (1983) argues that there are four language learning strategies: an active planning strategy, an academic learning strategy, a social learning strategy, and an effective strategy. Good language learning involves active language learning strategies. First of all, good language learners make goals and sub-goals and, in turn, plan to achieve the goals actively.

Zimmerman argues (1989) that the learners are self-monitors about the effectiveness of their learning strategies, method, learning contents, syllabus, and teachers. The learners need self-esteem, self-concept, and self-actualization to develop self-regulated learning. According to constructivists, very young children cannot become self-regulated due to geocentricism and the inability to use language covertly to guide function. Self-efficacy, self-esteem, and self-perception are the main motivating factors for self-regulated learners and academic achievement.

Second language learning is more complicated than learning the first language since second language learners are frequently influenced by their prior knowledge of the first language. So, second language learning is exclusively

conscious learning that cannot be accomplished effectively without learning strategies. They help them to solve cognitively demanding tasks easily. The learners would fail to encounter the problem-solving task without learning strategies. Due to language learning strategies, thousands of millions of second language learners are facilitated to learn a second language successfully. To perform a particular task, the learners should deploy task-appropriate strategies. The learning strategies play a vital role in performing a particular task to enhance second language learning.

Language learning strategies make the learners aware of employing different strategies, viz. top-down, bottom-up, and interactive strategies accordingly (Abbott, 2006). Successful learners are familiar with a wider variety of learning strategies. Accordingly, they can employ appropriate and selective learning strategies to carry out the tasks. Thus, learning strategies make the learners easier, faster, and more comfortable to foster second language learning. Learning strategies help them develop language learning skills and broaden their competencies in grammar and vocabulary. Less proficient learners are catered to special learning strategies to grapple with specific problems. Thus, less successful learners are efficient in employing selective and appropriate learning strategies to speed up their learning. So, the learners can solve the specific problems through language learning strategies. Once they are automated with effective learning strategies, they can carry out any task independently. They become independent learners who do not need any help from their peers and teachers. They are thus successful in being autonomous learners. Eventually, successful learners are driven to be self-regulated learners due to their repertoire of learning strategies.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of the study were i) to identify pre-service teachers' perceptions of the impact of language learning strategies (memory, cognitive,



metacognitive, compensation, affective, and social strategies) on academic performance and ii) to find out the importance of language learning strategies for language learners to be self-regulated.

### **Methodology**

The narrative inquiry research design was used to conduct this study. An interpretive paradigm was adopted to analyze and interpret the subjective perspectives of the pre-service teachers on the impact of language learning strategies on their academic achievement in this study. In the interpretive approach, reality (ontology) would be from multiple perspectives of the respondents regarding the impact of language learning strategies for better academic performance. A purposive, non-random sampling procedure was used to select the informants in this study. In-depth-interview was used as a tool to collect data in this study. Having had a friendly rapport with them, I administered in-depth-interview as a tool to collect their stories on the impact of applying language learning strategies to get the academic achievement. I transcribed their verbatim correctly without losing the main essence. I collected and recorded the participants' stories from one-to-one interviews (Creswell, 2013).

Meanwhile, I maintained the ethical norms and values in interviews with the participants. I assured everyone of maintaining their confidentiality and anonymity. This study represents the respondents as R1, R2, R3, R4, R5, and R6. Three boys were represented as R1, R2, and R3. Likewise, three girls were represented as R4, R5, and R6.

### **Results and Discussion**

I collected the data from six participants who have been studying M.Ed. in English Education in the fourth semester. The recorded verbatim of the participants was coded and decoded to develop the primary themes. Out of 10

basic themes, I developed five global themes, which have been discussed, analyzed, and interpreted below:

### **Self-regulated Learners**

Learning strategies are essential for the students to get success in learning. Particularly, learning strategies, such as cognitive, metacognitive, and social strategies, are very important for learners to achieve success in learning. If the learners are proficient in using all of the six learning strategies, viz. memory, cognitive, metacognitive, compensation, social and affective, they can be self-regulated learners. One of the respondents (R1) argued:

I use the new word with the help of an image or mental picture of new words to remember the words in the course of holding a conversation with my friends. I am immensely motivated to watch YouTube to produce native-like pronunciation in English. I keep on watching English movies on TV, laptop, and smartphone. Most of the time, I listen to BBC, which helps me to improve my pronunciation. I have developed native-like pronunciation with the help of language learning strategies. I have been successful to get 'B+' in the first and second semesters due to the employing of language learning strategies in learning phonetics and phonology, grammar, linguistic application, interdisciplinary readings, reading literature, etc.

It can be inferred that learners become self-regulated with the help of language learning strategies so they can achieve better academic performance. In a similar vein, R4 claimed:

language learning strategies are the main guidelines for the learners to achieve learning in the classroom. I sometimes use gestures to support my expression while conducting a presentation.

While reading critically, I use the compensation strategy to guess the meaning through the context with the help of internal components in the passage to get the meaning. I become self-regulated learners with the help of applying a metacognitive strategy which supports me to be a self-directed learner.

Zimmerman argues (1989) that the learners are self-monitors about the effectiveness of their learning strategies, methods, learning contents, syllabus, and their teachers. Language learning strategies help the learners to be more self-regulated. Likewise, the affective strategy supports them to be self-motivated learners through the help of rewards, motivating music, songs, games, and other means of entertainment to refresh exhausted minds (Oxford, 1990). It can be inferred that language learning strategies help second language learners to be self-regulated. Learning strategies enable them to learn second and foreign languages effectively.

#### **Easier, Faster, and More Effective Learners**

Language learning strategies make ESL and EFL learners learn easier and faster. If the ESL and EFL learners are familiar with applying language learning strategies appropriately, they can be successful learners. Any given learning task can be carried out easily and effectively if they use learning strategies as much as possible. One of the participants, R1, asserted:

learning strategies help the learners become successful learners since language learning strategies are special types of plans, actions, and techniques that are the means to achieve the goals. The complicated tasks of learning can be accomplished faster and easier if those tasks are shared among friends. The learner can accumulate diverse feedback and comments, which can be very useful in solving the problems.

Chamot (1987) defines that "learning strategies are techniques, approaches or deliberate actions that students take to facilitate the learning and recall of both linguistic and content area information" (p. 71). In this regard, one of the respondents, R5, stated:

language learning strategies will facilitate the learners to find out the gist by reading the text through guessing, using reasoning, and critical thinking skills. Having found the main central ideas of the text, the learner can proceed ahead through the write-up.

Specifically, successful learners are those learners who use language-learning strategies effectively. Learning of any area, whether language, science, mathematics, or content knowledge, can be learned fast, easily, and effectively with the support of language learning strategies. In this regard, Abbott (2006) argues that language learning strategies make the learners aware of employing different types of strategies, viz. top-down, bottom-up, and interactive strategies adequately.

### **Tackling Complicated Tasks**

Learning grammar, vocabulary, phonetics, phonology, linguistic application, literature, language power, or critical discourse is a very challenging task. Had the learners been strategically accustomed to language learning strategies, they would be able to solve any challenging tasks in the course of learning. In this regard, one of the respondents, R6 claims:

to be a successful learner academically, s/he should be accustomed to the language learning strategies to carry out some challenging tasks. Sometimes, learners can get meaning by guessing the meaning from the context. Some of the tasks cannot be solved by individual learners; rather, those tasks are to be solved

collaboratively. Social strategies are necessary to solve complex tasks in language learning.

Collaborative research and learning are in vogue as strategies for the way out of any complicated issues. Language learning strategies are beneficial for solving any problem in the course of learning. They are procedures that facilitate the learners to accomplish learning tasks. Language learning strategies are conscious and goal-directed in tackling unfamiliar tasks (Chamot, 2005). The respondent R3 asserts that "if the tasks are sequenced and graded in order scientifically, learners will use different types of techniques and way out to learn. Further, the task of learning should be arranged adopting comprehensible input of the Krashen". According to Krashen (1982), the learning task of every content in the syllabus is to be designed following the  $i+1$  formula in which each learning item is designed by adopting Krashen's principle of comprehensible input.

#### **Developing Self-assessment Skills**

Language learning strategies help learners develop the different types of action, techniques, vision, and mission. The learners can be a very thoughtful planner to complete the learning productively. One of the respondents, R1 contended:

proactive learners can use metacognitive strategies to have scientific planning of any task to carry out fruitfully. More importantly, the learners can evaluate their learning themselves using metacognitive learning strategies. They can monitor their academic achievement with the help of a metacognitive strategy.

Many successful learners have used metacognitive strategies to find out how much they have learned without the help of an external assessor of their academic achievement. In a similar vein, another respondent, R4, stated:

learning strategies are paramount for the students to develop their self-assessment skills for their academic achievement. The learners can identify their strengths and weaknesses in the course of learning. The skills of self-assessment make the learners insightful learners.

Metacognitive strategies are planning, self-monitoring, and self-evaluating (Oxford, 1990). From the data provided by the respondents, it can be inferred that there are a lot of advantages of being educated with language learning strategies. Metacognitive strategy is very useful for ESL and EFL learners to be successful learners academically.

### **Enhancing Cooperation and Collaboration in Learning**

Language learning strategies inspire the learners to be cooperative and collaborative learners. Specifically, female students are directed by social and affective language learning strategies. One of the respondents, R4, asserted:

when I could not understand any work individually, I take help from my friends collaboratively. I generally understand some issues of language and power and critical discourse analysis through discussion in the group. Language learning strategies help to enhance cooperation and collaboration in learning.

Female learners prefer employing social strategies in developing their learning. Social strategies can be developed through posing questions, collaborating, cooperating, and empathizing with each other (Oxford, 1990). Some language learning strategies are inevitable to develop cooperation and collaboration in learning.

### **Conclusion**

Language learning strategies help the second language learners to be self-regulated learners who can develop their abilities to be independent learners, make the ESL and EFL learners learn easily, fast, and effectively, help them

tackle the complicated task, develop self-assessment skills and enhance cooperation and collaborative learning. Language learning strategies are essential for ESL and EFL learners to be smart language learners. All learners must apply adequate language learning strategies compatible with their learning styles and personalities in the course of learning. The introvert and self-judging learners can use cognitive and metacognitive strategies. Likewise, extrovert, frank, and friendly learners can apply social and affective learning strategies to make their learning effective and successful. Language learning strategies are beneficial for learners to be successful. There should be practices of applying learning strategies based on the learning styles of each learner in the language classroom to make the pre-service teachers experts in this regard.

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### **Policy Implementation Challenges of Special/Inclusive Education in Nepal**

Rabindra Shiwakoti

Tribhuvan University

#### **Author Note**

Dr. Rabindra Shiwakoti is an Associate Professor of Foundations of Education at the Central Department of Education, Tribhuvan University, Nepal. He is a teacher and research guide to M.Ed., M.Phil, and Ph.D. students at Tribhuvan University. He has participated in several national and international seminars and conferences on educational and social issues. He contributes to General Education, Special Needs Education, and Inclusive Education policy for the National Planning Commission, Ministry of Health and Population, Ministry of Women, Children, and Senior Citizens. He also serves as a Subject Committee member of Tribhuvan University and Pokhara University, a Faculty Board member of Purbanchal University, and Secretary of the Center for Educational Research and Social Development (CERSOD).

Correspondence to this article should be addressed to Rabindra Siwakoti, Tribhuvan University. Email: [rabindra.siwakoti@cded.tu.edu.np](mailto:rabindra.siwakoti@cded.tu.edu.np)

### Abstract

This study critically analyzed Nepal's policy implementation challenges of special/inclusive education. Using qualitative data collected through document analysis, interviews, and focus group discussions, this study is based on the premises of qualitative research design under the interpretative paradigm followed by critical interpretive design to analyze and interpret the field data. For this, 15 (fifteen) policy experts from the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology, Department of Education, university professors, and 11 (eleven) headteachers from 6 (six) special and 5 (five) integrated schools, and special education council members and members of disabled related organizations were purposively selected as the informants. Furthermore, inadequate human resources, lack of necessary budgetary provision, and low level of awareness are the major challenges of special education in Nepal. There is a lack of a separate special education policy in the foundation period, and the responsibility and authority of relevant stakeholders are not explicitly stated. At the practice level, the researcher found a gap in the inductive action plans for implementation across the central, provincial, and local levels of government of Nepal. It was also found that there was no coordination among the Ministry of Education and other line ministries for the implementation of existing policy and provisions. This study implies that coherent policy-making is required through consultation with the relevant stakeholders from the central, provincial, and local levels so that there is a minimum gap in power-sharing among agencies at different levels of governance. Such attempts will ease the implementation of macro policies into the micro contexts.

*Keywords:* dimension, policy theory, challenges, implementation, special education, Nepal

**Policy Implementation Challenges of Special/Inclusive Education in Nepal**

The modern education system of Nepal started in the 1950s. In the series of the educational commission, Nepal National Educational Planning Commission (NNEPC, 1956) was the first and the most important education commission in the context of Nepal. The NNEPC has suggested that the Government of Nepal ensure universal and free primary education (Ministry of Education, 1956). After ten years, the All Round National Education Committee (ARNEC) was formed in 1966. This commission opened the straight discussion of special education by including specialized teaching for crippled, blind, deaf, and dumb. The commission's report suggested providing training and certification to entrust these trained people with the responsibility of working with children with disability (Kafle, 2002). Nepal adopted National Education System Plan (NESP) in 1971 as another previous plan has categorically described the role of the government in the extension of special education in the country by recognizing both need and importance.

In this context, NESP was the first systematic endeavor to formulate education policy in Nepal. The plan suggested establishing a Special Education Council as an apex body for running special education programs under the Ministry of Education and Culture. This Plan accepted the accountability and responsibility of the state in special education and was established Special Education Council (1973) under the chairmanship of the Education Minister. The council had taken total responsibility for Special Education in Nepal. In this context, it was later developed to provide education to disabled children and make them survive in society. The Rotary Club had sent a person to the USA for one-month teacher training. After returning to Nepal, he established a school for blind children in the Lalitpur district of Nepal. Unfortunately, the school soon closed (Research Centre for Educational Innovation & Development, 2004) because of the financial problem. Similarly, Isabel Grant, a blind American

woman, visited Nepal. She had requested the related persons about disabilities to run the integrated class for the blind children.

After that, teachers of Laboratory School and student teachers of the College of Education were provided teacher training in relation to teaching children with visual impairment in 1994. In the same year, a few blind children were admitted to the Laboratory School, and since then, the integrated education program has been started. In the year 1996, the school for deaf students was established in Bal Mandir, Naxal in Kathmandu. Mr. Khagendra Basnet, who is himself physically disabled, took initiation and successfully established the Nepal Blind and Disabled Association in Nepal. The association had advocated for special education in Nepal and was able to establish Nirmal Child Development Centre in 1980 for mentally disabled children. In 1977, the Government of Nepal established Social Welfare National Coordination Council (SWNCC) to support children with disabilities. All the special education programs were started to run under the Social Welfare National Coordination Council. Due to the initiation of this platform, the Special Education Policy (1996) came into effect in Nepal.

Furthermore, after the restoration of multiparty democracy in 1990, the Government of Nepal formed the National Education Commission (NEC) in 1992. NEC was mandated to review the current education system and suggested changes to address people's demands in the changed context (Ministry of Education, 1992). The commission identified caste and gender disparities in education and suggested special provisions for physically and mentally disabled people. Similarly, High-Level National Education Commission (HLNEC) was formed in 1998, and it advocated for ensuring the effective implementation of recommendations of the previous commissions. The report of HLNEC (1998) recommended the establishment of disability-friendly special education for children with disabilities (Ministry of Education, 1998).

The Non-Formal Education Policy (2006) has arranged the special provisions for special as well as inclusive education. The policy primarily focuses on implementing inclusive education by ensuring the access and quality of education through the non-formal education system. This concern has been well stated in Article 31 of the Constitution of Nepal (2015) as a right to education. This article also ensured compulsory basic education and free education up to the secondary level and ensured education for the economically marginalized people (Nepal Law Commission, 2015). The results of ensuring education as a human right were the contribution made by the United Nations Convention on the rights of the children (1989); United Nations standard rules (1993), the Salamanca conference (1994), the Jomtien declaration (1990) and Dakar framework for action (2000). The national special education policies were the results of postulates and provisions set by the international community for Education for All (EFA).

The Government of Nepal has changed the current focus from policy to practice and has emphasized quality education by mainstreaming those marginalized and those in need of special education. In Nepal, it is estimated that approximately 2 percent (1.94%) of the population are disabled (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2012). There are only 380-resource classes for the blind, deaf with hard of hearing, and intellectual disability. Thirty-two special schools and 22 integrated schools are operated to educate disabled children (Ministry of Education, 2017) across the country. Currently, in Nepal, there are 13 schools for intellectual disabilities, 13 schools for the deaf, one school for the physically disabled, and one school for blind students. Most importantly, like a global ideological shift in educational discourse, the discourse of special needs education was initially started in Nepal. Despite several efforts, the existing situation of special education in Nepal has not improved in an intended manner to ensure access to and quality education for children with special needs.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The Government of Nepal has been formulating different educational policies by targeting the quality education of all children, including children with disabilities, for five decades. The Government of Nepal has been formulating various policies and plans (National Education System Plan –1971, Education Act-1971, Special Education Policy-1996, Special Education Operation Guidelines-2004, Inclusive Education Policy for Disabled People-2017) for a long time, but large numbers of children do not have access to basic education yet. According to Thapa (2012), the government promotes an inclusive education policy to provide education to all sorts of children without discrimination, but the children with disability have not got the complete support they need, and many schools are unprepared to teach these children.

Similarly, in the country, a large number of children with disabilities are out of school; some of them are in segregated homes, and; the rest of all are in regular schools studying with normal children, but our regular schools do not have a disabled-friendly environment to address diversity (Human Rights Watch, 2011). The schools do not have the disabled-friendly infrastructure and supporting teaching materials (Shrestha, 2017). In this context, a few major representative questions are: Do the policies work in favor of the person with disabilities, disadvantaged, and marginalized groups? Does the policy structure represent the needs and problems of persons with disabilities? Are the formulated policies implemented in an intended manner? What steps need to be followed to make special educational policy more effective? This study, therefore, was based on exploring these policy-related questions, and it also advocated the necessity of the study in the context of developing countries, especially in the case of Nepal.

After the Education for All (EFA) 1990, special needs students have been learning in the regular classroom with other students, but the progress has still been very slow. The researcher has chosen this concern as a research problem from these

situations. Since this research explores the current challenges of special education policies and draws implications for further improvement, it is important to dig out the challenges of special education and the gaps in the policies and their implementation in real situations. This research also identifies the stakeholders' attitudes and their views toward the current policy. By reflecting on those ideas, this study's realistic and more practical results will ultimately be fruitful for the total improvement of the current special education policies and its implication in Nepal.

### **Methodology**

This study is based on the premises of the qualitative research design under the interpretative paradigm. In this regard, the study followed a critical interpretive design or approach to analyze and interpret the field data. The data was mostly gathered through the qualitative research tools, and analysis and interpretation of the study are made on the basis of the theories and the understandings obtained through sociocultural and educational contexts. In this context, fifteen policy experts were selected from the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology, Department of Education, and university professors for an in-depth interview. Similarly, eleven headteachers of special and integrated schools of Kathmandu valley and four education council members were selected for focus group discussion. In this study, the schools are selected from rural and urban settings using the purposive sampling method based on access and convenience to the school taken as a study sample. In this study, the key informants were the policy experts from the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology, the Department of Education, and universities. The details of the informants are presented in table 1 below.



**Table 1***List of Informants*

Districts	Schools		Informants	Number of informants
	Special	Integrated		
Kathmandu	3	2	Head Teachers	5
Bhaktapur	2	1	Head Teachers	3
Lalitpur	1	2	Head Teachers	3
Organizations			Policy experts (including	5
Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology			Special Education Council members)	
Department of Education			Policy experts (including	5
			Special Education Council members)	
National Federation of the Disabled-Nepal			Special Education Council members	2
Blind Association of Nepal			Special Education Council members	2
University professors			Policy experts (including	5
			Special Education Council members)	

In this study, the researcher used document analysis, interview protocols, and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) guidelines to explore policy implementation challenges of special/inclusive education in Nepal. The researcher directly collected the materials and reviewed them for a basic source of information. After reviewing these documents, they served as the basic source of information about design, activities, and processes, and they gave ideas about important questions to pursue through more direct observations and interviewing (Patton, 1990; Punch, 2005).

Similarly, policy experts from the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, and the Department of Education used diverse, in-depth interview protocols to collect information related to policy implementation challenges of special/inclusive education in Nepal. The researcher consulted and discussed with policy experts and headteachers and developed interview guidelines. The researcher also conducted pilot testing of interview guidelines with some policy experts for the reliability and validity of the contents. Focus group discussion (FGD) guidelines were arranged to carry out discussions with the special education council members representing the National Federation of Disabled Nepal and Blind Association of Nepal to get the required information about the policy implementation challenges of special/inclusive education in Nepal. At the time of FGD, the researcher has provided the open opportunity to the informants for their independent opinions without any biases.

For data collection, the researcher visited the sampled organizations and schools as an uninvited guest to earn trust and establish a good relationship with the informants. After collecting the data, the gathered data were analyzed and interpreted thematically, connecting them with the policy theory. In this regard, the principal mode of analysis has generated the themes from the raw data or done by developing categories. According to the research objectives, the general thematic categories were deduced. The thematic categories were generated from multiple readings of the collected raw data. The results of the study depend on the information collected about the policy implementation challenges of special education/inclusive education in Nepal. Every activity of the research work was undertaken in a common natural setting, and their relation was analyzed through both primary and secondary data.

### **Results and Discussion**

Education policy implementation is a field of investigation and put into practice for decades has amounted to a type of national look for the development of

special education policies. Education has become a big budget and also high-stakes policy arena in developing countries like Nepal. Education orders or commands a lion's allocation of state and local budgets to levels that ask for hard queries about education policies' feasibility and supplementary value. The realities of schooling in different communities countrywide recommend that those paying attention to improving the quality of education policy implementation should focus not simply on what conditions if any, different education policies get implemented and work. Following are the policy implementation challenges of special/inclusive education in the context of Nepal.

### **Inadequate Human Resources for the Promotion and Development of Special Education**

Nepal has no trained and resourceful human resources to conduct the identification of disability classification. The Government of Nepal has been unable to classify the proper types of disabilities due to the absence of appropriate tools. In this context, the researcher took an in-depth interview with the policy experts from Tribhuvan University. One of the policy experts from Tribhuvan University said:

I am not satisfied with the policies implementation before 1996 in the country. The special education council failed to reform the existing special education policy and was unable to prepare the concrete implementation guidelines for effective policy implementation. The budgetary allocation in the special education sector was the main challenge in relation to the policy implementation in the country.

From the above explanation, the real policy experts who are frequently involved in policy formulation are not satisfied with budgetary allocation and policy implementation. They are not convinced about the duties and responsibilities of the Special Education Council.

**Lack of Necessary Budgetary Provision and Low Level of Awareness in the Special Education Sector**

The lack of a necessary budget for special education is the main challenge in formulating the appropriate policy and its implementation in our country. The government of Nepal has allocated the national budget for education under 20 percent of the total budget. So the special education budget seems inadequate for effective policy implementation in an intended manner. The previous government has failed to allocate adequate budgetary amounts to the special education sector of Nepal. The lack of adequate budget in the special education sector and low awareness of educating children with a disability created big challenges in implementing special education in Nepal.

**Lack of Separate Special Education Policy in the Foundation Period**

Special Education Council 1973 was the supreme body for formulating policies, guidelines, and implementation strategies in the country. There was no separate special education policy during the foundation period, but some provisions for special education were made in the Education Act 1971. The Special Education Policy 1996 is the first formal legal policy document in the special education sector in Nepal. This policy has been in place for more than twenty years in the history of special education in Nepal. In this context, the researcher conducted an in-depth interview, majority of the policy experts opined that the implementation aspect of this policy was satisfactory, but some of the stakeholders reported that there was a small gap between the policy document and its implementation in the country.

**Political Instability Creates a Transitional Situation in Special Education Sector**

The political instability created uncertainty in policy formation, reform, and implementation. The political structural stability has also created barriers to good policy design and full implementation. Due to the effects of political structural stability, the government of Nepal failed to address the global assumptions and

postulates signed at the governmental level. This issue remains a major challenge in special education in Nepal. In addition, the policy could cover only a small chunk of the disability sector. The formulated special education policy has helped increase the awareness and access of disabled children and empowered Nepalese society. The implementation of this policy also established the trend of admitting disabled children into the school system.

### **Lack of Necessary Coordination Between the Ministry of Education and Other Line Ministries**

The major challenge of this policy was its failure to establish the coordination between the Ministry of Education and other line ministries (Ministry of Federal Affairs, Ministry of Woman, Children and Senior Citizen, and Ministry of Health, etc.) who were working in the areas of welfare for the disabled people. The stakeholders failed to make effective coordination for policy formulation and its implementation. The researcher has conducted FGD with the Special Education Council members and headteachers of special and integrated schools in the sample districts. One of the headteachers of special school from Bhaktapur district said:

This policy helps to bear the salary of 278 teachers and 150 non-teaching staff from the special school of Nepal. This contribution from Special Education Council was the milestone for the extension and promotion of Special education in Nepal. The implementation of the Special Education Policy (1996) was completely based on the right based approach in the special education sector.

The government of Nepal is still focusing on the basic needs of the Nepalese people and spending their capacity to increase the living standard of people. However, some strategies were not successfully implemented as intended because of the lack of good coordination between the Ministry of Education and other line Ministries which were related to the welfare of disabled people.

### **Lack of Clarity on the Responsibility and Authority of Stakeholders**

Nepal has just introduced the federal concept, but there is no clear-cut provision for allocating the distribution of authority to three levels of government in Nepal. Currently, Nepal's state and local governments are still waiting for the policy decision from the central government. It seems that the stakeholders are confused about taking the authority to implement this policy in the full phase. The budgetary issues are also raised to implement this policy. In this context, the researcher conducted the focus group discussion with the special education council members from disabled-related organizations and headteachers of special and integrated schools. One of the renewed special education council members of a disability-related organization said:

The state and local governments have tried to escape from their responsibility and accountability to extend the special education in Nepal. There is no clear-cut implementation guideline for provincial and local government in our context. Even though, implementation of this policy is in the initial phase, it is better to wait for its outputs and results.

Common ownership for the implementation of existing special education policy at all those levels of government should be developed. The state and local level government should take responsibility for monitoring and evaluating the special education programs.

### **Inclusive Education Policy 2017 not Addressing the Philosophy of Full Inclusion**

Finally, the existing Inclusive Education Policy 2017 incorporated the values of social justice, equity, and inclusiveness, as indicated in the Salamanca Conference (1994). The policy has caught the spirit of the United Nations Convention on the Right of a Person with Disability (2006) in the line of special education policy formulation in Nepal. Indeed, the policy has been a push factor for shifting towards inclusive education from special education. In this regard, it would be better if inclusive

education could be run through special and integrated mechanisms until the construction of disability-friendly infrastructure. When we have the availability of disabled-friendly infrastructure, then it can be run either way. In this context, we are not able to go into full inclusion in the current situation without arranging the provision of special education for children with deaf and hard of hearing.

### **Conclusion**

Before 1996, the council worked as an apex body for policy formulation and policy implementation for the development of special education in Nepal. The special education policy 1996 was no specific policy implementation schedule but made a provision for special schools, integrated schools, and resource classes. The policy was partly successful in addressing the dimension of policy theory. However, the political instability caused a transitional situation in policy formulation and failed to prepare clear-cut guidelines for effective policy implementation in the country. The efforts made for the real development of special education were not adequate to provide access and quality of special/inclusive education to disabled people. Due to a lack of necessary budgetary provision, the policy failed to implement the policies and programs of special education in the context of Nepal. The policy failed to establish the coordination between the Ministry of Education and other line ministries (Ministry of Federal Affairs, Ministry of Woman, Children and Senior Citizen, and Ministry of Health, etc.) working on welfare for disabled people. The current inclusive education policy has its details action plan for its implementation in its document. However, it was found that state and local governments are reluctant to take the implementation responsibility and accountability to extend special education in Nepal.

### **Implications**

The central government should draft a clear-cut policy and course of action to keep away from the overlap of power-sharing among different agencies to implement the special education programs in the school. The first basic level implications of the

policy are that we have to conduct the discussion sessions among the special education stakeholders and then reach a conclusion on whether the special/inclusive education policy is appropriate for implementation. The central government should be responsible for policy-making, and the provincial government should be responsible for materials production and curriculum formulation. Likewise, the local level body should be responsible for policy implementation and monitoring and evaluating the programs related to special/inclusive education in the country.

Indeed, we have to increase access to reach the goals of full inclusion by arranging disabled-friendly infrastructure and environment. There should be research, evidence, and practice-based policy reform mechanisms and a policy evaluation and review system. The central government should take responsibility for special education until adequate human resources at the provincial and local levels are developed. The government must initiate establishing Disability Right Commission (DRC) at the central level to develop disabled-friendly infrastructure to reach the destination of full inclusion. Finally, there should be a provision for Residential Schools, an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), Transitional Planning, and an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) in the policy to enhance the promotion of the special education sector in our context. The current policy needs to encompass the Response to Intervention (RTI) strategies, home-school collaboration, and continuous support for using modern assistive devices in the instructional process.



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**Decentralization of Corruption in the Education Sector: An Analysis of Anti-Graft Reports**

Shak Bahadur Budhathoki

Lifelong Learning Mandala 2020

**Author Note**

Mr. Shak Bahadur Budhathoki is a member of Lifelong Learning Mandala 2020, a loose forum of development professionals, researchers, teachers, lawyers, journalists, and social workers. He worked at Mercy Corps Nepal as an Education Advisor for 3.6 years based in Dhangadhi, Kailali. He also worked at Martin Chautari, a non-state research institution based in Kathmandu, as an Associate Researcher for seven years, undertaking research projects focusing on Nepal's education sector. His scholarly contributions focus on various facets of Nepal's school education sector.

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Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Shak Bdr. Budhathoki. Email: [budhathokishakbahadur@gmail.com](mailto:budhathokishakbahadur@gmail.com)

**Abstract**

The Commission for the Investigation of Abuse of Authority (CIAA) annual report points out that complaints related to the education sector for financial misuses occupy the largest share consistently in the past few years. In this context, the paper aims to draw on types and patterns of educational corruption in Nepal in the context of education decentralization since 2000. Further, it interprets how it takes place and its associated factors. Undertaking the qualitative content analysis of annual reports of CIAA and Office of the Auditor General (OAG) of Nepal between 2010 and 2015, this article portrays financial irregularities taking place consistently under construction work, teacher salary, and student-related grants - showing or allocating more funds, releasing additional teacher salary and inflating student numbers. The existing literature on education decentralization and corruption entails various factors for financial mismanagement - lack of local capacity, elite capture of public funds, etc. Using education decentralization as a theoretical lens (McGinn & Welsh, 1999), this paper argues that poor monitoring and lack of policy implementation are major factors for the misuse of education finance in Nepal, coupled with complex procedural aspects of the public fund flow system. Thus, an adequate support system, especially during the early phase, can facilitate the decentralization of education and combat corruption.

*Keywords:* educational decentralization, corruption, public education finance, support system, qualitative content analysis, Nepal

### **Decentralization of Corruption in the Education Sector: An Analysis of Anti-Graft Reports**

In the past, corruption in the education sector was a huge moral crime because the school was considered a temple of goddess *Saraswati* – the goddess of knowledge and education. Hence, people were ready to donate to educational temples to create a learning environment. However, in recent years, this sacred value attached to educational institutions is gradually declining as people intend to earn money from these institutions abusing the public authority entrusted to them.

As per the annual reports of CIAA<sup>6</sup> (Commission for the Abuse of Authority), the largest share of complaints about the misuse of public resources as registered is consistently related to the education sector for the last three years (CIAA, 2016, p. 6). In fact, this reality reveals that the corruption cases in the education sector have hardly been reduced over the years despite attempts to curb it. On the contrary, the CIAA report points out that corruption mainly occurs in a mutual understanding between district and school level authorities (CIAA, 2014, p. 139). This happens when Nepal's education sector has been on the verge of decentralization since 2001, conferring different powers, including financial ones, to local stakeholders - the headteacher and school management committee chair assume major roles for managing and mobilizing public funds and resources at the school level. Given this context, what are the forms of educational corruption in the school education sector as portrayed in the annual reports of CIAA and OAG from 2011 to 2015 in the context of education decentralization? And what are the factors behind such acts of education corruption?

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<sup>6</sup>CIAA is the constitutional body established in 1991 to curb corruption and its tentacles in the country, investigating corruption cases as per the complaints filed against public authority and then recommending prosecution.

With the growing trend of decentralization of education globally during the last quarter of the twentieth century, there has been an ongoing scholarly debate about its linkages with corruption. The debates point in both directions – some argue decentralizing the education sector will structurally give way for financial misuses (Segal, 1997), while others point out it will reduce the potential for corruption (Grauwe, 2013). In general, it can be observed that the decentralization of education has given way to corruption, mostly in developing countries (Hallak & Poisson, 2007). Yet it is hard to generalize as it is often context-dependent and varies from one context to another.

The experience in other countries shows that strong supreme audit institutions lead to a good perception of corruption and vice versa (Brusca et al., 2017). Brusca et. al (2017) point out:

Moreover, our results evidence that New Zealand, Sweden, Slovenia, Norway, Germany, the US and the UK are countries with the strongest supreme audit institutions (SAIs) and the best perception of corruption. Conversely, Azerbaijan, Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Timor-Leste, Yemen and Cameroon have the worst audit systems and a bad perception of corruption. In Europe, mainly the North European and Anglo-Saxon countries have a positive score for the TI Corruption Perception Index and strength of SAIs; while the other countries – such as Bulgaria, Italy, Romania, Russia and Spain – are in the opposite situation (p. 13).

The lessons learned from other countries – that the existence of strong supreme audit institutions can help reduce corruption, thereby creating positive citizen perceptions – can be examined in the case of Nepal. OAG (Office of the Auditor General)- the supreme audit institution of Nepal that has been in existence since 1958 - undertakes the task of doing final external auditing of public sector

governance up to the district level (now up to local governments in federal structure). Then it presents the status of misuses in/among the parliament, civil society, and stakeholders.

From the very first OAG report of 1963, the issue of misuse of education funds surfaced, such as "more expenses on teacher salary than allocated budget,' 'salary expenses without receipt and appointment letter'" (OAG, 1963, p. 48) and so on. In the past, the scale of reported cases was limited. Whereas, in recent years, the annual reports cover more varied and comprehensive cases of misuses with many subtopics. For example, the sub-topics in recent reports include reconciling quota, extra expenditure, local allowance, per child fund, infrastructure construction, expenses for ghost schools, free education, etc. (OAG, 2015). The gradual increase in corruption cases over the years questions the relevance of the audit institution – whether it has contributed to maintaining financial compliance by pointing out anomalies between the legal framework and its practices. In the annual reports of CIAA and OAG, the terms 'misuse,' 'not abiding by rules,' and 'irregularity' are used, which refer to 'corruption' in one way or another. Hence, the terms are used interchangeably in this article as they point to some form of 'corruption' in general.

Drawing on the patterns/forms of educational corruption as portrayed in the annual reports and critiquing Nepal's education decentralization process, this article argues that lack of policy implementation rather than not having one in place, coupled with poor monitoring mechanisms, gives way to corruption at the local level. It further adds that the lack of adequate preparation and systematization of the decentralization initiatives fails in implementing policy as envisaged at the national level. In addition to the policy framework, a support system is required, especially during the early phase of the decentralization



process, as it often takes significant time to institutionalize and operationalize the system.

The next section of this paper provides a brief description of the research methodology adopted to pursue this research, followed by a review of literature pertaining to education decentralization and corruption. Then, analyses of misuse of public finance taking place in construction work, teacher salary, and student grants are made. It shows that financial irregularities are taking place mainly, inflating the cost of construction-related materials and releasing additional grants for teacher salaries and student-related grants. In the end, it draws some conclusions based on the discussions made in the paper.

### **Methodology**

This research adopts a qualitative research paradigm reviewing and analyzing annual reports of CIAA and OAG to contextualize corruption in the education sector. The context of statements/extracts from annual reports has been critically studied, observed, and interpreted in relation to the existing literature in the domain, attempting to make sense of them. Although corruption cases are a lived reality that exists in our society, it is difficult to undertake research on such issues of ethics and privacy. However, as the object of the study is published reports, the researcher had no obligation to take consent for quoting these statements.

This article is based on the qualitative content analysis of the annual reports of CIAA and OAG between 2011 to 2015. The annual reports are first to read to identify any instances of misuse of public finance in the school education sector, and then such instances are extracted as they are and compiled in a separate word file year-wise. In the next stage, the data as extracted are studied to identify consistent categories for the misuses to further analyze them. In this

sense, this research has adopted a data-driven approach for generating key concepts and categories (Schreier, 2012).

The limitation of this research is its coverage of contents – it intentionally looks at misuses of public finance in the education sector. As a result, the findings and conclusions show corruption in the context of education decentralization as guided by the research question – what the forms of misuse of public finance in the education sector are as portrayed in the annual reports of CIAA and OAG. This is also because the roles and responsibilities of the institution concern auditing, prosecuting, and curbing misuses of the state resources.

The secondary sources related to the research question are used to understand and analyze corruption cases in the education sector. These sources include newspapers, books, reports, gray literature available on google, and journal articles from various sources. The following section discusses the linkages between education decentralization and corruption briefly.

### **Education Decentralization and Corruption**

The term decentralization refers to "the exercise of substantial power at the local level on many aspects" (Florestal & Copper, 1997, p. 1). Globally, there was an upsurge of decentralization around the 1970s, and the reasons for this were the disintegration of centralized governments, financial globalization, and the emergence of new information and communication technologies to control systems (McGinn & Welsh, 1999). In general, the practice of decentralizing power and functions related to financial aspects in the education sector greatly varies across countries (Abu-Duhou, 1999).

The relationship between education decentralization and corruption is little coherent and generalizable as it manifests differently depending on the society, culture, time, and opportunity-specific contexts. As the degree and types of decentralization vary from one context to another, it is important to look at what

kind of decentralization will impact corruption, how, etc. Thus, contextualization of the nature and scale of the decentralization process is necessary before deriving any conclusions on the effects of decentralization and corruption.

Several studies have been undertaken in relation to education and corruption, but there is little focus on the linkages between education decentralization and corruption. As Fjeldstad (2004) opines, "While the literature on corruption has boomed, relatively few studies have been carried out that explicitly focus on the linkages between decentralization and corruption" (p. 2). This points out that the co-relationship between education decentralization and corruption remains to be an under-researched phenomenon. This is also true in the case of Nepal.

However, some scholars have documented that decentralization of education structurally gives way to corruption. Segal (1997), making reference to New York City public schools, argues:

Decentralized programs provide the tools for corruption: virtually unfettered control over large amounts of money and different levels of jobs. Such benefits offer high stakes to those interested in power or money, especially in areas where alternative routes to these amenities are limited. Because decentralized programs are a form of governance established in reaction to rigid central control, they tend to maximize local discretion and minimize oversight, making corruption easy to engage in and conceal (p. 143).

The decentralization process confers control over resources to the local actors, which could potentially be misused. Because decentralization emphasizes 'local discretion and minimizes oversight' (Segal, 1997, p. 143), it creates ground for corruption.

Nonetheless, in theory, the decentralization of education should contribute to decreasing corruption partly because the decision-making process is likely to be 'transparent' at the local level, as Graue (2013) states:

Arguably, decentralization will lead to less corruption: closer contacts between decision-makers and beneficiaries allows the latter more control and leads to stronger accountability on the part of the former, while at the local level decisions are made in a more transparent manner than in central ministries (p. 27).

Although the theory is such that it should have positive outcomes, it has both dimensions as an effective and ineffective tool to curtail corruption. In practice, there are a number of other constraints, practicalities, etc., which often make decentralization result in diverse manifestations in reality (McGinn & Welsh, 1999).

In many countries, financial mismanagements seem to be taking place more in non-wage or discretionary funds in the decentralized financing systems. For instance, it is uncovered that frauds occur on the voluntary funds even in England (Hallak & Poisson, 2007, p. 138-139), while the rate of misuse of non-wage funds is sixty-six percent higher than the fixed school grants in Zambia (Hallak & Poisson, 2007, p. 110). Although misuses occur even in teacher salary funds in Nepal, it seems to take place more on non-wage funds in line with the international experiences (Hallak & Poisson, 2007, p. 110), although no comparative study has been conducted in this area to date.

### **Financial Irregularity in Construction Work**

This section brings in different facets of financial misuses taking place in construction-related funds. In particular, showing or allocating more funds, violating the procurement act in purchasing goods, failing to prepare and submit a monitoring plan to higher levels/authorities, disbursing funds without construction

work, and not submitting the completion report for auditing indicate financial irregularities. The problems are compounded by the fact that the construction fund is released in the last trimester (during the last four months of the fiscal year), making it susceptible to misuse. Therefore, the process for the flow of funds functions poorly in Nepal, causing a risk for public finance.

During construction work- beginning from preparing cost estimates to other processes - the amount is exaggerated, pointing toward financial irregularities as in the annual report of CIAA (2012):

In preparing cost estimates for construction work, keeping details in record file after measurements, evaluating the work completion and preparing report, it is found that the sub-engineer of Rautahat Prem Chandra Jha, and engineers Dipendra Prasad Yadav and Binod Kumar Thakur has inflated amounts and rates, etc. To take departmental action against them, the commission has recommended District Development Committee/District Technical Office of Rautahat as per the decision of 18 May 2012 (p. 147).

Even though it is recommended to take departmental actions against such people involved in unethical acts, it is unclear in the report whether it is executed or not, thereby exposing the possibility of financial misuse.

Public funds are also misused in the process of construction work inflating expenditure amounts. The HT and SMC chair of Rautahat, for example, has shown extra - expenditure for construction materials. As reported in the CIAA report of 2012:

It is found that in constructing building instead of using six rods four rods are used and while leveling the school ground the rates are shown maximum high in comparison to the previous year. The extra expenditure shown for inadequate rods of 216.36 Kg at the rate of Rs. 64 per Kg

amounted to Rs. 13,847.04 and while leveling the school ground of 352.12 square kilometer with the difference of Rs. 122 amounted to Rs. 42,958.64 (p. 158).

This shows the irregularities in public funds occurring in the absence of effective supervision and monitoring mechanisms. In most cases, it is the HT and SMC chair who are involved in such misappropriations (Yadav et al., 2015). In Saptari district alone, sixty-five complaints are registered against HTs that shed light on this point (Dev, 2012).

Moreover, schools have violated the procurement act<sup>7</sup> while undertaking construction work. According to the CIAA (2015) annual report, to build a hall in a school in Kathmandu, the proposals had been called pasting news on the school's notice board instead of publishing news in the newspaper. As some of the schools did not follow the instruction of abiding by the public procurement act and law, DEOs are asked to draw the attention of the concerned HT and SMC chair. However, no information has been received about the execution of such recommendations. The existing provision envisions that direct procurement requires the formation of a construction committee, but more than one-fifth of schools did not form it for their construction activities (The World Bank, 2013). This means due processes are not followed, and hence there are possibilities for misuse of public finance.

Similarly, many DEOs have not submitted completion reports of construction work while doing auditing. The OAG reports of 2011, 2013, 2014, and 2015 consistently report that many DEOs have not submitted the completion report of construction work for a huge amount of public funds. This means construction work may not have occurred even if funds are disbursed. This again

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<sup>7</sup>The paper fixing takes place for procurement and construction work subverting the formal guidelines at the local level. This is done especially by the HT and SMC chair in most cases. See for example, The Asia Foundation (n.d.).

indicates the possibility of financial irregularity. In this way, although a huge amount of money is released for construction purposes, the work has not been accomplished accordingly, and the provisions to be followed during the construction work have not been observed duly. The complex procedure of the fund flow system seems to aggravate the construction work. More specifically, the construction budget is released towards the end of the fiscal year, which results in ineffective use of public finance (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, 2009). This also leads to problems such as not submitting the completion report, inflating the rates for construction work, and so on (The World Bank, n.d.). Therefore, it is necessary to look at the procedural aspects of construction work to examine how it occurs.

As discussed above, local powerholders in terms of construction-related activities, such as headteacher, SMC chair, engineers based at DEO, etc., are involved in corruption. In fact, they are the frontline service providers as per the current education policy. Thus, corruption has resulted primarily from public authority/power abuse, as in many other social and political sectors. As part of the decentralization process, powers and functions are conferred to local actors assuming that they understand the local context better than those in the center. However, this positive intention may hardly result in positive outcomes if local actors exercise a transparent and accountable decision-making process.

The Government of Nepal initiated the education decentralization process during the 2000s by introducing several policies and conferring several powers and functions to school-level stakeholders. As indicated above, school stakeholders often misuse their powers, which is in line with the argument of Segal (1997) in the context of New York City Public School. In the context of Nepal, on the one hand, the institutional capacity is still to be improved to make it more accountable, fair, and transparent, while citizen engagement in the issues of

public concern should be increased to maintain checks and balance. Doing this is likely to hold local stakeholders accountable and transparent and potentially decrease corruption cases.

### **Financial Irregularities Related to Teacher Salary**

This section provides various ways in which misuse of teacher salary funds takes place. In particular, financial misuses have occurred by not passing teacher salary reports and releasing additional, double, and ghost teacher salaries. The total number of cases of financial misuse related to teacher salary, as mentioned in the annual reports of CIAA and OAG, was fifty-eight between 2011 and 2015<sup>8</sup>. In fact, teacher salary<sup>9</sup> represents about eighty percent of the total education budget annually (Ghimire, 2019); hence, misuse of this significant chunk of the budget is a huge loss.

DEOs should pass a teacher salary report through the school-teacher's record office as per the policy. The salary report shows the details on the total number of teachers and total salary in the district. However, this has not been followed properly, pointing toward irregularities. According to the OAG report of 2014, "In the past, teacher salary reports had been passed for the permanent teachers working in the nineteen districts, but this year none of the districts have passed the teacher's salary report" (p. 232). Compared to the previous year, a decrease in the number of districts submitting salary reports to zero suggests possibilities for an increase in financial mismanagements. This means legal procedures are hardly followed in practice.

Similarly, teacher salaries are released for more than the actual number of teachers working in schools. According to the OAG report of 2012, "This year, thirty-nine DEOs have released Rs. 3,29,55,000 more than the approved teacher's

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<sup>8</sup>In order to extract the total number of cases of financial misuses, the reports were studied thoroughly, counting the numbers when there were such references related to teacher salary.

<sup>9</sup>The irregularities related to teachers have occurred even while appointing teachers. The head teachers are involved in such cases. See for example, Sah (2010) and Dev (2012).



quota and without subtracting the salary of retired teachers," (p. 318). This sort of story is also repeated in the OAG report of 2013 and 2014 with similar length and intensity. The MoE is asked to take departmental action against the DEO of Rukum for releasing more funds than the teacher quota (CIAA, 2012). This kind of misuse also occurs in other countries (Hallak & Poisson, 2007). Thus, the release of additional funds for teacher salary in CIAA and OAG reports show serious cases of financial misuse.

Financial misuse has also occurred as teachers draw double salaries remaining in two institutions at a time. The same management committee has appointed the same person in school and campus, giving double salary and allowance. In this case, CIAA has drawn the attention of the management committee not to repeat the same mistakes (CIAA, 2014). A similar story has occurred in the Tanahun district as it was found that a teacher was drawing a double salary at a time from school and higher secondary level (CIAA, 2015).

In some cases, DEOs have released a teacher's salary from the office itself without any teaching. According to the OAG report of 2011, "Against the article 133 of education regulation 2001, DEO of Bara has made payment of Rs. 11,03,000 for twelve teachers as salary instead of releasing it in the school's name," (p. 310). Releasing salary from DEO without any teaching is unethical and is the clear example of corrupt practices. The salary has been transferred for non-existent teachers in other countries as well.<sup>10</sup> This is partly because of insufficient data on the one hand and lack of transparency and corrupt practices on the other hand.

In some schools, the HT and others have worked as management heads and coordinators even after retirement and have enjoyed salary, allowance, and

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<sup>10</sup>For instance, five percent of the payroll of teachers went to ghost teachers in Honduras in 2000 and twenty percent of the salaries in Uganda in 1993 (Hallak and Poisson 2007, 110).

benefits. According to the CIAA report of 2015, "With regards to have received a regular allowance of forty thousand rupees as a management head even after retirement, DEO Kathmandu is asked to recover Rs. 3,72,225 additional amounts from Surya Raj Shakya within a month," (p. 470). This sort of action is against the existing education policy, and it is unreasonable to create a new position in the school and receive a salary and other benefits. This increases the risks of financial irregularity.

In conclusion, irregularities under teacher salary are repeated consistently over the years, and the major reason for such misuses is the lack of accurate data on teachers. This task falls under the jurisdiction of DEOs and now EDCU (Education Development and Coordination Unit) during the time, but they have failed to undertake this responsibility. In addition, teacher salaries are disbursed in the trimester, and the process of transferring funds follows different steps per the teachers' types and levels. This means the procedural aspect of releasing teacher salaries is complex and often makes public finance susceptible to misappropriations.

The cases of over-expenditure at the district level from DEOs to schools for teacher salary in various ways suggests that there exists a nexus between/among the local stakeholders for the repeated misuses because in the absence of their close relationship and mutual understanding, it is unlikely that the release of extra – public money would take place. As a significant proportion of expenditure on public finance takes place at the school level, corruption cases also occur at this level. Given the fact that school stakeholders seem to be having close cooperation for the misuses, it is partly decentralization of corruption in some ways in the context that citizens are hardly proactive to contribute for accountable and transparent public governance.

Although the basic purpose of decentralizing the education sector is to curb such practices because citizens and stakeholders know their context better and contribute to good governance, it little appears to translate in the contexts where social and economic context is poor. This is mainly because developing societies may have a web of social problems that may hinder even decentralization initiatives. And this should be the reason why developing countries encounter similar challenges in the decentralization process – that most of them have experienced undergoing misuse of public finance, unlike developed countries (Hallak & Poisson, 2007).

### **Misuse of Funds released based on Student Numbers**

The financial misuses also occur in the funds released based on student numbers. Specifically, PCF, textbook, and scholarship funds are misused, inflating student numbers, and in the name of ghost school (a school that does not exist), textbook, scholarship, and salary funds are transferred and misused repeatedly over the years. Repeating such acts over the years indicates that the system functions poorly.

According to the policy provision, salary and non-salary funds should be released based on the Flash Report. However, many DEOs release funds without it. According to the OAG report of 2011, "As DEOs of Rautahat, Dang, Mahottari, and Bara have not submitted social audits citing the unavailability of Flash Report, it is hard to believe that the funds released by them are accurate" (p. 311). This means the system does not have updated data, which is important for effective governance. Spending funds without determining student numbers is a serious issue because such expenses may not be accurate.

Some DEOs have released more funds under the PCF grant. DEO, Bajhang has released an additional amount of Rs. 44,50,000 for 55330 students and has released Rs. 11,01,000 for five schools for the second time after having

already released the money as per the policy (OAG, 2012). This sort of misuse of the PCF grant was found to have been made consistently in the years 2012, 2013, and 2014 in different districts. Inflating the number of students, textbooks, and scholarship grants have been misused (CIAA, 2014). The OAG reports of 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2015 consistently show that additional grants for textbooks have been released over the years. Thus, it is necessary to examine the effect of 'ghost' enrollments and 'ghost' teachers and leakage in PCF-based funds such as textbooks and scholarships (The World Bank, 2014, p. 15).

The CIAA and OAG reports show financial irregularity taking place for the ghost school<sup>11</sup> in the name of textbooks, scholarship, salary, allowance, and so on continuously over the years. According to the CIAA report of 2015 in the ghost schools of Terai districts, "The government aid is received for salary, allowance, administrative expenses, student scholarship, and physical construction and has been misused" (CIAA, 2015, p. *jha*). In such misconduct, it is found that MoE, DoE, RED, and DEOs have not fulfilled the responsibility of doing regular monitoring and supervision. DEO, HT, and Resource Persons, including SMC authorities, have been found involved in such irregularities. The pertinent question is why such acts occur continuously even after national monitoring agencies disclose them and why remedial measures are not taken up appropriately.

As discussed above, the lack of real-time data is one of the factors for misuse under student-related grants. The primary responsibility of maintaining data is of schools and DEOs and disburse funds accordingly and doing this could easily check fraudulent acts. Although the funds have to be released as per the Flash Report , it has not been done so. Therefore, the actors need to fulfill their

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<sup>11</sup>There are a lot of media reports about the ghost school scandal in Nepal. See for example, Biswakarma and Yadav (2010).

roles and responsibilities to translate policy into practice. There are examples that school finance is misused, inflating student numbers in other decentralized contexts of developing countries (Hallak & Poisson, 2007). Thus, the Nepal case is not a unique phenomenon.

The irregularity taking place consistently over the years, as presented and discussed above, indicates the institutionalization of corruption in Nepal's education sector. The systemic corruption is partly because bureaucracy has missed its roles and responsibilities and partly because of failure to implement policy. Further, this instance indicates how entrenched corruption is in our social, cultural, political, and administrative processes, and hence, it is difficult to root it out immediately, but it requires a long-term strategy for the purpose.

### **Conclusion**

With the decentralization of the school education sector in Nepal, corruption has also been decentralized over the past two decades. The district and school stakeholders have maintained close cooperation and linkages to abuse power conferred to them with the good intention that they would work to improve the existing condition. In doing this, the discretionary power given to local stakeholders is misused and abused instead of using it creatively based on their local context that would potentially contribute to better outcomes. This conclusion aligns with Segal (1997) that public authority is misused in the decentralized context in New York City Public School in the US.

The early years of the decentralization process are relatively confusing because the frontline authorities have little idea about doing things, which is a new experience for them. In this context, they need systematic support to bring them into the process, which is often missing in developing countries. Instead, the institutional process of the education sector is often found to be weak in the developing countries, which hinders smooth operationalization of the

decentralization process leading to the poor implementation of the system.

Although there is a huge body of literature on the poor implementation aspects of the decentralization process, there is little discussion on how government structures that exist for a longer period hinder or obstruct the decentralization process. That is what happened in Nepal.

Financial mismanagement has occurred in Nepal as legal/policy provisions are not followed by the concerned authority rather than not having a policy in place. This points out the need to enable local bodies/authorities to implement the existing policies effectively, including sanctions on those who do not follow policy provisions. In this way, decentralization on its own is unlikely to be systematically effective or ineffective. Instead, the stakeholders, actors, and their roles determine the nature and function of decentralization. Therefore, it is important to contextualize the decentralization process based on country-specific situations.

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**Give a Man a Fish: Reflections on the New Politics of Distribution:**

**A Book Review**

Kapil Babu Dahal

Tribhuvan University

**Author Note**

Dr. Kapil Babu Dahal  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9974-694X> is an assistant professor at the Central Department of Anthropology, Tribhuvan University, Nepal. His scholarly contributions are mainly in medical anthropology, development anthropology, ethnography, research philosophy, and gender. He is also the author of a book (2018), *Conflict, Gender and Body Politic in Nepal: Anthropological Engagement with the Threatened Lives and Well-Being of Women*. Washington, DC: Academica Press. Email: [kapil.dahal@cda.tu.edu.np](mailto:kapil.dahal@cda.tu.edu.np)

Book Title: Give a man a fish: reflections on the new politics of distribution

Author: James Ferguson

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Price: US\$ 24.95

Lewis Henry Morgan Lecture that Professor James Ferguson conveyed at the University of Rochester (UoR), New York, in October 2009 provided the foundation for this book. It contains eight chapters coherently linked with and encompassing several social, cultural, economic, and historical facts that the author claims provide justifiable grounds for the emergence of direct cash distribution. Pointing to the weaknesses of the productivist view on development, Ferguson primarily shows his concerns and emphasizes the need to promote what he regards as the New Politics of Distribution emerging in various parts of the global South, including South Africa and Namibia Brazil, India, and Mexico. The book has come up with a very brief and sharp foreword by Thomas Gibson, the Editor of Lewis Henry Morgan Monograph Series.

In the book, Ferguson approaches the Southern African regional history from his long academic engagement, which has come up through the efforts of review and synthesized works aiming to bring forth the essence of the regional literature for consideration into the wider sphere. In doing so, he has reexamined and sometimes reinterpreted some of his prior ethnographic research. Unlike many other anthropologists, Ferguson has presented his critical axiological position showing the possible path to envisioning futures through the advocacy of direct cash distribution. This axiological stance places him clearly in the position of radical anthropology.

To reach the advocacy, he begins to criticize the productionist ideology and the associated practices inherent in neoliberal capitalism and Marxist approaches. Capitalism always shows the primacy of people in labor, and working-class “able-bodied” men are considered capable of supporting themselves through their labor. Any plan to distribute resources beyond it goes against the “incentive to work.” Considering the increasing size of the unemployed population, he is not satisfied with such an ideological position; the

assumptions of Marxists also fall into this, that only the wage-earning workers are entitled to a share of the social product. For Marx, distribution was “completely determined by the production structure,” a “product of production.” However, Ferguson sees that “before a man can produce, he must be nursed, i.e., the receipt of unconditional and unearned distribution and care must always precede any productive labor.” Here, Ferguson weighs the notion of direct cash transfers and basic income to unveil a mediating theoretical approach to the nature of state, money, justice, value, society, and welfare.

For Ferguson, the real big “development” story of the last 20 years is not microcredit but “the rise and rise of social protection” (p.2) manifested as providing small amounts of money to needy people. This has happened away from the imagination of marketization and neoliberalism. Moreover, such a system of cash grants to the poor is expanding mostly with the support of established development institutions like the World Bank, which are repeatedly taken as the prime advocates and pillars of neoliberalism. Ferguson regards this as a new politics of distribution’ which openly contests the central idea of the classic welfare states, which has, in essence, expanded the “Quiet Revolution” across the globe.

He is not happy with the critics and political parties that they were only articulate towards the ills of neoliberalism but could not emerge advocating any substantial policy departure. The newly introduced direct cash transfer system, what Ferguson regards as a viable alternative path, also demands new ways of thinking in the context of South Africa. Despite considering black populations as sources of labor, the state control of black movement, and residents made efforts to solve the problems compelling the labor to remain “migrant”. This implied the cost of social reproduction, such as raising children and caring for the sick and aged in the rural areas, creating a condition of “super-exploitation,” which

aggrieved the workers in their destination and their family and communities at their place of origin. Therefore, Ferguson strongly argues that a new beginning to replace the apartheid should commence at the place of those working for the capitalists and with the poor in the rural margins.

One's ability to get access to cash depends largely not on his/her ability to work but on the ability to claim a condition showing the need. This approach of direct cash transfer is novel and a path breaker in a sense it is non-contributory; it is paid to the beneficiaries out of national treasury funds without any reference to their prior "contributions." on the other hand, it is not meant to substitute for other economic activities but functions as a catalyst. It provides security to the livelihoods of the marginal people and access to wage employment. Even the "less developed" countries could adopt this measure extensively nationwide as welfare institutions. Likewise, it is not meant to govern or police the structure of domestic life; it supports the individual without considering his marital, age, and gender status. Ferguson links this kind of distributive practice with how other societies have organized differential distributive institutional arrangements across time and space. He sees that sharing and caring were there among the hunters and gatherers through obligatory rules, whereas gift-giving/receiving and ceremonial gifting institutions like *Kula* and *Potlach* were also cultural norms for some others. They all look different from what is presently considered the usual way of accessing goods and services via the market. Even in the US, many people get support from distributive provisions. Therefore, distributive practice and distributive politics are acquiring a new centrality.

Ferguson examines the famous Chinese proverb, "Give a man a fish, and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish, and you feed him for a lifetime" (p.35) in chapter one. Here, he shows that the proverb sums up certain development philosophies rooted in productionist fundamentalism, "the object of

development work is transformation, not charity, and that recipient of aid should get productive skills and the opportunity to work, not handouts and dependency” (p.35). Moreover, he points out numerous discrepancies inherently accompanying the proverb, such as gender inequality, underestimating the ancient indigenous knowledge and thus diverting the shortcomings into the sphere of knowledge from that of the material means, and indirectly disparaging the significance of distribution.

He has beautifully presented how “the invention of social” took the place of what previously used to be considered “moral problems” to understand the (problematic) social situation. This process expanded with the emergence of Durkheim’s idea of “social fact,” in which he pointed out the need to understand a social phenomenon through other social phenomena. This process was further accelerated once it got the real substance of the “avalanche of numbers” in the twentieth century to look at the pattern in the social sphere. Ferguson argues that “welfare states” were invented with the set of techniques for managing “the social” and family became the key sites of intervention. Later on, “the death of social” opened the pathways for the market to take part in adding the shortcomings of the state. He sees that Southern African society is also not ideologically different from the above characterization of society which he critically regards as Eurocentric mainly because of the colonial and Christian ideological influence. But, he shows that the welfare state has a distinctive history in Africa, mainly in the settler-colonial societies of southern Africa, and this typical and extremely racialized history provided ground for the emergence of a new kind of social protection. To get rid of the white biased and moral policing approach, the direct cash transfer measure to the individuals comes out as a remedy to the income deficiency of the individuals who may not be found in the conventional form of a proper family. He optimistically claims that the use of

biometrics and smart cards can facilitate providing cash directly and transparently to the deemed beneficiaries. I have found that, in chapter two, Ferguson is capable of showing how the notion of society is rooted in the Southern African historical context, and thus new distributive measure becomes culturally relevant for the future distributive programs as well.

It is a general idea that people make their livelihood by being “productive” (p.89). However, the reality for all people in all the regions may not be that. Therefore, Ferguson states that distribution is also an important social activity, not only an economic one. In this pretext, in chapter three, he shows how distributed livelihood has become a major source of survival for significant numbers of people across the world who are not embraced within the conventional production sphere. Fast-growing cities and massive migration of people to cities have created a situation in which only small portions are involved in the formal employment sector in Southern Africa. He is not satisfied with the Marxists' labeling of “lumpen proletariat” and the “informal economy” as these terms and concepts are not able to capture the ground reality of these larger folks. Thus he proposes to use the term “survivalist improvisation” to denote the livelihood of people such as beggars, thieves, and visiting employed kin who rely more on direct distributive practices making claims of others' resources. As shown by the many scholars, Ferguson presents that different ways of distributive labor can broadly be divided into six, unlike clusters that include land and landholdings, migration and movement, sex and love, kinship and sharing, work and business, and death and funerals. The sphere of distributed livelihood embraces even beyond the people at the margin and it has been a key foundation for livelihood in Southern African regions and thus offers a solid historical and cultural base for the direct cash payment approach.

Often the academic left makes objections to the direct cash transfer approach as reformist agenda, arguing that it ultimately supports the neoliberal process that eventually erodes other social relations. Ferguson regards that it is easy to say that traditional or pre-capitalist societies were founded on virtuous relations than market relations. Borrowing the idea of Mauss, Ferguson argues that a modern society without market relations is inconceivable and claims that nonmarket relations were never inherently altruistic but were filled with “powerful elements of egoism, self-interest, competitive striving, and antagonism”. Here, Ferguson reminds us that an error committed by the political left is that they regard money and the market as capitalism. Instead, in chapter four, he argues that markets are a great source of information to know about the need of others. And, in fact, along with the political left, aid mechanisms and the state machinery time and again failed to understand this. Moreover, he strongly believes that money and the market do not erode intimate social bonds; rather, cash relation facilitates the maintenance of social bonds. Therefore, he regards the minimum quantum of income as social relations and bonds lifeline.

Chapter five traces a regional history linked with Ngoni invasions in which the defeated people were incorporated into their band but the form of the dependent. Desire to have more followers continued rooted in such historical context, later became the marker of one’s higher status even in the “liberated” and postcolonial societies, and the latter actively sought such “hierarchical and dependent relationships” with the elites, power holders, and propertied class of people. One can assume that becoming “dependent” shakes the imagination of “independent” and “autonomous” masculinity. On the contrary, emerging from such a long history, the willingness to have a dependent relationship with well-placed people is not the story of the inapt old-time and bigoted vestige of the



authoritarian past but a contemporary response to current social and economic conditions situations.

One of the most elusive proclamations expressed in The Freedom Charter of South Africa for Ferguson is the provision that “the people shall share the country’s wealth”. It is because it does not say how to materialize this. Initially, people regarded this as the nationalization of the national resources and the resources owned by the White propertied classes, but the African National Congress, the leading political force, did not take the country in that direction. The people, especially those excluded from wages, were not satisfied with what came in the form of social support based on some criteria like citizenship, residence, identity, and political loyalty. Millions of excluded continued widespread demonstrations demanding their pie from the national resources led to the emergence of direct cash transfers to the needy. Ferguson argues that “Rightful Share” is the better terminology that captures the essence of this provision that provides a minimum form of recognition of the social self of the beneficiaries and the obligation towards them. In chapter six, Ferguson claims that sharing is not a political choice but simply the most elementary form of social order. Moreover, he optimistically quotes Morgan that “human intelligence will rise to the mastery over property”. He also suggests learning from the rich experiences unfolding in new welfare states of the global South, being open to “increase the experiments whenever possible,” and being ready for the unexpected.

I found that the strength of this book lies primarily in historicization, through his empirical studies, and based on a larger set of data from secondary sources. He lucidly engages and links sufficiently with prominent anthropological contributions from scholars such as Foucault, Mauss, and Morgan. The significance of the book lies in its usefulness not only for academics but also for

people involved in policymaking, implementation, and advocacy as well. Additionally, the organization of the book in various chapters, which can be grasped on their own or as the whole text, makes it very useful for the need of different categories of the readers.

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**Participatory Research: Working with Vulnerable Groups in  
Research and Practice Book: A Book Review**

Sanjeev Dahal

Boston College School of Social Work

**Author Note**

Sanjeev Dahal  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5571-1043> is a Ph.D. Candidate in Social Work at Boston College, Massachusetts, USA. His work focuses on child protection, particularly juvenile justice. Dahal has worked with several non-government organizations, which have worked in community engagement, and taught in various social work colleges in Nepal.

Correspondence concerning this book review should be addressed to Sanjeev Dahal, Boston College School of Social Work. Email: [dahalsanjeev@gmail.com](mailto:dahalsanjeev@gmail.com).

Book title: Participatory Research: Working with Vulnerable Groups in Research and Practice Book

Author: Jo Aldridge

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Participatory Research: Working with Vulnerable Groups in Research and Practice illuminates the link between participatory approaches and techniques and vulnerable sections of the society, particularly those “who are excluded from society or who are not necessarily connected to, or part of, a recognized organization, locality or community, and who might otherwise be overlooked in research studies that use conventional approaches (because the nature of their vulnerability or marginalization may make them hard to reach and recruit onto studies using conventional methods)” (p. 10). The vulnerable groups that the book chapters engage in are aligned with the author’s prominent research experiences. Aldridge directs the Young Carers Research Group, which is known for its pioneering work with young carers, and work with young carers forms the bulk of the second chapter. Aldridge also spent considerable time working with people with learning disabilities, which is covered in chapter three. Chapter four discusses working with women victims—survivors of domestic violence—an engagement embossed in Aldridge’s CV. Aldridge has reflected sensitivity by only dealing in areas where she has significant experiences; this adds to the author’s credibility. This credibility is augmented by the generous references she draws from other scholars with substantive experiences in using participatory research (PR) methods in their work with vulnerable groups.

The organization of the book, per se, is appealing. The introductory chapter establishes the meaning of participation, discusses the dynamism in vulnerability, and engages with the ‘voice’ of the participants within participatory research. The introduction builds a solid foundation for chapters two through four about working with relatively specific vulnerable groups. Chapter 5 embraces all the earlier chapters to discuss the careful considerations to be made in interpreting the data and representing and transforming the participants through participation in the research. Chapter six provides closure to all the earlier discussions and goes

a step further to flag areas of participatory research needing attention to improve its rigor as well as to push the science forward.

In the introductory chapter, Aldridge highlights that “Despite these advances in methods terms and the opportunities offered by PR, critical questions remained (and remain) about the nature and extent of participation in these new types of approaches and their relevance to research with vulnerable or marginalized populations.” (p. 9). Following up on this issue, she discusses a continuum of participation in the concluding chapter through a model of participation aimed at helping researchers better align their projects in relation to particular domain/s within the model itself; she does so while acknowledging the range of participation that researches might have and emphasizes the need to move away from tokenistic ‘participants as objects’ methods to emancipatory methods where participants are ‘subjects of research’ led by themselves. This sincere follow-through on questions raised in an earlier chapter is a notable strength of this book.

Aldridge’s model’s commitment to the principles and objectives of participatory research, rather than adherence to a strict set of rules to be followed, also impressed me. Commitment to the broader principles and objectives leaves ample space for methodological discussions and decisions among the research participants, including academics, practitioners, and people whose lived experiences contribute to the research –an important aspect of participatory research highlighted throughout the book. The model is also helpful in distinguishing true participatory research from those who merely claim to be participatory by providing a framework to present the ways in which it is participatory clearly. The inter-weaving of the chapters that I pointed out earlier as the book’s strength is also reflected in this model’s discussion. The model presented in chapter six integrates the studies described in chapters two through four; this allows deeper engagements with the model in light of known studies.

Although a chronological following of the book chapters provides a natural flow to the reader, each of the chapters can be read independently – another beauty of the book. Furthermore, except for chapter 5, which has to be read after chapter 4 (because it contains the interpretation of Rosie’s narrative letter from chapter 4), all other chapters can be read in any order. This proves helpful to readers who want to jump into any particular chapter that draws their interest. Despite having a defined focus, each chapter provides ample discussions on participatory research with marginalized/vulnerable groups in general, and thus the careful reading of each of the book chapters is helpful in working with a wide range of vulnerable groups. The book's thesis is that research participants who agree to share their lived experiences need to be engaged in most, if not all, stages of research as long as they feel comfortable and are willing to. This allows both the participants and the data to speak for themselves to some extent and offers insights into their subjective experiences. There is a lot of repetition of information on participatory methods, how to ensure their effectiveness, and how to live up to its ideals, thus making this book an invaluable resource, particularly for new researchers who plan to take up participatory research.

I thoroughly enjoyed the book and have only minor suggestions for improvement. A thick description of the methodologies used in the research cited in the chapters would provide concrete opportunities for the learners to draw from. The chapters reflect the author’s deep engagement in PR with vulnerable groups (particularly chapters 2-4) and would benefit from the inclusion of more examples from their research. For example, I loved the fourth chapter on participatory research with women victims-survivors of domestic violence, the narrative account of one of the participants, Rosie, and an additional discussion on its interpretation in chapter 5. In one breath, I read Rosie’s unedited letter to her former abuser [written as part of the research]. Rosie’s letter—a vivid account of her experiences presenting a clear picture of what she had gone through—is a

wonderful example of the impact participatory research can have on the participants. In Rosie's own words, "I'm writing this letter to you as a form of closure on the seven years I spent with you." Moreover, this closure of an abusive relationship is a notable outcome of the research engagement. Although the letter does not preclude the researcher's engagement with Rosie, I believe they would have spent considerable time with Rosie for her to feel comfortable opening to such an extent. Apart from briefly arguing that building relations is intuitive, requires insight and empathy, and is difficult to formulate, the book does not discuss the processes that the author engaged in building relations with the research participants to facilitate the intended research; this is a limitation of the book.

Additionally, I feel this book on PR is at a loss for not paying enough attention to Participatory Action Research. A discussion on emancipatory and action research examples would be a great addition to the book. A minor limitation of the book is the presence of typos in a few places, e.g., the words "they saw glimpses" on page 112 are quoted as "the saw glimpses" on page 129. Since it is the book's first edition, these errors can be undone in the next editions.

Throughout the book, the author is conscious of reminding the readers about taking a step back in research relationships and prioritizing the voices of the research participants over the researcher's perspectives, reiterating the book's thesis. The bulk of literature on PR discusses the researcher's perspective, whereas this book presents the participant's perspective of PR. I feel such a presentation is unique and clearly aligned with the essence of PR. Along the same lines, the author emphasizes reflexivity in PR with a heightened focus on providing research participants with opportunities for reflection and opening up avenues for them to reframe, rephrase, and revise what they want to share through the research rather than the academic researcher's reflexivity. The essence of the relationship between the researcher and the participants in PR is captured by these

statements from the author “...it also demands recognition of the point at which authorial, analytical and reflexive expertise and precedence must be conceded to others who are the research participants, and whose voices must be prioritized, especially if participants’ lives and experiences – and data – are to be more faithfully presented rather than re-presented.” (p. 139). Additionally, the author flags that participatory research should incorporate the reflection of the participants on the methods used, including how they felt using the method and how well they felt their lived experiences were captured through the method—an often-overlooked aspect of PR.

In conclusion, I contend that this book is a good resource for researchers planning to use participatory research methods in general and with vulnerable groups in particular but are new to them. Much repetition of the ideas is mainly related to the essence, purpose, and characteristics of participatory research. The book deeply discusses participatory methods and helps the readers engage with their essence in each chapter. The repetition of information helps the readers to build clarity on the topic rather than give a feeling of redundancy. I believe this book will help inculcate the values of participatory research in its readers, and I firmly believe integrating these values into a researcher is non-negotiable eligibility for undertaking participatory research.



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3. The article should contain about 5000 words which may vary depending on the nature of the topic. But book review articles can be in about 2500 words. It should strictly follow the latest version of APA Manual style sheet/format.
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**Methodological Approach**

13. Is the methodological approach consistent with the research paradigm, objectives, and research question(s)/ and/or hypothesis (es)?
14. Have all the necessary procedures been followed (e.g., ethical considerations and health as well as safety issues of participants involved) in the study?
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Researchers and scholars are cordially requested to send their manuscripts based on original research and intensive study applying the style sheet of the latest edition of the APA Manual. We publish the selected articles after double blind review, revision from the author, and acceptance of the Editorial Board in June every year.

We may also publish Special Issue(s) on relevant theme (s) on the institutional decision if the Foundation manages technical as well as financial resources for publication or if a group of researchers show their interest and kindly inform the Editor-in-Chief six months in advance.

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