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Table of Contents

Employability Issues in Nepal: Graduates' Perceptions, Aspirations and Experiences	1-15
Shatrughan Prasad Gupta	
Higher Education and Economic Growth in Nepal: An ARDL Bounds Test Co- Integration Approach.....	16-25
Dipa Adhikari and Basanta Kumar Baral	
Health Literacy and Menstrual Hygiene Practices among Adolescent Girls.....	26-37
Basanta Kumar Baral and Suraj Kumar Bista	
Knowledge and Practices of Reproductive Rights among Women in Chandragiri Municipality	38-48
Ohm Prakash Joshi	
Integrating AI Tools in Teachers' Professional Development: Opportunities and Challenges	49-60
Bhim Prasad Sapkota	
Principals' Perceptions on Managing Private Schools in Kathmandu Valley	61-71
Prem Singh Shrestha	
Stock Market Development and Sustainable Economic Growth in Nepal: A Decade Experiences	72-83
Dilli Raj Belbase	
Herding Behavior in Nepali Stock Market	84-94
Sabina Maharjan	
Soil-Friendly Education in Nepal: Mythology vs Reality	95-111
Bhakta Bahadur Shahi	
A Systematic Review on Dietary Pattern and Academic Performance of Children and Adolescents	112-127
Bishnu Kumar Adhikari and Prakash Sharma	
How Social Learning Theory Explains the Persistence of Sexual Harassment.....	128-141
Tribhuwon Sharma, Bhagwan Aryal, Kalpana Gyawali and Sharmila Pandit	

Context-sensitive Pedagogy for Sustainable English Language Teaching: Prospect and Practice.....	142-153
Renu Kumari Singh	
Factors Influencing Consumers' Purchase Intentions towards Private Label Products	154-169
Bhanu Bhakta Sharma and Muna Adhikari	
Post-COVID Blended Learning at Kathmandu Shiksha Campus: Challenges, Successes, and Future Prospects	
Yuba Raj Devkota	170-182
फुटपाथ मिनिस्टर कथामा सबाल्टर्न : बालमनोविज्ञानको समालोचनात्मक अध्ययन	183-198
किसन आले मगर (कृष्णहरि)	
कक्षा चारका नेपाली पाठ्यक्रममा व्याकरणका विषय वस्तु प्रयोगको परम्परा	199-208
शिव प्रसाद तिमल्सेना	
सहिद कथामा सांस्कृतिक अध्ययन.....	209-220
अप्सरा अधिकारी	



Employability Issues in Nepal: Graduates' Perceptions, Aspirations and Experiences

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Abstract

The perception, career aspirations and experience of Master of Education (M. Ed.) graduates have been examined in relation to employability issues in this study. The research has addressed perception in relation to the curriculum provided to M. Ed. students, drawing on the Human Capital Theory put forward by Becker (1964) and Yorke (2006). Adopting a mixed-methods approach, quantitative data were collected through a self-administered questionnaire from conveniently sampled respondents while qualitative data were generated through focus group discussion with 30 graduates (18 females, 12 male) from Kathmandu Shiksha Campus (KSC) and semi-structured interview was also held with six purposively selected students. The qualitative data were analyzed thematically with a focus on employability related issues. The findings show that the M.Ed. programme under Tribhuvan University performs well in research training and academic relevance with 53.3% positive responses. However, the data indicate serious limitations in teaching practice, professional skill development, mentorship and most critically responsiveness to the job market demands with 96.7% of respondents. Although participants perceived the pedagogy as relevant to the academic sector, they reported a mismatch between their career aspirations, the skills required during the programme and the requirements of academia and the broader job market. Furthermore, inconsistencies have been identified between TU-prescribed curriculum and Teacher Service Commission requirements. The curriculum was perceived as overly theoretical and insufficiently aligned with contemporary workforce demands. Overall, the findings suggest an urgent need to strengthen the employability orientation of the M.Ed. Programme to meet graduates' aspirations and institutional requirements. This study points out some notable gaps in the existing curriculum and provides a basis for further research to enhance the employability of M.Ed. graduates in Nepal.

Keywords: *Aspirations, curriculum, employability, job market, pedagogy, skills*

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Introduction

Employability issues in Nepal and global market is one of the major concerns considered in the academic market. The contemporary research on employability in higher education (HE) has gathered immense criticism and poses a critical issue in light of the questions: What does employability mean? What are the status and the issues of employability in Nepal particularly in M. Ed program? What are the aspirations of M. Ed graduates under Tribhuvan University (TU) and how they perceive it? What is the contemporary understanding about employability in Nepal? What types of problems they have encountered in job market while going for the search of job? How has the higher education been linked to their programs and prepared their graduates for job market? How does one develop employability? How is employability measured or assessed? What is lost when employability becomes the primary focus in higher education? What is the market demands? What are the gaps in M. Ed curriculum? What skills are now most important as employers evaluate M. Ed graduates beyond formal academic credentials in the contemporary global academic market? How has globalization, internationalization, and competitiveness changed employer's expectations moving employability from degrees and certificates to particular skills?

Amongst others, these questions demonstrate the broad areas of positions adoptable in relating to employability in higher education. In contemporary society, there is an extraordinary focus on employability in higher education. In fact, employability continues to develop an argument on an ongoing debate across centuries on the career and developmental aspects of higher education, with particular emphasis on higher education graduates' ability to contribute to and be productive within the contemporary context of the massification of higher education institutions (HEIs) across this globe. In effect, instead of being an end (the creation of well-rounded individuals), higher education is positioned a new as simply a means to an end (valued work) (Tight, 2023).

Nepal's higher education has undergone significant transformation since the restoration of democracy in 1990 A.D. The adaptation of a multi-university model led to a massification of higher education and resulted unplanned growth to establish higher education institutions. Different community based HEIs have been established in between 2035 to 2050 B.S. throughout the country without mapping. Few of them were established with political influence. Currently, Nepal has 28 universities (14 central, 6 provincials and 8 deemed) along with 1,432 constituents and affiliated colleges and 59 private colleges affiliated with foreign universities (UGC, 2081, MOE, 2081). While this expansion has

widened access to higher education, it has also raised serious concerns about the quality, relevance, financial sustainability and graduates' employability.

Many universities continue to grant affiliations without comprehensive need assessments or proper geographical mapping or job market analysis resulting in low enrolment, high operational deficits and limited institutional effectiveness (Gupta & Shibakoti, 2024). As per UGC (2024), more than 500 HEIs have less than 100 students showing the critical sustainability problems for existence. The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology and the University Grants Commission are forcing to merge HEIs due to the lack of the students. However, the current affiliation records (2081) of Rajshree Janak University, Janakpur and Far Western University affiliation related decisions have shown the adverse picture.

These universities had affiliated even to schools, tuition centers and paper based private companies as well as many colleges having dual affiliations without proper justification, need analysis and mappings. No organizations including UGC controlled, monitored, and terminated grants in the name of university autonomy and universities. Such affiliations trends are not matched with merger policy of UGC which indicates the urgent needs for systematic reform in higher education to ensure sustainability, quality, relevance and employability. This raised the new dialogues in uncontrolled growth of universities and colleges in Nepal. So, here seems the necessity of universities and higher education institutions governing act which is under the discussions for the decades.

Universities are increasingly expected to increase graduates' employability by equipping them with competences, skills and attributes valued by employers (Menon et al., 2018). Globally, employability has become a core concern of higher education curricula (Sumanasiri et al., 2015). However, studies' findings consistently demonstrate a mismatch between graduates' educational preparation and job market requirements (Allen & De Weert, 2007 as cited in Menon et al., 2018). In Nepal, this mismatch seems more serious. Government employment opportunities are limited due to overstaffing while the private sector remains constrained by political instability and slow economic growth. Consequently, many graduates struggle to find suitable employment leading to rising level of under-employment and large-scale youth outmigration (e-Kantipur, 2025, September 29).

The demands of employability are further complicated by out-of-date management and education curriculum that don't address the needs of the modern workforce. The employment market requires flexible skills like digital literacy and ongoing upskilling in

a time of fast technological advancement, digital transformation, and artificial intelligence. Governments throughout the world are beginning to align higher education with more comprehensive economic development policies, emphasizing micro-credentials, flexible learning pathways, and lifelong learning. However, HEIs in Nepal have been far slower to adjust, as seen by the country's ongoing skill gaps, graduates' waning confidence, and rising ambitions for study and work abroad (KIST, 2024).

The Human Capital Theory (Becker, 1964; Schultz, 1961) and the Employability Theory (Yorke, 2006) were the theories utilized to assess the project's importance. According to the Human Capital Theory, education is a process that raises people's economic worth, productivity, and income. The hypothesis is supported by actual data, which clearly shows that educated individuals increase a nation's GDP per capita, tax base, and general social stability (World Bank, 2018, 2019). For instance, the World Bank (2019) noted that educated individuals increased both the tax base and GDP per capita. Additionally, the results demonstrated that a nation's productivity rate and general social stability were enhanced by an educated populace (World Bank, 2018). Low human capital economies would only experience weak innovation, slow growth, and the lowest labor market productivity (Hussain, 2005). In addition to aforementioned idea, the Employability idea highlights the necessity for individuals to possess universal, personal, and useful traits in the labor market (GMMC Tracer Study, 2019; Sharma, 2014; MDC, 2021).

An appropriate case for dissection on employment issues in Nepal is Kathmandu Shiksha Campus (KSC), which is a renowned community-based teacher education colleges associated with Tribhuvan University (TU). With over 530 associated community campuses in the country, it is the biggest one in TU, a renowned name in the Faculty of Education (FoE). In a bid by KSC to train teachers, trainer teachers, and educational researchers for the educational system in Nepal, it is a vital institution (Faculty of Education, TU, 2025; Nepal Public Campus Association, 2025). Although Nepal presently possesses more schools, namely 35876 schools, over 286,000 teachers in 2023-2024 (MOF, 2023-2024), employment opportunities for freshly graduated personnel in this sector remain low, thereby resulting in foreign workers migration increased (MOF, 2023/24),

As of March 2024, for example, about 5.97 million Nepali laborers had obtained labor permits to work overseas (MOF, 2023/24). In one sense, it is a reflection of the nation's restricted options, particularly for educated young. However, it is also observed that many graduates fail in the competitive examination of teacher selection by Tribhuvan

University service commission. Even the teacher service commission exam has faced the problem of the position unfilled. Given that there are significant concerns about the quality and applicability of teacher education programs in Nepal, what are the implications? The reason why our graduates are unable to compete in the tests might possibly be the subject of another study.

In view of the situation, this particular study undertakes to investigate the concerns, attitudes, and intentions of Master of Education graduates from the Kathmandu Shiksha Campus with respect to employability over a period of ten years, ranging from 2015 to 2024. The aim of the study was to make an assessment of how apt the education provided by the Master of Education degree is to meet the ever-evolving needs of the educational scene, along with that of the general job market. For purposes of ensuring a harmonious integration with the needs of higher education, along with that of its graduates, the findings of the study would seek to guide policy decisions. Furthermore, this study would support the Sustainable Development Goal (4) with regard to emphasizing quality, relevance, and employability in higher education, along with the development of overall research in Nepal.

Methods

This study employed a mixed-methods research design to examine employability issues, graduates' perceptions, expectations and experiences of Master of Education (M.Ed.) graduates at Kathmandu Shiksha Campus (KSC), Nepal. Integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches enabled a comprehensive understanding of graduates' perceptions, aspirations and employability experiences. The study was theoretically informed by Human Capital Theory (Becker, 1964) and Employability Theory (Yorke, 2006), which together frame employability as the outcome of both academic investment and skill development.

The study targeted M.Ed. graduates who completed their programme at KSC between 2015 and 2024. For the quantitative component, survey questionnaires administered during the tracer study and their responses were utilized for identifying the employability issues of graduates. For the qualitative component, 30 graduates from M. Ed. in English Education, Nepali Education, Health Education and Educational Planning and Management (18 females and 12 male) were selected through purposive sampling to ensure representation of graduates with diverse experiences including employment, further study and job seeking.

Based on the findings of the survey among the graduates, they were invited for focused group discussion. In the focused group discussion, participants shared their experiences of learning in the M.Ed. programmes finding jobs and seeking their career. Out of 30 graduates, 6 graduates were interviewed using semi-structured interview guidelines. Interview was fit for exploring their personal experiences, perceptions and the meanings individuals assign to them (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Semi-structured interviews were conducted to gather rich and in-depth data allowing participants the flexibility to express their perceptions, aspirations and experiences. The interviews lasted 45-60 minutes and were conducted face-to-face. All the interviews and focused group discussions were recorded with the consent of the participants and transcribed verbatim.

The quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics to identify the employability issues of the graduates and their perceptions towards employability related dimensions of M.Ed. programme. Qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis following the systematic procedures of coding, categorizing, theme development and interpretations. The themes were derived both deductively, guided by theories and tracer study findings and inductively from participants' narratives. The findings from both quantitative and qualitative data were triangulated and discussed for the overall results and discussion.

To enhance the reliability, the questionnaire items were aligned with the theoretical framework and the tracer study indicators. Moreover, these items were reviewed by the subject experts for the content clarity and relevance. The trustworthiness of qualitative data was ensured through triangulation, prolong engagement with the participants, data and the transcripts. The clear documentation of coding procedures and thematic development further supported the analytical rigor of the study. Ethical standards were strictly maintained throughout the study. Participants were informed about the purpose of the research and informed consent was obtained prior to data collection. Participants were voluntary and their confidentiality and anonymity were maintained. While reporting qualitative data, pseudonyms were used and all the audio recordings and transcripts were securely stored in the password protected laptop and only used for research purposes.

Results and Discussion

The graduates' perceptions, aspirations and experiences of employability issues have been presented in the following themes and sub-themes. First, the graduates' perceptions on the thematic responses obtained from survey questions are summarized in table 1. And other

themes emerged from the interviews and focused group discussions are presented subsequently.

Graduates' Perceptions of Employability and Programme Effectiveness

The participants of this study perceived M.Ed. programme as academically rigorous but weakly aligned with employability demands. While curriculum relevance and research training were acknowledged, limited practice-oriented pedagogy, professional skill development, mentorship, digital preparedness and labor market alignment reduced confidence in job readiness. Overall neutrality in satisfaction reflects unmet potential and the need for stronger employability-focused reform. Their responses are summarized in the following table.

Table 1. *Employability issues in Nepal: Graduates' responses in 14 variables*

Variables	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Missing
Academic Quality & Curriculum Relevance	5 (16.7%)	6 (20.0%)	3 (10.0%)	12 (40.0%)	4 (13.3%)	0
Teaching-Learning Pedagogy	4 (14.3%)	2 (7.1%)	16 (57.1%)	4 (14.3%)	2 (7.1%)	2
Research Capacity & Thesis Experience	1 (3.4%)	8 (27.6%)	9 (31.0%)	11 (37.9%)	0 (0.0%)	1
Professional Skill Development	5 (20.0%)	9 (36.0%)	4 (16.0%)	6 (24.0%)	1 (4.0%)	5
Faculty Competence & Mentorship	8 (26.7%)	7 (23.3%)	14 (46.7%)	1 (3.3%)	0 (0.0%)	0
Institutional Resources & Learning Environment	3 (12.0%)	12 (48.0%)	4 (16.0%)	5 (20.0%)	1 (4.0%)	5
Career Readiness & Employability	4 (13.3%)	7 (23.3%)	5 (16.7%)	13 (43.3%)	1 (3.3%)	0
Higher Academic Aspirations	11 (36.7%)	14 (46.7%)	3 (10.0%)	1 (3.3%)	1 (3.3%)	0
Social Contribution & Educational Leadership	8 (27.6%)	11 (37.9%)	7 (24.1%)	3 (10.3%)	0 (0.0%)	1
Overall Program Satisfaction & Future Expectations	5 (17.2%)	4 (13.8%)	11 (37.9%)	5 (17.2%)	4 (13.8%)	1
Alignment with School Job Market Demands	4 (13.3%)	6 (20.0%)	10 (33.3%)	4 (13.3%)	6 (20.0%)	0
Preparation for Employability in Academic Institutions	4 (13.3%)	7 (23.3%)	6 (20.0%)	9 (30.0%)	4 (13.3%)	0
Linkage between the TU syllabus & Service Commission Curricula	0 (0.0%)	2 (7.1%)	13 (46.4%)	4 (14.3%)	9 (32.1%)	2
Responsiveness to Evolving Educational Job Needs	14 (46.7%)	15 (50.0%)	1 (3.3%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0

The survey of 30 M.Ed. graduates at KSC under FOE reveals a mixed perception of employability which is characterized by relatively strong academic preparation but weak alignment with job market demands. Half of the respondents agreed that the curriculum meets Nepal's educational difficulties, indicating that graduates recognized the academic quality and curriculum relevance of M.Ed. program. However, there appears to be a significant disconnect between theoretical rigor and practical human resource preparation, since academic capabilities did not convert into confidence in employability. Perceptions

of teaching-learning methodology had an inverse relationship to employability; most replies expressed neutrality, and only a tiny percentage reported favorable experiences. These findings indicate a limited application of practice-led and participatory learning strategies. Participatory learning strategies enable the development of skills for employability such as communication, critical thinking, and flexibility. On the other hand, their capacity for research was considered an improvement through thesis writing classes. The curriculum did not make a significant impact upon their leadership skills, communication skills, and creative thinking, as stated by a majority of respondents, who evaluated the development of their professional skills relatively poorly. Considering their employability skills, this finding appears most significant. Likewise, an evaluation of the competence of the faculty and mentorship was also mainly negative. This assumes an absence of professional networking, mentorship for careers, and academic counseling that helps improve the employability of graduates.

The issues were further compounded by dissatisfaction with institutional resources and the learning environment, particularly library and ICT facilities. The insufficient infrastructures appear to limit the opportunities for developing digital and technological competences that are central to present educational employment contexts. Likewise, graduates expressed cautious optimism regarding general career readiness, with nearly half perceiving some level of preparation for employment in education sector. However, this optimism is weak when respondents considered specific job market alignment. Perceptions of programme alignment with school job demands and employability in academic institutions were mixed. They reflected partial preparedness rather than systematic workforce orientation. The awareness of the demand of M.Ed. graduates and the linkage between the TU syllabus and Teacher Service Commission requirements was also limited.

The results indicate that weak coherence between policy/programme and employment as argued in the literature (Allen & De Weert, 2007). The most critical employability issue relates to the M.Ed. program's responsiveness to emerging educational job requirements such as digital literacy, inclusiveness and pedagogical competencies. All most all the respondents disagreed that the curriculum addresses these areas. They perceived the programme as outdated in relation to current and future employment trends. This indicates the low confidence level of graduates in the competitive job market. Low level of aspiration for higher education study and perceived capacity for social and educational leadership also reinforce the limited impact of M.Ed. programme on long term career motivation and professional identity formation. The graduates' overall satisfaction

remained largely neutral which reflects neither strong endorsement nor outright rejection. This shows that graduates have sense of unfulfilled potential.

In summary, the data displayed in the table 1 shows the perceptions of graduates on M.Ed. programmes in relation to employability which shows serious lacking in professional skill development, mentorship, resource adequacy and alignment with education job market. This study suggests that curriculum revision, faculty development, curriculum-job market linkages and improved institutional resources are essential for the enhancement of employability of graduates.

Graduates' Perceptions of Skills Development and Employability

The data obtained from the recent tracer study conducted by KSC shows that M.Ed. graduates have enhanced various skills from the academic programmes. However, the analysis shows that these skills are less relatable to the employability in the respective field of study. The analysis of quantitative and qualitative data shows that whatever skills the graduates earned from their academic programme in M.Ed. are not enough to be employed.

Table 2. *Skills enhanced from the curriculum/syllabus*

S.N.	Descriptions of Skills	Female (n=18)	Male (n=12)	Missing
1	Skills	12 (66.7%)	8 (66.7%)	10 (33.3%)
2	Communication Skills	14 (77.8%)	9 (75.0%)	7 (23.3%)
3	Critical Thinking	11 (61.1%)	6 (50.0%)	13 (43.3%)
4	Problem-Solving	9 (50.0%)	4 (33.3%)	17 (56.7%)
5	Technical Skills	5 (27.8%)	7 (58.3%)	18 (60.0%)
6	Digital Literacy	4 (22.2%)	5 (41.7%)	21 (70.0%)
7	Teamwork	11 (61.1%)	4 (33.3%)	15 (50.0%)
8	Leadership	9 (50.0%)	3 (25.0%)	18 (60.0%)
9	Adaptability	11 (61.1%)	4 (33.3%)	15 (50.0%)
10	Creativity	12 (66.7%)	6 (50.0%)	12 (40.0%)
11	Time Management	11 (61.1%)	4 (33.3%)	15 (50.0%)
12	Analytical Skills	14 (77.8%)	9 (75.0%)	7 (23.3%)
13	Research Skills	9 (50.0%)	8 (66.7%)	13 (43.3%)
14	Interpersonal Skills	10 (55.6%)	8 (66.7%)	12 (40.0%)
15	Decision-Making	7 (38.9%)	9 (75.0%)	14 (46.7%)
16	Entrepreneurial Skills	12 (66.7%)	5 (41.7%)	13 (43.3%)
17	Ethical Awareness	11 (61.1%)	8 (66.7%)	11 (36.7%)

The data presented in the table above shows graduates' self-reported perceptions of skills enhanced through M.Ed. curriculum particularly at KSC. This provides the important information about how programmes contribute to the employability. The findings suggest

that the programme is perceived to strengthen academic and cognitive skills more effectively than technical, digital and market-oriented competencies reflecting a partial and uneven development of employability related human capital. Graduates reported strong gains in communication and analytical skills (over 75% across genders). This suggests effective development of core cognitive human capital essential for academic and educational roles.

The findings reveal that the programs significantly strengthened key academic and professional competencies among graduates, particularly in communication skills (77.8% females; 75.0 % males) and analytical skills (77.8 % females; 75.0 % males).

These high percentages show that the curriculum helps to develop skills and competencies needed for employment as well as for pursuing higher studies. In the same way, the high percentage of creativity (66.7%), entrepreneurship skills (66.7%), and ethical awareness (61.1%) among girls indicate the focus of the organization towards innovation, entrepreneurship and ethics. However, there exist some skills like digital literacy (22.2 % female; 41.7 % male) and technical skills (27.8 % female; 58.3 % male), where the performance is less, indicating a difference in gender and hence an overall requirement for more technological inputs in education.

The moderate level of development in leadership skills, problem-solving skills, and project management skills implies that although KSC offers sound theoretical knowledge, more practical and industry-engaged education is required. All these indicate that the aspirations of the emerging breed of students who find employment in the competitive and technological sectors. For the overall higher education system in Nepal, this assessment identifies an overall need to modernize the education curriculum and adopt more technological inputs and engagements. It is necessary to emphasize more on practical/industry-oriented education and entrepreneurship initiatives. This would improve the employability of students and also contribute positively for nation building.

Common Aspirations among Graduates of HEIs

This KSC tracer research (2015–2024) reveals graduates' common aspirations, which include landing a steady employment with room for professional growth and a position that aligns with their own beliefs, such as sustainability and social impact. Access to learning opportunities, flexibility in work schedules, freedom to travel, competitive benefits in the form of just remuneration, a productive workplace culture, and assistance for entrepreneurs wishing to launch their own businesses. This research provides a highly significant commentary on the Nepali job/employment market in addition to these other

trends/aspirations. It highlights some extremely important concerns, such as the entry-level employment market in Nepal.

It has become worse over the past 10 years, and the majority of graduates now feel unprepared for the workforce and have difficulty obtaining jobs in their fields of expertise. Similar to KSC, the majority of other job/tracer studies (BNC, 2024; GCI, 2024; PUSoB, 2024; SMC, 2023) show that fewer than one-third of graduates find employment that fits their credentials in the first year following graduation. These results point to the urgent need for curriculum modifications that are relevant to the labor market, as well as an increase in experiential learning and employer participation throughout Nepal's HEIs. In all regions of Nepal, employers often find inconsistencies between the skills of recent graduates of higher education and the demands of the contemporary workplace.

Digital competences, job-related practical competencies, and the skillful application of AI are only a few of the areas. The results of recent surveys and studies (KSC, 2024; BNC, 2024; GCI, 2024; PUSoB, 2024; SMC, 2023) also highlight the critical need to update and modify HEI curricula to incorporate digital competencies and experiential, applied learning opportunities in order to better prepare graduates for the demands of the modern workplace. Nepalese graduates' expectations for the future are becoming more and more centered on meaningful employment, a great workplace culture, diversity, and corporate assistance for their overall well-being. Tracer studies indicate that graduates select some companies over others mostly due to factors such as employment security, corporate culture, rewards, and prospects for professional growth. This pattern is indicative of a larger generational focus on mental health and purpose-driven employment. Geographical flexibility and mixed employment arrangements are becoming more and more important to many Nepalese graduates. Smaller companies and start-ups are becoming more appealing possibilities for certain graduates, but factors including workforce location, life balance, and competitive wage systems are impacting their career choices (KSC, 2024).

Graduates' Experiences of Employability

The participants in the focused group discussion expressed their experiences of being employed through rigorous studies again. Their expression shows that the study of the academic courses could not help them obtain job. One of the participants of FGD said:

After completion of my Master's degree in Education, I applied for the secondary level teaching license and appeared in the exam. It was my bad luck that I failed the exam in the first attempt. Again, I joined the preparation class and spent more

than six months' time in the institute. Then, I passed that license exam and also the teacher service commission in the same year. (Narayan, M.Ed. graduate at KSC).

Similarly, another participant shared:

The courses we studied in the campus are heavy and we studied them just to pass the exam. We never realized their practical implication while studying. I don't know what is wrong with our curriculum or courses in the campus. This study does not support us to get the job easily. (Smriti, M.Ed. Graduate at KSC).

On the other hand, next participant said:

I am working at the private school. As soon as I passed M. Ed., I was given the classes at Secondary Level. There, I learned many practical things while working. The courses taught in the campus were theoretical and not directly linked to the practice. (Shiva, Graduate at KSC).

These expressions show a consistent perception among graduates that employability outcomes were achieved largely outside the formal M.Ed. curriculum rather than through it. Narayan's experience of repeatedly preparing for the teaching license and Teacher Service Commission Examinations highlight a disconnection between curricular learning and certification requirements. This suggests that institutional human capital formation was insufficient for direct job market entry. Employability, in this case, depended on additional private preparation and personal investment beyond the university programme. Smriti further added the curriculum as exam oriented and heavily theoretical, with limited perceived practical relevance. It was evident that learning was largely framed as a means of passing assessments rather than developing occupational competence indicating weak integration of employability-oriented pedagogy.

This reflects a failure to translate academic knowledge into professional capital which is a key concern in graduate employability framework (Becker, 1964). In contrast, practical skills and professional confidence were reported to develop primarily through workplace exposure particularly in private schools. Shiva perceived employment itself as the site where employability skills such as classroom management, instructional strategies and professional adaptation were acquired rather than during university study. This reinforces the view that the M.Ed. programme contributes more to credential attainment than to work-readiness.

Collectively these narratives suggest that while the M.Ed. degree functions as an entry qualification, graduates experience a significant gap between academic preparation and employability demands. The findings highlight the need for stronger alignment between curriculum, professional certification systems and workplace realities to support smoother transitions from graduation to employment.

Conclusion

The thematic analysis of interviews and questionnaire with 30 graduates (2015–2024) reveals a complex picture of graduates' perceptions, aspirations and experiences of employability and Master's degree courses in Nepalese higher education system. While 60 % of respondents appreciated strong subject knowledge and theoretical foundations, 40 % reported deficiencies in practical application, digital literacy and industry-relevant skills. Approximately 65 % pursued careers outside their academic disciplines driven by financial necessity, personal interest or better employment prospects. Graduates emphasized the importance of generic skills, such as communication, adaptability, teamwork and emotional intelligence with over 70 % identifying these as critical to employability. Self-confidence, self-esteem and self-efficacy were also cited as pivotal in securing job offers and navigating early career challenges. Despite these strengths, graduates noted significant gaps in curriculum relevance, career support and experiential learning. Existing career services were underutilized, often generic and not integrated into the academic journey. Exposure to internships, volunteering and leadership opportunities positively influenced employability, highlighting the need for structured platforms for real-world engagement and reflective learning.

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Higher Education and Economic Growth in Nepal: An ARDL Bounds Test Co-integration Approach

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Abstract

The study examines the connection between higher education and economic growth of Nepal over the period (1990-2024) using time series data techniques with an ARDL bounds test co-integration approach. It's outcomes (short-run and long-run) coefficients demonstrate that higher education has a highly significant and positive influence on economic growth in the country. The outcomes imply that investment in higher education plays a role of major contributor for poverty alleviation and fostering the sustainable economic growth in Nepal. The study also found that investment and government expenditure variables positively affect Nepalese economic growth performance. Conversely, inflation demonstrates a negative relationship with economic growth, though its impact is statistically significant at 1%. The empirical outcomes concluded that investing in higher education can boost the Nepalese economy and increasing the sustainable economic growth in Nepal.

Keywords: ARDL approach, Economic growth, Higher education, Sustainable economic growth

Introduction

At present education has been basic component of human capital development which plays a key contributor for economic development in the universe. In this point, higher education is a means for transferring skills and innovative knowledge of sustainable economic development around the world (Becker, 1964; Mankiw, et al. 1992). Therefore, it is believed that

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connection of higher education and economic growth are very crucial for making effective and efficient education policies in every county. Over the three and half decades, endogenous growth theory in particular focused on the relation between growth economic and higher education, which highlighted the knowledge spillover and human capital are key drivers of economic growth performance (Lucas, 1988; Romer, 1990).

In the 21 century, a larger number of empirical research have focused on linkage between higher education and economic growth using several methods and various quality of data. Similarly, it also includes different county or region or cross country or panel cross section (see for example, Barro, 2001; Musila and Belassi, 2004; Njong, 2010; Hanueshek and Woessmann, 2012; Barro and Lee, 2013; Jalil and Idrees, 2013; Wang and Liu, 2016; Dissou et al., 2016; Rathanasiri, 2020; Okerekepti, 2022; Ni, et al., 2023). These previous research in higher education have a positive existence on performance economic growth. However, some other studies found a negative influences on economic growth performance (see for example, Devarajan et al., 1996; Omodero and Kalanechi, 2020; Pimar, 2022).

In recent years, a few number of empirical research in Nepalese context focus on linkage between higher education and economic growth. Dahal (2016), applying an OLS method for (1995-2013) time period of Nepal, found that higher education significantly influenced economic growth performance. Likewise, Khanal (2023) investigated an OLS approach for (1985-2022) period of time in Nepal and his study found that higher education enrollment positively influenced GDP. However, Dangal and Gajurel (2019) employing an ARDL model found that public funding in education have negatively influence on economic growth. Many existing research in this field relies on earlier datasets and does not adequately account for recent structural changes in the economy, evolving higher education policies, and the rapid expansion of tertiary enrolment. Furthermore, the dynamic short run as well as long run linkage between higher education and economic growth have not been sufficiently explored using a contemporary econometric approach such as an auto-regressive distributed lag (ARDL) model.

Therefore, the aim of this study is to investigate the nexus between higher education and economic growth in Nepal employing updated data (1990-2024) and a robust time-series data framework within an ARDL cointegration approach. The ARDL approach is especially suitable for the Nepalese context as it allows for the estimation of both short-run as well as long-run dynamics in the presence of variables integrated of different orders.

Methods

Econometric methods have been employed for the research, however, first we have made a brief discussion of the variable.

Variable Description

The study adopts secondary data from Nepal during (1990-2024) time period to investigate the long-run equilibrium and short-run relationships dynamic adjustments among higher education, economic growth. It has three macroeconomic control variables such as investment, government expenditure and inflation. All the annual secondary data are taken from the World Bank (WB, 2025).

Economic growth (Y), the dependent variable, is measured using the natural logarithm of real Gross Domestic Product (GDP). It serves as a widely accepted macroeconomic indicator of aggregate economic performance (Barro, 2001). The primary independent variable representing higher education (HE) is school enrollment at the tertiary level, expressed as the gross enrollment ratio (percent of total population eligible). The research incorporates three macroeconomic control variables. First, investment (INV) variable is calculated by gross fixed capital formation (percent of GDP). The second, control variables (GOV) are measured by general government final consumption expenditure percent of GDP. And, the final control variable, inflation (INF) is measured as consumer prices (annual percent).

Econometric Methods

In this work, we used the ARDL bounds-testing method of Pesaran et al. (2001) to investigate the long-run as well as short-run connections between Nepalese higher education and economic growth for (1990-2024) period of time. Here, we present an ARDL model that incorporates economic growth, higher education, and three macroeconomic control variables: investment, government expenditure, and inflation. The following is a representation of this model:

$$\begin{aligned} \Delta \ln Y_t &= a_0 + \sum_{i=0}^k \theta_i \Delta \ln Y_{t-i} + \sum_{i=0}^k \varphi_i \Delta \ln HE_{t-i} + \sum_{i=0}^k \pi_i \Delta \ln INV_{t-i} + \sum_{i=0}^k \eta_i \Delta \ln GOV_{t-i} \\ &+ \sum_{i=0}^k \gamma_i \Delta \ln INF_{t-i} + \beta_1 \ln Y_{t-1} + \beta_2 \ln HE_{t-1} + \beta_3 \ln INV_{t-1} + \beta_4 \ln GOV_{t-1} + \beta_5 \ln INF_{t-1} + \varepsilon_t \end{aligned} \quad (1)$$

Where, the symbols have their usual meaning. The symbol Δ refers to first difference, α represent constant, Y denotes economic growth, HE is higher education, GOV refers to government expenditure, INV indicates investment, and INF stands for inflation, \ln denotes the natural logarithm, t is the time trend, k refers to optimal lag length, ε_t denotes error term.

The first stage in the ARDL bounds test method is to use an F -test to determine whether the variables of higher education, economic growth, government expenditure, investment, and inflation have a long-run relation or not. The null hypothesis in the equation (1) is $H_N = \beta_1 = \beta_2 = \beta_3 = \beta_4 = \beta_5 = 0$, indicates that the non-existence long-term correlation among the variables. On the other hand, a long-term connection is suggested by an alternative hypothesis like $H_A : \beta_1 \neq \beta_2 \neq \beta_3 \neq \beta_4 \neq \beta_5 \neq 0$.

Once co-integration is confirmed, the long run coefficients are calculated utilizing an optimal ARDL specification determined by an AIC (Akaike Information Criterion). The second step is to use a short-run dynamic ECM (Error Correction Model) to find out how quickly an ARDL model returns to long-run equilibrium after short-run shocks (Pesaran et al., 2001). Equation (1) is used to implement the ECM, which is represented as:

$$\Delta \ln Y_t = \alpha_0 + \sum_{i=0}^k \theta_i \Delta \ln Y_{t-i} + \sum_{i=0}^k \varphi_i \Delta \ln HE_{t-i} + \sum_{i=0}^k \eta_i \Delta \ln GOV_{t-i} + \sum_{i=0}^k \psi_i \Delta \ln INV_{t-i} + \sum_{i=0}^k \gamma_i \Delta \ln INF_{t-i} + \delta_i ECT_{t-i} + \varepsilon_t \quad (2)$$

Where, δ refers to speed of the adjustment. A statistically significant and negative error-correction term indicates stable long-run adjustment dynamics (Narayan, 2005).

Finally, stability tests were utilized to assess an ARDL approach's goodness of fit. In particular, the stability tests of the long-run parameters based on recursive residual estimates was assessed using the cumulative sum of recursive residuals (CUSUM) and of squares of recursive residuals (CUSUMSQ), as suggested by Brown et al., (1975).

Results and Discussions

Before calculating an ARDL approach, it is essential to assess the order of integration. In this context, this work applies most common ADF (Augmented Dickey-Fuller) unit root test, which is proposed by Dickey and Fuller, (1979).

Table 1. Analysis of ADF unit root test results

Varibales	With trend and intercept	
	Level	Second difference
lnY	-1.8729	-7.7116***
lnHE	-4.2002**	-0.7916***
lnInv	-3.0076	-6.1612***
lnGOV	-2.7558	-6.6193***
lnINF	-4.9260***	-5.1796***

Source: Eviews 12 Output.

*** indicate satatistical significance at 1 percent.

** indicate statistical significance at 5 percent.

Table 1 reports the outcomes of the ADF unit root test of variables such as economic growth, higher education, investment, government expenditure, and inflation. All the variables of the null hypothesis of ADF unit root test have been highly rejected in their second difference with trend and intercept. While employing the level with trend and intercept, we found the ADF unit root test of null hypothesis is hard to deny. The analysis evident shows that the second difference of each variable is stationary and integrated.

Table 2. ARDL bounds cointegration test

Model for estimation	F-Statistics	Significance Level (%)	Critical bounds value	
			lower bound I(0)	Upper bound I(1)
$lnY = f(lnINV, lnGOV, lnINF)$	14.7036	1%	3.29	4.37
		5%	2.56	3.49
		10%	2.20	3.09

Source: Eviews 12 output

The ARDL bounds cointegration test outcomes are present in Table 2. The computed F -statistic (14.7036) exceeds the critical values of the upper bound value (4.37) at 1 percent significance. Therefore, the study concludes that bounds test results support the cointegrating relation among variables: higher education, economic growth, investment, government expenditure, and inflation during (1990-2024) study period.

Table 3. Long-run estimated coefficients

Varibales	Coefficients	Dependent Variable: lnY		
		Standard error	T-statistic	Probability
lnHE	0.8162	0.2005	4.0699***	0.0066
lnInv	0.6943	0.2337	2.9696***	0.0250
lnGOV	1.0415	0.2237	4.6556***	0.0035
lnINF	-0.3154	0.0878	-3.5915***	0.0115
C	7.7420	2.7585	2.8066**	0.0309

Source: Eviews 12 Output

** indicate statistical significance at 5 percent.

*** indicate statistical significance at 1 percent.

The estimated coefficient of long-run outcomes are given in Table 3. At 1 percent level, the estimated coefficient of higher education is positive as well as statistically significant. This finding indicates that from 1990 to 2024, higher education played an important function in Nepal's economic development. The finding indicates that for every 1 percent growing in higher education, economic growth leads by about 0.82 percent. This outcome is in line with earlier studies by Masatoshi (2025); Okerekeoti (2022) and Nowak and Dahal (2016). However, our findings contradict with those of Pimar (2022) and Duwal and Acharya (2023), who found that higher education has a negative effect on economic growth.

This study determined that each variable of the ARDL model has an expected sign with regard to the long-run estimated coefficients of control variables. The long-run estimated coefficient of investment variable has positive as well as significantly influence economic growth performance, indicating that a 1 percent rise in investment would enhance economic growth by about 0.69 percent. This outcome is in line with research by Duwal and Suwal (2024), who found that investment has positive influence economic growth. Similarly, government expenditures variable has a pleasing effect on Nepal's economic growth, which shows that the government expenditures variable has a positive effect. It presents that a 1 percent growth in government expenditures, Nepalese economic growth rising by about 1.04 percent. Our findings are consistent with those of Mallick and Dash (2015) for India and Okerekeoti (2022) for Nigeria. In case of the inflation, the long-run estimated parameter has a negative and highly significant at 1 percent. It demonstrates that for every 1 percent improvement in inflation, economic growth is lowered by about 0.32 percent.

Table 4. Short-run estimated coefficients with ECM

Varibales	Coefficients	Dependent Variable: ΔY		
		Standard error	T-statistic	Probability
ΔHE	0.2699	0.0462	5.8471***	0.0011
ΔInv	0.7176	0.0857	8.3754***	0.0002
ΔGOV	0.3054	0.1073	2.8198**	0.0371
ΔINF	-0.0778	0.0099	-7.8029***	0.0002
ECT_{t-1}	-0.5675	0.0446	-12.7177***	0.0000

Source: Eviews 12 Output

** indicate statistically significant at 5 percent.

*** indicate statistical significance at 1 percent.

Table 4 shows the outcomes of the ARDL short run coefficients with ECT. From 1990 to 2024, the study finds that higher education, investment, and government expenditures variables had a significant positive impact on economic growth in Nepal. This means that

these variables (higher education, government expenditures and investment) are supportive simulators on Nepalese economy. The estimated coefficient of inflation has a negative and significant effect on economic growth at the 1 percent level. According to table 4, the coefficient of an error correction (ECT_{t-1}) has a negative as well as very significant at 1 percent. This supports the awaited convergence procedure in long run relation of each variable like higher education, economic growth, investment, inflation and government expenditures.

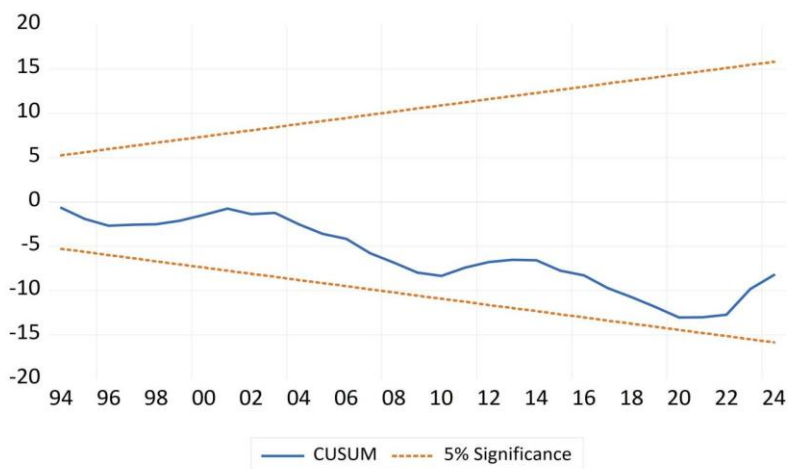


Fig. 1: Plot of the CUSUM statistic

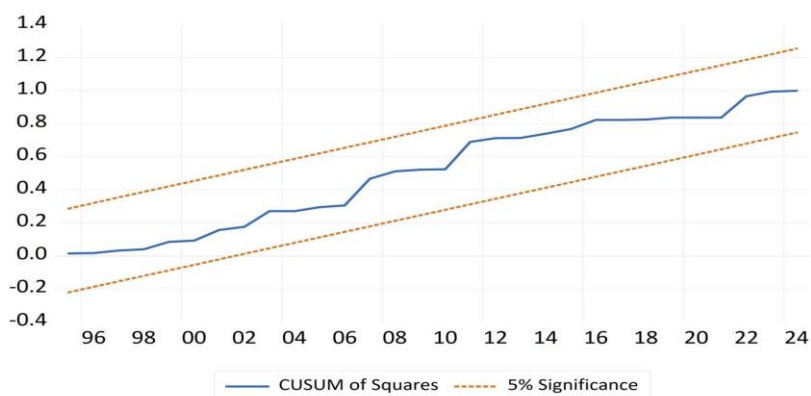


Fig. 2: Plot of the CUSUMSQR statistic

Figs. 1 and 2 present cumulative sums of squares of recursive residuals (CUSUMQ) and of recursive residuals (CUSUM) statistics. These predicted coefficients appear to demonstrate stability throughout period from 1990 to 2024, as evidenced by the CUSUM and CUSUMSQ statistics, remaining inside the 5 percent critical value bounds.

Conclusion

The present study investigated the relationship between higher education and economic growth of Nepal employing recent data (1990-2024) and an ARDL cointegration approach. Initially, we utilized the ADF unit root test to find out the order of integration for the variables. The long run as well as short run impacts of higher education, investment, inflation and government expenditure on economic growth were then investigated using the ARDL bounds test cointegration approach. The outcomes of the ADF test found that each of the variables (higher education, economic growth, government expenditure, investment and inflation) are integrated as well as stationary.

An ARDL bounds test outcomes indicated that computed F -statistics are greater than an upper bound value. It shows that there was a cointegrating relation with connection among the selected variables during 1990-2024 the study period. This empirical work found that the coefficients of higher education have a significant as well as positive consequences in economic growth. It indicates that higher education has a key function of Nepalese economic growth. Similarly, the study found that the investment, and government expenditures have supportive and significant impression on economic growth during the research period. This means that investment, and government expenditures variables had a favourable impact on Nepalese growth performance. On the other hand, it has been found that variable of inflation has a non-supportive effect on Nepalese economic growth.

This research only analyzed the relation of economic growth on higher education and observed supportive effect in Nepalese economic growth. Future work can investigate the effect of economic growth on higher education, primary education as well as secondary education in a combined form.

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Health Literacy and Menstrual Hygiene Practices among Adolescent Girls

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Abstract

Adolescent girls must have the knowledge, skills, and confidence to get proper information about sanitation, safe hygiene practices and menstruation for better reproductive health. This study aims to investigate the menstrual hygiene and health literacy of adolescents studying in community-run secondary schools of Chandragiri Municipality. The study followed a quantitative descriptive research design. Purposive sampling was used to choose one hundred adolescents as participants studying in 11th and 12th grade, who had at least an experience of their first menstrual cycle. The data were analyzed using percentile. Primary data was collected by using the structured questionnaire. The demographic characteristics show that about 92 % participants were found between the age group of (16-17), a majority 57% demonstrated a basic level of health literacy while 18% of respondents remained below the basic level of understanding. As it is seen in the results, for 72% adolescents, their family members were the main source of knowledge. Only 58% found using sanitary pads. A transformation was observed as a majority (88%) continued to attend school despite their periods and 82% adolescent felt alone because of various restrictions (cultural/ religious/family/ etc.), particularly in the Hindu community. About 92% of the girls stated that the biggest problems were physical discomforts during menstrual period. Finally, the adolescent's menstrual literacy was found from moderate to high due to the changing cultural context and fostering educational awareness. So, it can be inferred that health education must be integrated not in form but in substance in school curriculum with cultural sensitivity and practical efficiency. Initiatives to improve menstrual hygiene and health knowledge is desirable to the families, communities, and schools.

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Introduction

Adolescents make up a sizable section of the world's population, with over half of all people under the age of 21 (WHO/UNFPA/UNICEF, 1999). Adolescence is a critical time when young people build their own identities and undergo physical and psychological development. Similarly, the brain automatically produces the hormonal changes that lead to menstruation and other pubertal processes (Roche & Morgan, 2007).

In different developmental phases, girls must pass across the different transitional phases in their lives. Hence, girls' development phases from adolescence to adulthood signify a major transition from childhood to adulthood for teenage girls. A study by Dingra and Kumar's (2009) shows that menstruation actually represents an ordinary biological occurrence that is usually compounded by family and societal customs regarding menstruation during this time. Similarly, although menstruation is a normal aspect of growing up, research indicates (e.g., Chandra-Mouli et al., 2015) it can be made even more difficult by a variety of everyday activity restrictions as well as strong cultural norms regarding periods and menstruation.

Health literacy significantly influences their ability to understand and control menstruation. Nutbeam (2008) argues that it essentially comprises the attitudes, abilities, and information required to sustain a normal cycle of menstruation. Adolescents who are knowledgeable about menstruation are more likely to use sanitary items carefully, practice better cleanliness, and feel more at ease asking for support when something doesn't feel right (Chandra-Mouli et al., 2015). Effective management of menstrual hygiene is complicated by elements, such as cultural limitations, restricted social mobility, and low levels of education.

Lack of access to proper facilities for period hygiene causes many schoolgirls to skip class or drop out. According to reports (MoHP, status report 2025), over two million female students in Nepal lack access to menstrual hygiene services. Policies encouraged gender-neutral restrooms in schools, yet they are ineffective, and unhealthy practices are followed in rural areas (Mukherjee et al., 2020). Campaigns for awareness and proper reproductive health and comprehensive sexual health education are necessary to improve this problem. These programs can assist in balancing cultural standards with appropriate menstrual hygiene and encourage healthier routines. Since many women from remote locations are unaware of their reproductive health, poor hygiene practices raise the risk of infections and cervical cancer. In rural areas, 82% of the approximately 2,90,000 Nepali women who menstruate daily use unhygienic methods (Mukherjee et al., 2020). Focused

awareness and education campaigns are necessary to address this issue. These programs can help balance cultural expectations with proper menstrual hygiene and promote improved behaviors.

Adolescence is a pivotal period characterized by rapid physical and emotional changes, and menstruation is an important turning point in a young woman's reproductive life. However, many young girls experience menstrual health problems because of poor hygiene practices and insufficient health literacy (Mukherjee et al., 2020). It is common for girls attending school to face very difficulties due to poor menstrual hygiene, which can lead to health issues like infections and other reproductive issues. The absence of water, sanitary, private restrooms, and menstrual protection alternatives increases their poor hygiene practices. Girls' health and education are affected by the fact that many of them miss school during their periods (Fernandes, 2009).

Low health literacy regarding menstruation causes misconceptions, embarrassment, and dangerous behaviors like wearing soiled clothing, which can lead to vaginitis, UTIs, and other serious illnesses. These health problems may impede gender equality and educational goals, as well as lead to social isolation and absenteeism from school. Cultural taboos and ignorance often prevent menstrual health from being openly discussed, leaving many girls ignorant and powerless. Lack of supportive school infrastructure and community understanding exacerbates these issues, violating girls' rights to health, education, and privacy (Gautam, 2010).

Cultural views, social status, and the availability of information all significantly influence menstrual hygiene practices (Hennegan et al., 2019). According to Jadhao et al. (2020, p. 9), health education can spread misconceptions and hinder better hygiene. Improving the health awareness of adolescent girls directly affects their menstrual hygiene. This study examines the menstrual hygiene practices and knowledge of girls in Chandragiri Municipality's Grades 11 and 12, as well as the variables that affect these behaviours. The findings will lay the groundwork for improving infrastructure, regulation, and health education. This approach can be applied in similar contexts and locations, and adolescent girls can benefit by promoting gender equality and reproductive health in the study area. Though several studies have been undertaken on menstrual practices and health literacy, the studeis on knowledge and practices of menstruation along with cultural practices and literacy status still remains unexplored. In this regard, the present research aims to identify the level of health literacy and menstrual hygiene practice among adolescent girls.

Theoretical Frameworks

To understand health behaviors related to menstruation hygiene, the Health Belief Model (HBM) and Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) are commonly employed. These models specify that individuals perceive a negative health outcome to be severe or harmful and perceive themselves to be susceptible to the harm or effects. On the other hand, both of the theories perceive the benefits of behaviour that reduces the likelihood of that outcome as better health and sound behaviour, which they also perceive the barriers to be low. In this context, Rosenstock (1974) stated that HBM influences behavior change by emphasizing perceived susceptibility and benefits. SCT emphasizes self-efficacy and observational learning as the foundations of health practices (Bandura, 1986). According to these theories, enhancing health literacy can enhance self-efficacy and encourage healthy behaviors connected to menstrual hygiene. Hence, the constructs of these theories are used to accomplish the objective of the study.

Methods

This study followed a descriptive design. The primary data were collected through a questionnaire technique and are quantitative in nature. All the adolescent girls studying in grades 11 and 12 in four community run-secondary schools of Chandragiri Municipality comprised the population for the study. However, this study was confined to adolescent girls who were above the age of 16 and had menarche. The sample size consisted of 100 adolescent girls proportionally selected from four schools. Purposive sampling strategy was used for the study because adolescent girls who were absent and not willing to participate in the study were excluded. The schedule for data collection was determined after discussion with teachers. The study was conducted within 12 weeks (three months). Data were collected through a self-administered questionnaire, where clear verbal instructions were given before distributing the questionnaire. A simple statistical method, such as percentage was applied in the process of data analysis and interpretation.

Consent was taken before distributing data questionnaire and voluntary participation was ensured for the ethical consideration. Besides, confidentiality of the participants was assured.

Results and Discussion

The discussion section of the study is subsumed under the following sub-sections.

Socio-demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Socio-demographic characteristics is important in literacy-based research as it gives basic information about the participants. In the study Socio-demographic characteristics was sought to have better understanding of respondents' menstrual literacy, important biological, emotional, and cognitive changes occur during the adolescent period of our lives, which influence behaviour and knowledge of cleanliness. The position of developmental maturity with health education demands is ensured by comparing menstrual health views within a specific age period.

Reproductive awareness, identity, and self-regulation actually develop during the adolescent period. People of this age group normally have similar social learning environments, peer influences, media exposure, and school curriculum, according to SCT. Health literacy often correlates with and age and caste. The data indicate that the significant majority of the responders (92%) were between the ages of 16 and 17. Table 1 reveals the respondents' caste composition

Table 1. *Caste distribution of respondents*

Caste	K.S.S.	M.S.S.	P.S.S.	B. S.S.S.	Total	%
Newar	13	6	11	9	39	39
Chhetri	5	5	7	11	28	28
Tamang	4	3	5	4	16	16
Brahmin	0	9	2	1	12	12
Rai	2	0	0	0	2	2
Dalit	1	0	0	0	1	1
Others	0	2	0	0	2	2
Total	25	25	25	25	100	100

Table 1 shows that the majority of the respondents by caste belong to Newar (39%), followed by Chhetri (28%), Tamang 16% and Brahmin, and minority of them belong to Dalit and Rai. SCT explains that caste norms strongly affect menstrual behavior through cultural modeling, ritual boundaries, purity beliefs, and taboos learned from elders. Foremost cultural groups influence suitable menstrual practices, often preserving restrictive traditions. Minority respondents may approve hybrid practices shaped by exposure to both traditional and modern influences. Hence, caste distribution underlines how community values regulate adolescents' menstrual hygiene behaviors, self-efficacy, and access to precise information related to reproductive health. Quite unexpected result has been seen in terms of religious structure. About 96% of respondents are identified as Hindu, and the group's cultural background is strangely consistent. Hindu menstrual trends stress the concepts of purity and pollution, and they frequently prohibit eating at

the same table together with family members, visiting temples, and interacting with others while menstruating.

Awareness and Practice of Menstrual Hygiene

Regarding the awareness and practice of menstrual hygiene, the constructs of the health belief model comprise: perceived susceptibility, severity, and benefits of menstrual hygiene and reproductive health. Awareness and practice of menstrual hygiene has been studied in order to assess the health literacy of adolescent girls, which is further examined with reference to menstrual hygiene, the first pubertal transition, reproductive maturity, menstrual hygiene, menstruation-related factors, and menstrual hygiene information sources.

Assessing the consciousness level of the respondents discloses their reproductive literacy, demonstrating how well they distinguish between cultural myths and biological facts. It also shows how early awareness of physical changes influences a person's ability to manage menstrual hygiene and develop healthy habits. Table 2 presents respondents' knowledge of puberty's first signs.

Table 2. *Knowledge of the first sign of pubertal change*

Statement	Number	%
Breasts development	54	54
Underarms/pubic hair grow	16	16
Menstruation starts	30	30
Total	100	100

Data in table 2 shows that 30% of the respondents chose menstruation as the earliest signal of puberty, while more than half of them (54%) recognized breast development as the sign of puberty and only a few of them (16%) identified public hair grow as the sign. This result shows the significance of early, open reproductive education for enhancing perceived self-efficacy and informed menstrual management. It also shows that school health education was somewhat successful.

Respondents' perception regarding the necessity of cleanliness in preventing illnesses was also examined. The data indicate that the significant majority of respondents (93%) who correlated hygiene to the avoidance of contaminants have a high level of awareness. On the other hand, only 6% of them appeared confused or unable to understand. Even though respondents clearly recognise these basic concepts, it is important to provide appropriate facilities and emotional support to maintain excellent menstrual hygiene.

Regarding the causes of menstruation, 60% of respondents identified heredity, and 33% of them recognized nutrition. This advocates that teenagers are becoming well-informed about the science of human anatomy. Their thoughtfulness of nutritional and genetic impacts reveals that they might have paid more attention in class. Hence, it is argued that reproductive education is required, with a particular emphasis on the environmental aspect and a link to biology, lifestyle, and the environment.

Similarly, only 19% of the respondents learnt about menstruation hygiene from textbooks whereas a large majority (72%) learnt from their mothers and elder sisters. Thus, it has been noted that family-based, informal learning is the main source of respondents' learning about menstrual hygiene. Girls learnt the attitudes and actions just by observing the elderly members of their family. Besides, age difference has been studied which helps to link physiological development with menstrual knowledge, hygiene habits, and exposure to health education. For instance, most of the girls (60%) had their first period (menarche) when they were 13 or 14, with the average being 14.12 years. Similarly, a large majority of the respondents (88%) regularly attended school even during their menstrual period.

Cultural Practices, Challenges, and the Problems Related to Menstruation

Socio-cultural norms and behaviours in Nepalese society are a result of deeply ingrained Hindu taboos around purity. Women experienced behaviours like separation and untouchability during their menstrual cycle due to old cultural customs. The respondents' situation on the practice of separation and untouchability during menstruation is given in the table below.

Table 3. *Separation as untouchable*

Practice	Number	%
Yes	82	82
No	18	18
Total	100	100%
Period of Separation	Number	%
Four days	69	84.14
Six days	9	10.98
Nine days	2	2.43
Total	82	100%

Data in table 3 reveal that about 84.14% of girls faced isolation and untouchability during menstruation, mainly for four days and only 2.43% of them faced for nine days. These cultural trends for purity taboos are deeply rooted in Hindu traditions. The HBM views these norms as perceived social barriers, leading to close usual communication and self-

care. Even with growing literacy, these customs continue. Thus, social traditionalism becomes a barrier and often creates humiliations. Community education and cultural dialogue is required to avoid such humulation, rather than just having individual awareness.

HBM directly impedes healthy habits by taking away of the comfort and regularity and suggest that the programs that promote inclusive behaviors and family talking are necessary to enhance psychological well-being and strengthen health education creativity.

Problems Faced During Menstruation

To identify and determine common problems and challenges due to menstruation among adolescent girls, respondents were asked to report in the questionnaire. The responses regarding the difficulties are presented in the table below:

Table 4. *Problems faced by the respondents during menstruation*

Problems	Number	%
Physical pain and cramps	92	92
Discomfort due to insufficient materials	98	98
Emotional suffering due to isolation	50	50
Restricted movement and participation	50	50

Note: Multiple response percent exceeds 100.

Table 4 presents the main problems that teenage girls face during their periods. Physical pain and cramps were the most common physiological problems, reported by 92% of the respondents. About 98%, percent of the respondents reported uneasiness from insufficiency of safe required materials. this shows that lack of access to suitable menstrual products remains a significant problem for respondents. Besides, half of the respondents said that feeling alone caused them emotional and social suffering. They also exposed that their periods limited their ability to move around and participate in regular activities. Girls frequently deal with a combination of social, emotional, and physical problems every month as a result of these diverse experiences. The difficulties stem from both societal and physical reasons. In addition to physical discomfort and lack of resources, half of the respondents also face social rejection and activity restrictions in society.

Relationship Between Literacy, Practice, and Cultural Barriers

Literature about cultural practices and barriers explains how educational experience, social customs, and cultural barriers form adolescents' menstrual knowledge and practices. The data in this concern shows the distribution of adolescent girls' literacy levels associated with menstrual hygiene in the selected four schools. By classifying

literacy as *Below Basic*, *Basic*, *Intermediate*, and *Proficient*, the table 5 highlights how awareness and behavior are interrelated within different socio-cultural settings.

Table 5. *Level of health literacy status regarding menstrual hygiene*

Religion	K.S.S.	M.S.S.	R.R.S.S.	P.H.S.S.	Total	%
Below Basic	3	4	5	6	18	18
Basic	17	14	13	13	57	57
Intermediate	2	5	4	5	16	16
Profecient	3	2	3	1	9	9
Total	25	25	25	25	100	100

As presented in the table, the majority (57%) had a basic degree of menstrual hygiene health literacy. Only 16% of respondents had an intermediate level of health literacy, and only 9% had proficient level. In contrast, 18% of respondents had literacy level below basic, showing a poor knowledge of menstruation health concepts and hygiene behaviours. Thus, it is concluded that girls with higher literacy levels are motivated to practice better menstrual hygiene and face fewer restrictions, confirming that education raises value and behavior. The results indicate that teenage girls' menstrual literacy is still developing as most of them responded that they are learning fundamentals of hygiene on their own and lack deeper behavioral application. So, it is important to integrate the knowledge, positive role models, and cultural understanding into health education programs.

Discussion

Generally, in Nepalese society, girls are always confined by social rules, which constrain their freedom and adversely affect their emotional well-being. Menstrual rules, privacy beliefs, and taboos related to purity are a few examples of these norms. Due to a lack of resources and feelings of shame about their periods, women are observed to leave school and participate in fewer social activities worldwide (Hennegan et al., 2019; World Bank, 2025). Even though 98% of girls in the study continued to regularly attend school throughout their periods and 58% of them used sanitary pads, many of them are unable to fully adopt safe hygiene practices due to things like prevailing stigma, wrong information, and financial challenges. Lack of sufficient water, sanitation, and hygiene facilities, as well as financial constraints create challenges in managing menstruation properly (Adane et al., 2024).

In line with HBM, the results show that girls perceive the benefits of keeping things clean and completing school, which encourages enhanced behaviour. However, perceived barriers such as social isolation or a lack of resources create barriers to maintain them

regularly (Ayele et al., 2025). In a similar vein, SCT explains how girls' views and actions around menstruation are changed by watching and learning from peers, teachers, and mothers (Nalugya et al., 2020). In order to better connect cultural and societal norms with healthy habits during periods, we need to promote health and menstrual literacy. For this, it is essential to formulate and implement intensive education and awareness programs from the basic level.

Conclusion

The results from survey depict that teenage girls attending schools in the research site have a moderate to high level of menstrual knowledge. It suggests that discussions with family members and educational programs have a positive impact on reproductive health awareness. The demographic characteristics demonstrate that most of the participants were similar in age (16–17 years). However, by religion 96% of them are Hindu and it has made easy to assess menstrual literacy across cultural and developmental phases. Persistent social taboos, such as rigid norms about privacy and purity continue to limit girls' behavioural choices and mental health. Due to economic constraints, wrong information, and rigidly shaped beliefs, many of adolescent girls are still unable to regularly practice good hygiene, although over half (58%) of the participants used sanitary pads. School participation has remained high (98%) throughout menstruation.

From a theoretical point of view, HBM suggests that although young people think menstruation is manageable, barriers, including stigma and a lack of resources, keep them away from taking common action. Similar to this, SCT focuses on how girls' perceptions of menstruation and their sense of self are influenced by role models, especially mothers, sisters, teachers, and friends. The results indicate that while knowledge is growing, more cultural norms and support are needed for genuine behavioural change. Finally, it is argued that better access, cultural changes, and education are necessary to accomplish long-term menstrual hygiene. The educational institutions must work together to promote menstrual dignity, eradicate stigma, and raise teenage girls' health knowledge.

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Knowledge and Practices of Reproductive Rights among Women in Chandragiri Municipality

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Abstract

This study was conducted with an aim to identify the knowledge and practices of reproductive rights among women of reproductive age. Descriptive and cross-sectional methods under the quantitative research design were adopted. About 160 women from Chandragiri Municipality were selected using lottery methods. Both structured and semi-structured questionnaires were administered as the tools of data collection. The collected data were analysed and interpreted using statistical tools. A high level of awareness among the sample population was demonstrated by the fact that 84.9 % of respondents were aware of reproductive health and rights, whereas 15.1 % had never heard of them. Respondents' perceptions of reproductive rights like making decisions which was achieved by 28.0 % and health care right was achieved by 25.1 % of respondents. Similarly, the right to information was practiced by only 19.4 % of respondents. It indicates that there are gaps in the knowledge of women's reproductive health and access to health services in Chandragiri Municipality, which are driven by socio-economic, cultural, and gender barriers. So, accessible health services and comprehensive education in reproductive health with legal aspects should be managed both in community outreach and in school curricula effectively.

Keywords: Antenatal care, behaviour, family planning, health seeking, maternal health service, reproductive rights.

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Introduction

Reproductive rights constitute an essential dimension of human rights, ensuring that individuals can make informed and autonomous decisions regarding their reproductive health without discrimination, coercion or violence. These rights encompass access to comprehensive and accurate reproductive health information, family planning services, safe pregnancy and child birth care, and the freedom to determine whether and when to have children (UNFPA, 2022; WHO, 2020). For women of reproductive age, understanding and exercising these rights are crucial for safe guarding overall health, enhancing social empowerment and promoting economic well-being (UNFPA, 2022). This right is the attainment of the highest standard of physical and mental health possible for women. The enjoyment of reproductive right is essential to their life, well-being, and to their ability to participate in all areas of public and private life. A humanistic approach is built on seven fundamental principles: availability, accessibility, acceptability, quality of facilities and services, participation, equality, and accountability. According to World Health Organization (WHO), (2013), reproductive rights can be realised, respected and met if the sexual and reproductive health results are going to be enhanced, especially for the providers and the poor. Socio-economic and demographic characteristics have equally played a key role in the growth of knowledge about human rights to reproductive health. Economic and democratic developments have key positive effects on levels of gender equality (Pillai & Gupta, 2011).

Reproductive health is central to individual well-being and self-determination; thus, identification of the gaps in knowledge and practices is a priority. Most of the relatively underdeveloped areas face low literacy rates. Poor utilisation of health services and deeply rooted beliefs in culture are negative factors for reproductive health outcomes. This study hereby illustrates the gaps, providing useful insights to develop proper interventions and educational programs. The steps have been deemed crucial for the improvement of reproductive health and rights to ensure progress in the general quality of life and increased equality between genders in life. So, this study aimed to identify the knowledge and practices of reproductive rights among women of reproductive age in Nepal.

Literature Review

Reproductive rights among women of reproductive age remain uneven across many low- and middle-income countries. Although women may be aware of concepts such as family planning and safe motherhood, the understanding of reproductive rights as entitlements,

such as the right to access information, make autonomous decisions, and receive non-discriminatory reproductive health services, remains limited. Limited formal education and restricted access to accurate health information are common barriers that diminish women's ability to understand their reproductive rights (Kariuki & Muthoni, 2022).

Digital tools offer anonymity and convenience, enabling women, especially younger and unmarried individuals, to seek information without fear of judgment. These technologies have been linked with improved contraceptive uptake and increased self-advocacy in reproductive decision-making (Fernandez & Malik, 2024).

Sharma and Awasthi (2018) attempted to evaluate the effect of some socio-demographic factors on women's knowledge in regards to reproductive health in Nepal. The finding presents the education level and income as the two basic parameters affecting the management and understanding of reproductive health problems by women.

Nepal and Thapa (2020) highlighted the effectiveness of the role of health education programs in strengthening the feeling of reproductive rights among Nepalese women. Their results showed that focused education programs greatly increased knowledge, thereby increasing the practice of reproductive rights.

Although existing studies highlight factors influencing women's knowledge and practice of reproductive rights, there remains limited evidence specifically focused on women of reproductive age in Chandragiri Municipality. General awareness, but gaps persist in understanding how education, socioeconomic status, and access to services interact at the local level (Kaphle, 2013). In this way there is disconnection between knowledge and practical utilisation of reproductive rights in Nepal's semi-urban settings.

Methods

The constraints of the study area were deliberately set for an in-depth investigation of reproductive rights awareness and practices in the selected community without expanding the scope to other areas with potentially different socio-cultural and economic conditions. Under the quantitative method, the lottery sampling technique was used to select the participants. The population of reproductive age women in Chandragiri Municipality is not readily available. Since the population of the study was unknown, the researcher followed the statistical formula invented by William G. Cochran in 1963: $n = Z^2pq/d^2$ to calculate the actual sample size.

Z^2 = 6.6536 derived from the Z-score for a 99% confidence interval)

d = signifies the degree of freedom

In this case, the values are set as follows:

$$p = 60\% = 0.6; q = 1 - 0.6 = 0.4; d = 10\% = 0.1 \text{ (Margin of error)}$$

Using the formula, the calculation yields:

$$n = \frac{Z^2 pq}{d^2}, \text{ where } n = \text{desired sample size}$$

$$= 6.6536 * 0.24 / 0.01 = n = 159.6864; n = 160 \text{ (Nearly)}$$

Therefore, the calculated sample size for the study was 160, with respondents representing the study area.

Results and Discussion

The collected data were reviewed for completeness, accuracy and consistency, and transferred into Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) for further analysis. Descriptive statistics (frequency and percentage) were used to describe the socio-demographic information of respondents, knowledge on reproductive rights, and practices in managing reproductive health.

Socio-demographic Information of Respondents

The socio-demographic information, including number, religion, caste, education and occupation of the respondents as per survey is mentioned below.

Table 1. *Socio-demographic informations of the respondents*

Age group	Frequencies (N)	Percentage (%)
18–30 years	55	34.37
31–40 years	70	43.75
41–49 years	35	21.87
Religion	Frequencies (N)	Percentage (%)
Hindu	130	81.12
Buddhist	15	9.37
Muslim	8	4.97
Christians	7	3.79
Caste	Frequencies (N)	Percentage (%)
Chhetri	49	30.55
Brahman	36	20.37
Janajati	60	37.81
Dalits	9	5.73
Muslims	2	1.01
Others	4	4.53
Total	160	100

Source: Field data, 2024

The residence of Chandragiri Municipality is culturally mixed which is reflected in the data given in table 1. The age composition analysis of the respondents

shows that a bigger proportion, which is 43.75%, of the respondents fall in the age bracket of (31-40) years. Second age group is of (18-30) years, which composes 34.37%. Following this the age group with the least proportion, which is the 41-49 years age group, with only 21.87 % of the respondents. These groups indicate that the dominant membership comes from the age group of (31-40) years, while the age group of (41-49) years holds a comparatively lesser proportion.

The table 1 also indicates that among the overall number of respondents, which is 160, the greatest number of respondents are Hindus, constituting people or 81.12%. The Buddhist community is the second-leading respondent, constituting 9.37% as the total of respondents. Likewise, there are also Muslim respondents, accounting for 4.97% and a total of 12 respondents. Then, the Christian community represents the final position, accounting for the lowest percentage of 3.79% and a total of 10 respondents. This indicates the overall respondents belong to a predominately Hindu community, followed by the Buddhist, Muslim, and Christian communities.

Table 2. *Level of education and ccupation of respondent (n=160)*

Education Level	Frequencies (N)	Percentage (%)
No formal education	16	0.101
Primary school	48	29.9
Secondary school	53	33.4
High school	34	21
Higher education	9	5.6
Occupation	Frequencies (N)	Percentage (%)
Housewife	62	38.5
Farmer	43	27.1
Laborer	35	21.6
Teacher	9	5.6
Students	11	7.2
Total	160	100

Source: Field data, 2024

The educational background of the respondents indicates a diversified trend among the levels of education attained. Notably, an impressive 33.4% of all the respondents attained their last educational level by completing secondary education, followed by 29.9% who attained their last educational level by completing primary education.

According to the data, 21.0 % of the respondents completed high school, while 5.6 % of the respondents had higher education. This is quite remarkable, considering that 10.1% of

the respondents had no schooling at all. Based on the distribution, it is clear that the number of secondary and primary schools is prevalent among the respondents, as opposed to the meager level of higher education.

Similarly, occupational status reveals that a large number of respondents are housewives at 38.5 percent and 62 in number; then farmers at 27.1 percent and 43 in number; followed by laborers at 21.6 percent and 35 in number. Teachers and students followed closely at 5.6 percent and 9 respectively; and 7.2 percent and 11 respectively. Clearly, from this information, it is evident that a large number of respondents are housewives and farmers, although there is a fair proportion of laborers and so forth. The knowledge of respondents on reproductive rights is presented in the following tables:

Table 3. *Knowledge and understanding on reproductive rights*

Response	Frequencies (N)	Percentage (%)
Yes	136	84.9
No	24	15.1
Understanding	Frequencies (N)	Percentage (%)
Right to access health services	40	25.1
Right to make decisions	45	28
Right to receive information	31	19.4
Uncertain	44	27.5
Total	160	100

A high level of awareness among the sample population was demonstrated by the fact that 84.9 % of respondents were aware of reproductive health and rights, whereas 15.1 % had never heard of them. Respondents' perceptions of reproductive rights include the right to make decisions (28.0 %) and the right to health care (25.1 %). The right to information, which has the lowest percentage of responses (19.4 %), is referred to as reproductive rights. A sizable portion of respondents about 27.5 % remained unsure and may require more education and awareness around reproductive rights. The descriptions of the respondents' reproductive health management practices is given below:

Table 4. *Practices Followed (n=160)*

Practice	Frequencies (N)	Percentage (%)
Regular check-ups	3	2
Use of contraceptives	75	46.7
Seeking info from health professionals	74	46.2
Self-care practices	8	5.1
Total	160	100

Table 4 lists the methods used by the respondents to manage their reproductive health. Contraception and consulting medical professionals were the most common practices

among the 160 respondents, accounting for 46.7 % and 46.2 %, respectively. Just 2.0 % have sought routine checkups, compared to 5.1 % who exercise self-care. According to the data, the sample's most popular behaviors include using contraceptives and consulting with medical professionals; regular checkups and self-care are far less common.

Table 5. *Education level affects knowledge of reproductive rights (n=160)*

Impact	Frequencies (N)	Percentage (%)
Significantly affects	82	51.0
Somewhat affects	43	27.0
No effect	35	22.0
Total	160	100

The table above highlights the role of education level in influencing the respondents' awareness about reproductive rights. A higher percentage, 51.0 %, perceived education to have a substantial effect on them, while 27.0 % agreed that education has some effect on them, but 22.0 % perceived it as having no effect on them. It is very notable that education is an ideal tool for creating reproductive rights awareness, as more of its respondents agreed to the substantial effect of education on them.

Discussion

The study reveals that a majority of the respondents fall in the age group of 31-40 years, and a greater number of them follow Hinduism. The caste representation in the population is varied, and same in educational background. The majority of respondents completed secondary school. In the occupation, the largest groups are housewives and farmers. Regarding awareness, most of the respondents were aware of reproductive rights, and their major source of information came from community health workers and health professionals. The Respondents who believed that reproductive rights include decision-making comprise 28.0%, and health service access is 25.1%. There was good awareness of maternal health and FP services among the respondents; however, awareness about certain reproductive health services was quite varied, such as sexual health education or prenatal care.

The findings of the study have also highlighted that knowledge of reproductive health is widely present in the surveyed population. 84.9% of the respondents reported knowing about reproductive rights, but knowledge concerning what the concept entails is limited. The most frequent responses were the right to decide and the right to health services, although a significant percentage (27.5%) did not know what reproductive rights meant. This means that profound education in reproductive rights is needed, explaining the

concepts in their broader perspective, sexual and reproductive health, and entitlements that accrue to persons from healthcare systems.

Similarly, the study also elicited information on practices about reproductive health, where the use of contraceptives and seeking professional health advice were the most 37 common practices. Although awareness in most of aspects is high, barriers to access, especially financial constraints, lack of information, and stigma, are still reported by many respondents. This study has established that the influence of education and income levels was high on the knowledge about reproductive rights and accessibility of services. Moreover, a large number of respondents stated that their communities did not provide sufficient help with problems arising from reproductive health. Results of the research reveal significant awareness among respondents on issues of reproductive rights, specifically about health services accessibility and the right to individual decision-making. At the same time, health services on reproductive issues turn out to be inaccessible for financial, informational, and social reasons. General education and income are crucial factors in knowledge and access to services. Besides, community support is found lacking and increases the need for more vigilant efforts towards improvement in reproductive health services and their awareness, especially in the less privileged areas. Better education, community support, and accessibility to reproductive health services all call for equated health care.

The study also found that although the respondents were familiar with services such as family planning and maternal health care, practices related to the management of reproductive health were not common. It is further supported that routine health check-ups were as low as 2.0%. This is because awareness cannot always be translated into action, or services may be inaccessible or unaffordable, or cultural beliefs and gender expectations influence them from seeking care or being openly communicative about reproductive health issues. Finally, socio-demographic factors include education and income, which are important factors in the knowledge of reproductive rights and the accessibility of services. Awareness is better for people with higher education, and similarly, income levels determine access to the services.

Conclusion

This study points out a significant gap in knowledge and practices regarding reproductive health rights among women of reproductive age in Chandragiri Municipality of Kathmandu district. Despite some level of awareness about family planning and maternal health services, various barriers, including economic barriers, stigma, and deeply

ingrained cultural norms, hinder women's ability to fully access and utilise reproductive health services. These challenges are compounded by socio-economic factors such as education and income, which have been shown to play an important role in improving knowledge and access to reproductive health services. The findings suggest that addressing these socio-economic inequalities through targeted policies could help improve reproductive health outcomes in the region. Furthermore, misconceptions about reproductive rights and a general lack of awareness of legal protections contribute to the continued under-utilisation of reproductive health services. This underscores the need for more accessible, comprehensive education in reproductive health, including a focus on legal aspects, both in community outreach and in school curricula. In addition, addressing gender-based barriers and ensuring women receive adequate support from health care providers and community organisations are important steps in building a more inclusive environment where reproductive rights are respected and supported.

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Integrating AI Tools in Teachers' Professional Development: Opportunities and Challenges

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Abstract

The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) has been increasingly using in different areas, including teaching, learning and professional development. In this regard, this study explores the opportunities and challenges faced by secondary-level English teachers while integrating AI tools, like ChatGPT and MagicSchool AI for their professional growth. A qualitative research design was adopted. Four secondary-level English teachers, two from community and two from private schools of Kathmandu district having at least one-year experiences of using AI tools were purposively selected as the sample. Data were collected using semi-structured interviews. Teachers' narratives were transcribed and analysed thematically. The findings from the narratives show that teachers get many opportunities, including becoming the best learning partner, material creation and designing, workload reduction, and interesting and engaged classroom techniques while integrating AI tools in developing their teaching profession, including. However, they faced some challenges, such as inadequate equipment and infrastructure, incomplete technological knowledge on the part of teachers, and over-dependency. Importantly, AI tools have high potential for teachers' professional development and transformative pedagogy. So, technological training for teachers, management of the required infrastructure and equipment, and proper policy formation are mandatory to promote AI tools in sustainable integration for teachers' capacity building.

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Introduction

Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) is becoming popular in each field of human concern, including teaching and learning. As it enhances personalised learning, efficiency, and student autonomy, and also challenges traditional teacher-student dynamics (Alasgarova & Rzayev, 2025), teachers and students have preferred AI tools for their teaching and learning purposes. These provide opportunities for personalised learning, automated administrative support, and data-driven feedback that can strengthen instructional practice (Viberg et al., 2025). Although developed countries have begun embedding AI literacy into teacher-preparation programs and in-service teacher education, persistent concerns about ethics, equity of access, and teachers' trust complicate wide-scale adoption (Viberg et al., 2025). Despite these shortcomings, teachers are independently learning new knowledge, skills and ideas of better teaching using diverse AI tools, such as Gemini, Canva, ChatGPT etc. Actually, these tools are supporting teachers as virtual assistants (Aguilar-Cruz & Salas-Pilco, 2025) by providing updated and innovative strategies required for their teaching profession.

Professional development is solely related to the teachers' self-practices and reflection, which generate context-sensitive practices in a particular teaching context. Teacher professional development programs and sessions frequently lack hands-on training, contextual relevance, and ongoing support, leaving teacher educators unprepared for their profession (Tomaskinova & Tomaskin, 2024). Due to the use of lecture-based programs of teacher development (al-Zyoud, 2020), many questions have been raised regarding their effectiveness at the practical level, i.e, the classroom. But these questions have started to be addressed by teachers' self-initiation to practice AI tools to learn professional skills. Most of the teachers, including the experienced ones, are consulting different AI-based tools for lesson planning, material designing, question construction, language editing and so on (Lamrabet, 2025). For a professional teacher preparing a reading test, interactive tasks and assignments are very important and require additional skills. But AI tools like ChatGPT, Q-Craft, or MagicSchool (Karakaya et al., 2025) have been facilitating them easily without consuming their valuable time.

In the Nepalese context, teachers are practising different AI tools, including ChatGPT, to get teaching resources and strategies. In another way, they are in the process of getting teacher education for their professional growth. According to Dhakal et al. (2025), the use of AI tools in the field of teacher education in Nepal has assisted in social transformation and contributed to inclusive and equitable access to education. Though there are some constraints, including inadequate technological infrastructure, improper teacher training,

ethical dilemmas, and digital inequity in terms of under-resourced communities (Karki & Karki, 2025), teachers are passionate about enhancing their digital skills with the help of AI tools. Teachers teaching in a digitally equipped school have updated their skills as well as improved engagement and academic outcomes among students (Baral, 2025a). So, despite some shortcomings such as policy gaps and limited infrastructures (Dhakal et al., 2025), teachers are eagerly engaging in practising different AI tools to enhance their capabilities and learners' learning together. However, how teachers can implement AI tools for their professional enhancement is very important at present. In this regard, this study explores the opportunities and challenges faced by teachers in Nepal while integrating different AI tools for their professional development.

AI Tools for Teachers

Chat GPT

Among the AI tools available, ChatGPT by OpenAI stands out as a potential game-changer for educators around the world (Tran et al., 2024). It further helps teachers stay updated on new pedagogies, curriculum trends, educational technology, and assessment methods. It opens a wide field of possibilities for teaching assistance and learning processes (Mena Octavio et al., 2024). Generally, teachers can ask their queries related to multiple subjects and get a variety of alternatives immediately. Furthermore, they can upload their teaching content or materials and ask to analyse their effectiveness in the learning process. Teachers do not need to meet experts or colleagues for their problems, but can learn independently. Asare & Boateng (2025) state that ChatGPT helps to enhance teachers' self-efficacy and self-regulatory learning.

Magic School AI

MagicSchool AI is an AI-powered platform designed specifically for K-12 educators and school systems. It offers a wide range of tools to support lesson planning, differentiation, assessment creation, communication, and student-facing supports through AI (Li et al., 2025). It is specially designed for teachers and includes a wide range of additional tools related to teaching and learning. It covers features that can be used to produce diagnostic assessments, produce project-based lesson plans, improve the visual quality of learning, and produce learning support texts (Anggi Prasetya, 2023), which are integrated into a single platform. As found by Robinson & Leander (2025), teachers can use this AI to record their audio, create a visual presentation, generate music from the content, create different polls, etc., which are really significant for teachers' professional development.

Canva

Canva AI uses artificial intelligence to assist teachers in designing visual and text-based content, such as presentations, posters, infographics, and graphics, that are very inspiring for learners. More interestingly, teachers can design and construct attractive digital teaching materials (Amalia et al., 2025) in Canva, which creates motivation on the part of teachers. It helps to implement the institutional digitalisation of schools in the age of science and technology. Similarly, teachers can enhance their design skills by simply writing their concept in Canva (Catya et al., 2025). Teachers can also inspire their learners to use such a design platform. It significant positive impact on student abilities, marking the effectiveness of this innovative approach in meeting the learning needs of Generation Z (Arifa, 2024). So, Canva can be another platform for enhancing professional skills related to students' motivation, interesting teaching skills and learners' inspiration.

AI for Teachers: Nepalese Practices

Along with the growing use of technology in teaching and learning, teachers have been practising different AI tools in Nepal. Mostly, most of the teachers use AI for their personalised learning (Baral, 2025a). Using different platforms like ChatGPT, Gemini, Grok, etc., teachers are learning to develop their professional skills. Using specific design tools like Canva, teachers have started to create interesting teaching materials like PPT text, posters, and short picture-related stories (Amalia et al., 2025). Khadka et al. (2025) state that teachers are promoting learners' autonomy using AI tools. Here, teachers are using AI tools to develop their teaching skills on one hand and to inspire the learners for independent learning on the other hand.

Though teachers in Nepal have been getting the benefits of AI to develop their teaching abilities, they are not free from challenges. Particularly, a lack of adequate assistance, poor technological skills, inadequate infrastructures like internet and devices are the major issues (Neupane et al., 2025). In the same way, some ethical issues like over-dependence on AI tools might undermine critical thinking, suppress creativity, and elevate the risk of plagiarism have been seen on the part of both teachers and students (Dahal & Paudel, 2025).

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative method to explore secondary-level English language teachers' perspectives, opportunities and challenges while working with AI tools for their

professional development. Their opinion, obstacles and practices of AI were explored using a narrative enquiry. Four secondary-level English teachers from two schools in Kathmandu district, one public school and another private, were selected as research participants. A purposive sampling procedure was adopted to select participants having experience in using AI for their professional development. The selected teachers have used AI tools to enhance their teaching skills for at least a year.

Semi-structured interviews with selected teachers were used to collect the data. Participants were inspired to share their practices and experiences freely and openly without personal bias. As per participants' preferences, interviews were done in person or using video chat. Each interview was about 50 to 60 minutes, with teachers' permission. Mainly, the topics of the interview were practices, opportunities and challenges that the teachers faced while using AI tools for their professional development. Special attention was given during data collection on obtaining informed consent and protecting participants' privacy. After proper transcription of the interview, the research generated themes based on opportunities, challenges and practices regarding AI in teacher development.

Results and Discussion

This section covers the analysis and interpretation of data collected from the interviews of selected participants. Basically, two categories are used for thematic analysis: Opportunities of AI tools for teacher professional development, and challenges faced by teachers while using AI tools in the teaching and learning field.

Opportunities

All of the teachers have highlighted that they have been getting golden professional opportunities. They further termed AI tools as their mentor to learn independently, as interpreted in the following sub-themes.

AI Tools as Learning Partner

Teachers used to learn teaching skills and content by asking their colleagues. But the majority of the respondents stated that they are getting good company with different AI tools to learn personally, and do not realise the need for their colleagues. In this regard, Yagya Sharma (pseudonym), one of the respondents, states:

"I ask ChatGPT to support me in lesson planning. I just put the topic, students' level and a few criteria it gives me an attractive PowerPoint with pictures. When

students ask difficult questions, I consult it and make them satisfied. It is my 'sikne sathi' (learning friend)."

Here, Mr Sharma is more confident because of ChatGPT. It has created an additional opportunity to create materials and make his teaching smart. As per his idea, ChatGPT is not a replacement, but it is a true helper for enhancing professional skills. In the same way, another respondent, Ranjana Thapa (pseudonym), shares:

"I frequently use Gemini to correct my written language. While preparing the question set for the English subject, I can get many unseen passages from Gemini easily. In past, I spent more than 2 hours preparing an unseen passage and comprehension questions. Now, AI tools like Gemini have become my teachers".

As Sharma, the second respondent, is also getting support from Gemini, particularly in question paper construction. She has become able to reduce professional burden, like spending hours to write lengthy passages and comprehension questions from there. Fourth respondent, Dhiraj Yadav (pseudonym), adds:

"I used to request my friend to record my voice using his cell phone for audio text while teaching listening skills. But nowadays, ChatGPT is providing different downloadable audio files as per my students' level. I download these files and play using my mobile phone in class."

According to these narratives, AI tools are serving as an assistant in teachers' professional journeys. Due to these tools, teachers can learn independently and make their profession relevant and effective. A professional journey is collaborative; teachers are collaborating with AI tools for learning. So, these tools are being true learning partners of teachers.

AI Tools for Interesting Teaching

Respondents were asked about what additional benefits they have realised after using AI tools. Commonly, most of the respondents agreed that after consulting with different AI platforms, they have made their teaching strategies more interesting and fun. Tanka Subedi (pseudonym) narrates:

"I consult many stories and jokes generated by AI tools. Based on the teaching contents, I share these stories and jokes in the class to motivate the learners towards learning. They feel enjoyment and participate in learning interestingly."

As per these ideas, by consulting AI tools, teachers are making their teaching style enjoyable and fun. AI tools can offer many interesting ideas and concepts for teachers.

Using these ideas, they can inspire and motivate the learners for further learning. Similar ideas are expressed by Ranjana Thapa:

"I love to implement language games in my class. Before few years ago, I was aware of limited language games. But when I started to consult AI tools, particularly MagicSchool AI, I got a range of language games suitable for my learners. They feel enjoyment while participating in language games and learning the content."

According to these narratives, teachers are using AI tools to bring change in their teaching style. They can bring innovation in teaching by replacing monotonous lecture methods with other interesting techniques like language games. By consulting AI tools, they can adapt new and interesting teaching strategies best for their learners as well as the classroom situation. Another respondent, Yagya Sharma, tells :

"I do not put in my hard effort to translate and explain the English text for my students. I just upload the text in Gemini or ChatGPT and give simple commands to prepare worksheets. Then I assign these worksheets to the students. They actively engage to complete the worksheet based on the text given in the textbook."

Here, teachers are dealing with the content given in the textbook very effectively using AI. On the one hand, they have brought variety with interesting teaching methods and reduced their workload to avoid over-explanation and translation techniques. By such practices, learners feel really engaged and have fun while learning.

Challenges Faced by the Teachers

Despite having many opportunities and benefits of using AI tools for teachers' professional capacity building, teachers have shared some challenges they faced. These challenges are interpreted in the following sub-themes.

Inadequate Resources and Infrastructures

Teachers shared that they are using different AI tools on their personal side. Institutional support is not available effectively. Schools, as well as local governments, have not managed to allocate resources and infrastructures for practising digital skills for teachers' professional development. Accepting these facts, Dhiraj Yadav shares:

"I have been using my personal mobile data to consult AI tools during school hours. There is an internet service, but that covers only limited areas. I requested

the school administration to manage additional internet service in the staff room, but they have not addressed it yet."

As highlighted by Acharya & Bansyat (2024) major issue in practising AI in schools is the internet issue. The respondent was from Kathmandu, the capital city of Nepal and shared such a pathetic experience; then we can not expect adequate internet access in the remote parts of Nepal. Tanka Subedi adds:

"I am teaching in a private school now. Sometimes my cell phone does not support uploading large files to upload in AI to generate questions as well as a quiz. I try to use a desktop computer from the computers and find it in worse condition."

As shared by Mr Subedi, the computers in the computer labs of schools in Nepal are kept randomly. Internet connection, updated systems and equipment are rarely found. Because of this, most of the teachers are not able to surf the internet using functional devices, as highlighted by (Baral (2025b).

Lack of Technological Knowledge and Skills

While sharing their narratives, teachers shared that they have limited knowledge and skills in using AI tools for their profession. Although they have been practising popular AI tools like ChatGPT and Gemini, they are not aware of specific AI tools for teachers. Yagya Sharma responds to the question of how many AI tools are familiar to him:

" and there are only two AI tools, ChatGPT and Gemini. I can handle both generally. I do not think that there are others."

From this argument, it is clear that teachers have limited knowledge of the varieties of AI tools to improve teachers' teaching modalities. There are specific AI tools designed and developed for teachers, like MagicSchool AI, but teachers are unknown. Ranjana Thapa expresses:

"I just know how to ask queries to ChatGPT and Gemini. I don't know the skills of questioning with proper prompts. Sometimes I get irrelevant responses from AI tools as per my students' level and teaching content."

As Ranjita shared, most of the teachers just paste the question in AI tools without limiting and relating to context, students' age and learning level and the expected outcome of the curriculum. Here, it is necessary to assist the teachers with the skills of preparing correct

prompts and criteria for relevant responses (Chapagai & Adhikari, 2024). Tanka Subedi has similar responses:

"I am facing a problem in editing the PPT text generated by the AI tool. I can ask to prepare slides on the given topic and download them, but I do not know any ideas to modify the slides in my context. So, AI training is necessary for teachers like me."

According to these experiences, teachers are not able to adjust and convert the output given by AI in their teaching context. They just share whatever they get in AI. They need to facilitate reviewing and editing the output information from the contextual lens. They will get additional benefits to develop their teaching profession if a proper training and guidance program is offered.

Discussions

Teachers are getting many opportunities by adopting AI tools for their professional growth. AI tools can be the best learning partner to enhance professional skills, like creating lesson plans and preparing attractive and interesting PowerPoint presentations. By this, teachers can perform their teaching behaviours confidently. The teaching profession incorporates many tasks such as constructing questions, preparing worksets, developing audio text for listening, etc., which can be completed using different AI tools within in short period of time. Here, AI tools can be the best collaborator of teachers. Getting ideas from AI, teacher make their classroom teaching more engaging and enjoyable using effective strategies such as storytelling, language games, worksheets, and audio text and language quizzes. These tools help the teachers to be updated with innovative ideas on one hand and inspire and motivate the learners on the other hand. Similarly, it helps to reduce teachers' workload.

Despite many benefits and opportunities, teachers have been facing some challenges while using AI in their professional work. Available resources and infrastructures in schools are not adequate for the effective integration of technological tools. Due to the limited bandwidth in the schools of Nepal, teachers are compelled to use their personal mobile data for teaching purposes. In the remote areas of Nepal, the same mobile data can not be used because of network issues. Computers available in schools are not updated and functional. Similarly, teachers have poor technological skills, such as pasting proper prompts, modifying the generated information as per local context, proper uploading and downloading of files and information filtering skills. Lacking these ideas, they have faced

many problems and used raw AI output. In this way, proper support and guidance through training sessions to teachers can minimise these challenges.

Conclusion and Implications

Integrating different AI tools, teachers from low-resourced countries like Nepal can develop and update their professional knowledge and skills. The participants of this study got the opportunities to update their professional knowledge and skills. However, the findings of this study indicate some perplexing problems, including inadequate ideas about technology and lack of equipments like internet and devices to practice innovative ideas in teaching and reduce unnecessary workload, teaching specific tools like MagicSchool AI is really beneficial for teachers. Inspiring learners with interesting materials like PPT text, worksheets, pictures and audio text teacher can implement the real spirit of engaged pedagogy. The findings of the study provide evidence for effectiveness of AI tools for teachers' professional growth which should be ensured from the policy level. Similarly, proper collaborative practices among teachers for effective use of AI tools is very important which can be addressed in the institutional level.

For further effectiveness of AI tools, efforts should be focused on enhancing digital and technological skills and proper management of infrastructures, like devices and adequate internet access. Only then, AI tools transform the education systems and teachers' professional capabilities.

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Principals' Perceptions on Managing Private Schools in Kathmandu Valley

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Abstract

This is an exploratory qualitative study. It explores the perspectives of principals towards their administrative practices especially in the private schools of Kathmandu Valley. The data collected from ten school principals using semi-structured interviews. The findings have been discussed under the themes like academic leadership, financial management, human resource practices, stakeholder involvement and strategic planning. The principals assert their principalship as a daunting task. The principalship in the private schools in Kathmandu was found to have faced a large range of expectations of the parents, students and teachers. Since there is a large number of private schools, the principalship has to meet highly competitive demands of the stakeholders. Additionally, they ensure a rational balance between affordability on the part of the parents and academic success. There are some key challenges such as allocating adequate resources, inviting professors to ensure expertly support on the part of the teachers and students and preserving a unique institutional character. They were found to have employed strategies to handle these challenges. Some key recommendations have been made in relation to policy, practice and future research.

Keywords: Financial management, Human resource practices, Leadership, Private schools, Perceptions

Introduction

In the present-day world, the need and importance of global education is mounting up. Such needs emerged due to technological advancements, economic liberalization, improved lifestyle, recognition of diversities, etc. It has been thus imperative for the

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principals to ensure their effective leadership especially in reshaping and rearticulating the mission, culture and operational effectiveness of the schools (Leithwood et al., 2008). The school principals are expected to be not only administrators but also a key actor to lead learning activities in the classroom maintaining learning environment in schools, enhancing quality of learning on the part of the students and achieving overall institutional success in defined time. The principals of the schools are also expected to play the role of change agents, community builders, financial managers and instructional leaders. In this context, it is important to understand how the school principals explain and manage their duties and responsibilities to ensure improved learning outcomes and its sustainability.

In the context of Nepal, there is a rapid growth of private schools especially after reintroduction of democracy in 1990. Since then, education in private schools has been an important area for employment and business. Education in private sector then has been complements or even outperforms public education systems (Sarangapani, 2013) in Nepal. It is widely accepted that private schools in Nepal cover a large number of socio-economic groups with excellent instruction and first-rate facilities. It has often been able to provide better academic results. Kathmandu has been a highly concentrated city for private schools in Nepal.

The extension of education in private sector reveals how important it is to comprehend the dynamics of their operations particularly the leadership that guides them. Compared to their counterparts in public schools, private school principals frequently have a different set of opportunities and problems. These include negotiating competitive markets, handling a range of parental expectations, maintaining financial sustainability, hiring and retaining competent employees in a cutthroat industry and frequently operating with more autonomy while also being more accountable to different stakeholders (Day & Leithwood, 2007). Their perceptions of these diverse responsibilities which include everything from curriculum development and academic oversight to financial management, human resource practices and external relations are not just subjective opinions but also significant factors that influence their leadership styles, decision-making and the eventual success of their institutions.

Even though private education is becoming more and more popular and school leadership is recognized as being important, there is still a significant gap in the literature about how private school principals specifically view management practices especially in culturally and geographically different contexts like Kathmandu Valley. Although there are many

general theories of educational leadership and some studies deal with school management in Nepal, there are few direct insights into how private school principals view their roles, the difficulties they face and the tactics they use to run their institutions. The insufficiency as such limits our understanding and competence to comprehend how these schools are run. It also shed lights on important areas for policy action on professional development as well.

This paper therefore aims to bridge the gap by interpreting the perspectives of private schools' principals especially in relation to administering private schools in Kathmandu Valley. It uncovers experiences and interpretations of private school principals especially in relation to managerial aspects of their schools including human resource, financial and academic management. It also focuses to highlight the practices of stakeholder engagement and strategic planning as handled by the private schools' principals in Kathmandu. In this way, this paper provides a rich and thick description of principals' perspectives especially from those who are actively engaged in mainstream leadership in private schools in Kathmandu. The findings of this study thus are supposed to benefit the school leaders, policymakers, educators and administrators who are engaging in private schools in Nepal

Literature Review

Managing and administering schools effectively is an important endeavor to ensure quality education. This endeavor significantly influences learning outcomes on the part of the students and capability of the schools as a whole (Hallinger & Heck, 1998). There are some research-based models on educational leadership such as instructional leadership which focuses on curriculum, teaching and learning (Robinson et al., 2008) and transformational leadership which emphasizes vision, motivation and organizational change (Bass & Avolio, 1994). These are some internationally established models in the field of school leadership. However, there can be some varied perspectives on their use in various educational and cultural contexts. This study therefore responds to this issue.

School Leadership and Management in Private Schools

Compared to public counterparts, private schools operate under distinct economic and regulatory frameworks which has a significant impact on their management goals and methods. Principals of private schools are frequently more accountable for marketing, competitive positioning and financial sustainability (Lubienski & Lubienski, 2014). This calls for a more entrepreneurial style of leadership where stakeholder satisfaction, resource mobilization and strategic planning become critical (Mestry & Grobler, 2007).

According to studies, private school administrators frequently have more authority which can result in creative approaches but also raise performance standards (Coleman & Palmer, 2008). Therefore, these particular institutional requirements and the market-driven character of private education probably influence how they view management activities.

Challenges and Contextual Factors in Developing Countries

Private schools frequently arise to cover gaps in the public system in developing nations like Nepal frequently offering greater infrastructure and higher quality (Rose & Akyeampong, 2017). They do, however, also have particular difficulties, such as overseeing a variety of socioeconomic student populations, coping with little local resources, negotiating intricate government rules that might not be well-suited to private education and competing for skilled instructors (Bray & Kwok, 2003). In such situations, the principal's job becomes much more complicated requiring flexibility, fortitude and a thorough comprehension of local dynamics. Since these mental models direct their decision-making and problem-solving in these difficult circumstances, it is essential to comprehend their perspectives. Actually, prior studies on Nepalese education have addressed broad school management difficulties (e.g., Giri, 2018) but they have not examined private school administrators' perspectives, particularly with regard to their daily operational and strategic perceptions.

The Importance of Principal's Perceptions

Principals' perception is important as they affect how people interpret circumstances, make choices and act which are considered as important insights (Smircich & Morgan, 1982). Principals' leadership styles are directly influenced by how they view their management duties, difficulties and accomplishments. Teacher development and retention will probably receive more attention from a principal who sees human resource management as a crucial strategic function than from one who sees it as merely an administrative duty. Consequently, examining these views provides a more thorough and in-depth comprehension of "leadership in action" than simply monitoring procedures or evaluating results. This study, therefore, is a response to address this gap by uncovering and interpreting the subjective experiences of private school principals in Kathmandu Valley.

Methods

Qualitative method was used to explore the perspectives of private school's principals especially in relation to administering and managing schools. This methodology was used to uncover a detailed understanding, the professional life experiences, views and interpretations of the participants in relation to their school management strategies which was not possible simply by using quantitative methodologies (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Participants and Sampling

Altogether ten principals were selected from the private schools of Kathmandu Valley. The participants were selected purposively. One of the basic criteria for selecting the participants was their work experiences. Only those principals were considered as the study participants who held the post of principals in the school at least for five years. The purpose of selecting such principals was to ensure that they would offer rich and thick descriptions of school management and administering process in their socio-cultural context. The schools were different in terms of size, number of students and other things and criteria. Informed consent, participants' privacy and anonymity were some key ethical considerations in the study.

Data Collection

Data from the participants was collected by using semi-structured interviews. Between March and August 2025, each interview took place at the principals' individual schools or at a neutral site that was mutually agreed upon. Each interview lasted between sixty to ninety minutes. Key aspects of school administration including academic leadership, financial management, human resource management, stakeholder engagement (parents, community, government) and strategic planning which were covered in an interview guide. Principals were encouraged to expound on their experiences, difficulties, achievements and general opinions by using open-ended questions. "How do you perceive your role in ensuring academic quality?" and "What are the biggest challenges you face in managing your school's finances?" were two examples of questions. With consent, all interviews were audio recorded and then verbatim transcribed.

Data Analysis

The six-phase method described by Braun and Clarke (2006) was used to evaluate the transcribed data using thematic analysis: getting acquainted with the data, creating preliminary codes, looking for themes, reviewing themes, defining and labeling themes and creating the report. In order to find recurrent themes and important details, the

analysis required reviewing the transcripts several times. Text passages were coded and then sorted into more general themes. These topics reflected principals' fundamental beliefs about the administration of private schools in Kathmandu Valley. Peer debriefing with a fellow researcher was done to increase trustworthiness and member checking was done with a subset of participants to confirm the interpretations' accuracy.

Results and Discussion

The interview data were analyzed and interpreted thematically. A number of themes have been generated out of the field data. These themes are related to the perspectives of the principals in relation to managing and administering their schools in Kathmandu Valley. The themes are discussed and interpreted by supplying contextual evidences and relevant literature below:

Academic Leadership: Balancing Autonomy with External Pressures

The principals of private schools under the study accepted academic excellence on the part of the students as their duties. They valued their autonomy in developing curricula and methods of instruction. In this regard, Principal A stated, "We have the freedom to innovate, to introduce new teaching methods that we believe are best for our students without much bureaucratic red tape." But such claim of the principal seems to have been challenged by competitive academic context among the private schools and parents' expectations for comparatively better score on the part of the students in exams. This shows that principals are desirous to hold autonomy in curriculum development and pedagogic innovation. They asserted the importance of integrating local practices with global standard practices in education. For this reason, they affirmed their innovative roles in school leadership. Besides these, they also explained the importance of preparing teachers for ensuring quality education in their schools.

The other aspect of their school management as claimed by the participants was the fulfillment of parental expectations of higher score on the part of the students. As viewed by the principals, parental expectations of highest score in exam and curricular claims of holistic development on the part of students are two different poles; opposite to each other where one often challenges the other within the given set of learning environment. In the words of Principal G, "Parents judge us by grades so while we want all round development on the part of the students. We also must deliver good exam results."

Financial Management: The Constant Balancing Act

Financial management was claimed to be one of the difficult tasks. Some of them claimed it as an ongoing challenge on the way to operating a private school on daily basis. Principals who frequently lacked specialized financial knowledge were directly in charge of resource allocation, budgeting and fee collecting. 'Raising adequate fund' was accepted as one of the common themes in relation to financial management. For them, adequate fund for day-to-day operation of the schools becomes difficult if they focus on the affordability of tuition fee for the students.

As a part of their financial roles, they asserted to have allocated budget on teacher wages, infrastructure and technology management. In this regard, Principal C said, "Every cent matters. To maximize the educational value, we must be quite astute about where we invest.". The financial administration of the schools also focused on the fee structure. It was quite difficult to balance affordability among parents and daily operational costs of the schools. Some of them however claimed that they often remain under financial pressure as the parents in questions intent to pay lower fee but they demand for higher level of quality services.

Human Resource Management: Retention as a Key Challenge

The hiring, retaining and professional growth of competent educators were seen as critical yet extremely difficult. Principals emphasized the attractiveness of overseas prospects and the competitive market for qualified teachers in Kathmandu's private school sector. Principals stressed the value of hiring motivated and qualified teachers. To improve teaching quality, they made investments in professional development, frequently through internal seminars and outside training. One of the biggest obstacles was frequently found to be teacher retention. Principals admitted that even though they work hard to provide competitive pay and a happy workplace, they frequently lose experienced educators to foreign or better-paying schools. "We invest so much in our teachers, only for them to leave for a little more salary or an opportunity overseas," Principal D bemoaned. It's an ongoing loop. Additionally, principals saw themselves as key players in balancing the interests of many stakeholders especially parents, employees and to a lesser degree government regulators.

Engaging with parents was seen as critical for student success and school reputation but also as a source of considerable pressure. Parents were thought to be very involved and to have high standards for both the school's success and their children's education. Principals

discussed on handling inappropriate demands or disagreements even while positive parental engagement was valued.

Principals realized the importance of appropriate planning to ensure quality education for a long-time. For them, assurance of quality education as a part of their duty often helps them build up their school reputations. They were found to have advocated for their schools as one of the excellent educational institutions in the valley. They were found to have highly engaged in reshaping the school's vision and mission and goals which are comparatively distinct from the other private schools in surroundings. They were also found to have realized the extremities of competitions among the private schools and thus they often remain themselves engaging in creating new agenda and new proposition on the part of their schools to claim educational excellence in their schools. For example, sometimes they claim for excellence in extracurricular activities in schools and some other time they advocate for excellent instructional pedagogy in their schools. In this regard, Principal B clarified, "We can't just be 'another private school. We have to show what makes us special and why our parents choose us over other people."

Discussion

The findings reveal the management of private schools in Kathmandu Valley as the complex and dynamic in nature. Their perspectives go in line with some well-established educational leadership theories which provide particular contextual knowledge pertinent to Nepal's private school system. For example, their claim towards academic excellence and quality learning in the classroom go in line with instructional leadership theories (Robinson et al., 2008). This theory insists on principals' roles on improving learning outcomes on the part of the students. The parents in question, however, as reported by the principals, based on the score that the students achieve in exam. That is, for them, higher the score in exam, better the quality of education. Hence, theoretical claims for quality education appears to be in conflict with the parents' way of interpreting quality education in the context of this study.

The quality education as interpreted by the community members in the context of Nepal is often emphasized in the private schools. The principals in question thus work for social reputation and financial stability in the context of this study (Lubienski & Lubienski, 2014). Financial stability, as claimed in (Mestry & Grobler, 2007) in private schools was claimed to have achieved only when it is considered as an entrepreneurial endeavor. In this context, the principals design to integrate entrepreneurial strategies in educational planning.

Private school principals in Kathmandu see an ongoing duty to strike a balance between affordability, quality and profitability in contrast to their public sector counterparts who frequently work under set government budgets. This calls for clever decision-making, a solid grasp of the local economy and a strong business sense all of which may not be specifically addressed in conventional training programs.

One of the most important perceived challenges in human resource management is teacher retention. This result is in line with more general problems that educational systems in developing nations where the "brain drain" of qualified professionals is frequent-face (Bray & Kwok, 2003). In spite of competing market forces, principals always look for creative ways to retain talent because they consider themselves not just as managers but also as guardians of staff morale and professional development. This points to the necessity of focused legislative changes and professional development initiatives that give principals cutting-edge HR tactics appropriate for these kinds of settings.

The distinct accountability systems seen in private education are made clear by the principals' opinions about stakeholder involvement particularly with parents. In addition to being beneficiaries, parents are frequently viewed as important clients and demanding stakeholders who call for prompt and aggressive communication. In comparison, parental involvement may be more passive in public systems (Coleman & Palmer, 2008). Because schools need to set themselves apart in order to draw in and keep students. These interactions have an impact on institutional identity and strategic planning.

Private school principals in Kathmandu Valley describe themselves as highly flexible, resilient and multi-skilled leaders. In addition to demonstrating great managerial and instructional leadership traits, they engage in transformational leadership by influencing institutional vision and culture (Leithwood et al., 2008). Their "leadership in action" is a continual balancing act between local sociocultural expectations, market realities and educational ideals.

Conclusion

School management for the principals of private schools in Kathmandu Valley is the integration of financial, academic and human resource management. The school leadership on the way to ensuring excellence in school management face various challenges such as tough competition among the private schools, non-alignment between theoretical claim on quality education and parental perception over it and resource constraints. The principals in private schools appear to be dynamic to address these challenges. They remain active agent in ensuring quality on the part of human resources,

excellent financial management, instructional leadership and stakeholder engagement in schools.

Although there are some established theories to explain roles and responsibilities of school leaderships to ensure quality education in schools, its actual applications are heavily contextualized in private schools in Nepal. The study contributes to the existing body of knowledge by providing a thorough qualitative evaluation from the perspective of the principals; a viewpoint that is often underrepresented in regional educational research,

Limitations and Implications

The focus of this study was the private schools in Kathmandu. The views of the principals cover the specific time and space. So, the conclusions restrict the generalizability. Future research could elaborate on this study by comparing Nepalese private and public-school principals providing more comprehensive insights into leadership in several educational domains.

Furthermore, quantitative research might be used to provide statistical validity by determining how common the identified perceptions are among a wider sample of private school principals. To find out how these principal attitudes directly affect particular school management strategies and eventually student outcomes, more research is necessary. Lastly, analyzing how government policies affect the management attitudes and practices of private school administrators would provide important information for the creation and execution of policies. We can better support these principals' professional growth, influence educational policy and ultimately improve the quality of private schools in Kathmandu and other comparable urban areas throughout the world by learning more about their perspectives.

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Stock Market Development and Sustainable Economic Growth in Nepal: A Decade Experiences

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Abstract

Stock market is the mirror of economic growth of any country. It directly links with the economic growth and measures the sustainable economic growth. It has various causes like the political instability, low development national budget, high inflation, unstable economic policies and economic crisis, role of the Rastra Bank, World Bank decectatives, correction, institutional disparities and many others including political and economic scenario in which Nepal is facing from the early decades. This study mainly looks at how Nepal's growth of stock market links to its long-term economic development and Nepal's financial sector and stock market. This study uses data from (2014 to 2024) to see in what way Nepal's capital market has formed the country's economic growth. These changes show up in the way people invest, the rules shape on the market and the bigger economic areas. This research delves into how stock market indicators show market capitalization, trading volume and price upsets line up with big-picture economic factors like GDP growth, inflation and gross capital formation. The study uses time-series econometric tools including Granger Causation tests to look at both short-term market ups and downs and longer-term links between the stock market and economic growth. There's a modest but positive relationship between Nepal's stock market and its economic development. Equally sides seem to influence each other over time but there are real obstacles. Through those changes, the stock market could play a much bigger role in helping the country to develop sustainable economic growth. This research adds information on frontier market and gives clear steps to governments, development agencies and investors.

Keywords: *Economic growth, market performance, sustainability*

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Introduction

At recent, developing nations have increasingly known the importance of financial markets, clearly stock markets, for development sustainable economic growth. The Stock markets help difference risk, improve business power, allocate capital efficiently, and activate savings. The development of Nepal's stock market offers an actual chance to promote on sensible and sustainable economic development. In this study examines the connection between Nepal's stock market develop between 2014 and 2024 and sustainable economic growth. Actual adjustments, law modifications, an increase in domestic investment, updated economic laws, and technical advancements have all had a negative impact on Nepal's economy.

The Nepal Stock Exchange and its regulatory bodies gradually broadened their purview and regulations during the 1990s. Market capitalization, turnover, the number of listed businesses and the NEPSE index are examples of stock market growth indicators that have all shown an upward tendency. Governments and companies have used the stock market to raise long-term capital. This capital has funded the expansion and modernization of businesses and industries as well as new initiatives (Thapa, 2019). By expanding the range of financial products that savers can use to diversify their portfolios and stock markets help to mobilize domestic savings. By doing this, they offer a significant and reasonably priced source of investment cash.

As a crucial first step toward financial deregulation, efficient stock markets offer guidance for maintaining adequate monetary policy via the issuing and buyback of government securities on the market that is liquid. In a similar strain, vibrant and well-run stock markets have the potential to alter the money demand pattern and contribute to the creation of liquidity which in turn boosts economic expansion. In a robust and liquid stock market, investors can diversify away from unsystematic risk, increasing the capital's marginal productivity. Risk diversification is another significant way that changes in the stock market may impact economic expansion. Obstfeld contends that better economic growth allocation results from global risk sharing via globally integrated stock markets. Significant developments have occurred over the past 10 years including global financial volatility, regulatory reforms, macro-economic shocks like COVID-19 and digitalization. These might change the way that stock markets support long-term, steady growth.

A lot of earlier empirical research focused on GDP growth or per capita income but less stability, equity or crisis resilience, computation out if economic growth drives stock market development or if growth serves as the foundation for stock market expansion or

both, particularly in recent years in which particular metrics such as market capitalization, liquidity, the number of listed companies, trading turnover, digitalization, etc. have had the biggest impact recently. It is necessary to evaluate the policy consequences under present and future circumstances in light of the global push for sustainable development, climate-related financing, environmental, social and governance concerns and changing financial sector regulation.

Review of Literature

According to Akingbohunge (1996), the capital market is the place where medium- and long-term financing can be raised. A range of financial instruments are available on the capital market, allowing economic agents to exchange, price, and pool risk. It promotes financial saving through assets with alluring yields, liquidity, and risk characteristics. For the government and other organizations that require long-term funding, this is crucial (Nwankwo, 1999).

According to the findings, Nepal's economic advancement has been substantially facilitated by the creation of the stock market. So, in order to sustain the economy's robust growth, more sophisticated policy measures should be implemented to enhance and strengthen the stock market's function. One of the main behavioral phenomena of the stock market is the turnover of securities. The marketplace turnover takes into account the number of trading share units, share turnover values, and percentage share value of stocks because it is always dependent on the supply and demand for the securities. Nwankwo (1999) examined the various facets of stock market value coverage and turnover. The market turnover is a measure of the small businesses that account for a significant portion of the overall trading value of shares. The analysis came to the conclusion that the Nepalese stock market cannot achieve risk diversification since the portfolio of many enterprises is not idle.

Previous authors have attempted in a number of ways to connect the expansion of the capital market and the economy. According to Levine (1991), a developed stock market increases the economy's output capacity and lessens the productivity and liquidity shocks that businesspeople experience when investing money. This, in turn, leads to higher economic growth. King and Levine (1993) backed up the idea that financial development promotes economic expansion. Furthermore, Bensivenga et al. (1996) came to the conclusion that a robust stock market and financial market contribute to sustained economic expansion. Zervos and Levine (1996) investigate whether the

evolution regarding the stock market and long-term economic expansion are empirically strongly connected.

According to Tekin & Yener (2019), there is unidirectional or occasionally bidirectional causality between the stock market and growth. According to several studies, market efficiency and liquidity rather than merely size are critical factors. However, there are inconsistencies: SMD may not yet make a substantial contribution in certain low-income or extremely young markets or the effect may be modest or delayed. Additionally, if markets are illiquid or liquidity is thin, metrics such as turnover may not have a strong impact. Although size is important, the benefits of liquidity are typically weaker and occasionally less effective. According to studies, turnover has a "weak contribution," indicating that liquidity is insufficient or ineffective, Ranjit (2021).

According to above studies that split the sample, the stock market's impact on growth is less pronounced or negligible in the early stages but grows as the market evolves. In "Stock Market's Contribution on Economic Growth in Nepal: A Brief Note," Shah (2017) compared the periods from mid-2001 to mid-2007 and mid-2008 to mid-2015 and finds that the latter had a positive impact while the former had little. Numerous studies indicate that investor awareness, macroeconomic stability, transparency, and regulatory reforms are key policy levers. Dhungana (2023) suggests improving disclosure, openness, and other elements. Furthermore, private capital flows and the expansion of the banking industry are factors that impact SMD, according to Pyakurel (2024). Market size and index are favorable indicators, although turnover frequently doesn't have a significant positive effect. This implies that depth, frequency, transaction costs, and market microstructure are important factors that affect trading volume.

Certain studies incorporate concentration and demonstrate adverse effects (Pajiyar, 2024). However, many people overlook factors like market concentration, risk, and volatility that could mitigate the effects. Not much research has been conducted in Nepal on the potential for non-linear effects of SMD on growth (for example, only beyond specific liquidity, legal, or regulatory thresholds). Fewer studies investigate whether stock market expansion in certain sectors (industry, finance, and infrastructure) has a greater impact than the majority, which use aggregate SMD indicators.

Recent years are covered in studies like Dhungana (2023), Pyakurel (2024), Bist (2024), and Pajiyar (2024), which occasionally go into post-COVID or at the very least address the effects of recent macro issues. This makes it possible to comprehend more volatile times better. In addition to standard measurements, some current work includes

digitalization (Bijukchhe, 2024), concentration ratio (Pajiyar, 2024), and "number of listed securities." Cointegration, Granger causality, or ARDL models are used in studies with lengthy data spans, such as Dhungana (2023) and Bhattarai et al. (2024). Fewer studies completely encompass the COVID-19 timeframe (2020-2022) and beyond, however, some work includes post-2018. This is a gap because stock markets around the world experienced significant disruptions, growth shocks, etc.

Numerous studies continue to use traditional indicators, such as market capitalization, turnover, and listing count. Digitalization, concentration ratio and volatility are some among the more recent ones. However, metrics such as bid-ask spreads, stock market depth, investor activity and foreign versus local ownership can be included. Even though regulatory changes are regularly mentioned in recommendations, empirical studies, particularly those that span time are less likely to include variables that capture investor protection, regulatory enforcement, transparency indices, etc. GDP or GDP per capita, rarely indicates whether economic growth is sustainable (i.e., inclusive, resilient and low environmental cost). There hasn't been much discussion of how stock markets support sustainable growth in Nepalese literature up to this point.

Though more thorough identification of regime alterations (pre-vs.post-political/economic reforms; pre- vs. post-COVID; crises) could provide more information, some research takes structural breaks into consideration (Bhattarai et al., 2024) highlight possible structural breaks. As a result, it is anticipated that this study will support government and policymakers' initiatives to revive the Nepal stock market and win back the trust of investors and other market participants. Furthermore, it is thought that a thriving and advanced stock market will draw in foreign capital and facilitate the achievement of greater economic expansion.

Methodology

The quantitative research design was used in this study. Secondary data and previously published works about Nepal's stock market and economic expansion have been incorporated. These secondary data sources span a ten-year period from (2014 to 2024) and include the Securities Board of Nepal (SEBON) database, the Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB) Statistical Bulletin and the official website of the Nepal Stock Exchange (NEPSE). These platforms offer data on GDP, market capitalization and other macroeconomic factors, which can be linked to stock market concert with ongoing economic growth.

I measured GDP at constant prices to get a strong image of financial growth while market capitalization (MCAP) gave us a reason of responsibility. Primarily, I checked if the variables were stationary and running unit root tests like the Improved Dickey-Fuller (ADF) test. Similar Granger and Newbold (1974) and Engle and Granger (1987) noted out the need of co-integration for non-stationary time series regression can lead down the wrong path. By this method, we can see how a rising stock market boosts economic productivity, boosts investment efficiency and supports financial intermediation. Collected, these factors all play a role in powerful Nepal's sustainable economic development.

Model Specification

The improvement proposed by Demirgüç-Kunt and Levine (1996), Ewah et al. and Levine and Zervos (1996). (2009) who have examined the relationship between the stock market and economic growth, served as the foundation for the technique used in this work. According to their research, market capitalization, new issues, transaction value, and total listing are some of the capital market indices that have a major impact on economic growth (as measured by GDP). One would need to create an over-parameterized error correction model (ECM1) and a parsimonious error correction model (ECM2) in order to analyze the long-term relationship using the Johansen co-integration test. Leading and lagging of the variables in the regression equation are part of ECM1. Dynamism is added to the model by ECM2.

Expectations for the model's coefficients are as follows: $a_1, a_2 > 0$. Our econometric model is based on the following functional form:

$$Y = f(x_1, x_2) \dots\dots\dots(1)$$

Where Y is either GDP = dependents or economic growth. F is the functional idea, and x_1-x_4 are independent variables. In particular, this can be expressed as;

$$GDP = f(MCAP) \dots\dots\dots(2)$$

Where GDP, a stand-in for economic growth is equal to gross domestic output. Market capitalization or MCAP and Total New Issues (TNI), TLE = Total Listed Equities and VLT = Total Value for Transactions. $GDP = \beta_0 + \beta_1 MCAP + \beta_2 TNI + \epsilon \dots(3)$ is the explicit form of the equation (i). where β_0 is the model's intercept of the connection and $\beta_1-\beta_2$ are the coefficients of each independent variable. The model is as follows: $\epsilon =$ stochastic/error terms via log-linear emerging

$$\text{Log}(GDP) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{log}(MCAP) + \beta_2 \text{log}(TNI) + \epsilon \dots\dots\dots(4)$$

Where; Log = Natural log from equation (4) model can be specified in a time series forms as;

$$\text{Log (GDP)}_t = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \log(\text{MCAP})_t + \beta_2 \log(\text{TNI})_t + \epsilon \dots\dots\dots(5)$$

$$\Delta \log(\text{GDP}) = \beta_0 + \sum_{i=0}^n \beta_1 \log(\text{MCAP})_{t-1} + \beta_0 + \sum_{i=0}^n \beta_2 \log(\text{TNI})_{t-1} + \beta_0 + \sum_{i=0}^n (\text{ECM})_{t-1} + \beta_0 + \sum_t^n \dots\dots\dots(6)$$

Equation (5) can be used to express the model for error correction (ECM), which is the following: $\sum_{i=0}^n (\text{ECM})_{t-1}$ Error The variables were lagged by one period \sum White Noise Residual, as indicated by the correction term $t-1$. By imposing certain limitations on the projected long-run coefficient of variables, the error correction model, or equation (6) can be used to test for the presence of a long-run equilibrium connection. Consequently, the following is the formulation of the test's hypothesis: $H_0: \beta_1 = \beta_2 = 0$ (meaning there is no long-term relationship, or co-integration). $H_1: \beta_1 \neq \beta_2 \neq 0$ (meaning there is a long-term relationship, or co-integration).

Results and Discussion

As previously mentioned, the Granger causality test and the Johansen integration technique serve as the foundation for the estimated regression results. This title presents and discusses these findings. Every variable included in the regression model have their time series properties investigated and determined is a component of the procedure. The unit root test, which in this instance is based on the Augmented Dickey-Fuller (ADF) test, is the proper test in this situation. It provides a framework for determining each time series' order of integration and, as a result, its (non)stationarity.

Utilizing Quantities Micro's EViews 1.9.5 exe software, estimate connection (1). Table 1 below displays the findings of the unit root test for stationarity.

Table1. *The outcome of the unit root test*

Variable	Lag	ADF Stat@Stationary	Remarks
LGDP	2	-4.6833	Stationary
LMCAP	1	-2.9826	Stationary
LTNI	0	-3.8705	Stationary
LVLTS	0	-6.9102	Stationary
LTLE	0	-4.9963	Stationary

Table 1 above displays the findings of the unit root analysis for stationary. The GDP is integrated of order one as the table illustrates whereas the MCAP, TNI, VLT and TLE are level and stationery. This indicates that whereas the other time series variables reached stationary without any differentiation, the GDP had to be differentiated once before it

could achieve stationary. For all variables, the non-stationary hypothesis was thus disproved. The table's second column reports the ideal lag length, which serves as a selection guide for models and was chosen using the Schwarz Criterion (SC). The test for an integrating relationship between stationary series of the same order is based on this. The integration test will then be explained as follows:

Table 2. Johansen integration test result

H0	HA	Eigen value	Trace (stat)	Critical Value (0.05)	Prob.
$R = 0$	$r = 1$	0.849295	142.5567	66.28	0.0000
$R \leq 1$	$r = 2$	0.710452	81.7298	44.0790	0.0000
$R \leq 2$	$r = 3$	0.64742	49.1009	25.1926	0.0000
$R \leq 3$	$r = 4$	0.590531	31.1886	10.2418	0.0000
$R \leq 4$	$r = 5$	0.3248	9.40773	8.1645	0.0277

The findings of the Johansen integration test show a robust long-term correlation between the variables being examined. Because the trace statistic (142.56) is greater than the crucial value (66.28), with a p-value of 0.0000, the null hypothesis of no integration ($R = 0$) is rejected at the 5% significance level. Multiple integrating vectors are confirmed by subsequent tests for $R \leq 1$, $R \leq 2$, and $R \leq 3$, which also reject the null and have trace statistics that are consistently greater than their corresponding critical values. This suggests a fifth integrating relationship, as the null is rejected even at $R \leq 4$ (trace = 9.41 > critical value = 8.16, $p = 0.0277$). These findings validate the use of an error correction model to capture short-term deviations while remaining consistent with the long-run dynamics by confirming that the time-series variables share a stable long-term equilibrium connection.

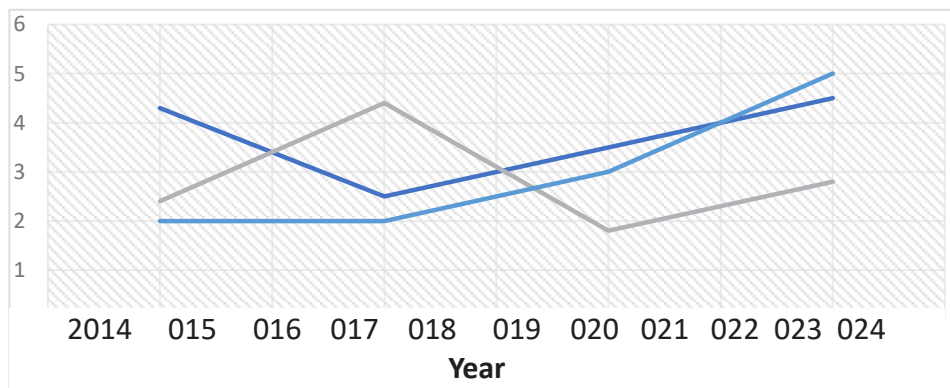
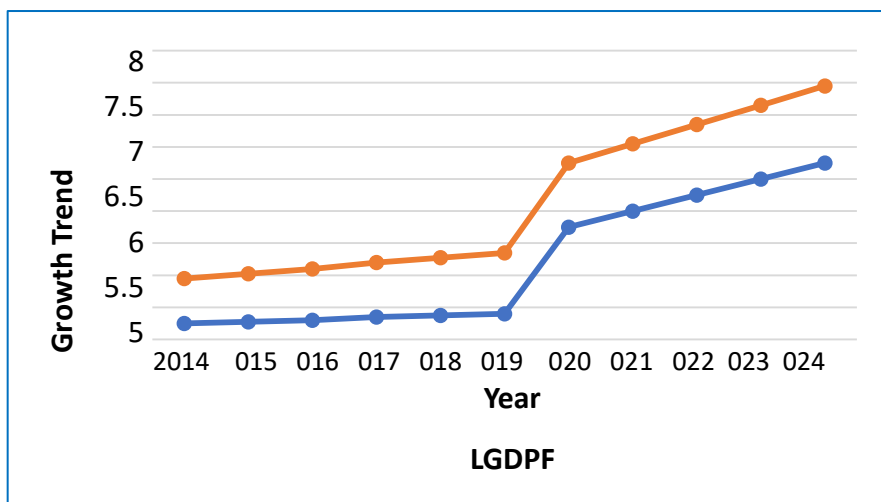


Figure 1. The Residual Plot

Table 3. *Garner causality test*

The Null Hypothesis	Obs	F-Statistics	Probability
LGDP is not Granger Caused by LMCAP.	18	3.62074	0.04060
LMCAP is not Granger Caused by LGDP.		1.87486	0.16559
LTNI does not Granger Cause LGDP	18	0.00828	0.89077
LGDP does not Granger Cause LTNI		0.74916	0.34867
LGDP is not Granger Caused by LVLT.	18	2.29890	0.11710
LGDP does not Granger Cause LVLT		4.46805	0.01971
LLEGS does not Granger Cause LGDP	18	0.02847	0.86236
LGDP does not Granger Cause LTLE		0.22420	0.78416

The results of the causality test indicate a bidirectional relationship between GDP and the value of new issues (LVLT) and a unidirectional causal relationship between market capitalization and GDP rather than the other way around. The F statistic is significant at 5% using a two-tailed test; 2.08 is the crucial value for 15 (4 degrees of freedom). Nevertheless, "reverse causation" does not exist between GDP and LMCAP. Additionally, "no causation" or disassociation between LGDP and LTNI and GDP and LTLE. This clearly illustrates the capital market's relatively positive role in the country's economic growth.

**Figure 2.** *The Economic Growth Forecast Graph*

From 2014 to 2024, the LGDP forecast graph displays a trend and a consistent growth rate. Although the rise is somewhat reflected in the GDP, it has no discernible and substantial effect on the economy's growth. However, between 2021 and 2022, the growth rate fell precipitously which may have been caused by the sloppy effect of banks

rushing into the capital market as a result of the increase in their capital bases. The graph also indicates an increase after the decline in 2023–2024.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The relationship between capital market development and sustainable economic development is difficult but active according to an analysis of Nepal's stock market development from 2014 to 2024. Stockholder attitudes, monetary strategies, worldwide economic patterns and national political instability all shaped the Nepal Stock Exchange (NEPSE) during this period. Now the market's total direction shows it's slowly maturing and getting more capital market contribution. Now a days weak but on positive link between stock market growth and broader financial expansion, realized in things like GDP growth, capital establishment and a rising financial sector. In this study highlights many important issues: inadequate financial knowledge, political instability, market volatility, limited change among publicly traded companies and weak regulatory enforcement. Contempt these challenges, Nepal's stock market could suggestively increase sustained economic growth with the correct improvements.

Long-term market expansion and investor confidence depend on stable government and consistent economic policy. Coordination of monetary, fiscal and capital market policies is necessary to establish an atmosphere that is conducive to investment. The short-term dynamics of the model are investigated by looking at how each variable responds or corrects itself to the residual or error from the integrating vector a procedure called the error correction mechanism. The error correction (EC) term quantifies the rate at which each variable adjusts to a deviation from the steady-state equilibrium. The VEC specification forces the long-term behavior of the endogenous variables to converge to their integrating link while permitting short-term dynamics.

The dynamic specification of the model suggests removing the unnecessary variables while retaining the error correction term. The development of the stock market is directly impacted by economic growth, yet interest rates harm both. The findings show that whereas other variables are stationary at level, the GDP was stationary at the first difference, according to the stationary test. Second, a long-term relationship between the variables is implied by the co-integration test, which shows that they are co-integrated.

In addition, only the LMCAP and TLE which are positively signed, have a favorable influence on economic growth. The other variables were negatively signed, suggesting a negligible or negative effect. However, according to the findings of the Economic Review (2014) and Arthic Newspaper (2015), the Nepalese capital market has the potential to

spur economic growth but hasn't done so much because of factors like low market capitalization, a small market size, a lack of listed companies, low transaction volume and illiquidity.

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Herding Behavior in Nepali Stock Market

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Abstract

The study explores how cognitive biases affect the aspect of retail investor's herding behavior in the context of Nepalese market. This study is based upon the theoretical aspect of Prospect theory and Behavioral theory. Perfect theory explains how investors strengthen herding behavior are tending losses more fatly than equal profits. Behavior Finance theory explains systematic departure from rationality. In terms of theoretical aspect for connecting psychological biases to collect market behavior is succeeding by these frameworks. The study was taken from 250 active retail investors from Nepal stock exchange (NEPSE) which emphasis the qualitative approach with cross sectional research design along with structured questionnaire. The analysis was approved with the 5-point Likert scale through different data gathered together for the analysis with different statistical tools like regression models, PCA, correlation, ANOVA and reliability test. The findings show that whereas loss aversion and regret aversion mainly affect choices through herding behavior and overconfidence which has both direct and indirect effects on the investment decisions. The explanatory significance of behavior variables in developing countries was highlighted by regression models, which accounted for around half of the variance in investment decision making. By confirming a mediation model in the Nepalese setting and showing that herding behavior increases the impact of cognitive biases on investment results, this study adds to the body on behavioral finance. The results have consequences for policy actions meant to improve market stability, regulatory supervision, regulatory supervision and investor education.

Keywords: Behavioral Finance Theory, Cognitive Biases, Herding Behavior, Investment Decision, Prospect Theory, Nepal Stock Exchange, Retail Investors

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Introduction

Investors are rational actors that maximize utility based on comprehensive knowledge, according to classical finance theories. Empirical data from developing and global markets, however, contradicts this notion by demonstrating that social conformity and psychological biases frequently influence investing behavior (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979). In order to explain anomalies like excessive trading, speculative booms and herd-driven collapses, and behavioral finance combines ideas from psychology and economics. It increases volatility and destabilizes markets herding behavior defined as investors' propensity to copy the actions of others rather than rely on independent analysis which has garnered much scholarly interest (Dewi, 2023; Xing et al., 2024; Sabir et al., 2025). During optimistic periods, retail investors in Nepal frequently follow market consensus, which exacerbates bubbles and collapses (Rijal, 2023; Gurung et al., 2024; Kunwar, 2021). In addition to being a social phenomenon, herding is a calculated reaction to perceived safety in numbers and uncertainty.

Herding tendencies are further reinforced by cognitive biases. Investors that are overconfident tend to overestimate their expertise and forecasting skills which frequently leads to excessive trading and crowd alignment (Gurung et al., 2024; Rana, 2025; Mufti et al., 2023). According to Prospect Theory, investors experience loss aversion more strongly than comparable profits which leads them to follow the lead in order to reduce risk (Pokharel, 2020; Rawat, 2023). Independent decision-making is discouraged by regret aversion as investors want to avoid taking responsibility for bad results by imitating others (Rana, 2025; Pokharel, 2020). These prejudices produce a psychological setting in which investing decisions are heavily influenced by herding.

By utilizing different advanced statistical methods to assess a mediation hypothesis, our work fills up these gaps. Prospect theory Kahneman and Tversky (1979) helps to explain about people evaluate potential gain and loss indefinitely. There may arises about the problem of loss and gain. With the focus of Behavioral Finance Theory, it also helps in analyzing psychological factors with aspect of cognitive limitations for financial decisions. Overconfidence causes investors to underestimate risks and overestimate their capacity for the prediction which results in portfolio diversification (Gurung et al., 2024; Mufti et al., 2023; Rana, 2025). Anchoring bias value can cause inertia in decision making when investors become fixated with reference points highs (Rawat, 2023; Nasarudin et al., 2022). Loss aversion causes investors to hold losing stocks for too long

and sell winning stocks too soon because it represents a higher emotional reaction to losses than to profits (Pokharel, 2020; Gurung et al., 2024).

According to Rana (2025) and Mufti et al. (2023), investors are motivated by regret aversion to steer clear of actions that may cause them to regret them in the future which encourages herding behavior to reduce accountability for unfavorable results. Therefore, herding is higher in bull markets and during global crises according to Xing et al. As well as herding highlighted as a crucial behavioral feature according to Kunwar (2021). However, in the context of Nepal herding highlighted as a crucial feature among investors (Rijal, 2023).

Therefore, recent research is still dispersed and frequently concentrates on individual's biases without proper mediation effect regarding to financial decision. The studies conducted in Nepal are still dispersed and frequently concentrate on individual biases without considering the impact of mediation shows the research gap. It is understudied how social media, financial literacy, and investor mood contribute to herding behavior.

Theoretical Framework

A theoretical framework provides the intellectual foundation of a research study by identifying and explaining the key theories and concepts that guide the investigation. It helps the researcher understand the phenomenon under study in a systematic way and clarifies how variables or experiences are conceptually related. A theoretical framework does not merely function as a set of rigid rules; rather, it serves as a lens through which meanings, practices, and experiences are interpreted within specific social and institutional contexts.

Theoretical frameworks are particularly important in studies focusing on teachers' professional practices, motivation, classroom management, or pedagogical development, as these areas are shaped by both personal cognition and social interaction. The framework helps explain how teachers construct meaning from their experiences, how they respond to challenges, and how their professional identities evolve over time. By drawing on relevant theories, the researcher can better interpret participants' narratives, actions, and reflections.

The theoretical framework of this study includes the discussion of the following theories:

Behavioral Finance Theory (BFT), Shefrin (2000)

Behavior Finance Theory acts as the inner concept for the framework for the study examining how cognitive bias leads the investors deviate towards the concept of

investment in the stock market along with the decision of financial analysis. It challenges the assumptions of traditional finance by highlighting the errors in judgment like overconfidence, loss aversion and herding. Among 20 Review articles incorporate this theory for the explanation of market anomalies and irrational behavior in the study of Behavior context of investment in Nepal.

Prospect Theory (PT) Kahneman and Tversky (1979)

Prospect Theory explores that evaluate the performance of investors potential gains and losses relative to a reference point with losses perceived more rapidly than equivalent gains. This assumes to regret aversion and herding, as investors seek to avoid the emotional pain of loss by herding trend of others. According to Pokharel (2020), Rawat (2023) and Gurung et al. (2024) utilizes this theory towards Nepalese investors resulting its impact in explaining risk-averse and herding behavior.

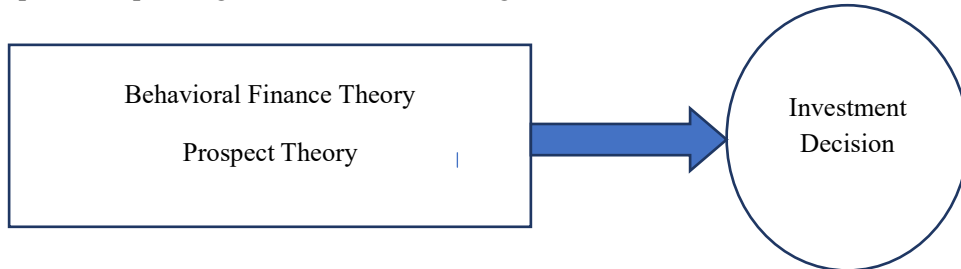


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

This study explores the effect of cognitive biases particularly loss aversion, regret aversion, overconfidence on herding behavior among Nepalese stock market investment decision. Overconfidence leads investors overestimate their action and knowledge in decision making abilities which results in excessive trading and a tendency to follow others during market conditions. Loss aversion navigates investors to avoid realizing losses, attempting them to minimize other's perception with controlling component of risk. Likewise, regret aversion discourages independent decision making due to the fear of making wrong decision and choices which may lead to follow the herding crowd to avoid regret in future. Generally, these cognitive biases contribute to herding behavior where investors imitate the action of others rather than focus on their own analysis and decision of financial analysis which results in the phenomena such as bubbles and crashes.

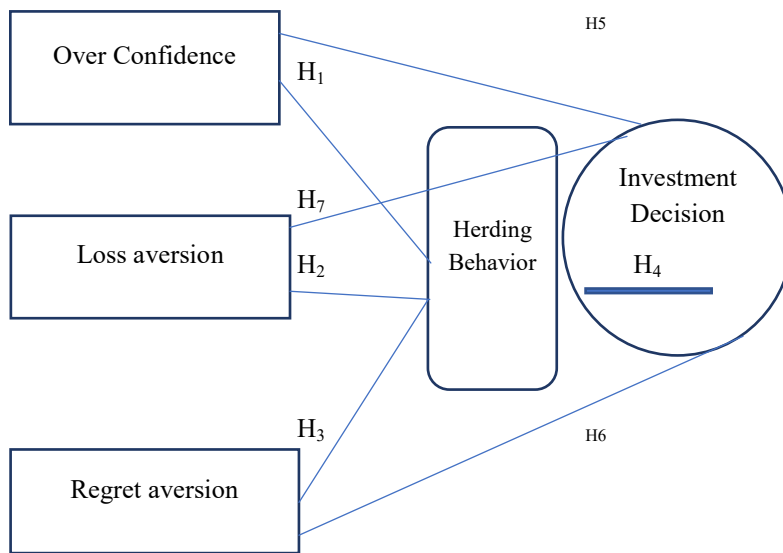


Figure 2: Hypothesis Relationships

H1. Overconfidence positively influences herding behavior. Overconfident investors overestimate their predictive abilities and trade excessively, often aligning with the crowd (Gurung et.al. 2024; Rana 2025; sabir et al., 2025; Multi et al., 2023).

H2. Loss aversion positively influences herding behavior. Prospect Theory (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979) explains that losses loom larger than gains. Investors therefore majority behavior to minimize perceived risk (Pokharel, 2020; Rawat, 2023; Mufti et al., Rijal, 2023).

H3. Regret aversion positively influences herding behavior. To avoid personal accountability for poor outcomes, investors often follow others' choices, reducing independent analysis (Pokharel, 2020; Gurung et al., 2024; Rana, 2025; Mufti et al., 2023).

H4. Herding behavior mediates the relationship between cognitive biases and investment decisions. Herding amplifies volatility and speculative bubbles acting as a channel through which biases influence final investment choices (Rijal, 2023; Dewi, 2023; Xing et al., 2024; Lobao & Almeida, 2024).

H5. Herding behavior mediates the relationship between overconfidence and investment decisions. Herding acts as the channel through which overconfidence influences final investment choices (Gurung et al. (2024); Rana (2025); Sabir et al. (2025); Mufti et al.

(2023) all confirm that overconfident investors trade excessively focuses on trust on realistic and often herding when confidence is challenged.

H6. Herding behavior mediates the relationship between regret aversion and investment decisions. Herding thus becomes the mechanism that converts regret aversion into collective investment choices. Pokharel (2020); Gurung et al., (2024); Rana (2025); Mufti et al. (2023) findings show regret adverse investors herd to avoid responsibility and reduce the emotional burden of wrong decisions.

H7. Herding behavior mediates the relationship between loss aversion and investment decision. Herding transfers, the psychological effect of loss aversion into perfect sell/hold or purchase decisions. Pokharel (2020); Mufti et al. (2023); Rijal (2023) evidence that loss averse hold losers too long, sell early and herd to reduce risk exposure.

Methods

A quantitative research approach along with cross sectional survey design was used in this study to target those retail investors who had experienced of two year trading on NEPSE. Investors with two year experience were selected as purposive selection approach with the validated structures questionnaires that were delivered by both methods physically and virtual(Barber & Odean, 2001; Gurung et al., 2024; Mufti et al., 2023; Pokharel, 2020). For the analysis of construct, a five point Likert scale, spanning from strongly disagree to strongly agree, was used to code the responses. The sample size was determined to be between 350 and 400 respondents according to the previous study of behavior finance research in Nepal and South Asia based on SEM criteria (Rawat, 2023; Gurung et al., 2024; Sabir et al., 2025).

Different types of steps were done in data analysis process. Investor's profile and factor levels were created using descriptive statistics. Measurement consistency was verified using reliability and validity tests, such as Cronbach's alpha, KMO, Bartlett's and Principal Component analysis. Initially insights into the relationship between variables were accepted through correlation analysis. The primary study used bootstrapping to validate mediation effects and structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to examine direct and mediated connections.

Robustness checks increased in the results, while diagnostic tests including normality, multicollinearity and model fit index CFI and RMSEA, χ^2 for validity.

Results and Discussion

The internal consistency of the measurement scales in this research was verified by the reliability analysis. The range of Cronbach's values, which indicate acceptable to exceptional reliability, was 0.588 to 0.875. Loss Aversion ($\alpha = 0.714$) and Herding Behavior ($\alpha = 0.638$) exhibited intermediate reliability, but Investment Decision ($\alpha = 0.875$) AND overconfidence ($\alpha = 0.850.588$) showed good dependability. Despite being lesser, regret aversion ($\alpha = 0.588$) was kept because of its theoretical significance. These findings support the measuring tool's reliability and support their use in further research.

Table 1. Reliability test

Scale	Cronbach's α	Interpretation
Investment Decision	0.719	Excellent reliability
Overconfidence, Loss Aversion, Regret Aversion, Herding	0.858	Strong reliability
Overconfidence (subset)	0.719	Acceptable reliability
Loss Aversion	0.714	Acceptable reliability
Regret Aversion	0.588	Weak reliability (items reduced after PCA)
Herding Behavior	0.638	Moderate reliability

Investment decisions, herding behavior and cognitive biases all showed strong positive correlation, according to correlation analysis. Herding and Overconfidence were shown to be highly associated indicating that investors who overestimate their capacity for prediction are more inclined to follow the herd when faced with uncertainty (Gurung et al., 2024; Rana, 2025). Herding was positively correlated with loss aversion indicating that investors who are afraid of losing money typically follow the lead in order to reduce perceived risk (Pokharel, 2020; Rawat, 2023). Additionally, there was a strong correlation between herding and regret aversion suggesting that investors avoid making autonomous decisions in order to lessen the emotional impact of regret (Mufti et al., 2023).

These connections were subsequently validated via structural equation modeling. Loss aversion and regret aversion mostly affected choices through herding behavior, confidence had both direct and indirect effects on investment decisions. The explanatory significance of behavior variables in developing economies was heightened regression models which accounted for around half of the variance in investment decision making. Bootstrapping validated hypothesis H4 through H7 by confirming the mediating function of herding with CFI over 0.90 and RMSEA below 0.08, diagnostic tests showed that the model satisfied acceptable fit indices, guaranteeing the validity and generalizability of the results.

Principal Component Analysis (PCA)

From the (PCA) Principal Component Analysis, the dimensions of construct Overconfidence, Loss Aversion, Regret Aversion, Herding Behavior and Investment Decision are strongly loaded. From the Dimensions of Construct Anchoring Bias item was removed due to weak load. The selected constructs indicated sufficient variance, justifying in final framework.

Table 2. *Component loadings (varimax rotation)*

Item	Component 1	Component 2	Component 3	Uniqueness
OC1	0.711	–	–	0.488
OC2	0.665	–	–	0.553
OC4	0.558	–	–	0.619
OC5	0.551	0.503	–	0.441
LS1	–	0.555	0.364	0.554
LS2	–	–	0.619	0.526
LS3	–	0.447	0.657	0.345
LS4	–	0.517	–	0.731
LS5	–	–	0.735	0.428
RA1	0.570	–	–	0.575
RA2	0.309	–	0.638	0.444
RA3	–	0.395	0.398	0.683
RS4	–	–	0.689	0.466
RA5	–	–	0.649	0.574
HB1	–	0.406	0.358	0.654
HB2	–	–	0.537	0.669
HB3	–	0.601	0.476	0.398
HB4	0.483	–	–	0.642
HB5	–	0.823	–	0.244
INV1	0.490	0.716	–	0.246
INV2	0.734	–	–	0.412
INV3	0.768	–	–	0.352
INV4	0.571	0.626	–	0.275

From the above analysis of PCA overconfidence, Loss Aversion, Regret Aversion, Herding and Investment Decision as valid constructs and Anchoring Bias was excluded due to poor loading.

Descriptive Statistics

From the Descriptive results, Cognitive biases among Nepalese retail investors revealed moderate level. Overconfidence averaged (3.07), which suggests investors average believe in their abilities of financial decision. Similarly, Loss Aversion and Regret

Aversion ($M = 3.42$) and ($M = 3.41$) respectively high than other dimensional construct showing high emotional responses to loss and regret. According to the analysis of Herding component here the value ($M = 3.29$) was prevalent by the reflection of crowd following tendencies in the investment of Nepalese stock market. Similarly, Investment decision ($M = 3.17$) indicates moderately reliance on biases and herding. Therefore, the descriptive analysis highlights M Moderates effect on biases and herding showed tendencies shaping investor choice.

Table 3. *Descriptive statistics*

Variable	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Skewness	Kurtosis
Overconfidence (meanOC1)	3.07	0.867	1.25	4.75	-0.138	-0.629
Loss Aversion (meanLS1)	3.42	0.789	1.20	5.00	-0.637	0.517
Regret Aversion (meanRA1)	3.41	0.613	1.60	4.80	-0.233	0.488
Herding Behavior (meanHB1)	3.29	0.669	1.20	4.60	-0.729	1.66
Investment Decision (meanINV1)	3.17	0.899	1.00	5.00	-0.293	-0.181

Correlation Analysis

From the above Correlation analysis, it demonstrated significant relation with all variables. Overconfidence correlated strongly with investment decision ($r = 0.625$, $p < 0.001$) confirming its predictive role. Similarly herding behavior also showed a significant positive correlation with investment decision ($r = 0.480$, $p < 0.001$). Likewise, Regret Aversion moderately correlated with both Herding ($r = 0.525$, $p = 0.001$) and Investment Decision ($r = 0.306$, $p < 0.005$). Loss Aversion, however showed weak and non-significant correlation. Overall analysis from correlation, over confidence and Herding Behavior are the most primitive element in the investment decision of Nepalese share market.

Table 4. *Correlation matrix*

Variables	Overconfidence	Loss Aversion	Regret Aversion	Herding	Investment Decision
Overconfidence	1	–	–	–	–
Loss Aversion	0.011 (ns)	1	–	–	–
Regret Aversion	0.203 (ns)	0.577***	1	–	–
Herding	0.307*	0.577***	0.525***	1	–
Investment Decision	0.625***	0.229 (ns)	0.306*	0.480***	1

Overconfidence, Regret Aversion and Herding Behavior show significant positive correlation with the decision of Investment in Nepalese stock market.

Regression Analysis

Regression results further validated the hypotheses. Overconfidence had a strong positive effect on Investment Decision ($B=0.556-0.636$, $p < 0.001$) while Herding Behavior also significantly influenced decisions ($B=0.351-0.428$, $p < 0.05$). Loss Aversion and Regret Aversion did not show significant direct effects, although their correlations suggest indirect influence through herding. The model explained approximately 50% of the variance ($R^2 = 0.50$), indicating that cognitive biases and herding jointly account for half of the variation in investment decisions among Nepalese retail investors.

Table 5. Regression results (dependent variable: investment decision)

Predictor	Estimate (β)	SE	t	p	Interpretation
Overconfidence	0.556 – 0.636	0.107–0.127	5.0–5.2	<0.001	Strong positive effect
Loss Aversion	0.045 – 0.080	0.149–0.152	0.30– 0.54	ns	No significant effect
Regret Aversion	-0.012 – 0.054	0.182–0.184	0.07– 0.30	ns	No significant effect
Herding Behavior	0.351 – 0.428	0.171–0.178	2.0–2.4	0.020– 0.052	Significant positive effect

From the Regression Analysis it explains about the Model fit. Model Fit shows $R^2 = 0.50$. It means the model explains 50 % of variance in Investment decisions which also describe about goodness of fit.

Conclusion

From the overall study, the analysis of result confirms herding act as the mediating element in the investment decision of Nepalese Stock market. The cognitive bias and herding behavior act as the strong component in the investment decision of Nepalese. Regarding to above finding the different aspects and other psychological aspects of cognitive bias acts as the prevailing elements with mediating factor of herding in investment decision. Due to different restricted access of information, infrastructure limitations and increasing impact of social media, these findings were consistent with research overall the world.

However, by experimentally testing a mediation model in an emerging market, herding affects the cognitive bias in the investment decision in the major context of Nepal. Therefore, regulatory monitoring, policy implications required to improve further progress in investment decision. Further studies should examine moderating elements including investor attitude, digital platforms and financial knowledge help to clarify the dynamics of herding behavior in Nepalese stock market.

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Soil-Friendly Education in Nepal: Mythology Vs Reality

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Abstract

This study aims to explore the relevance, integration of soil friendly content, and impact of soil-suited education within Nepal's school education and curriculum across diverse socio-cultural and ecological contexts. To furnish this study mixed method was adopted and within qualitative design geographical phenomenological study was used with direct field visit as primary data and observation. Direct interview was conducted with twenty teachers and fifteen school management committee members from Darchula, Surkhet, Dang, Taplejung, Kailali and Kalikot district. The perspective was calculated in percentile ranking interpretation as quantitative analysis. The study concludes that, there is a huge gap in soil friendly education in school curriculum with relevant contents, that created bundles of problems and crisis in the education system of Nepal but the Hinduism, Buddhism, Islamic Quran, Bible and Christianity have more focused on soil and land as mother; God and Goddess praying as the powerful source and truth and treasure of divine and prosperity. Soil-suited education and curriculum is a truth according to philosophical base. It is reality not a mythology. We are unable to include the truth of soil within school education and curriculum. To resolve the problem policy makers, need to be implement the best guideline of mentioned philosophies and theories for the development of soil-friendly education (Mato Suhaudo Sikshya) in Nepal.

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Introduction

All religions address soils differently and shows diverse cultural pattern of understanding as valuable natural resource. According to Hinduism, soil (matter, nature) is considered as divine as respected as mother. Soil is seen as a feminine donor attributed predominantly Chthonic (Ancient Greek words: Khthon, which means earth or soil) (Bhattacharyya, 2025).

In Hinduism, the soil is considered as *Dharti/ Bhoomata* (Mother/ Earth). It is also related to cosmic elements. In Buddhism, the soil is described as a symbol of dust in this ephemeral world to support life. In Bible, it is linked with social justice, equity and care for the poor and human evils are being affected to soil fertility and environmental harmony (Holy Bible, 2017). Likewise, in Quran, soil is considered as true treasure not only for the agricultural use but also for human and environmental sustainability. Quran again stated that soil is the main source of our food, feed, fiber and fuel. Soil contains the same elements that exist in the human body and plants as well. The creation of human begins from soil to clay has been mentioned in the Quran. So, the soil has a holy position in all ages and years and its protection through education and curriculum as well as utilization is needed (Holy Bible, 2011).

The recent crisis in education of Nepal is the weak philosophical guidelines according to philosophical axiology. There need to be address soil friendly curriculum and education focused more and more as stated eastern philosophical orthodox and heterodoxies. I call to Nepali curricular and scholars to choose the right crop in the right time and place in their school curriculum structure. according to researchers' perspective means please choose the right curriculum for right place this is the key anxiety of the researcher myself. It will help to preserve our ecology for longer substance and they posed on such knowledge through generation (Bhattacharyya, 2023).

Similarly, there is high level of profit and revenue collection could be possible from our motherland, earth and soil. We can get spiritual flavor in life from the soil friendly education and curriculum. Our mind will become organic or purely devoted to mother land (soil) and selfless. Hinduism teaches about the way to live in harmony to nature and nurture. It makes our life easy and comfortable and to leave a better earth for the next generation highlighting the principle of sustainability thousands of years back. Our very popular motto (*Mulmantra*) is from our ancestors shows that the broad mindedness to seek peace for all (*Atharva Veda, Bhumi sukkta* 12.1).

ॐ सर्वे भवन्तु सुखिनः, सर्वे सन्तु निरामयाः सर्वे भद्राणि पश्यन्तु मा कश्चिदुःखभावेत ।

ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः : शान्तिः ॥

'May all sentient beings be at peace, may no one suffer from illness, may all see what is auspicious, may no one suffer, Om peace, peace, peace.'

मित्राणि धन धान्यानि प्रजानां सम्मतानिव । जननी जन्मभूमिश्चः स्वर्गादिपि गरीयसी ॥

अथर्ववेद भूमि सुक्त १२.१।

“Soil is our friend, there is peace and prosperity in soil, there is stability in soil, there is fearless power, divine power, supreme way of life, equity and equality attributes where all human interests are possible to be fulfill from soil so land and soil are more lovely and powerful than heaven. अपि स्वर्णमयी लङ्का न मे लक्ष्मण रोचते जननी जन्मभूमिश्चः स्वर्गादिपि गरीयसी ॥ रामायण युद्धकाण्ड राम लक्ष्मण संवाद

The dialogue highlighted in ancient book Ramayana in Sanskrit language, Ram stated to his brother Laxman after victory over Ravan, *the golden made city Lanka does not appeal to him compared to his own mother and his motherland.* Or they did not love and like the golden made beautiful city Lanka which was made by Ravan where the all infrastructure was made by expensive metal gold, brave and powerful personality Ravan who began the great war with Hindu Lord Ram. After the great victory Lanka city was totally control of Ram and Laxman two brothers but they did not prefer Lanka they prefer to their native land or birth place soil (Ramayana, youddha kanda).

The ancient scripture Ramayan is a popular traditional literature the all prediction stated by great seer Balmiki are being practical and real in daily life of eastern and western people. These realities are unable to address in school curriculum as stated the dialogue between Ram and Laxman two brothers. Similarly, the global practice of sustainable development goal one, no poverty, zero hunger, good health to quality education to all 17 goals are closely related on soil. Without proper utilization of soil all 17 goals can't be fulfill. So, soil friendly education and curriculum is the emerging need for education for tomorrow in Nepal.

Around 1933 B.S. (1936 A.D.), under Prime Minister Juddha Shamsheer Jang Bahadur Rana, the idea of soil-suited and contextual education in Nepal first emerged as the framework for a formal, structured educational system started to take shape. He over the establishment of the first 22-member Education Board, which proposed a three-year primary education (Grades 1-3) and a four-year secondary school (Grades 4-6). This was a significant turning point in Nepal's educational history (Shrestha, 1989; Bista, 2006).

An elite-centered system was replaced by a more inclusive and nationally focused model following the introduction of major educational changes following the onset of democracy in 2007 B.S. (1951 A.D.) (Awasthi, 2004; Ministry of Education, 2019).

In the primary school curriculum of Nepal, several subjects were included, such as introduction to nature, zoology, history, health, and handicrafts (Sharma, 2003, 2060 B.S.). Among these, the subject “introduction to nature” played an important role in familiarizing students with their local environment, natural resources and their practical uses in daily life. Incorporating such content allowed students to gain knowledge of the diverse, naturally available resources in their specific localities and communities, fostering both ecological awareness and sustainable practices (Sharma, 2003).

However, examining contemporary school education in Nepal reveals a significant decline in such traditional knowledge. Today, many school children struggle to identify local environmental resources such as plants, herbs, and shrubs or understand their uses and benefits in daily life. This decline indicates a loss of indigenous knowledge and highlights a growing generation gap in ecological and cultural understanding (Sharma, 1993).

Zoology or *Bhu Bigyan*, was another important subject in the primary curriculum, as it introduced students to the characteristics of soils and the natural environment across diverse regions. Through this subject, children learned to identify different types of land and understand which crops were suitable for cultivation in specific areas, enabling them to manage and harvest their fields effectively. However, contemporary school curricula as designed by the Curriculum Development Centre of Nepal have largely neglected this practical and locally relevant knowledge leading to a gradual loss of traditional understanding related to soil, plantation, and sustainable agricultural practices.

The Nepalese school education system has increasingly oriented learners toward dependency, often prioritizing theoretical knowledge over practical understanding of local resources. For instance, while a child may recognize an apple, they are rarely taught how it is cultivated or where it originates reflecting a disconnection between schooling and environmental literacy (Sharma, 2003; Bista, 2006). Such gaps in knowledge pose long-term risks, potentially undermining sustainable development and creating challenges across multiple sectors of national growth. Integrating soil-friendly education rooted in Nepalese indigenous knowledge, local traditions, and mythological understanding into curricula offers a more contextually relevant and sustainable approach than globally organized agendas such as the Incheon Declaration (UNESCO, 2015). Indigenous

knowledge systems provide deeper ecological understanding while international frameworks often address sustainability superficially.

Historically, Nepalese education has been shaped by political influence, as observed during the era of Chandra Shamsher and the “triangular struggle” among English, Sanskrit and Nepali education systems. Dev Shamsher (1993) noted that Nepali education ultimately gained predominance; however, successive governments, including Chandra Shamsher, manipulated the system to produce compliant laborers (“karinda”) for governance rather than fostering critical awareness or local resource utilization (Sharma, 1993). Gandhi’s concept of “satyagraha” applied to education reflects how government interventions have consistently suppressed alternative, locally relevant educational practices. Consequently, Nepal’s formal education system has largely neglected the preservation and practical application of indigenous knowledge, skills and soil-friendly practices creating a pressing need to reform curricula to integrate ecological and resource-oriented education.

This study, therefore, seeks to examine the gap between mythological ideals of soil-friendly education and contemporary practices in Nepal aiming to provide insights into designing curricula that promote local resource utilization, sustainability and culturally grounded ecological literacy. This study aimed to examine the relevance, integration, and effectiveness of soil-friendly education in Nepalese school curricula and assess how indigenous knowledge, local resources and ecological practices are incorporated across diverse socio-cultural and environmental contexts.

Conceptual And Theoretical Referent

This conceptual framework of this research provides a structured approach to check the integration and effect of soil-friendly education within school curriculum of Nepal matching mythological perceptions with recent emerging practices. It has identified key elements, indicators and outcomes which has guided this investigation.

Table 1. *Conceptual referents*

Key Elements	Indicators / Variables
Curricular Relevance	Inclusion of local content, indigenous knowledge, language, culture, and ecological resources in school curricula
Implementation Practices	Local curriculum adaptation, teacher training, classroom strategies, and practical engagement with soil-friendly concepts
Barriers / Challenges	Centralized policies, inadequate local materials, limited teacher capacity, and neglect of traditional knowledge
Outcomes & Impact	Student engagement, improved learning retention, preservation of local knowledge, ecological literacy, and community empowerment
Policy and Pedagogical Support	SSDP provisions, decentralization, community participation, and policy incentives for context-based education

Literature Review

National Education Strategic Plan (NESP, 2028–2032 B.S.) symbolized a significant milestone in Nepal by articulating national aims and goals of education for the initial time. Objective 4 emphasized the promotion and preservation of national language, culture, values, literature, fine art and vocational education, thereby indirectly supporting life-long and soil-friendly endeavors through resourceful and heritage friendly education (NESP, 2028 B.S.). The Vice-Chancellor of Tribhuvan University (T.U.) prescribed that university's role needs to be fixed the policy and coordination, until maintaining autonomy in its implementation strategies (Sharma, 2064 B. S.).

During this era, Tribhuvan University incorporated various disciplines such as agriculture, forestry, applied science and technology, Lalitkala (Fine Arts) Institute, animal science, humanities, social sciences and higher education related research institutes. These initiatives reflected a positive attempt to align higher education from national materials utilization and local sustainability (Author, Year). Although, instead these efforts, education institutions often failed to integrate everyday life-based curriculum framework which could actively promote the sustainable use of local and national state resources.

Resource-friendly Implementation Strategy of National Education System Plan (NESP, 2028 B.S.) simultaneously aimed to help both national and local resource utilization practices in the village by agricultural practices from traditional knowledge and skills. Incidentally, political hegemony and frequent policy changing trend hampered its continuity and effectiveness (Sharma, 2004). That vocational education, which previously carried 200 full marks could significantly contribute to local materials utilization and preservation awareness and sustainable development with linking content with context, it was later reduced as an elective subject that decision which weakened the potential impact on soil-friendly practices in education (Wagley, 2065 B.S.).

National Education Commission (NEC, 2049 B.S.), Higher-Level National Education Commission (HLNEC, 2055 B.S.), National Curriculum Frameworks (NCF, 2063 and 2076 B.S.) and the National Education Policy (NEP, 2076 B.S.) have frequently focused at the importance of utilizing and preserving the national resources. Despite these policy directives, practical integration of local resource utilization knowledge and skills into curriculum has been remained insufficient, revealing a persistent gap between educational ideals and reality (Shahi, 2021).

This idea of soil-suited education in Nepal focuses on learning which must be addressed the socio-cultural, economic and ecological ontologies, epistemologies and axiology of

learners. Bhattarai (2017) has criticized the Nepalese education system from its reliance perspectives on imparted American models, which always failed to integrate local knowledge, skills and production systems of diverse Nepalese context. The gap between formal education system of school curriculum and everyday life of Nepalese people has been opposite contribution to increase the low relevance and suboptimal learning outcomes (Sharma, 2020). Soil-friendly education which calls for tailoring curriculum with supportive pedagogical approaches to address the Nepalese diverse multi-linguistic, ethnic, and environmental contexts (Ghimire & Rana, 2018).

Freire's (1970) conceptualization of education as a practice of freedom underpins soil-friendly education by focusing critical and reflective engagement with learners lived experiences. Nepal, where over 100 ethnic groups of people coexist alongside dozens of languages, imposing a universal curriculum as both impractical and inequitable (Rai, 2021). This evidence suggested that localized curriculum is the essence of today's integrating of indigenous knowledge, contextual practices and mother tongues education only can improve student engagement, learning outcomes and retention rate at school level to avoid the dropout and failure problems (Koirala & Adhikari, 2020).

The policies and strategies of Nepal government, likewise School Sector Development Plan (SSDP, 2016–2023) recognizes the importance of localizing curriculum on the basis of geographical, cultural and other many social contexts availability (MOEST, 2016). Although, implementation has been inconsistent, constrained by centralized education and government system in the past, limited capacity of the teacher, and political instability (Paudel, 2022). As the consequence while some Terai schools incorporate Maithili stories in early education, similar practices remain scarce in mountain and hilly districts (Lama & Tamang, 2021). Educationist argues that the decentralized, participatory curriculum-making process is essential to operationalize soil-friendly education system effectively (Regmi, 2019).

Educational innovator such as Chitrakar (2011) and Pun (2015) justify the transformative potential of context-sensitive education. Chitrakar had advocated for educating youth to innovate locally rather than solely searching employment in abroad. These examples confirm that grounding education in local epistemologies and ontologies can promotes both empowerment and sustainable development in education sector of Nepal (Shrestha, 2018).

Some empirical studies have been reinforced these philosophical claims. Thapa and Basnet (2020) reported that integrating local agriculture-based knowledge and skills in

Jumla district schools has been increasing student attendance and engagement at school level. Similarly, Gurung (2021) stated that using local folklore in early childhood education enhanced literacy among marginalized ethnic-group children. Such some cases illustrated that soil-friendly education is not only conceptually and theoretically valid but also pedagogically effective and kitchen friendly, day to day life friendly which can foster both aspect identity and learning outcomes (Subedi, 2022).

Except these significant challenges persist. Teacher preparedness for local curriculum development remaining limited, localized learning materials were found scarce and national assessment pressures favoring standardization test over contextual relevance (Bhandari & Sapkota, 2019). Some of the donor-driven policies focusing on global benchmarks may further marginalize local needs (Carney & Bista, 2009). Achieving effective soil-friendly and climate friendly education, therefore, there need to be require a balanced integration of global competencies and local epistemologies and ontologies supporting by aligned policies through teacher training and active community participation with soil-friendly education and curriculum (Devkota, 2023).

Methods

This study employed a mixed method research design, specifically adopting a phenomenological approach, to explore the lived experiences and perceptions related to soil-friendly education in Nepal. The researcher conducted field visits across diverse regions of the country, engaging with schools, teachers and local communities to gather firsthand empirical data. Primary sources, including interviews, observations and local educational artifacts, were utilized to capture authentic insights into how indigenous knowledge, local resources, and ecological practices are being integrated or neglected within school curricula. Field visit forms and semi-structured interviews schedule designed to capture in-depth view from key stakeholders. respondents cross checked secondary-level head teachers, subject teachers, and members of School Management Committees from purposively selected schools across Darchula, Taplejung, Dang and Dailekh districts. These instruments were used to gather context-specific data on the integration of indigenous knowledge, local resources, and environmental practices within the school curriculum.

The collected data were analyzed thematically in percentile ranking for quantitative interpretations to understand the gap between mythological ideals and contemporary educational practices, providing critical implications for curriculum development and sustainable education in Nepal.

Results and Discussions

Collected data from sampled districts have been representing Nepal's ecological and socio-cultural diversity and diverse perspectives. Darchula from far western region, Surkhet from mid-west territory of Dang district from inner terai region, Taplejung from far east mountain and Kalikot from remote Karnali Province. Particularly participants included 20 teachers (each four from each district), 15 School Management Committee chairs (from 3 per district), and five student focus groups discussion (one from per district, 8–10 students each). Thematic analysis thematic coding and descriptive interpretation counted to identify prevailing trends and perceptions from the respondents. A brief quantitative summary of response tendencies is provided in Table 1.

Table 2. *Teachers' responses on soil related content*

S.n	District	No. of Teachers	%
1	Darchula	4	35
2	Surkhet	4	45
3	Dang	4	52
4	Taplejung	4	30
5	Kalikot	4	25

Table 3. *SMC responses on the awareness of soil friendly education*

S.n	District	No. of SMC members	%
1	Darchula	4	40
2	Surkhet	4	55
3	Dang	4	48
4	Taplejung	4	33
5	Kalikot	4	22

Table 3. *Students knowledge on locally available resources*

S.n.	District	No. of students	%
1.	Darchula	20	28
2.	Surkhet	20	36
3.	Dang	20	41
4.	Taplejung	20	27
5.	Kalikot	20	19

Overall, only 37% teachers responded that some form of soil-related to local environment content integrated into the curriculum, while under half (40%) of school management committee members presented conceptual awareness of soil-friendly education. From the focus group discussions of sampled students indicated that a significant discrepancy of familiarity with indigenous soil knowledge and practical applications. The parents of students are not ready to give the domestic task to their children because of the illusion of

urbanization and white color job influence and attraction. One of the girls from class eight argued that:

“My parents did not get rid of from the trouble of hunger and famine from this traditional occupation so I strongly like to left this domestic local task cutting grass, grazing the cows, buffaloes and goats in my village.”

So, my individual choice is going in city area and I like to learn computer for getting job easily in my life. Likewise, one of the adult parents of male students that his grandfather and father struggled high risk of jobs like climbing trees, mountains and walking step path in the individual job of carrying load of grass and other materials in their back. He again added that the basket and rope of basket is just like a dowry of his family so they are ready to left this traditional occupation and local resource utilization in education. In the opposition of these two respondents, an educated S.L.C. graduate presented his view by abusing government policy and strategy of weak support of local knowledge and skills from the five centuries. He blamed the rulers and ruling class people to be the less inclusion of local resources and content in school curriculum. So 37 percent people have been left their traditional skills and occupations by the negative policy practice of government.

Relevancy of the Curriculum

Inappropriate curriculum increased irrelevancy in school education begin regression of Local Knowledge in the local community of Nepal. All sampled respondent consistently highlighted the absence of locally relevant and soil-friendly content in the existing curriculum. one of the teachers from Taplejung district of far east region remarked: “Our science books talk about the world’s environment but not about our own soil and crops. Students read about deserts and oceans but do not learn why maize grows better on our slopes than in the plains.”

The teacher respondent of that district we are very rich in bamboos plant, bamboos are everywhere in our village so we are maximum utilizing it in daily life problem solving human activities and we have our own skills of developing bamboos materials in daily life. We are learning these skills by non-formally but in formal school curriculum the skills and strategies and methods of constructing bamboos related materials are not included in the content sufficiently. So, we are being excluded from the content and pedagogy of school curriculum.

In the same line, the school management committee Chair from Darchula district viewed that: “In our area, children know the soil types by working in fields, but school never connects that knowledge with lessons. We are losing what we already know.” From the field visit and observation found that maximum plants of orchards and the huge big trees and forest of orchards in that area. Most of the milk-maids fulfill their hunger in the day time by eating naturally available orchards in the jungle but this is not well managed farming. The market or selling problem is the serious one for that village people. It is also found that there is not easy access of transportation of orchards.

The finding from this study ensured that there is a context gap in school curriculum, where centrally designed textbooks excluded local ecological ontologies and epistemologies. As stated by Bhattarai (2017) and Sharma (2020), the careless of indigenous knowledge results are leading to a “cognitive mismatch” between school learning and students lived experiences as geographical diversity. Educationist can see the natural diversity and possibility but found unable to include as content relating with context.

Environment Friendly Lessons

The teachers of Surkhet and Dang district reported mixed views regarding the inclusion of environment friendly lessons. They included environmental contents as optional or extracurricular activities. Although, they have emphasized inadequate training and lack of localized teaching learning materials. A science teacher from Surkhet district stated: “We like to teach about soil composition and farming practices in our territory, but no local models are being provided. Even the teacher training centers are ignoring local ecology and their availability in different resources.”

But the people are living by eating naturally available fruits and grains in their life but not well managed farming for systematically through formal education processes. 70% teachers replied that we are never receiving training related to contextual and soil-friendly curriculum and pedagogy. This reflects broader structural obstacles within the School Sector Development Plan (SSDP, 2016–2023), where decentralization goals were not properly implemented at the classroom level of contents.

From the focus group discussion in Dang district revealed that, the interest in learning through field-based activities, such as “identifying soils,” “classification relating with cash crops” “testing water and its quality,” and “visiting local farms.” This preference aligns with Freire’s (1970) principle of “education through their own experience,”

advocating for participatory, problem-solving learning. From these narratives it would be clear that people are in the favor of nature driven approach of school curriculum reform.

Gaps in Policy Implementation

The chairpersons of school management committee chairman responded that education policies are being highly centralized, they are offering little space for contextual adaptation. School management committee chairman from Kalikot district shared that: “our curriculum comes from Kathmandu capital city of Nepal; we can’t modify this one and we could not add our local content we have no right to do so, we have better traditional independent knowledge, but no place to include it into school curriculum.” there is a great problem in systematizing and localizing knowledge as local contextual curriculum.

The aforementioned perspective was triangulated in Taplejung with SMC chair noted that “policy stated local curriculum can be developing through local people according to national curriculum framework, but it is never being practiced due to bureaucratic hurdles and out of choice contents as local curriculum by the lack of expertise in local curriculum development.” This interpretation revealed that there is a detachment between policy intent and school-level practice. Even though curriculum frameworks like National Curriculum Framework (2076 B.S.) and National Education Policy (2019) emphasizing contextualization in school curriculum this is a better aspect, but they lack localized available resources allocation, monitoring and professional development appropriate mechanisms.

Students’ Awareness on Environment in Education

The students, especially from Kalikot, Darchula, and Taplejung district, presented poor familiarity with local soil and vegetation types. From Darchula, only 3 out of 10 students could give the name of locally available soil and its types on the basis of main crops harvested in their area. Students from Surkhet and Dang district, viewed slightly better awareness due to the impact of community-based learning initiatives and agriculture programs launched in the village area. Class 8 lady student from the Kalikot district noted that: “I have recognized and familiarized the color of soil but not what’s the importance and use of different color of soil in our daily life?” We just know the name of the books and chapters but don’t know the utility and significance of curriculum and their content in our future career development.”

The finding of response is supporting to Ghimire & Rana (2018), they argued that modern schooling tends to alienate students from their emerging ecological ontology, reducing experiential and practical learning opportunities. This disconnection also minimizes sustainable attitudes and reduces motivation and interest toward local occupations such as farming and natural resource management and their utilization.

Students' Engagement in Environmental Occupational Practices

Several relevant initiatives were identified in Dang and Surkhet valley. Dang valley schools had found integrated local context as a "local resource week," where students participated in soil testing, plant identification, and compost fertilize-making process of traditional knowledge was included in their local curriculum content. Surkhet valley schools introduced a "community classroom garden," motivating students to learn sustainable agriculture practices and their strengths. Teachers from Taplejung district had begun translating parts of science lessons relating with local dialects and practices to promote local science understanding as environmental occupational practices.

The all-mentioned localized practices presented improved student engagement in learning and retention. Highest 52 percent and lowest 25 percent teachers from teachers in the programs responded in the favor of enhanced interest in science and environment-related contents in the curriculum.

Study reveals that there is a significant gap between the philosophical and recent indigenous ideals of soil-friendly education and curriculum in practice. It was found 55 percent high and 19 percent low favoring. 75 percent teachers are found unfamiliar in the practice of soil friendly school curriculum. While policies and national frameworks rhetorically supported contextualized education and curriculum need for today but implementation remains fragmented, under-resource utilization, and weak practice of top-down approach in education. Most essential foundation of traditional knowledge and philosophies are being demised from the content. The real context is being escaped from the structure of school curriculum.

Conclusion

Soil-friendly education found as a pedagogical philosophy, innovation, ecological wisdom, cultural existence, and sustainable livelihood. 75 percent respondent were on the favor of soil friendly curriculum planning. Respondent have required reconstruction of soil friendly curriculum that can strengthen local resilience, fosters sustainable education and curriculum. sustainable curriculum is only possible from soil friendly educational

planning and development. The enormous gap found in exclusion of ecological and sociocultural diversity. Recent content was identified out of epistemological and ontological realm.

Respondent viewed school curriculum termed as an irrelevant contextual content. School education is facing unemployment, brain drain, migration, crisis of practical skills, dependency in different sectors, great loss of indigenous knowledge and skills low-income rate, curriculum detached from national and global market. Weak budgeting also does not support in an indigenous knowledge and skills of local community. Traditional knowledge and skills are being declining from new generation. Also found lack of research-based curriculum dissemination, good governance in curriculum planning, managing, developing and designing at school level education. Furthermore, the existing school curricula less orienting from philosophical back up of soil and its importance.

Implications

Curriculum decentralization better implementation practice is the essence of school curriculum. The monitoring and supervision mechanism is most essential to be manage. teacher capacity building training needs to be increased for developing soil friendly education and curriculum practice. The interest of soil friendly education is an independent concept for the people but it is not properly conceptualizing towards local community so community awareness programs is essential.

The practice of integrated curriculum in basic level students is better to enhancing soil friendly curriculum but not enough sufficient in this context it would be the compulsory subject at basic level curriculum. Indigenous ecological knowledge gives high production and make the students independent so education can shift as fruitful and relevant process, sustainable, and community-oriented knowledge, Freire's emancipatory model and Nepal's own mythological ideals need to be included in school curriculum for living harmoniously with soil and nature.

Furthermore, from district-based contrast highlights recent need for differentiated educational planning. Dang and Surkhet valley presented potential practices through community initiatives, remote district like Kalikot and Darchula required better institutional and policy support for soil friendly education and curriculum at school education because It is the foundation pillar of higher education.

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A Systematic Review on Dietary Pattern and Academic Performance of Children and Adolescents

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Abstract

Dietary patterns significantly impact on academic performance of children and adolescent, which is a growing area of research. A systematic search of electronic databases was conducted to identify studies examining the association between dietary intake and academic performance. A total 14 studies met the inclusion criteria. The purpose of this systematic review was to identify the dietary patterns and academic performance of children and adolescents as well as its related factors. Data were collected from published articles using a systematic literature review approach. Articles were searched from scholar.google.com, eric.ed.gov, pubmed.com, semanticscholar.com, and Elicit.com using the key words. Out of 120 identified full-text papers, irrelevant articles were excluded. Only English articles focusing on dietary pattern and academic performance were included. The final selection comprised 14 articles. Among them, 21.42% studies were related to healthy home food environment (HFE) and breakfast consumption and remaining 21%, 21%, 14.28%, 14.28% and 7.14% were related with processed food and energy dense diet, poverty and life style, Mediterranean diet, balance diet with fruits and vegetables and inflammatory and anti-inflammatory diet respectively. The average age groups of participants in the reviewed studies was 13 years with an age range from 4 to 22 years. The study showed that most studies were cross-sectional (78.57%), followed by longitudinal (14.28%), and systematic review (7.14%). The findings suggest a positive

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association between dietary intake and academic outcome. The study concluded that dietary patterns significantly impact the academic performance of children and adolescents. A balanced diet including fruits and vegetables, as well as Mediterranean diet may enhance cognitive function and academic achievements. In addition, a healthy home food environment (HFE), and other factors also play an crucial role in shaping academic performance.

Keywords: *Academic performance, Adolescent, Children, Dietary pattern*

Introduction

The body of children requires adequate nutrients, which are obtained through diet or foods. The foods sometimes can either be good or bad for us (Adhikari et al., 2024). Dietary pattern is the combination of foods and beverages that comprise their total intake over time. The foods that people eat have a big influence on their health. Eating a nutritious diet can help people achieve and maintain good health and reduce their risk of chronic illnesses at any stage of life (Stoody et al., 2020). Academic success and intelligence are usually related. Intelligence is one trait that controls both environmental and genetic factors.

Although cognitive abilities are usually attributed to genetic factors, environmental factors also play a role in their development and stability (Chikwere, 2019). A healthy diet pattern can affect academic performance by enhancing brain function, promoting better behavior, and yielding positive school outcomes. Dietary factors like the amount of fruits and vegetables consumed, the consumption of discretionary foods and/or beverages, or the overall quality of the diet are generally associated with school-valued outcomes (Chan et al., 2017).

Contradictorily, as of right now, there is no solid proof that eating breakfast and which dietary intake improves academic performance. Recently, the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program was expanded to at-risk schools in most of the country to increase students' intake of fruits and vegetables. Even the use of multivitamin supplements to enhance school-age children's diets showed no correlation to improved academic performance (Woodhouse et al., 2012). Therefore, the reviewed literature showed that a clear causal link between dietary intake and academic achievement of children and adolescents has not yet been established.

Another study also revealed that school children's learning is significantly impacted by undernutrition. School-age children's dietary intake affects their health, cognitive function, and ultimately their academic performance. Inadequate nutrition and poor health in school-age children can hinder their cognitive development by lowering their capacity

to participate in learning activities or by causing physiological changes, or both (Zenebe et al., 2018). However, several studies have revealed that eating breakfast is the most frequently reported nutritional factors linked to academic success (Burrows et al., 2017; Cohen et al., 2016; Hoyland et al., 2009). Overall, the results suggest that there may be a connection between diet and academic success, with the majority of studies relating more nutrient-dense diets to higher academic achievement in college/ university students (Burrows et al., 2017).

Despite the existing literature on the association between dietary intake and academic success, a clear causal link has not been established. This study aims to carefully examine and incorporate data from earlier research to determine how different eating patterns impact academic performance of children and adolescents.

This study intended to respond to the research inquiry, 'how the variety of dietetics-behavior with breakfast eating and processing intake versus a Mediterranean Diet-might interfere with cognition within the children and adolescents. Thus, even if food products prepared using many ingredients can sometimes impede school achievements because they contain some percentage of energy, proper nutritional meal behavior-the child which constitute plenty of fruits and vegetables-contribute positively towards successful achievement in study.

Methods

A systematic literature search was conducted from different databases. Articles were extracted from scholar.google.com, Pubmed.com, eric.ed.gov, Elicit.com, semanticscholar.com to identify related studies published between 2015 to 2025. The search was performed from January 15 to February 16, 2025, using predefined key words. They were 'dietary pattern', 'diet quality', 'academic performance'. 'School children', and 'adolescents. From this process approximately 150 full text papers were initially identified. Among them, irrelevant papers were excluded. These studies were assessed on the basis of information provided in their title, abstract and description. Only the studies published in English and focusing on dietary pattern and academic performance of children and adolescents were considered. After screening 14 studies, met the inclusion criteria, which were included in the final review. Other relevant literatures were utilized to analyze and discuss the situation of the topic. Selected articles and result of them were examined and synthesized in sub headings through thematic analysis.

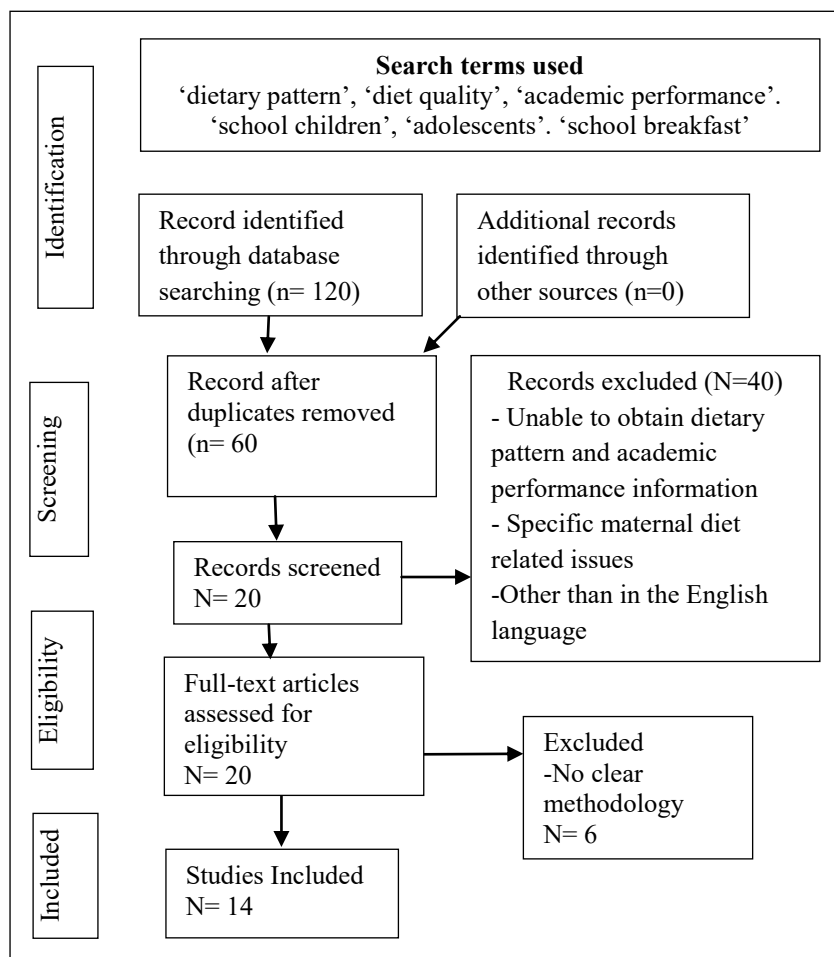
Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

The studies published in English, focusing on dietary patterns and academic performance, employing a clear methodology were included. Similarly, if they lacked a clear methodology, did not examine dietary patterns in relation with academic performance, focused on maternal diet related issues, published in other than English language were excluded in this study.

Selection Process

A PRISMA flow diagram was applied to illustrate the study selection process. First of all, a total 120 full-text articles were retrieved from electronic databases including scholar.google.com, Pubmed.com, eric.ed.gov, Elicit.com, semanticscholar.com. After removing duplicate records, 60 unique studies remained for screening.

During the screening phase, 40 articles were removed based on title and abstract screening because they did not focus on dietary patterns and academic performance. They were published in languages other than English, or contained content pertaining to maternal diet. During the eligibility phase, 20 full-text articles were assessed for methodological soundness and applicability. Six of these articles were rejected due to unclear methodology. At the end, 14 studies that met the inclusion criteria were included in the systematic review. These studies were analyzed and categorized thematically based on the ways in which diet affects academic performance. The PRISMA flow diagram provides a visual representation of this methodical selection process, which are presented in figure 1.

Figure 1. PRISMA Flow Diagram of the Study

Results and Discussion

The available studies were examined to summarize eating meal pattern associated with energy intake, fruit and vegetable intake dietary patterns and overall diet in children and adolescents. The majority of the reviewed studies were cross-sectional (78.57%) and longitudinal (14.28%) and following were systematic review (7.14%). Overall findings suggested a positive association between the frequency of good dietary intake and academic outcome. Fourteen studies met the criteria for inclusion in this review. The 14 studies reviewed different aspects of dietary patterns and academic performance of children and adolescents. Mainly the aims of them were to identify the dietary patterns

and academic performance of children and adolescents as well as its related factors. The detail results of the systematic review are presented in table 1.

Table 1. *Dietary pattern and academic performance of the record*

Author/year	Title	Method	Sample size/ age group	Result /Findings
(Esteban-Cornejo et al., 2018)	Dietary inflammatory index and academic performance in children	Cross-sectional study	277 /aged 11·56 (SD 0·86) years	Adhering to a more anti-inflammatory diet (fresh fruits and vegetables, fish, whole grains, and fats) can improve academic performance because the inflammatory diet (white breads, cereals, white pasta, and other products made with refined flours and white rice) may have a negative impact.
(Lopez-Gil et al., 2024)	Is higher adherence to the Mediterranean diet associated with greater academic performance in children and adolescents? A systematic review and meta-analysis	A systematic review and meta-analysis	9691 (16 studies)/ aged 6-18 years	Overall, the result showed that children and adolescents who followed the Mediterranean Diet (Med Diet) more closely did better academic achievement. Similarly high adherence to the Med Diet is associated with greater working memory scores and cognitive strategies (e.g., organization and critical thinking
(Pearce et al., 2018)	The Apples of Academic Performance: Associations Between Dietary Patterns and Academic Performance in Australian Children	Cross-sectional study	315 /aged 9-11years	Academic performance was not linked to a nutritious diet, but it was negatively correlated with an energy-dense, nutrient-poor diet.
(Pena-Jorquera et al., 2024)	Adolescents with a Favorable Mediterranean-Style-Based Pattern Show Higher Cognitive and	Cross-sectional	1296/ aged10–14 years.	The Mediterranean diet group performed better in all domains than the low fruit and vegetables, high-sugar diet (LFV-HSD), low fruit and vegetables,

	Academic Achievement: A Cluster Analysis—The Cogni-Action Project			low-sugar diet (LFV-LSD). While the Med Diet was associated with improved cognitive and academic performance ($p < 0.05$).
(Sohail et al., 2024)	The Influence of the Home Food Environment on the Eating Behaviors, Family Meals, and Academic Achievement of Adolescents in Schools in the UAE	Cross-sectional study	304/aged 12-18 years	Results underscore the critical role of a healthy home food environment (HFE) in shaping healthy positive eating behaviors and food choices among adolescents. Likewise, those who excelled academically were more likely to have a high HFE score.
(Hair et al., 2015)	Association of Child Poverty, Brain Development, and Academic Achievement	Longitudinal cohort study	823/aged 4 to 22 years	Children who live in poverty typically have lower educational attainment and significantly lower standardized test scores, which reflect their poor academic performance. These trends continue into adulthood, which lowers occupational attainment over the course of a lifetime.
(Payne-Sturges et al., 2018)	Student hunger on campus: Food insecurity among college students and implications for academic institutions	Cross-sectional survey.	237/aged 18 year	Food insecure students reported lower academic achievement is consistent with prior campus-based studies.
(Adelantado-Renau et al., 2019)	Independent and combined influence of healthy lifestyle factors on academic performance in adolescents: DADOS Study	3-year longitudinal study	262/aged (13.9±0.3 years)	Eating at the right frequency had a positive, independent impact on academic achievement. Additionally, teenagers who maintained at least three healthy lifestyles (not being overweight, limiting screen time, and getting enough sleep) were more likely to be in the high-performance group for grades
(Kim et al.,	Dietary Habits Are	Cross-sectional	359,264	Eating three times a day,

2016)	Associated With School Performance in Adolescents		Web-based Survey/ Aged 12 to 18 yrs	especially breakfast, and regularly consuming fresh fruits, vegetables, and milk were associated with good academic performance. However, eating a variety of processed foods, such as soft drinks, instant noodles, fast food were linked to poor academic performance.
(Rajan Jr et al., 2024)	Relation of Dietary Practices and Academic Achievement Among School-Going Children in Kattankulathur Block, Chengalpattu District, Tamil Nadu	Cross-sectional study	262/ Aged 11-16 years	Higher academic achievement was found to be significantly correlated with balanced dietary practices, which include regular consumption of fruits and vegetables. Research indicates that 24.8% of students perform exceptionally well in school, 88.2% of students eat three regular meals a day, and 88.9% of students regularly eat breakfast.
(Beressa et al., 2024)	Association between dietary diversity, nutritional status, and academic performance of school-age children in Southeast Ethiopia using structural equation modelling	School-based cross-sectional	395/aged 10 to 14 years	A child's dietary diversity score (DDS) had no direct, indirect, or total effect on academic achievement.
(Barg et al., 2023)	Dietary patterns and cognitive achievement among school children in socio-cultural context, a case of Montevideo, Uruguay	Cross-sectional s	270/ 6.75years (mean age of 81 months)	Increased consumption of dark green and red-orange vegetables, eggs, beans and peas, and potatoes was associated with a higher reading proficiency. There was no correlation between reduced consumption of milk, pastries, and pizza dinners and cognitive function.

(Mualem et al., 2023)	The effect of dietary preferences on academic performance among kindergarten-aged children	Quantitative	68 / aged 5-6 years	A high-fiber diet has improved brain electrophysiology and cognitive function, as evidenced by increased efficacy and efficiency in resolving cognitive difficulties. The health and cognitive development of the children are significantly impacted by plant-based diets. Eating a processed diet might make learning more difficult.
(Martin et al., 2024)	A healthy breakfast each and every day is important for students' motivation and achievement	Descriptive study	648 / Mean aged 13.52 years (SD =0.98)	Healthy breakfasts have long been linked to better cognitive and academic performance. Regularly eating a healthy breakfast has also been shown to have a positive impact on students' academic motivation and achievement in the home and in the classroom.

Table 1 showed in the dietary pattern and academic performance, most of the study (21.42%) were related with healthy home food environment (HFE) and breakfast consumption and following 21%, 21%, 14.28%, 14.28% and 7.14% were related with processed food and energy dense diet, poverty and life style, Mediterranean diet, balance diet with fruits and vegetables and inflammatory and anti-inflammatory diet respectively. Similarly, the average age groups of reviewed studies were 13 years' ranges from 4 to 22 years.

Regarding the research design, out of 14 studies 11 studies used cross-sectional study design, two studies used longitudinal study design and remaining studies used systematic review in this study. It has been suggested that a long-term study is required to determine the relationship between dietary consumption and academic achievement. Among the total (374112), maximum sample was 359,264 (web-based survey) and minimum sample size was 68 in this reviewed study. Therefore, it appears that a longitudinal study with a suitable sample size is required to determine the connection between dietary patterns and academic performance of children's and adolescents.

This comparative engagement strengthens the academic value of the research and demonstrates the researcher's understanding of the field. In qualitative studies, the discussion often highlights participants' voices while interpreting their experiences through relevant theoretical lenses.

Moreover, the discussion emphasizes the significance of the findings by explaining their implications for educational practice, policy, and future research. For studies focusing on teachers, this includes reflecting on how the findings may inform professional development, classroom practices, or institutional support mechanisms. The discussion also acknowledges contextual factors and limitations that may have influenced the findings, ensuring transparency and credibility. In this study, the discussion section aims to provide a meaningful interpretation of the findings by situating them within the theoretical framework and relevant literature, thereby offering deeper insights into the research problem and its practical and academic implications.

Diet and Academic Performance

This systematic review identified the different types of diet in relation to academic performance, which includes the inflammatory and anti-inflammatory diet, processed foods and energy dense diet, Mediterranean diet and balance diet. They are described here:

Inflammatory and Anti-inflammatory Diet. According to our reviewed studies, eating inflammatory foods like white breads, cereals, white pasta, and other refined-flour products, along with white rice, may have a negative effect on academic performance. To improve academic performance, people should follow a more anti-inflammatory diet that includes fresh fruits and vegetables, fish, whole grains, and fats (Esteban-Cornejo et al., 2018). To support this finding, a study revealed that the nature of inflammatory diet is complex and danger for normal physiology. It is used for chronic inflammatory diseases that may lower the levels or actions of the tissue and decrease memory for learning (Tabas & Glass, 2013). This suggests that the negative consequences of inflammatory diets may affect long-term cognitive development in academic performance, highlighting the significance of dietary interventions during crucial phases of brain maturation.

Processed foods and Energy Dense Diet. Our review reported that academic performance was not linked to a nutritious diet, but it was negatively correlated with an energy-dense, nutrient-poor diet (Pearce et al., 2018). Similarly, this review also revealed that eating three times per day without skipping meals, especially breakfast, and frequent

intakes of fresh fruits, vegetables, and milk were related to good school performance. However, consuming several processed foods such as soft drinks, instant noodles, fast foods, and eating confections more than seven times a week showed correlations with poor school performance (Kim et al., 2016).

In the same way, a high-fiber diet has improved brain electrophysiology and cognitive function. The cognitive development of the children is significantly impacted by plant-based diets. Eating a processed diet might make learning more difficult (Mualem et al., 2023). In relation to processed food and energy dense dietary intake, a study concluded that high dense sugar-sweetened beverage (SSB) consumption was associated with lower academic performance in English Z-score outcome in children and adolescent aged 2-18 years (Haftoglou, 2015). This finding suggested a growing issue where children's poor eating behaviors impact both their academic performance and their risk of chronic illnesses, which may eventually worsen cognitive abilities.

Mediterranean Diet. Overall, results of this study showed that academic performance was higher for children and teenagers who followed the Mediterranean Diet (vegetables and tubers, Fruits, Grains, Nuts, seeds and legumes) more closely. In a similar vein, greater Med Diet adherence is associated with higher working memory scores and cognitive strategies/critical thinking (López-Gil et al., 2024). In the same way, our next study reported that the Mediterranean diet group performed better in all domains than the low fruit and vegetables, high-sugar diet (LFV-HSD), low fruit and vegetables, low-sugar diet (LFV-LSD). While the Med Diet was associated with improved cognitive and academic performance ($p < 0.05$) (Peña-Jorquera et al., 2024). This statement supported that enhancing cognitive function requires a Mediterranean diet rich in foods high in anti-inflammatory and antioxidant compounds. Additionally, the nutrients found in the Mediterranean diet may help ensure that the brain receives the right number of essential micronutrients.

Balanced Diet with fruits and vegetables. This review found that, higher academic proficiency was linked to increased consumption of potatoes, eggs, beans and peas, and dark green and red-orange vegetables. Reduced intake of milk, pastries, and pizza dinners did not correlate with improved cognitive function (Barg et al., 2023). Similarly, a study found that, fast food, sausages, and soft drinks have been linked to poor cognitive function and academic performance. Heavy diets are also associated with overweight and obesity, which are linked to decreased cognitive abilities and academic achievement in children and adolescents (Naveed et al., 2020). Contradictorily, one of our studies

claimed that the dietary diversity score (DDS) of a child had no effect on academic performance, either directly or indirectly (Beressa et al., 2024).

This result indicated that particularly the micronutrient intake can impact on cognitive development in various socio-cultural context. Even though, the more research is required to determine the link of dietary intake on academic achievement.

Healthy Home Food Environment and Breakfast

Regarding the healthy home food environment (HFE), the findings of our study indicated that high academic achievers were more likely to have a favorable HFE score (Sohail et al., 2024). In addition, our study found that, Better academic and cognitive performance has long been associated with eating a healthy breakfast. Eating a nutritious breakfast on a regular basis has also been demonstrated to improve students' academic motivation and performance both at home and in the classroom (Martin et al., 2024).

Regarding the breakfast, it has been discovered that, 88.2% of students eat three regular meals a day, 88.9% of students regularly eat breakfast, where, 24.8% of students perform exceptionally well in school (Rajan Jr et al., 2024). In this scenario, a study concluded that the food environment that young children are exposed to at home and at school affects the quality of their diet; greater diet quality is associated with having access to more food outlets in general (Barrett et al., 2017).

This quotation suggested that the broader environment (both at home and in school) has a critical role in shaping children's dietary behaviors and, consequently, their academic performance. Additionally, the quality of the food environment could be a crucial for improving children's cognitive outcomes.

Poverty and Life Style

According to the studies we reviewed, children who live in poverty tend to perform poorly academically, as evidenced by their lower educational attainment and noticeably lower standardized test scores. These patterns persist into adulthood, resulting in a lifetime decline in occupational attainment (Hair et al., 2015). Eating at the right frequency had a positive effect on academic performance. Teens who led at least three healthy lifestyles (avoiding obesity, limiting screen time, and getting enough sleep) were also more likely to be in the high-performance group for grades (Adelantado-Renau et al., 2019). While the students who experience food insecurity report lower academic achievement, which is consistent with previous campus-based studies (Payne-Sturges et al., 2018).

From this statement we can say that the poverty or food insecurity and life style are crucial to academic performance of children and adolescents. A study also concluded that poverty or food insecurity may affect students more frequently and with more severe symptoms in lower-income areas. The connection between food insecurity and academic performance may have significant ramifications if it ultimately affects student retention and graduation rates (Maroto et al., 2015). These results showed that socioeconomic differences, such as limited access to nutritious food and educational opportunities, make food insecurity worse. These disparities highlight the need for comprehensive interventions that address broader educational and social inequalities in addition to nutritional support.

Population to suffer from food insecurity may be more common and more severe among the students in lower-income areas. The possible relationship between food insecurity and student academic performance could have far-reaching consequences if this is a factor that ultimately affects student retention and graduation rates. Therefore, in order to determine the best strategies for alleviating the negative effects of food insecurity on educational achievement, additional research should investigate these relationships more thoroughly.

Conclusion

This systematic review concluded that dietary pattern had the significant impact on academic performance of children and adolescents. Improved cognitive and academic performance is associated with a well-balanced, fruit-and vegetable-rich Mediterranean diet. Healthy home food environment (HFE), processed food and energy dense diet, poverty and life style might be the considerable factors for improving academic performance of children and adolescents. Even though, this may be linked with increased attendance, reduced absenteeism etc. Therefore, further long-term research is needed to examine the connection between eating patterns and academic performance.

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How Social Learning Theory Explains the Persistence of Sexual Harassment

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Abstract

This paper gives details on how Bandura's Social Learning Theory (SLT) describes the persistence of sexual harassment across institutions and generations. It asserts that individuals come to learn, observe, copy and normalize harassment, particularly when such behavior remains unchecked. Utilizing an integrative theoretical review based on systematic literature searches and thematic analysis, the study illustrates how factors like institutional complicity, peer culture, family, and cultural norms facilitate this deviant behavior. Key SLT concepts such as observational learning, vicarious reinforcement, and moral disengagement highlight how harassment becomes an ingrained behavioral script, often perpetuated when perpetrators are not punished or are even rewarded. The concept of reciprocal determinism further clarifies the continuous interplay between personal, behavioral, and environmental factors in sustaining these patterns.

The research indicates that learned behavior can be unlearned through positive role models, accountability, and structural interventions. This understanding offers a vehicle for developing more effective education, prevention, and policy interventions to disrupt the social learning chain supporting sexual harassment. While SLT provides a robust framework, the paper acknowledges its limitations in adequately addressing institutionalized power relations and intersectionality.

Keywords: Bandura, observational learning, role modeling, sexual harassment, social learning theory

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Introduction

Sexual harassment is a cross-cultural, cross-legal, social and behavioral phenomenon in the entire world and every context, including the workplace, schools, and public spaces (Sharma et al., 2024; Sharma et al., 2023; UNESCO, 2020; World Bank, 2019). While internationally agreed-upon definitions, such as those provided in the ILO Convention No. 190, sexual harassment is any unwelcome sexual conduct which makes the environment or workplace a place of intimidation or offense (ILO, 2019; UN Women, 2020), such definitions do not tend to be sufficient in their encapsulation of the structural and learned aspects. Studies show that the domains of inadequate institutional reactions, imbalance in power, and victim-blaming society are fertile ground for the enactment of such crimes (UN Women, 2021; OECD, 2023). The Victims are muzzled through stigmatization whereby perpetrators go unpunished due to institutional failure and sustaining the culture of violence (World Bank, 2019; UNESCO, 2020).

This study employs Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory (SLT) to define sexual harassment as acquired behavior learned by observing, imitating, and reinforcing social systems (Bandura, 1977; Bandura, 1986). Individuals who have experienced harassment within families, peer groups or the workplace replicate such actions when they observe others committing similar acts without being punished (OECD, 2023). The findings show that institutional tolerance acts as a situational reinforcer, which rationalizes misbehavior and makes it ongoing through generations (UNESCO, 2020; UN Women, 2020). For convicted offenders of sexual harassment, this present paper examines how organizational culture, peer group processes, attitudes, and generalized social discourses construct and sustain sexually deviant behaviors. The goal is to generate results for global policy, learning and behavior change towards prevention and rehabilitation (World Bank, 2019; UN Women, 2021; ILO, 2019).

SLT, as proposed by Bandura (1977), describes how individuals learn behaviors not only from direct experience but from the observation of others, especially if the behavior is reinforced or punished. This theory is important in accounting for sexual harassment as socially learned behavior. When peer groups or institutions do not sanction harassment or even condone it by silence or reward, the perpetrators internalize the belief that such an act is acceptable. Bandura's (1997) concept of reciprocal determinism further clarifies that individual attitudes, environmental conditions (e.g., institutional culture), and behaviors all continuously affect one another. For instance, narrative interviews of convicted offenders illustrate how early exposure to sexism, institutionalized objectification and

voids of accountability predispose harassment as an ingrained component of a behavioral script (Burton et al., 2002).

SLT theory also describes how such behaviors are perpetuated across different settings. Hogben and Byrne (1998) consider reinforcement systems including peer approval, perceived power and social status as reinforces of coercive sexual behavior. In patriarchal settings such as Nepal where men are taught to control and women are discouraged from complaining against abuse, a low risk of punishment and high modeling of abusive behavior exist. It leads to moral disengagement (Bandura, 1999) whereby perpetrators justify injurious activities without guilt. Sexual harassment, therefore, makes up an early-acquired conditioned reaction to social stimuli that is strengthened unless broken by awareness policy, training and role-modeling interventions. This study intended to understand how sexual harassment is perpetuated in the long-term using SLT in application. The study focuses on how individuals learn, imitate and reinstate such actions through observing other people in their social and organizational environments especially where those actions remain unpunished or sanctioned by society. It aims at finding out how such acquired behaviors are applicable in preventing and rehabilitating individuals more successfully.

Methods

The study used an integrative theoretical review based on Torraco (2005) for examining how SLT accounts for sexual harassment continuity in institutional and socio-cultural environments. Systematic literature searches from 1997 through 2025 from databases such as Google Scholar, Scopus, JSTOR, and PubMed were carried out using the terms "Sexual Harassment," "Social Learning Theory", "Moral Disengagement," and "Nepal Gender Norms." Inclusion criteria of the study were literature with relevance to SLT and harassment in organizational or educational settings and to patriarchal or South Asian settings. Research without theoretical support (related to SLT) and those not related to learning behavior were excluded.

Thematic analysis was employed to reveal individual, social, and environmental-level patterns behind harassment behavior. This study was employed to link SLT constructs such as modeling, vicarious learning, and reinforcement to institutional silence from real environments, peer validation, and gender norms. The strategy provided an improved understanding of the process by which harassment is learned and transmitted and served as the foundation for preventive and rehabilitative intervention.

Results and Discussion

SLT originally developed by Albert Bandura, is one of the theoretical bases of human behavior, such as sexual harassment behavior as acquired and not fixed or biologically determined (Bandura, 1977). The most important concept of this theory is that people learn by observing, especially if the behavior is rewarded or not punished. By modeling, imitation, and reinforcement processes, individuals learn pro-social as well as anti-social behavior. Bandura (1986) went on to expand this model by adding Social Cognitive Theory which emphasized the reality that individuals are self-regulatory agents who are capable of anticipating and reflecting.

The application of SLT to the educational environment of sexual harassment is applied to illustrate how institutional and cultural norms can inadvertently reinforce this behavior. When harassers are not punished or worse still get promoted or rewarded, such acts as models of behavior can be learned by others (Fitzgerald et al., 1997). Observational learning (Aryal & Maharjan, 2021) is particularly powerful in hierarchically structured organizations like universities where junior employees or students can imitate the actions of their seniors (Aryal, 2022a; Aryal, 2022b) generating cycles of abuse (Raver & Gelfand, 2005). Social learning also includes the process of vicarious reinforcement, in which people do not necessarily have to experience directly the consequences of behavior to learn from it.

As an example, should students receive education that presents harassment yields to victim-blaming or organizational inaction, they learn that they may win silence as the safest course of action (McDonald & Charlesworth, 2013). These can turn into effective generators of "moral disengagement," defined by Bandura (1999) as the psychological state of people providing morally justificatory explanations about engaging in injurious actions without bringing about large dosages of guilt or shame. Furthermore, SLT also lends support to feminist theory's gendered power relations. Women are socialized to occupy lower status positions, and when assertiveness is belittled or spurned, it further discourages reporting harassment (Berdahl, 2007). These gender norms are typically reinforced through exposure to a continuum of microaggressions, normalized harassment, and institutional indifference, all of which are social learning processes (Buchanan et al., 2014).

SLT also refers to the role of self-efficacy, a person's belief in his or her ability to act as the root of intervening or resisting harassment incidents. Students who have higher self-efficacy will more likely report or act for others who do, but where the organization fails

to follow up or remediate, self-efficacy in both potential bystanders and victims is undermined (Bandura, 1997; Banyard et al., 2007). This is particularly pertinent in situations where silence is rewarded and dissent punished leading to further harassment through learned helplessness. In addition, the implications of the theory are not only for preventive interventions. Interventions based on SLT are positive role modeling (Aryal et al., 2024), peer-implemented awareness campaigns and institutionalized reinforcement of respectfulness (Taylor et al., 2011). Peer educator or student leader role model program-based interventions have been effective in intervening against offending behavior patterns in schools and colleges (DeGue et al., 2014).

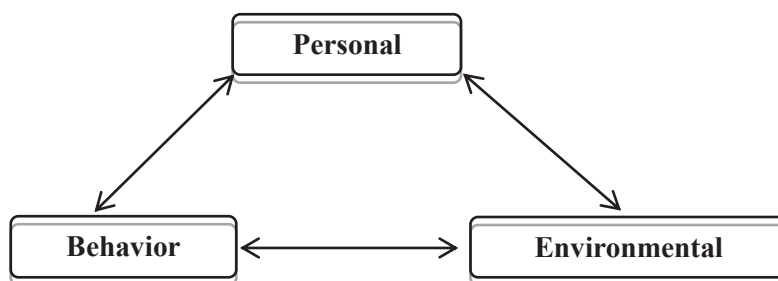


Figure 1. *Bandura's concept of reciprocal determinism*

This triangle demonstrates what affects sexual harassment directly depicting Bandura's theory of reciprocal determinism. For Bandura (1997), three interrelated personal, behavioral, and environmental factors are constantly affecting one another. Personal beliefs and attitudes, behavior like boundary invasion and environmental variables like organizational culture or peer pressure all affect sexual harassment experiences. In short, SLT offers a framework in which sexual harassment conduct is learned, reinforced, and unlearned in institutional and social environments. Observing, modeling, reinforcement and self-efficacy tie SLT together so that policymakers, researchers and teachers around the world.

Conceptual Framework

Following Bandura's SLT (1977), human behavior is not only learned from personal experience but also from observing others, interpreting consequences, and perceiving social and institutional disapproval or approval. In sexual harassment, the learning process is influenced by an interaction of personal, social, and environmental determinants. These circles constantly overlap to decide how individuals conceptualize harassment, legitimize it, resist it, or engage in it, sometimes subconsciously. This line of thinking accounts for how some conditions make individuals normalize or emulate harassing conduct in academic, social, and professional life.

Individual factors are internal cognitive, emotional, and psychological factors that govern how individuals perceive and take in social cues. For instance, low empathetic and emotionally restricted individuals fail to perceive the distress or violation inflicted on others and therefore have a greater chance of misperceiving the impact of their actions (Gini et al., 2007). Additionally, individuals with moral disengagement, disconnecting one from ethical standards of behavior can rationalize inconsiderate behavior without experiencing guilt (Bandura, 1999). This disengagement is more probable in individuals brought up in situations where sexism, aggression or dominance are the norm. Individuals with fixed gender role beliefs or who believe in male superiority are most likely to view harassment as acceptable or even humorous (Murnen & Kohlman, 2007). In addition, experience of abusive, neglectful or violent homes in early life can make aggressive sexual behavior look like a normalized way of exercising power or control (Espelage et al., 2012). These psychological and attitudinal dispositions are the essence of individual vulnerability to engaging in or tolerating harassment-related behavior.

Social factors create the proximal relational and cultural context within which the behaviors are modeled, nurtured and refined. If peer groups idealize, endorse or accept sexual teasing, objectification or domination, then individuals will tend to emulate these behaviors to be accepted or not rejected (Young et al., 2009). Silence by onlookers or people in positions of authority also condones harassment as the behavior will either be ignored or covered up (Banyard et al., 2007). This is perhaps most clearly observed in patriarchal cultures, where men's superiority is institutionalized and women are taught to accept unwanted advances rather than respond with a 'no' (Connell, 2005). Childhood is also a factor; boys and girls brought up in families that silence women's voices, insistent on men's authority and ashamed of girls' assertiveness will be likely to find gendered violence normal (Jewkes et al., 2015). Social media platforms also aggregate the learning by rewarding harassing behavior with likes, shares, or clever comments, making online violence a source of social capital (Salter, 2016). Such cultural and interpersonal drivers significantly shape attitudes and practices by confirming toxic masculinity blueprints and dissuading responsibility.

Environmental factors extend beyond interpersonal relations to encompass institutional and structural circumstances that dissuade or facilitate harassment. For example, where there exists a poor, poorly communicated or not enforced harassment policy at school or in the workplace, people are facilitated to harass others with impunity (Fitzgerald et al., 1997). These environments are conveying often by default that there are not many consequences for immoral actions.

Lastly, the physical environment also matters; open or uncontrolled areas such as canteens, hostels or student events can be breeding grounds for unchecked behavior

(Phipps & Smith, 2012). At a more general level, the media plays a significant role in attitudes of sexual entitlement and dominance. Popular films and music generally portray persistence after refusal as romantic reinforcing the overlap between consent and coercion (Coy & Horvath, 2011). These cultural standards, like victim-blaming wherein the victim is blamed for what they were wearing or did and not the fault of the attacker, also contribute to harassment by taking away responsibility (Gruber & Fineran, 2008). Socioeconomic disadvantage further fuels such trends in vertical relationships such as student-teacher, employer-intern or donor-recipient where the dominant party can use the position to claim sexual favors or crush dissent (Choo, 2021). Such environments make the structural imbalance itself part of the learning that harassment is not just possible but sometimes rewarded or tolerated.

As shown in Figure 2, three interconnected factors, personal, social, and environmental, constitute the learning ecosystem in which harassment-related behaviors are either discouraged or facilitated. Bandura's model highlights that these influences are mutual. One's actions can condition the environment as much as the environment conditions one. Through understanding how these factors interact to shape behavior, this paradigm provides an influential analytical tool through which sexual harassment causation, as well as prevention and intervention, may be explored.

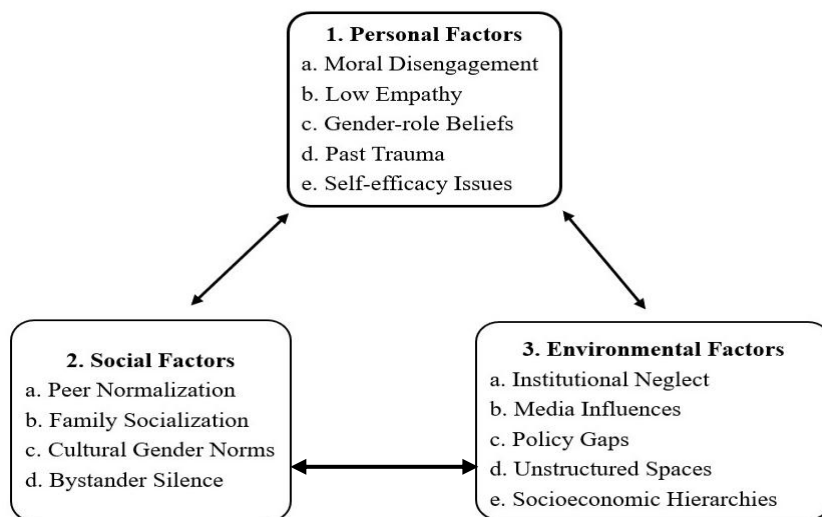


Figure 2. *Conceptual Framework of Factors Influencing the Social Learning of Sexual Harassment*

Habit Formation and the Path toward Criminality

Human deviant behavior is not inborn but socially constructed. It is acquired due to ongoing observation, imitation, reinforcement and normalization with the immediate

social environment (Bandura, 1977). These behaviors in sexual offending and harassment are developed where unwanted behaviors are rewarded and normalized, particularly in social environments accepting, excusing or even rewarding such behavior (Connell, 2005). SLT is concerned with the issue that individuals do not necessarily need to experience consequences directly to acquire behavior. Individuals may acquire behavior vicariously through observing others (Aryal, 2022a), namely, role models or authority figures who exhibit similar behavior without consequence (Bandura, 1999).

Criminal or sexually harassing behavior, therefore, emerges as the gradual result of small, mundane activities that are perhaps initially "innocent" objectification or sexist joking, progressively growing into more severe kinds of abuse when such activity is not checked or socially shunned (Young et al., 2009). This is also reinforced through the process of moral disengagement, whereby perpetrators justify or minimize their actions by blaming victims, displacing responsibility or dehumanizing others (Bandura, 1999). When this kind of cognitive restructuring is reinforced socially a deviant behavioral script is a durable personal tendency (Fitzgerald et al., 1997). Repeated exposure to environments where harassment is modeled, rewarded or ignored increases the likelihood of repeated perpetration of such acts as habit, rehearsing learned behavior into identity-based behavioral scripts (Jewkes et al., 2015).

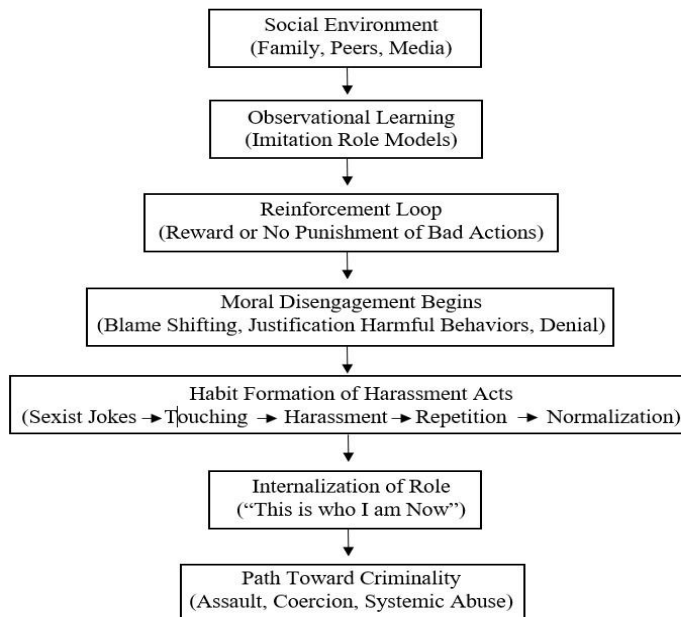


Figure 3. *Psychosocial Pathway to Sexual Offending*

Peer victimization in childhood, gender-role socialization and family or community violence exposure are involved in the subsequent development of harassing or aggressive behaviors (Espelage et al., 2012). These habituated patterns do not occur by chance but are constructed through repetitive behavioral and cognitive reinforcement in school, family, peer group, media, and workplace culture micro-contexts (Coy & Horvath, 2011). In young men, especially, exposure to hypermasculine norms and impunity for boundary-crossing behavior promotes a sense of entitlement, building a platform for repeat offenses and eventual normalization of harassment (Murnen & Kohlman, 2007; Phipps & Smith, 2012). In the long term, such acts become ingrained not just as behaviors, but as elements of the individual's identity and his entitlements over others and thus as a route to criminality.

This behavior graphically shows how people pick up unacceptable actions like sexual harassment from others are rewarded (or not punished) and gradually make that act a habit. Over time, they no longer feel guilty, repeat it and can go on to commit serious crimes. It's a step-by-step process from learning to crime brought about by personal, social and environmental conditions.

Limitations of SLT in Understanding Sexual Harassment

While Albert Bandura's SLT (1977, 1986) is a solid model for describing how individuals learn sexually deviant behaviors through observing, imitating and being rewarded, it is not perfect when applied to the multifaceted issue of sexual harassment. Among its key shortcomings is the failure to be able to adequately handle institutionalized power relations, namely gendered hierarchies and patriarchal norms embedded in educational, legal and work environments. SLT's emphasis on tailored learning spaces ignores broader socio-political mechanisms actively shaping the normalization and reproduction of harassment. It fails to adequately tackle internalized oppression, silencing, and psychological trauma as determinants of victims that are priceless in reporting conduct and accommodation (Chaudhuri, 2012; UNESCO, 2020).

SLT's other major weakness is that it lacks theory on intersectionality. Sexual harassment is not experienced universally but is instead compounded for those whose identities intersect with marginalized groups such as gender, caste, ethnicity and economic status (UN Women, 2021). For example, female workers employed in Nepal's informal sector experience systemic and exploitative harassment that is sexual due to their lack of legal protection and socio-economic vulnerability (WOREC, 2022; NHRC, 2020). SLT does not capture completely how these intersecting identities play in a system of social

learning. In an attempt to leap over such discrepancies, there needs to be a syncretic model that cross-pollinates SLT with feminist philosophy aimed at institutional power relations (CEDAW, 2018), trauma-sensitive psychology respectful of survivor behavior (Sharma & Shrestha, 2021) and intersectional analysis situating harassment concerning socio-cultural stratification (World Bank, 2019). It is solely through combining the behavioral theory and structural criticism with local insight that we move toward a more combined strategy in responding to prevention and response to sexual harassment locally and globally (ILO, 2019; UN Women, 2020).

Conclusions

Sexual harassment is not an isolated or spontaneous act, but a learned behavior shaped by observation, imitation, and reinforcement in accepting social and institutional environments. This study, following Bandura's Social Learning Theory boldly depicts how the harassment perpetuates where harmful acts go unpunished, sanctioned by peer communities, and embedded in institutional silence, patriarchal cultures and moral disengagement. By monitoring how humans acquire and transfer such behaviors over generations, the paper not only serves its overall purpose of describing the persistence of sexual harassment but also demonstrates how such learned behaviors may be unlearned through deliberate behavior such as positive role modeling, participatory education and accountability-oriented policies. The study encourages shifting from reactive to proactive strategies, prevention and rehabilitation based on the reclaiming of the very environments that have helped perpetuate abuse offering a powerful model of change translatable to schools, workplaces and broader culture.

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Context-sensitive Pedagogy for Sustainable English Language Teaching: Prospect and Practice

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Abstract

The global discussion on social justice and inclusive education has made it imperative to redefine English Language Teaching (ELT) from the lens of sustainability principles. In this vein, it is argued that sustainability in English Language Teaching (ELT) should be pursued through context-sensitive pedagogy that responds to local socio-linguistics realities, environmental challenges, and global sustainability goals (SDG 4.7). Based on post-method theory, translanguaging, Eco linguistics, and UNESCO's ESD for 2030 agenda, the study synthesizes secondary data and empirical studies from the global and Nepalese contexts. Using a systematic desk-based review and thematic synthesis of empirical reports, peer-reviewed articles and policy documents (2014–2025), the study identifies how teacher agency, translanguaging practices, multimodal tasks and Eco linguistic analysis have been used in ELT to promote sustainability competencies. Findings reveal that teachers employ context-sensitive moves (e.g., translanguaging, local texts) which support equity and engagement but face constraints from high-stakes assessments and rigid EMI policy. Eco linguistics and multimodal projects can provide practical dimensions to link language skills with sustainability literacy and system alignment (policy, curriculum, assessment, teacher education) is essential to implement context-sensitive sustainability in ELT. The study concludes with concrete implications for curriculum design, assessment reform, teacher professional development (TPD), and future research priorities for Nepal and similar multilingual contexts.

Keywords: Context -sensitive pedagogy, Education for sustainable development, English language teaching, Ecological linguistics

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Introduction

Sustainable education is now a global discourse for addressing the crisis related to climate change and global warming, through environmental integrity, social justice, and participation. In this regard, education is the only hope for bringing change as stated in the Incheon Declaration Article 5 of the World Education Forum (WEF) and its Declaration on global Education by 2030 agenda: “Our vision is to transform lives through education, recognizing the important role of education as a main driver of development and in achieving the other proposed SDGs through a renewed education agenda that is holistic, ambitious and aspirational, leaving no one behind” (UNESCO, 2015, p. 12).

Moreover, global education agenda by 2030 is specifically based on “a humanistic vision of education and development education is a public good, a fundamental human right and a basis for guaranteeing the realization of other right. It is essential for peace, tolerance, human fulfillment and sustainable development” (UNESCO, p.12). Subsequently, UNESCO’s ESD for 2030 advocates for the mainstreaming of sustainability and global citizenship in curricula, teacher education and assessment. Consequently, for English language teaching (ELT), it requires context-sensitive pedagogy that sustains learners, languages and communities. Similarly, Nepal National Framework (NNF) for Education 2030 localizes SDG 4 (Quality education), highlighting inclusive, culturally responsive provision and teacher capacity (Government of Nepal (GoN), 2019) which are directly relevant to ELT courses, assessment design and teacher professionalism. In this line, the SDG 4: Nepal National Framework (NNF) has set the goal “oriental philosophies serve as the foundation for setting Nepal’s agenda of education drawing on local cultures, knowledge systems, history, indigenous skills and cosmologies” (GoN, 2019, p. ix). Thus, sustainability in ELT requires pedagogy that is responsive to local sociolinguistic ecologies and power relations, thereby developing students' competencies for deliberation and action.

The priority of English language teaching needs a paradigm shift for a long run practice of developing linguistic proficiency of students alongside bringing awareness about socio-cultural and ecological aspects. Essentially, the imperatives of sustainability for the 21st century global citizenship can be practically realized through sustainable education based on context-sensitive pedagogical approach (Kumaravadivelu, 2001; García & Li Wei, 2014; Stibbe, 2015/2021). The complex intersections of diversity namely: linguistic, soci-cultural and educational practices in the Nepalese landscape require a

pedagogical approach that can assemble all the diversities together for making a complete whole. Thus, context-sensitive pedagogy can be an alternate approach for addressing all the complexities as it is based on various principles and theories; post method theory, translanguaging, and eco-linguistics. Unlike universal methods, post method theory addresses particularity, practicality and possibility (Kumaravadivelu, 2001), whereas translanguaging use various kinds of diversity as pedagogical resources (Garcia & Li Wei, 2014) that are relatable to students.

Additionally, the eco-linguistic dimension of pedagogy promotes linguistic proficiency of students involving them in dealing with existing local challenges (Stibbe, 2015; Stibbe, 2021). In doing so, they use language as an analytical tool for eco-critical awareness through sustainable discourses. Thus, context-sensitive pedagogical approach to English language teaching can holistically prepare the young minds for local to global citizenship by strengthening their inner capacity and outer performance for a better world.

The status of English in the multilingual context of Nepal is as a foreign language; however, the English-only policy basically reflects its priority in academic institutions and professional fields. Therefore, the contents of ELT need to address various sort of local and global diversities or realities (Giri, 2010; Phyak, 2021) for fostering sustainability. On the contrary, the ground reality of English language teaching in Nepal is based on universal methods, English-only policy, lack of culturally responsive teaching contents and resources, and lack of teacher adaptability to local realities (Poudel & Choi, 2021).

In this sense, it is crucial to determine whether context-sensitive pedagogy can be an alternate approach for sustainable English language teaching or not. With this purpose, the study has reviewed the theoretical perspectives of postmethod theory, translanguaging, and eco-linguistics. It also reviewed empirical studies primarily based on sustainability goals and English language teaching in Nepal and outside.

Theoretical Review

For the review of theoretical literature, mainly postmethod pedagogy, translanguaging, and eco-linguistics are selected because they align with context-sensitive pedagogy for sustainable English language teaching. They are as below:

Post Method Pedagogy

Against the backdrop of hegemonic prescriptive methods for teaching second or foreign language, postmethod pedagogy can be an alternate route that is based on three

dimensional pedagogic parameters: particularity, practicality and possibility (Kumaravadivelu, 2001). These three parameters interact with each other for facilitating context-sensitive pedagogy with the teachers' role "to theorize from their practice and practice what they theorize" and bringing linguistic proficiency outside the classroom for "a continual quest for identity formation and social transformation" (Kumaravadivelu, 2001, p.545). Instead of a one-size-fits for all method, the context-sensitive approach insists to take pedagogic decision in combination of socio-cultural context, learners' need and the purpose of education (Bax, 2003). Becker (1986) states "particularity is something, we arrive at is something and we learn is something we achieve (p. 29).

Similarly, pedagogy of practicality refers to a theory of practice that is "an ongoing, living, working theory" (Chambers, 1992, p. 13). Pedagogy of possibility is grounded in critical pedagogy developed by the Brazilian educator, Paulo Freire and advocated by Simon (1988) and Giroux (1988) to see pedagogy from the lens of power and dominance that has created and sustained social imbalance. Thus, there is "the need to develop theories, forms of knowledge and social practices that work with the experiences that people bring to the pedagogical setting" (Giroux, 1988, p.134).

In short, post method pedagogy advocates for context sensitive pedagogy in the sense that it incorporates the existing local knowledge and practices to develop sustainable skills in students. Moreover, the course contents delivered to students are highly relevant and based on sustainability goals.

Translanguaging as Pedagogy

Cen Williams has been credited for conceptualizing the term 'translanguaging' in Welsh in 1996 and was further extended by Gracia (2009) and Wei (2011). In the multilingual context like Nepal, translanguaging opens the door for addressing all existing languages equally. It refers to meaning making process being grounded in diverse socio-cultural and linguistic contexts that consists of 'multiple discursive practices' (Gracia, 2009). Additionally, it brings contents from students' locality 'to gain knowledge, to make sense, to articulate their thought and to communicate about using their language' (Li, 2011, p. 1223).

Translanguaging pedagogy uses students' linguistic repertoire for metacognitive reflection, and conceptual clarity alongside English for performing classroom tasks (García & Wei, 2014). In contexts with strong English-only ideologies, the legitimization of the linguistic repertoire can be transformative for access and inclusion. Thus, unlike monolingual approach, translanguaging promotes students to break language related

barriers and use linguistic resources for knowledge construction through appropriate classroom participation (Baker, 2011; Gracia, 2009; García & Wei, 2014). Consequently, it helps strengthen their confidence for participating in meaning making process and its implication in real life context.

Eco linguistics and Eco-Critical Language Awareness

Eco linguistics examines how discourse and stories influence human–environment relations, thereby affecting attitudes and practices related to sustainability (Stibbe, 2015; Stibbe, 2021). When integrated into ELT, ecolinguistic tasks involve critical analysis of media, policy and everyday texts to identify metaphors, agency and framing that sustain or challenge unsustainable narratives. Pedagogically, ecolinguistics can be used to craft tasks that combine textual analysis with action projects, e.g., producing public-facing multimodal campaigns, thereby linking language learning with community engagement and environmental literacy. Similarly, eco-critical language awareness pedagogy enables students to analyze the contents of their textbooks from the perspectives of ecological awareness (Haig, 2003, p.201). Furthermore, it combines the four pedagogical trends of global issues discussion, content-based learning, critical language awareness and learner autonomy.

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)

Education for sustainable development (ESD) is in the lead role of Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality education). Thus, ESD for 2030, UNESCO’s strategic framework for the decade, identifies five priority action areas: policy learning environments, educator capacity, youth and community action and emphasizes the need for mainstreaming sustainability learning across curricula (UNESCO, 2020). Additionally, SDG Target 4.7.1 emphasizes education for sustainable development and global citizenship, providing guidelines and indicators that can guide national curriculum reforms and program evaluation. For English language teaching, the strategies of ESD can guide language learning outcomes through persuasive writing, critical reading, communication for participation that will ensure sustainability competencies based on cognitive, socio-emotional and behavioral aspects (UNESCO, 2020).

Empirical Review

Globally, sustainable ELT practices are emerging through culturally responsive pedagogy, ecological curriculum design and teacher agency. Translanguaging in bilingual/multilingual context promotes students’ meaning making skills using their

linguistic repertoire (Gracia, 2017). In Japan, Saito (2020) found that incorporating eco-critical content in English lessons improved both linguistic competence and environmental awareness. Moreover, in the context of Nepal, Shrestha (2017) found that exclusion of local indigenous knowledge from textbook contents is a major shortcoming of the existing curriculum.

Similarly, Phyak (2018) found that translanguaging pedagogy against English-only policy-built students' confidence in knowledge construction on the basis of negotiation and active classroom participation. Dewan (2020) revealed that integration of eco-critical contents in English as a foreign language classroom made students' aware of environmental things. Poudel and Choi (2021) found that English as a medium of instruction (EMI) discouraged students from active classroom participation because of English-only policy and advocated for context-sensitive pedagogy. Collectively, these studies provide empirical grounding for context-sensitive pedagogy for sustainable English language teaching in Nepal.

Methods

This paper employs a descriptive qualitative research design based on a systematic, desk-based review and thematic synthesis of secondary data following Cooper's (2016) guidelines for integrative peer-reviewed journal articles, policy documents, practitioner reports and recent empirical studies from Nepal and the global literature, focusing on the period 2014–2025. The approach is integrative: rather than statistical meta-analysis, the study used qualitative synthesis to identify recurring themes, pedagogical strategies and systemic constraints. This design is suitable because the research questions are conceptual and policy-oriented and also because much of the Nepalese evidence is qualitative, practice-based or policy-linked.

Search Strategy and Selection Criteria

Literature searches were conducted in academic databases (e.g., Taylor & Francis Online, ScienceDirect, Wiley Online Library) and institutional repositories for the terms: “sustainability and ELT,” “ecolinguistics and ELT,” “translanguaging and Nepal,” “postmethod pedagogy,” “ESD for 2030,” and “English medium instruction Nepal,” supplemented by targeted searches for key authors (e.g., Kumaravadivelu, García, Stibbe, Phyak, Sah, Shrestha). Key institutional sources included UNESCO (WEF, 2015; ESD for 2030 road-map) and the British Council report on ELT in Nepal (2022).

Inclusion criteria: empirical focus (classroom studies, policy analyses, teacher inquiry reports), publication date 2014-2025 (to align with SDG era scholarship), and relevance to ELT pedagogy, assessment, or policy. Grey literature (reports, practitioner blogs) was included that additionally provided contextual or implementation evidence. All selected sources were critically appraised for methodological transparency and relevance.

Data Extraction and Analysis

From each source, the data were extracted related to: context (country, school type), participants (teachers, students), pedagogical practices described, evidence of outcomes (participation, learning, action), constraints (assessment, policy) and study design. Thematic synthesis involved coding of extracted data into specific themes: teacher agency and postmethod enactment; translanguaging and linguistic justice; multimodal/eco-project approaches; assessment and systemic alignment and barriers/enablers for scaling. Additionally, excerpts from empirical studies were used to illustrate practices and impacts.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Analysis of data has been conducted in three phases: descriptive mapping of empirical evidence (who, where, what), thematic coding of pedagogical practices and reported outcomes, and cross-case interpretation to identify conditions that support or inhibit sustainability-aligned ELT. Given the predominance of qualitative studies in the Nepal corpus (case studies, practitioner inquiry, policy analysis), interpretive synthesis emphasized patterns of practice and system-level interactions rather than statistical effect sizes. All analytic memos were cross-checked against source material to preserve the integrity of original claims.

Results and Discussion

The analysis of secondary data produced five major thematic findings based on global and Nepalese studies: teacher agency and postmethod pedagogy; translanguaging as pedagogy for linguistic justice; multimodal and ecolinguistic task design; assessment and accountability pressures; and gap in policy and practice. The themes are interpreted below:

Teacher Agency and Post Method Pedagogy

Empirical studies from Nepal consistently report that teachers exercise professional judgement to adapt materials, select local texts and co-design tasks that align with postmethod principles of particularity and practicality (Kumaravadivelu, 2001). British

council's review of ELT in Nepal documents many instances where teachers modified textbook tasks or used local stories and signage as instructional materials to make lessons relevant to students' lives (Shrestha et al., 2022). Similarly, Phyak (2018/2022) documents teacher-led translanguaging strategies in English-medium schools are depended on teachers' initiative and reflective practice. These studies find that teacher agency is a core enabling condition for sustainability-aligned practices. Evidently, students demonstrated higher engagement and a stronger sense of civic reasoning when assigned project-based units on local water issues than the textbook-based projects (Shrestha et al., 2022). Thus, teacher professional development should prioritize inquiry cycles and reflective practice over prescriptive methods to produce rich learning experiences aligned with sustainability for students.

Translanguaging Pedagogy for Linguistic Justice

Translanguaging pedagogy enables students to overcome linguistic boundaries and naturally utilize multiple linguistic resources (García, 2009; García & Li, 2014). It enhances comprehension, participation and affirmation of identity. English-only policies in English-medium instruction (EMI) contexts can alienate learners and perpetuate inequity while deliberate translanguaging fosters inclusion and concept mastery (Phyak, 2018/2022; Sah, 2022; Sah & Li, 2024). Translanguaging pedagogy is described not as ad hoc use of L1 but as a planned pedagogic resource. Teachers scaffold conceptual work in local languages and support students in re-rendering ideas in English for communicative purposes (Neupane, 2021). Translanguaging practices could reduce comprehension gaps and increase participation among marginalized language groups; however, policy or school norms insist on monolingual/ English making translanguaging covert and less effective (Sah & Li, 2022). It is commendable that school language policies should explicitly permit strategic use of home languages in ELT classrooms and guide planned translanguaging sequences.

Multimodal and Eco linguistic Task Design

Ecolinguistics and multimodal literacies provide practical pathways for linking language learning with sustainability literacy. Global case studies demonstrate that tasks involving critical discourse analysis (e.g., examining metaphors in media about nature) as well as multimodal productions such as podcasts, posters, videos, and community outreach, lead to both language gains and increased environmental awareness (Stibbe, 2015/2021). In Nepal, practitioner reports and classroom inquiries documented project work including multilingual campaigns on water conservation, school garden projects, and community

interviews, which were used within English lessons to develop students' argumentation and civic participation (Shrestha & Gautam, 2022). Evidently, they found that the tasks designed based on multimodal posts and eco-linguistic contents through translanguaging pedagogy enhanced students' awareness regarding natural calamity.

Assessment and Accountability Pressure

The practice of paper-pencil test and standardized assessment system generally assess students' linguistic performance based on grammar, vocabulary and skills whereas teachers need to be accountable for having good results in examination regardless of students' competencies (Shrestha & Gautam, 2022). It shows that the systemic barriers are the major hindrance for teachers to be focused on results instead of knowledge and skills. In this sense, English-only policy and teachers' accountability pressure for examination and result are not going in line with context-sensitive pedagogy. Consequently, the traditional forms of assessment are responsible for low proficiency of students in the English language.

Gaps in Policy and Practice

The reviewed empirical studies (Phyak, 2018/2022; Sah & Li, 2022; Sah & Li, 2024; Shrestha & Gautam, 2022) from the context of Nepal evidently highlight the existing wide gap between policy and practice. Even though, the policies namely, Nepal's Education-2030 National Framework (UNESCO, 2019) and UNESCO's Education for Sustainable Development (UNESCO, 2020) framework prioritize inclusive, competency-based education for sustainability, these are not addressed in practice. Thus, the gap is seen at various interconnected levels: teacher education program, curriculum, and assessment system that are not going parallel to Sustainable Development Goal 4.7. Essentially, the Ministry of Education and the language department should develop ELT specific ESD implementation guides and allocate resources for teacher training and assessment reform to narrow down the existing gaps.

Discussions

The study has focused on the pertinent concern of integrating context-sensitive pedagogy in ELT which can contribute to sustainable education outcomes overcoming systemic barriers for implementation. Regarding this, a comprehensive account of theoretical perspectives and empirical evidence from the globe and from the Nepalese contexts has been presented. The empirical synthesis brought the insight that school teachers in Nepal have already been practicing context-sensitive, sustainable ELT to some extent; however,

systemic constraints, such as the assessment mode and prescriptive EMI policies are the prime causes of limiting teachers' classroom practices.

The theoretical frameworks of post method pedagogy, translanguaging, Eco linguistics and ESD provide proper grounds for context-sensitive, sustainable ELT in the Nepalese context. Moreover, the three interrelated key highlights are: sustainability in ELT is a pedagogical and systemic problem more than a curricular one; linguistic justice is central to sustainable learning and ecolinguistics and multimodal projects can operationalize sustainability competencies. UNESCO's ESD framework can effectively guide the alignment across the curriculum, assessment and teacher education programs regarding classroom practices based on ecolinguistics modules through translanguaging projects (UNESCO, 2020; Nepal Education 2030 framework, 2019). Similarly, in the multilingual context of Nepal, translanguaging can help narrow the mismatch between students' diverse home languages and English-only guided assessments by sustaining learners' repertoires and identities for long-term educational resilience and inclusion (García & Li, 2014; Sah, 2022).

Likewise, English language teachers can operationalize sustainability competencies in students by incorporating tasks based on local environmental issues. By doing so, such tasks will not only develop language proficiency but also cultivate the habit of critical thinking and a sense of civic responsibility that can mobilize them as agents of change from local to the broader contexts.

Conclusion

The study is based on secondary data to unearth the relevance of context-sensitive pedagogy for sustainable ELT. The theoretical review of postmethod pedagogy, translanguaging pedagogy and eco-linguistics approach provided the lens to understand the requirements of context-sensitive pedagogy. Additionally, the policy review of Nepal's Education-2030 Framework (2019) and UNESCO's ESD (2020) has the road-map to guide practice; however, the mismatch among the components such as policy, teacher education program, curriculum and assessment system are the major barriers to competency based sustainable ELT.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

This study is desk-based research and entirely based on secondary data analyses and published reports. It does not present primary empirical findings. Moreover, the empirical studies are confined to qualitative research approach. Thus, there is a dire need for mixed-

methods and longitudinal research studies on language learning outcomes, identity measures, and community impact over time. Future empirical studies should: develop and validate rubrics for sustainability competencies in ELT; conduct quasi-experimental or longitudinal studies to examine the learning outcomes associated with translanguaging and Eco linguistics-embedded units and evaluate the effects of assessment reforms based on sustainable pedagogy.

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Factors Influencing Consumers' Purchase Intentions towards Private Label Products

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Abstract

Retailers and store owners are starting to introduce their own distinctive items under their own brand names, which has led to a rise in the popularity of private label brands (PLBs). Formerly restricted to being sold by specific retail chains, private label businesses have grown to provide a wide variety of goods. The main aim of this study is to identify the factors and variables that have had a substantial impact on the consumers' decision to purchase private label brands. The quantitative research approach was followed, and data were collected by an organized questionnaire survey. Three hundred and ninety-nine responses, utilizing the convenience sampling technique, were gathered from the target respondents who were consumers from supermarkets, and resellers. The findings of the study have demonstrated that the purchasing habits of consumers are significantly impacted by Perceived Price, Packaging, and Perceived Risk, which have a substantial impact on Purchase Intention towards Private Label Products. However, Perceived Quality has had no significant effect on Purchase Intention. It is suggested that retailers should effectively manage pricing, packaging, and risk perceptions in order to enhance consumer assurance and improve the consumption of private label products. The study serves as a guide for further research in this area and offers scholars useful insights particularly in Nepal where there is a lack of literature on private label products.

Keywords: Private Label Brands, Purchase Intention, Perceived Price, Packaging, Perceived Quality, Perceived Risk
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Introduction

Private Label Brand (PLB) was mainly defined by its affordability and the presence of the retailer's logo on its packaging (Mariño, 2016, as cited in Rendón W. M. et al., 2023). Consumers perceived private label brands as a competitive option to manufacturer brands because they offered lower prices, which was a result of their reduced costs (Dick et al., 1995). In the past, private-label brands had been mainly purchased by consumers who prioritized price (Kwon et al., 2008). At present, a diverse group of consumers has shown a keen interest in these brands, seeking high-quality products at affordable prices. Furthermore, private label brands can have a significant impact on the retailer's competitive strategy and differentiation (Lymperopoulos et al., 2010).

Doyle and Murgatroyd (2011), private labels have significantly affected the competitive dynamics of the markets. In recent years, private label products have experienced a major shift, overcoming their prior image of low quality and low cost. The product quality has greatly improved, and there has been a greater focus on packaging and product design. As a result, the market share of private-label products has consistently increased. In Europe, the food sector has experienced the largest growth, representing 10-45% of retail sales (Stauder et al., 2012).

Nevertheless, the way private label products were promoted varied depending on the product category. Market data indicated that private-label brands faced difficulties in gaining market share in products that relied heavily on consumer confidence, such as baby food and organic products (Bergès-Sennou et al., 2004). The use of PLBs been prevalent in developed countries for a significant time. However, in Nepal, this concept was relatively recent. A study conducted by Juhl et al. (2006) indicated that the market share of store brands had been on the rise in different food categories across western countries over the past decade.

In addition, store owners were being offered attractive incentives for developing their own store brands. Private brands provided several benefits to store owners, such as increased profit margins, enhanced customer loyalty, product category diversification, improved control over the supply chain, and others. Ashley (1998) claimed that private brands yielded greater profit margins compared to national brands. Private label brands (PLBs) had higher profit margins due to their lower production costs and minimal marketing expenses when compared to manufacturer's brands.

Nepal's retail sector has grown significantly, as prominent retail chains such as Bhat-Bhateni, Big Mart, Sales Berry, and others have expanded their operations across multiple

states. The expansion of organized sales has also increased private labels, which now pose significant competition to domestic retail companies. In response to this competition, retail marketers have implemented a range of strategies, with establishing a store/private brand as one of the most effective approaches. Private labels provide retailers with a notable advantage by enabling them to distinguish themselves in the market. Yet, to achieve this differentiation, it has been necessary to successfully position the private label in comparison to national brands, ensuring that the private label is perceived as being on par with or superior to its national counterparts. Private label products in retail chains are frequently priced lower than other products in the store's range. Customers with a higher sensitivity to price change or their income are typically more likely to purchase this particular product (Harakova, 2015).

This study aims to use empirical research and analysis to uncover the factors that influence consumer behavior. It also aims to provide guidance for retailers who are navigating the highly competitive market of private label branding. Although private label brands are becoming more prevalent in developed and developing markets, there is a lack of research on consumer behavior regarding private label brands, especially in Nepal. This study aims to fill this gap by investigating consumer intentions to buy private label brands and identifying the factors that influence these intentions. This research seeks to inform retailers and policymakers by offering valuable insights into consumer behavior and preferences. It aims to contribute to the ongoing discussion about private label brands in the retail sector.

Literature Review

Private Label Brands

Private label brands are the one owned by retailers and sold exclusively through a specific chain of stores. They were regarded as essential for attaining success in established global retail markets. Therefore, they had the potential to represent the store's private brand or a name exclusively created by the store. These brands allowed manufacturers to achieve economies of scale in production and distribution by increasing sales without incurring high marketing expenses. Their main objective was to enhance profitability, uniqueness, and dominance in the market (Wu et al., 2011).

It has allowed them to engage in price discrimination, which includes offering private label products at lower prices to gain a competitive advantage and increase profits by reducing costs (Norfarah et al., 2018; Boon et al., 2018). According to a study by Armani (2019), customer perceptions regarding private label brands have been evolving. Private

label brands have typically been priced at a lower level than national brands, while maintaining a high quality level. This has been accomplished in order to effectively compete with national brands (Norfarah et al., 2018). Over the years, as quality has improved, consumers' concerns about price and quality seem to have declined. However, the question of perceived risk remains unresolved.

Purchase Intention

The process of consumers making purchasing decisions is highly complex. The purchasing intention is usually affected by consumers' behavior, perception, and attitude. Intention pertains to an individual's perception that acts as a catalyst for engaging in specific behavior (Ramayah et al., 2018). Consumer purchase behavior plays a crucial role in the process of considering and evaluating a specific product (Keller, 2001).

Blackwell et al. (2001), the intention is the subjective assessment made by an individual regarding their decision to engage in specific behaviors in the future. Purchase intention is utilized in numerous studies to forecast the purchasing behavior of goods or services (Shao et al., 2004). Zeithaml (1988) study revealed that external factors, such as the price, quality, and value of a product, impact purchase intentions. However, Lin and Lekhawipat (2014) found that the store's image positively impacts customer satisfaction during their shopping experience, which ultimately impacts their intention to make a purchase. In short, the intention to purchase is influenced by perceptual factors such as attitude, norms, perceived behavioral control, product price, quality, value, and store image. Vazifehdost and Ghanbari (2017), Schiffman and Kanuk (2004) found that when consumers intend to make a purchase, they develop a strong commitment to the brand, which motivates them actually to make the purchase.

Perceived Price

The private label products that have been the most sensitive to price have also been the ones that have been consumed most frequently (Raju & Hastak, 1995, as cited in Rendon et al., 2023). Previous studies have demonstrated that price consciousness and perceived low prices positively influence PLB evaluation and overall attitude towards PLB (Beneke et al., 2013; Mostafa & Elseidi, 2018). According to Jin and Sternquist (2004), these consumers are willing to sacrifice time and effort to shop at multiple stores for the lowest prices. Price consciousness varies by product category (Monroe & Krishnan, 1985). Sinha and Batra (1999) stated that customers' price consciousness changes based on perceived risk and product category.

Beneke et al. (2013) demonstrated that price consciousness and perceived low prices have positively influenced PLB (private label brand) evaluation. Thanasuta (2015) observed that consumers with high price consciousness have focused more on low-priced products compared with those consumers with low price consciousness. Mostafa and Elseidi (2018) indicated that price consciousness and perceived low prices have positively influenced the overall attitude towards PLB. Ndlovu (2024) PIBs has been centered on pricing-quality, consumer perceptions, risk, purchase intentions, and consumer attitudes among others. Recently, prodigious investments by grocery retailers have set PIBs on a positive trajectory. In response, NBs fast track their investment on research and development toward ensuring the maintenance of their place ahead of their PIB counterparts, as these have been battle areas.

Packaging

Rundh (2005) has asserted that packaging draws attention to a specific brand, improves its reputation, and modifies the way that consumers view the product. Product packaging has served as both a means of promoting a product and shielding it from the elements (Raheem et al., 2014). They have argued that there has been a lack of consistency, objectivity, and rationality in the decision-making process by consumers. As a result, people have frequently depended on their opinion of quality on packaging. According to research by Rundh (2005), a product's packaging affects consumers' perceptions of the product, enhances its image, and directs their purchase intentions towards a particular brand.

Waheed et al. (2018) have stated that their research has sought to determine how various elements of product packaging such as color, material, and style of font, design, and printed information have affected consumers' purchasing decisions. Their research has concentrated on determining how these package characteristics have influenced the products that people have selected to purchase, thereby offering insightful information about the ways in which packaging has affected consumer behavior. Overall, their study's findings have been consistent with the idea that packaging has included more than just product covering. Instead, every component of packaging has been vital to motivating consumers to make purchases.

Perceived Quality

Beneke (2010), study on consumer perception, one of the key elements affecting the purchasing of private label products under food-based private brands has been perceived quality. Machavolu (2014) has concluded that in the food, grocery, and clothing segments,

private label purchases have largely been influenced by quality. Since quality has been considered by consumers as one of the most important factors, the perceived quality construct has been included in the study. According to numerous research studies in recent years, consumers' judgments have now been more heavily weighted towards product quality than brand (Parasuraman et al., 1996). Based on research by Caruana (2002) and Tsiotsou (2006), perceived quality and customer happiness are significantly correlated.

Perceived quality has had a greater impact on customer decision-making than other variables, like value for money (Richardson et al., 1994). For instance, purchase intention has been indirectly influenced by perceived quality (mediated through perceived quality) (Rajendran & Hariharan, 1996). Purchase intentions and perceived quality have been found to be significantly correlated by researchers (Parasuraman et al., 1996). Zeithaml (1988) has defined perceived quality as the consumer's assessment of a product's overall excellence or superiority. According to Snoj et al. (2004), perceived quality has been the outcome of a comparison between consumer expectations and a brand's or products actual performance. Furthermore, according to recent research, consumers have continued to regard store brands as having much worse quality than manufacturer brands (Richardson et al., 1996). Although the store brands' competitive prices have increased their worth from the consumers' perspective, their perceived quality has been questioned and seen differently (Rubio et al., 2014).

Perceived Risk

Customers have unavoidably experienced uncertainty and perceived purchase risk because it has been impossible to determine the degree of (dis)satisfaction with the goods prior to the act of purchase (Mitchell, 1998). Dunn et al. (1986) have defined perceived risk as the anticipated negative utility connected to the purchase of a good or service. Narasimhan and Wilcox (1998) have defined risk as the negative utility that has resulted from the product not living up to expectations multiplied by the likelihood that this has happened. Thus, risk has been brought down to a manageable level in one of two ways: either by raising the degree of assurance that a loss hasn't occurred or by lowering the amount at stake or the penalty for failing (Ross, 1975). Because private labels have frequently been compared to well-known manufacturer brands, it has been expected that perceived risk will have had an even greater detrimental impact in the case of private labels. In this way, customers have frequently selected reputable manufacturer brands that they have believed in to raise the likelihood that a loss hasn't happened.

Theoretical Framework of the Study

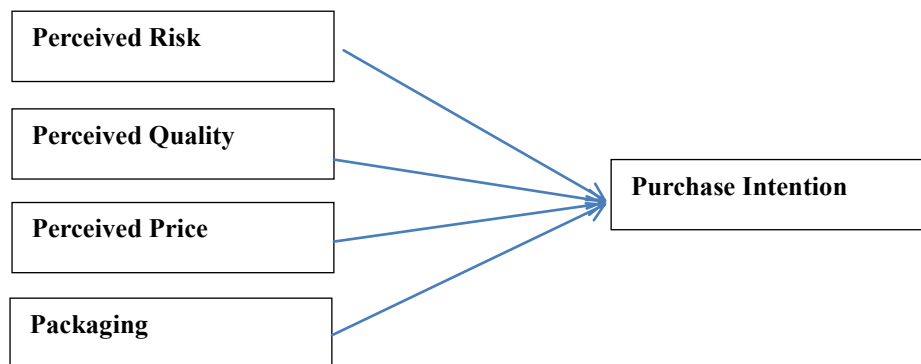


Figure 1: *Constructs of the study*

Perceived Risk: Consumers may perceive higher risk in PLBs due to uncertainty about quality and performance. Higher perceived risk negatively affects purchase intention.

Perceived Quality: Quality perception strongly influences trust and willingness to buy PLBs. Higher perceived quality positively affects purchase intention.

Packaging: Attractive and informative packaging can enhance perceived value and reduce risk. Packaging positively influences purchase intention.

Perceived Price: PLBs are often priced lower than national brands, which can attract price-sensitive consumers. Lower perceived price positively influences purchase intention.

Purchase Intention: The likelihood that a consumer will buy a PLB based on the above factors.

Methods

The quantitative method has been used for this study to explain, test, and analyze the research objectives via questionnaire distribution. The study employed descriptive as well as causal comparative research design to investigate the causal link between the dependent and independent variables.

The study investigated the factors that influenced consumers' purchasing decisions of private label products, specifically focusing on perceived price, packaging, quality, and risk. Additionally, the majority of consumers were primarily from the Kathmandu valley, including respondents from Lalitpur and Bhaktapur districts. For this research, we used the convenience sampling method to gather responses. Accordingly, the representative

sample size for the study was determined to be 384. Out of the 450 questionnaires were distributed to the target population, where 399 valid responses were collected, with a response rate of 89%. The study data was gathered using a questionnaire that utilized a 5-point rating Likert scale ranging from 1- very low consider to 5- very high consider.

The primary objective of establishing validity and reliability in research has been to guarantee the accuracy of the results as well as the reliability and reproducibility of the data. Among other things, two criteria that have had to be met for a study to be regarded as valid have been the lack of bias and the ability to be generalized to the entire population. The Cronbach's Alpha Test has been one of many reliability tests that have been performed on the study's primary data.

Table 1. Reliability Test

Particulars	Cronbach's Alpha	No. of items
Perceived Price	0.772	6
Packaging	0.701	6
Perceived Quality	0.677	6
Perceived Risk	0.679	6
Purchase Intention	0.827	6

Table 1 has shown that all six constructs have had Cronbach's alpha values greater than 0.6. Based on Hair et al. (2006), it has been found that values of 0.6 or higher indicates high reliability.

Table 2. General Demographics of the Respondents

	Respondents in			Respondents in	
	Nos	%		Nos	%
<i>Marital Status:</i>			<i>Gender:</i>		
Married	104	26.1	Female	121	30.3
Unmarried	295	73.9	Male	278	69.7
<i>Total</i>	399	100	<i>Total</i>	399	100
<i>AgeGroup in years:</i>			<i>Occupation:</i>		
18-25	161	40.4	Student	149	37.3
26-35	173	43.4	Employed	150	37.6
36-45	59	14.8	Self-employed	56	14
46-55	6	1.5	Unemployed	35	8.8
<i>Total</i>	399	100	Other	9	2.3
<i>Education Qualification:</i>			<i>Total</i>	399	100
High School or below	28	7			
Bachelor's Degree	254	63.7			
Master's Degree	117	29.3			
<i>Total</i>	399	100			

Table 2 showed that demographic data relating to a sample of 399 individuals. The data has been classified according to a range of criteria, including gender, age, marital status, education qualification, and occupation.

Results and Discussion

Table 3. *Descriptive Analysis*

Variables	Mean	S.D.
Perceived Price	3.46	0.97
Packaging	3.53	0.81
Perceived Quality	3.51	0.89
Perceived Risk	2.91	0.96
Purchase Intension	3.3	0.85
Private Level Brand	3.3	0.96

The highest mean score, 3.53, has indicated that most respondents have agreed that the packaging of private label products has met their expectations. On the other hand, the perceived risks with the lowest mean score, 2.91. While there has been a lot of variability in the responses, the highest standard deviation of 0.97 has indicated that people's opinions about the availability of private label products in perceived price have differed.

Table 4. *Correlation Analysis*

Variables	1	2	3	4	5
1. Perceived Price	1				
2. Packaging	0.369**	1			
3. Perceived Quality	0.193**	0.223**	1		
4. Perceived Risk	-0.138**	-0.076	0.005	1	
5. Purchase Intension	0.339**	0.267**	0.139**	-0.197**	1

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

The correlation coefficient of 0.339 has indicated positive correlation relationship between the independent variable perceived price and the dependent variable purchase intention. The correlation coefficient between packaging and purchase intention in the table has been 0.267. The correlation value of 0.139 has indicated a weak positive correlation between perceived quality and purchase intention. The table has shown a -0.197 correlation coefficient between perceived risk and purchase intention. The number has indicated a weak negative correlation between the dependent variable (purchase intention) and the independent variable (perceived risk). It has suggested that as perceived risk has risen, purchase intention has tended to fall.

Table 5. *Model Summary of Regression Analysis*

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.404 ^a	.163	.155	.57378

R Square has represented the proportion of the variance in the dependent variable (Purchase Intention) that has been predictable from the independent variables. The R-squared score of 0.163 has suggested that the model's independent variables have explained 16.3% of the dependent variable's variation. This has indicated a relatively low explanatory power of the model. The "Standard Error of the Estimate," 0.57378, measures data point fluctuation around the regression line.

Statistically, regression equation can be written as:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 (\text{Perceived price}) + \beta_2 (\text{Packaging}) + \beta_3 (\text{Perceived quality}) + \beta_4 (\text{Perceived risk}) + e_i$$

In equation form,

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + e_i \dots\dots\dots (1)$$

Table 6. *Estimated Regression Results of Purchase Decision on Study Variables*

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1 (Constant)	2.077	0.299		6.941	0		
Perceived Price (PP)	0.23	0.046	0.252	5.005	0	0.838	1.193
Packaging (PG)	0.181	0.061	0.15	2.979	0.003	0.839	1.192
Perceived Quality (PQ)	0.065	0.054	0.057	1.202	0.23	0.935	1.07
Perceived Risk (PR)	-0.157	0.048	-0.151	-3.24	0.001	0.979	1.022

The regression analysis has offered valuable insights into the relationship between the dependent variable, purchase intention (PI), and the independent variables. The positive unstandardized coefficient of 0.23 for Perceived Price (PP) indicates that for every unit rise in PP, the Purchase Intention increases by an average of 0.23 units. The standardized coefficient of 0.252 has indicated that, of all the variables taken into consideration, perceived price has had the largest positive impact on purchase intention.

The unstandardized coefficient of 0.181 for the Packaging (PG) variable has represented that Purchase Intention (PI) rises by 0.181 units for every unit increase in packaging. The standardized coefficient of 0.15 has indicated a moderately positive relationship between

packaging and intention to buy. In this instance, all Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values have been well below 10, and all tolerance values have been above 0.1. This has indicated that the presence of multicollinearity in the model may not have been a serious concern.

Discussions

After conducting a thorough review of the literature, we have identified four important factors that have a significant impact on consumers' intentions towards private label products: perceived price, perceived quality, perceived risk, and perceived packaging. Our correlation analysis has revealed that there have been positive correlations between perceived prices, packaging, perceived quality, and purchase intention. Conversely, there has been a negative correlation between purchase intention and perceived risk. According to Jaafar et al. (2012), the variable of perceived price is considered to have the most impact on purchase intention among those that include store image, advertisement, packaging, and store perception. Our findings are consistent with Manusamy and Wong (2008), who found a positive and significant relationship between price and consumer motives for purchasing private label products. Customers have found low-cost products to be the most appealing (Berman, 1996). Our results have been consistent with Rundh's (2007) study, which has shown that packaging is important for product promotion and for influencing consumers' intentions to purchase the product. Our results have contrasted with the research carried out by Richardson et al. (1994), which has discovered that purchasing private brands is primarily influenced by one's perception of quality. Based on our findings, we have identified a negative correlation between perceived risk and purchase intention. In line with our findings, Glynn and Chen (2009), suggested that customers are more inclined to purchase national brands when they anticipate significant consequences.

Conclusion and Implications

In summary, your study explores the relationships between various factors and purchase intention for private label products: Purchase intention is positively influenced by perceived price, packaging, and perceived quality. This aligns with previous studies, like Saleem et al. (2015), which also found that perceived quality positively affects purchase intention. Perceived risk has a negative impact on purchase intention, consistent with Ural's (2008) research, which highlighted the negative influence of functional and financial risks on consumer attitudes toward private brands. Regression Analysis shows that perceived price and packaging have a strong, positive effect on purchase intention. Perceived risk has a strong, negative effect on purchase intention. Perceived quality has a

positive influence, but it is not statistically significant in this model. These findings suggest that businesses should focus on strategies that enhance perceived price and packaging, as these factors have a stronger positive influence. Addressing perceived risks can help mitigate their negative effects and improve purchase intention. Overall, the study provides valuable guidance for businesses, emphasizing the importance of price and packaging while highlighting the need to manage perceived risks.

This study highlights key insights for companies and marketers in the private label product space:

- **Pricing Strategy:** A strong relationship exists between perceived price and purchase intention, emphasizing the need for retailers to align their pricing with consumer value perceptions to make private label products more attractive.
- **Packaging:** Packaging design plays a significant role in shaping consumer preferences. Retailers should invest in eye-catching and informative packaging that conveys quality and value.
- **Perceived Risk:** Perceived risk negatively affects purchase intention. Retailers should focus on building trust through clear product information, ensuring quality, and possibly offering trials to reduce perceived risks.
- **Academic Contribution:** The research provides valuable insights for academics, especially in Nepal, where literature on private label products is limited, serving as a reference for future research in this field.

In short, the study provides actionable recommendations for retailers and contributes to academic literature on private label products.

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Post-COVID Blended Learning at Kathmandu Shiksha Campus: Challenges, Successes, and Future Prospects

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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the global transition of higher education institutions to digital and blended learning. This study discusses the use of blended learning in Bachelor of Computer Applications (BCA) Department at Kathmandu Shiksha Campus (KSC). Forty Students was involved in online survey while five faculty members were participated in mixed method of data collection through interviews. The analysis was done on Moodle Learning Management System (MLMS) of Kathmandu Shiksha Campus and the results show that it has improved teaching and learning with the help of its features such as video based learning, easy access to materials, availability of resources in time and encouraging students study in their flexible hours. Teachers are happy with the regular training session that college is conducting yet focused on more advanced workshops or research seminars. As per the findings, KSC's blended learning program has been successful since its availability, students are more keen to learn, digital advancements are ongoing and teacher student interaction has been improved.

Keywords: *Bachelors in Computer Application (BCA), Blended Learning, Learning Management System (LMS), Moodle, Post-COVID Education*

Introduction

Institutions of higher education have been affected by COVID-19 and have transitioned to online platforms much faster than they would have otherwise (Bordoloi et al. 2023). In Nepal, universities and affiliated campuses utilized several different platforms (such as Google Classroom and Google Drive) in order to be able to continue educating their

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students during the pandemic (Paudyal 2022). Before this transition to virtual classrooms, classes at Kathmandu Shiksha Campus (KSC) prior to the pandemic were primarily traditional face-to-face classrooms with the addition of downloadable course materials on Google Classroom and file sharing using Google Drive. During the onset of the pandemic, KSC switched to using Zoom to facilitate online classes in an effort to not lose educational services for students. However, the KSC administration felt that this was inadequate and introduced Moodle Learning Management System (LMS) on the KSC portal in 2022 as a replacement for those older forms of online education. Moodle provides a structured way for faculty to provide lecture content in addition to homework and quizzes, as well as lecture video recordings for their students. The implementation of Moodle was supported by providing training to administrators, instructors and students in order to help them use the product more efficiently. This represents a larger trend throughout the world since the (Rahmawati & Waseso 2020).

There is very little systematic evaluation of students' and teachers' blended learning experience in Nepalese campuses, apart from these initiatives. Previous research has established that even though LMS platforms like Moodle do increase student participation, issues arise, and they include digital illiteracy gaps, internet connectivity issues, and pedagogical constraints in adoption (Baral, 2021; Sunarti et al., 2024). At KSC, it is unclear the extent to which the trainings targeted stakeholders, how Moodle has been of benefit, and to what extent challenges still hinder its use. Without such evidence, institutional strategies on blended learning may completely overlook the end-user experience.

This study aims to determine the implementation of blended learning at Kathmandu Shiksha Campus, with respect to the transition from pre-COVID methods (Google Drive, Google Classroom, Zoom) to the integration of Moodle LMS and related training programs and to assess the experience and perspective of students and teachers in the BCA Department, identifying major challenges, successes, and recommendations for the future of hybrid learning at KSC.

Research Questions

- What Kind of methods were used in BCA Department of KSC before and during COVID-19?
- How Moodle LMS was implemented in college and what kind of trainings were given to staffs, teachers and students.

- How effective was Moodle based blended learning among students and what were the challenges they faced during its use.
- What are teachers' experiences of working with Moodle, both success and challenges?
- In what directions should the future of blended learning at KSC go based on students' and teachers' experiences?

Literature Review

Both prior to and especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, blended learning that entails both online and offline teaching has received widespread recognition as the best teaching model. Learning Management Systems (LMS), especially the use of Moodle, has been shown to improve levels of university students' engagement and self-directed learning, provided it is well incorporated into the teaching process as indicated by empirical studies. Hayden (2017), for example, indicated that the deliberate teaching adoption of Moodle instead of the conventional teaching formality positively influenced the degree of university students' engagement and overall academic performance. Rahmawati & Waseso (2020) concur that the COVID-19 pandemic had the effect of positively influencing university teacher education students' self-directedness towards the teaching program using the blended teaching process on the Moodle site.

The technological foundation does exist, and, nevertheless, the success of the online learning process also depends upon adequate support for students and lecturers, along with the development of digit literacy skills that could help avoid any misuse of the online platforms. According to Paudyal (2022), well-structured training of university lecturers and appropriate preparation by their institutions have proved critical for the sustained adoption and successful use of online learning platforms by university lecturers of Nepal. Moreover, simultaneously, there also exist some obvious and traditional weaknesses for many South Asian nations, which include unstable internet connectivity, lack of capacity of appropriate ICT, and lack of accessibility of high-quality technical assistance (Bordoloi, et al., 2023). Students and lecturers also display some mixed feelings regarding their experience with online learning. While students of online learning find many benefits related to greater accessibility and ease of online learning, on the other hand, they also experience some drawbacks, such as lack of motivation, more distractions, and reduced interaction with their lecturers (Sunarti, et al., 2024). On the other hand, the lecturers of online learning also show some benefits, which include more workload due to greater responsibilities and the need for diverse learning techniques to

promote successful usage of online learning platforms along with inadequate development of digit literacy skills (Baral, 2021). While they experience many obvious drawbacks related to online learning, they also recognize that online learning creates a sense of opportunity for improving education quality with appropriate post-support.

In Nepalese universities or colleges, it is still in early stage. As per Baral in 2021, affiliated colleges of Tribhuvan University has adopted blended learning model and there was a promising success as well but long term success depends on how effectively these colleges use the usable infrastructure and conduct continuous trainings. Paudyal in 2022 reached the same conclusions in that teacher attitudes regarding blended learning in the Nepalese setting are driven by a motivation for innovation and frustration with the limitations of technology. The same can be concluded in the case at Kathmandu Shiksha Campus regarding the methods for improved post-COVID teachings and learning processes.

Collectively, the preceding research has indicated that there is a great potential for improvement within the delivery of higher education offered via blended learning. Yet, this depends upon the manner in which the institutions respond to the training, infrastructure, and readiness of the stakeholders. The current study continues this train of research via the examination of case-based experience at KSC for blended learning within the BCA department, incorporating both the teacher and the students.

Methods

This study used both online survey and semi structured interview approach to study the use of blended learning in BCA department of KSC. In this mixed method of research, both qualitative and quantitative data were collected from students and teachers. Some issues, comments and their views were evaluated in a descriptive manner. Students completed an online survey to collect quantitative data, and faculty members participated in semi-structured interviews to collect qualitative data.

Participants

The study focused on the KSC BCA Department, which had a total of 110 students and 10 faculty members. Out of these, 40 students took the online survey, a response rate of around 37%. Five faculty members were also interviewed to gain insight into their Moodle and blended learning experiences.

Data Collection

The study collected data in two phases. For Student Survey, an online survey was used among BCA students through Google Forms. The survey contained closed questions (scaled questions like Likert Scale) as well as open questions regarding accessibility, usability, and learning efficiency in Moodle. The study covered online learning experiences of students regarding access to learning materials, viewing uploaded videos, as well as note sharing from tutors.

And in Teacher Interviews, Semi-structured interviews were conducted with five members of the BCA faculty. Questions asked in these interviews were on teacher experiences on Moodle, uploading course content, posting lecture videos, as well as using the blended approach. Data collection in this research utilized descriptive statistics, employing percentages, bar charts, and pie charts. Interviews undertaken in this research were categorized as semi-structured interviews, with data collection being in the form of themes that emerged based on teacher experiences, lessons, challenges, and advantages of blended learning.

Results And Discussion

Prior to the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic, the BCA Department at the Kathmandu Shiksha Campus had commenced the integration of technology in their study opportunities using limited digital platforms like Google Classroom and Google Drive for teaching and learning activities. However, due to the rise of online distance education resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, the KSC had to devise an efficient way of managing the learning and teaching activities and, as such, introduced the LMS Moodle into their college website.

To ensure that the implementation of the system was successful, many orientations and trainings were conducted by KSC for students, faculty, and administrative personnel. Participants were taught how to load and manage lessons in Moodle, as well as other features such as managing submissions, inserting videos, and dealing with forum discussions. These orientation and training activities facilitated and helped the teachers and students acquire the needed skills and confidence required to utilize Moodle successfully for their combined learning mode. The successful implementation of this first step provided the foundation and opportunity for KSC to integrate technology into their learning method, leading to the formation of the permanent post-COVID learning

model. The first orientation and training were conducted with smaller numbers of attendees where they could work hands-on with individual instructor assistance.



Figure 1. Faculty members participating in Moodle training at Kathmandu Shiksha Campus



Figure 2. Instructor helping with practice session of LMS

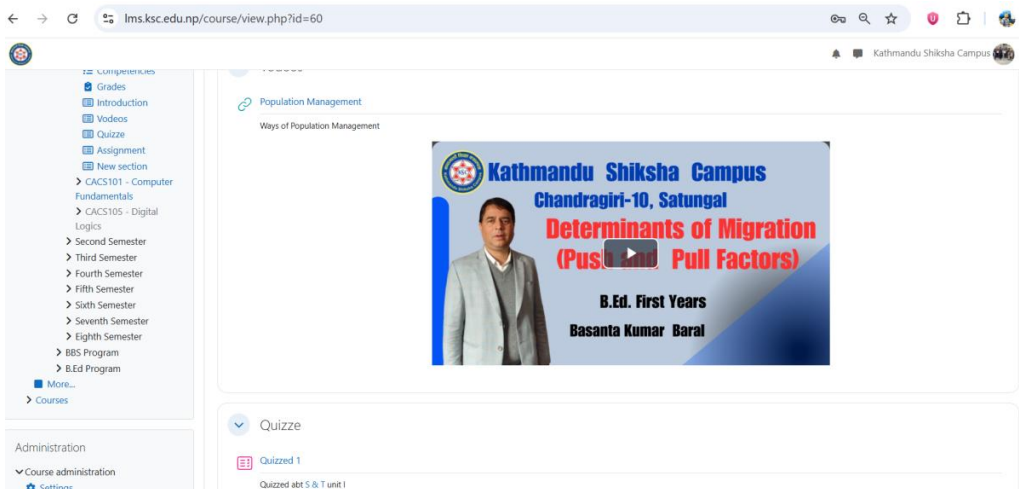


Figure 3. Video and Quiz contents uploaded in LMS Moodle of KSC

Students were given an introduction to Moodle through demonstration sessions after faculty training. During these sessions, they learned how to log in, access lecture materials, download notes, view uploaded videos, and turn in assignments online. The platform quickly emerged as the BCA Department's main communication and course management hub.

Results from students' Survey

A total of forty students from the BCA Department of Kathmandu Shiksha Campus were taken for the study with the help of a Google Form consisting of ten questions. Data analysis was conducted using various descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation, percentage, and frequency. To provide quantitative analysis for responses, numerical codes were given to the questions, with responses ranging from 1 INDICATING Strongly Disagree to 5 INDICATING Strongly Agree statements. Moreover, for creating better visuals, charts were plotted using the software Microsoft Excel.

As far as the demographics of the survey are concerned, 40% of the individual surveyed were females, whereas 60% were male. Out of the total surveyed individuals, 30% were students taking the 5th & 7th semesters, whereas 20% of the surveyed individuals were students of the 3rd & 8th semesters. In respect of accessing the Internet, 25% of the total sample surveyed made use of mobile data connections for accessing the Internet, whereas 75% made use of home Wi-Fi connections. These statistics clearly indicate that there is a fair representation of the students of Kathmandu Shiksha Campus who have access to sufficient Internet services for e-learning with the support of the online learning platform of Moodle.

Most of the student gave negative answer while asking if Moodle LMS was easy to use and locate the resources. The answers were not very positive. In Fact, 10% of students found it difficult to use and 75% of students found it a bit unique or not so easy to locate and confusing at times. Overall student gave an average response of 3.95 (with standard deviation of 0.87) which indicate that it supports their learning well. But Still many felt that this system could've been more user friendly, easy to locate, and few improvements on usage.

Table1. *Demographic profile of respondents*

Demographic Variable	Categories	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male: 24	24	60
	Female: 16	16	40
Year	1st	8	20
	2nd	12	30
	3rd	12	30
	4th	8	20
Internet Access	Home Wi-Fi	30	75
	Mobile Data	10	25

Another sign of a significant presence is the frequency with which respondents reported using Moodle. Half of the respondents (50%) said they used Moodle every day, 25% said they used or logged in three to four times a week, and 7.5% said they used it infrequently (twice a month). Students are therefore likely to be able to participate in their educational experience during a period when all students were experiencing a higher level of blended learning due to the COVID pandemic, as evidenced by their average usage frequency of 4.18 (SD = 0.98).

Table 2. *Access and navigation of moodle*

Scale	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very Easy	12	30
Easy	18	45
Neutral	6	15
Difficult	4	10

Mean = 3.95, SD = 0.87

Most respondents found that practice exams and lecture notes were particularly helpful (Mean = 4.35 and 4.20, respectively). Also students found the recorded videos very helpful. An average mean of 4.10 shows they found them very useful for studying at their own time. Reference books and discussion boards were only slightly helpful, indicating that students rely more on Moodle's direct instructional resources.

Most student said that they prefer a mix of both online and in person classes, which means that blending learning is being helpful in their studies. The relatively higher mean value (4.40) indicates that students value flexibility while still appreciating in-person classroom engagement. The popularity of fully online and traditional methods was lower, underscoring the importance of hybrid learning strategies.

Table 4. *Helpfulness of study materials*

Response	Frequency	%
Very Helpful	14	35
Helpful	18	45
Neutral	6	15
Not Helpful	2	5

Mean = 4.10, SD = 0.81

Table 3. *Frequency of LMS usage*

Usage Frequency	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Daily	20	50
3–4 times a week	10	25
Once a week	7	17.5
Rarely	3	7.5

Mean = 4.18, SD = 0.98

Table 5. *Preferred learning mode*

Mode	Frequency	%
Fully Online	6	15
Blended (Online + Physical)	26	65
Fully Physical	8	20

Table 6. *Main challenges with moodle*

Challenge	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Internet Connectivity	14	35
Lack of Interaction	10	25
Technical Issues	8	20
Limited Feedback	8	20

The results show that one of the biggest obstacles to using Moodle effectively is still technical. The most urgent problems are inadequate interaction with instructors and poor internet connectivity. In the meantime, students struggle to fully utilize the platform due to time management issues and a lack of feedback.

Results from the Interview with Teachers

Five faculty members of the BCA Department at Kathmandu Shiksha Campus were interviewed about their experience with the application of the Moodle platform in the context of blended learning in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. In contrast to the previous scenario where Google Drive handouts were used, the faculty members found the introduction of the Moodle platform to be a positive experience with transformative potential.

These were often shared by the teacher through the use of Moodle, with additional links directed to YouTube. All of the teachers agreed that it became easier for students to view the material at any desired time, but some of the students became less active after the resumption of regular classes. Blended learning is facilitated by KSC's training of their faculty members through Moodle training. Some of the faculty members requested more advanced training to enable the utilization of interactive features like quizzes and forums.

At first, students were a little hesitant about it, but then they appreciated the flexibility of the recorded lectures. Nevertheless, some students still wanted face-to-face interactions but were torn between times of distraction or loss of internet connection. It is observed that the implementation of blended learning through the use of Moodle in KSC has so far been effective, but for it to continue being so, it would need consistent support.

Discussion

The current study examined how five faculty members and forty BCA students at the Kathmandu Shiksha Campus felt about using the Moodle LMS in a post-COVID blended learning setting. Strong mean scores on accessibility ($M = 3.95$ and $SD = 0.87$) and usage frequency ($M = 4.18$ and $SD = 0.98$) show a generally positive student experience.

Meanwhile, some enduring issues with connectivity, teacher workload, and pedagogical adaptation were brought to light by lecturers' qualitative feedback.

Successes and Positive Outcomes

The claim that blended learning has become the norm in post-COVID universities is supported by the high frequency of LMS use, which suggests that Moodle has been integrated into students' study habits. This is consistent with a larger body of research showing that blended or hybrid models in higher education promote greater adaptability, self-control, and access to educational resources (Angwaomaodoko, 2024; Sain, Aziz & Sain, 2024). For instance, blended learning "offers flexibility, student motivation... and improved academic performance," according to Angwaomaodoko (2024) (p. 89). As evidenced by the mean scores over 4.0 on the pertinent items, which show that the LMS offered helpful learning resources, students in this study also gave Moodle's study materials a positive evaluation. This finding is further supported by a strong preference for blended learning mode, with a mean score of approximately 4.40 in our interpretation, which points to the fact that students like to combine face-to-face and online elements—a fact that corresponds with the results obtained by Watanapokakul (2022) and Cobo-Rendón et al. (2022), who found that blended learning approaches were considered effective and adequate by both students and teachers.

Challenges and Barriers

Despite positive perceptions, the study identifies important problems. Poor internet connectivity was the most frequently cited issue, which is consistent with research indicating that infrastructure remains a significant barrier to blended learning in many contexts (Hossain, 2024; Al-Naabi, 2024). Even though students feel comfortable using Moodle, lecturers noted that it is still difficult to create engaging content, manage workload, and ensure timely instructor feedback. This confirms recent research showing that institutional support, technological literacy, and teacher professional development are necessary for successful LMS adoption (Al-Naabi, 2024; Zeng, 2024).

High usage frequency is also encouraging, but it does not ensure deep engagement or learning outcomes. There have been documented problems with student isolation, decreased interaction, and decreased peer-to-peer collaboration (Balancing Technology, Pedagogy and the New Normal, 2021). Even though the mean scores in our data were high, the standard deviations (0.87–0.98) indicate that there was variation in the quality of the experience, suggesting that some students still had problems.

Practical Implications

Key considerations for improving blended learning sessions for Kathmandu Shiksha Campus and other such institutions: Firstly, given that poor internet connections were one of the factors, it is important that the institutions provide better digital infrastructure for enhanced internet connectivity among students. This is observed by Hossain 2024 and Rizaq & Sarmini 2024, and therefore, such institutions must look at collaboration or support services for ensuring better connections.

Conversely, interviews with lecturers revealed that the major challenge for the greater number of the teaching staff is still in the designing of interactive contents as well as workload management using the Moodle LMS. Online training of faculty staff is to be done to improve the effective use of LMS (Al-Naabi, 2024; Angwaomaodoko, 2024).

Although students were overwhelmingly in support of blended learning, it is important that concerns with regard to motivation and interactions be managed to ensure sustained engagement of students. Balancing Technology, Pedagogy, and the New Normal (2021) state that support services such as tutoring, deadline extension, or pre-recorded sessions could be necessary to ensure sustained levels of student engagement and minimize levels of stress. Lastly, it can be concluded that blended learning should be recognized as an “overall educational approach, independent of its application in response to the Covid-19 pandemic situation” (Balancing Technology, Pedagogy, and the New Normal, 2021). This would ensure that formal provisions for organized blend learning using the Moodle platform are taken into consideration by institutions, as it enhances flexibility and learning satisfaction (Cobo-Rendón et al., 2022; Zeng, 2024).

Conclusion

Following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, this research aimed to explore the situation of BCA students as well as their respective lecturers at Kathmandu Shiksha Campus with respect to the implementation of Moodle learning. It is evident that it has been utilized effectively, with positive perceptions among students with regard to the resource, learning, and accessibility offered by the learning management system. Challenges still remain, however, related to infrastructure, faculty utilization, and student-teacher interactions. Blended learning with Moodle is a viable option for the future of higher education in Nepal after the COVID-19 era, but it is important that its true potential is achieved with commitment to faculty development support and equity of access. Future research would explore more Moodle criteria and features such as more

engagement, specific activity or consistent performance which will definitely lead to better academic performance.

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फुटपाथ मिनिस्टर कथामा सबाल्टर्न : बालमनोविज्ञानको समालोचनात्मक अध्ययन

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लेखसार

प्रस्तुत अध्ययन कक्षा ११ मा अध्यापन गराइने 'फुटपाथ मिनिस्टर' कथामा देखिएको सबाल्टर्न चेतनाको उद्घाटनमा केन्द्रित छ। सबाल्टर्न अध्ययन पुँजीवादी समाजमा व्याप्त सांस्कृतिक अध्ययनभित्रको एक नवीन सैद्धान्तिक अवधारणा हो। यसले समाजका दलित, जनजाति, महिला, अल्पसङ्ख्यक, पिछडिएका वर्ग, असहाय वर्गको प्रतिनिधित्व गर्दछ। २१ औं शताब्दीमा पिछडिएको वर्गका आवाजलाई मुखरित गर्ने सबाल्टर्नको अवधारणा, विकास, बहुअर्थक प्रयोग, शब्दको अर्थमा देखिएको अस्पष्टता तथा कक्षा ११ मा अध्यापन गराइने फुटपाथ मिनिस्टर कथाले बालमस्तिष्कमा पार्ने प्रभावका बारेमा अध्ययन गर्नु यस अनुसन्धानको प्रमुख उद्देश्य रहेको छ। इटालीका दार्शनिक एन्टोनियो ग्राम्सीले सन् १९२९-१९३५ को विचमा तत्कालीन फासिस्ट शासनद्वारा जेलमा बन्दी बनाइएका बेला लेखेका नोटहरू, टिप्पणीहरू र वैचारिक लेखनहरूको संग्रहमा सबाल्टर्न सम्बन्धी सिद्धान्तमा आधारित रहेर मिस्रित विधिको प्रयोग गरी अध्ययन गरिएको यो लेखले नेपाली समाजमा व्याप्त विभिन्न खाले विभेदलाई उजागर गरेको छ।

कक्षा ११ मा कुल ३५ जना ऐच्छिक नेपाली विषय लिई अध्ययनरत विद्यार्थीहरू मध्ये ८६ प्रतिशतले सबाल्टर्नलाई दलित, महिला, बालबालिका र श्रमिक क्षेत्रमा कार्यरत र पिछड पारिएका समूहसँग आवद्ध गरेका छन्। यसैगरी ८० प्रतिशतले यसलाई मौन होइन, प्रतिरोधी समूहका रूपमा बुझेका छन् भने ८३ प्रतिशतले यसको मुख्य समस्या शक्ति संरचनामा पहुँच नहुनुलाई मानेका छन्। ८९ प्रतिशतले साहित्य, सामाजिक सञ्जाल र आन्दोलनमार्फत यसको प्रभाव बुझेका अभिव्यक्ति दिएका छन् भने ७७ प्रतिशतले सबाल्टर्न अवधारणा जटिल र बहुअर्थक भएको बताएका छन्। बहुसङ्ख्यक ९४ प्रतिशतले निरीह तथा गरिब बालजीवनको प्रतिनिधित्व गरेको महसुस गरेका छन्। प्रस्तुत कथाले सामाजिक यथार्थ उजागर गरेको धारणा ९१ प्रतिशत विद्यार्थीहरूमा रहेको देखिन्छ भने ८६ प्रतिशतले यसबाट करुणा र सामाजिक जिम्मेवारी सिकाएको बताएका छन्।

कुञ्जी शब्द : सबाल्टर्न, अधीनस्थ, प्रभत्वशाली, सीमान्तकृत, उत्पीडन, प्रतिरोध, आन्दोलन

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परिचय

कक्षा ११ को ऐच्छिक नेपाली विषयमा अध्यापन गराइने 'फुटपाथ मिनिस्टर' तत्कालीन समाजमा व्याप्त दमन, शोषण, उत्पीडन लगायतका जटिल समस्याहरूमा आधारित कथा हो। यस कथाले समाजका शोषित, पीडित सीमान्तकृत समुदायको सांस्कृतिक पक्षको उद्घाटन गर्दै मूल संस्कृतिबाट सीमान्तकृत गरिएका सबाल्टर्न वर्गको अध्ययन के कसरी गर्न सकिन्छ भन्ने विषयलाई विशेष रूपमा उठान गरिएको छ। प्रख्यात कथाकार रमेश विकलद्वारा रचित यस कथाले नेपाली ग्रामीण तथा सहरी जीवनका विभिन्न वर्गका सामाजिक, आर्थिक र भौगोलिक समस्याहरूलाई प्रस्तुत गरेको छ (शिवाकोटी, २०७१ : २१४)। निम्न वर्गका मानिसहरूको दुःख, पीडा र सङ्घर्षलाई उजागर गर्दै त्यसबाट मुक्ति पाउनु पर्ने, सुधारवादी चेतना फैलाउने कथाकारका रूपमा परिचित छन कथाकार विकल। यसै कारण उनका कथामा नेपाली समाजको यथार्थ चित्रण र सामाजिक सुधारको स्पष्ट सन्देश पाइन्छ। कथाले सामाजिक असमानता र विसङ्गतिले निम्त्याएको कारुणिक अवस्थाको यथार्थपरक चित्रण गरेको छ। परिवारका अभिभावक गुमाएर घरबारविहीन भएका टुहुरा र असहाय बालबालिकाहरू कसरी सडकमा जीवन बिताउन बाध्य हुन्छन् भन्ने कुराको मार्मिक तथ्यलाई उजागर गरेको छ।

सबाल्टर्न शब्दले शताब्दियौँदेखि शासक तथा शक्तिशाली वर्गद्वारा शोषित, पीडित र आवाजविहीन बनाइएका वर्गलाई जनाउँछ। यी वर्गहरू समाजको मूलधारबाट किनारामा पारिएका हुन्छन् र उनीहरूको इतिहासलाई प्रायः उपेक्षित गरिएको हुन्छ। उनीहरू आफ्नो पीडा र सङ्घर्ष व्यक्त गर्न सक्षम हुँदैनन् किनकि उनीहरूको आवाजलाई दबाइन्छ। यिनै सडक बालबालिकाहरूको अवस्थालाई सबाल्टर्नको दृष्टिकोणबाट अध्ययन गरिनुले समाजमा दबाइएका र सिमान्तकृत वर्गको वास्तविक समस्या र जीवन भोगाइलाई उजागर गर्छ। यसले समाजका शक्ति केन्द्रहरूबाट उपेक्षित भएका मानिसहरूको कथालाई महत्त्व दिन्छ र उनीहरूको सङ्घर्षलाई राष्ट्रिय मूलधारको बहसमा ल्याउने प्रयास गर्छ। "सबाल्टर्न शब्दले सदियौँदेखि शासित, आवाजविहीन तथा इतिहासविहीन वर्गलाई जनाउँछ। हरेक समाजको शासक तथा शक्ति केन्द्रहरूबाट शोषित र दमित निमुखा बोल्न सक्दैनन्" (श्रेष्ठ २०६८ : ३)। तिनीहरूको आवाज सुन्ने र यस वर्गलाई केन्द्रमा राखेर साहित्यको विश्लेषण गर्ने सैद्धान्तिक अवधारणा सबाल्टर्न अध्ययन हो।

अध्ययनका उद्देश्यहरू

- (क) २१ औँ शताब्दीमा शक्तिको विरोधमा उभिने एक सशक्त/उग्र आवाजका रूपमा 'सबाल्टर्न' को अवधारणालाई अध्ययन गर्नु,
- (ख) 'सबाल्टर्न' शब्दको प्रयोगमा देखिने अस्पष्टता र बहुअर्थक प्रयोगलाई स्पष्ट पार्दै विश्लेषण गर्नु,
- (ग) फुटपाथ मिनिस्टर कथालाई विश्लेषण गर्दै सबाल्टर्न अवधारणाले बालमस्तिष्कमा पार्ने प्रभावका बारेमा अध्ययन गर्नु।

सबाल्टर्नको अवधारणा

‘सबाल्टर्न (Subaltern) शब्द ल्याटिन भाषाको Sub (अर्थात् तल, अधीन) र Alternus (अर्थात् अन्य वा वैकल्पिक) शब्दबाट बनेको हो, जसबाट subalternus उत्पन्न भएको हो, जसको अर्थ अधीनस्थ, तल्लो दर्जा वा हैसियत नभएका निम्न वा हीन व्यक्तिसमेतलाई बुझाउँछ। सुरुमा ‘सबाल्टर्न’ शब्द ब्रिटिस सेनामा कप्तानभन्दा तल्लो दर्जाका सैनिक अधिकृतलाई जनाउन प्रयोग गरिएको थियो। तर २०औँ शताब्दीको उत्तरार्द्ध र २१ औँ शताब्दीमा मार्क्सवाद, राष्ट्रवाद, उत्तर-औपनिवेशिक सिद्धान्त (Post-colonial Theory) र नारीवादको प्रभावमा यो शब्द सामाजिक, राजनीतिक, साहित्यिक, धार्मिक तथा आर्थिक पदानुक्रमभित्रको अधीनता (Sub-ordination) जनाउन प्रयोग गर्न थालियो (वाग्ले, २००८)।

यस अवधारणाले व्यक्ति, समूह, समुदाय, समाज, इतिहास तथा अन्य मानवीय अवस्थाका विविध पक्षहरूलाई राष्ट्रिय तथा अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय तहमा अध्ययन गर्दै सामाजिक स्तरीकरणका कारण विस्थापित वा पछाडी पारिएका (Marginalized) समूहहरूको भूमिकालाई पुनः उजागर गर्ने प्रयास गर्दछ। यसमा जाति, वर्ग, लिङ्ग र धर्मका आधारमा विभेदमा परेका समूहहरू समावेश हुन्छन्। विशेषतः यस शब्दले बाह्य विजय, उपनिवेशीकरण र पश्चिमीकरणलाई प्राथमिकता दिँदा स्वदेशी इतिहास, मूल्य र राजनीतिक संरचनामा आएको विकृति र विसङ्गतिलाई पनि संकेत गर्दछ। ‘सबाल्टर्न’ को प्रयोगमा एकरूपता छैन; यसमा बहुलता, विविधता र जटिलता निहित रहेको देखिन्छ।

‘सबाल्टर्न’ शब्द इटालियन सामाजिक चिन्तक एन्टोनियो ग्राम्सी १९७१ को ‘सांस्कृतिक प्रभुत्व सम्बन्धी विचारबाट विकसित भएको हो। ग्राम्सीले उत्पीडित वर्ग राजनीतिक प्रतिनिधित्वबाट वञ्चित गराइन्छ। उनले ‘सबाल्टर्न’ लाई राज्य, वर्ग, जाति, पितृसत्ता, लिङ्ग, जातीयता आदि शक्तिगत प्रभुत्वका कारण अधीनस्थ बनाइएका समूहहरूलाई जनाउँछ भन्ने उल्लेख गरेका छन्। ग्राम्सीले सन् १९२९-१९३५ देखि बेनिटो मुसोलिनीको फासिवादी शासनकालमा जेलमा रहँदा ‘सांस्कृतिक प्रभुत्व’ सम्बन्धी विभिन्न लेखहरूको रचना गरेका थिए। इटालीको राज्य सेन्सरसिपका कारण उनले ‘प्रोलिटेरियट’ को सट्टा ‘सबाल्टर्न’ शब्द प्रयोग गरे, जसले अवधारणात्मक रूपमा पनि व्यापक अर्थ प्रदान गर्‍यो (वाग्ले, २००८)।

‘सबाल्टर्न’ शब्दले पुँजी र श्रम (ग्राम्सीका शब्दमा) बाहिर रहेका समूहहरूलाई समेत समेट्दै प्रभुत्वशाली व्यक्तिद्वारा हुने विभिन्न प्रकारका दमनलाई व्याख्या गर्ने गरेको छ। यसले ई.पी. थम्पसन (१९९१) द्वारा उल्लेखित ‘कामदार वर्ग’, सिमोन डे बोउभार (१९५२) द्वारा व्याख्या गरिएको ‘दोस्रो लिङ्ग’ को लैङ्गिक अधीनता आदिलाई पनि समेट्दछ। ग्राम्सी राज्य र संस्कृतिको सम्बन्ध बुझ्दै ‘सबाल्टर्न’ कसरी कुनै व्यक्ति वा समुदायलाई आधारभूत रूपमा अरूभन्दा निम्न अवस्थामा रहेको देखाउँछ भन्ने कुरामा केन्द्रित थिए। यसले भौतिक वा सामाजिक पुँजी तथा शक्तिमा पहुँचका

आधारमा हुने सम्बन्धलाई पनि जनाउँछ। त्यसैले 'सबाल्टर्न' व्यक्ति मात्र नभई सबाल्टर्नतालाई समुदाय, राष्ट्र वा कुनै विशेष विमर्श (पाठ, अभ्यास, इतिहास आदि) को अवस्थासमेतका रूपमा बुझ्न सकिन्छ (वाग्ले, २००८)।

सबाल्टर्न अध्ययनहरू मुख्यतः ग्राम्सी र मिसेल फुको (१९७२) बाट प्रेरित छन्। भारतीय सन्दर्भमा यसले औपनिवेशिक तथा उत्तर-औपनिवेशिक पाठहरूको अध्ययन गर्दै युरोपेली, अमेरिकी र भारतीय अभिजात वर्गद्वारा निर्मित राष्ट्रवादी इतिहासले दक्षिण एसियाको वास्तविक ऐतिहासिक यथार्थलाई कसरी प्रतिनिधित्व गर्न असफल भयो भन्ने कुरा उजागर गर्दछ। रणजित गुहाले भारतीय राष्ट्र "आफ्नै स्वरूपमा स्थापित हुन असफल भएको" अवस्थाको व्याख्या गर्दै 'सबाल्टर्न' लाई "दक्षिण एसियाली समाजमा वर्ग, जाति, उमेर, लिङ्ग, पद आदि कुनै पनि आधारमा हुने अधीनताको सामान्य विशेषता" का रूपमा परिभाषित गरेका छन् (गुहा, १९८३)। सबाल्टर्न अध्ययनहरूले विशेषतः इतिहास, राजनीति, संस्कृति र लिङ्गका विषयलाई जोड दिएका छन्।

सबाल्टर्न दृष्टिकोण अध्ययन गर्दा प्रश्न उठ्छ—सबाल्टर्न को हुन् ? साधारण रूपमा भन्नुपर्दा, शक्ति, अधिकार, पद, आवाज र हकमा पहुँच नपाउने समूहहरू सबाल्टर्न हुन्। प्राचीन समयमा यो राजनीतिक, आर्थिक, सामाजिक र धार्मिक क्षेत्रमा सीमित थियो, तर आज अभिव्यक्ति स्वतन्त्रता, शिक्षा, रोजगारी, जीविकोपार्जन, सांस्कृतिक अभ्यास, नैतिक निगरानी, जातीय तथा वर्गीय विवाद, रङ्गभेद आदि विषयहरू पनि यसमा समावेश छन्। समाजको शक्ति संरचना अभिजात वर्गद्वारा संस्थागत गरिएको हुन्छ, र उत्पीडित वर्ग आज त्यस संरचनाविरुद्ध आवाज उठाइरहेका छन्। मिसेल फुको (१९७२)को 'शक्ति र ज्ञान', मार्क्सको 'बुर्जुवा र प्रोलिटेरियट', दुर्खाइमको 'श्रम विभाजन' यी सबै शक्तिशाली र शक्तिहीन बिचको द्वन्द्वका उदाहरण हुन्।

'सबाल्टर्न' शब्द कहिलेकाहीँ अस्पष्ट र जटिल भए पनि यसले मूलतः शक्तिहीन, उत्पीडित र पछि पारिएका वर्गलाई जनाउँछ। गुहा (१९८३) का अनुसार, प्रत्येक सन्दर्भमा ऐतिहासिक विश्लेषण आवश्यक हुन्छ, किनकि एउटै समूह कहिले अभिजातसँग त कहिले सबाल्टर्नसँग उभिन सक्छ। यसै गरी स्पिभाक, जि.सी. १९८८ का अनुसार पितृसत्तात्मक समाजद्वारा उत्पीडित महिला र बालबालिका सबाल्टर्न हुन्। उनको निबन्ध Can the Subaltern Speak ? मा उपनिवेशकर्ता र उपनिवेशित बिचको सम्बन्धलाई "सेता पुरुषले खैरो महिलालाई खैरो पुरुषबाट बचाइरहेका छन्" भन्ने दृष्टान्तबाट व्याख्या गरिएको छ।

यसरी सबाल्टर्न अवधारणा विश्वव्यापी सन्दर्भमा दलित, आदिवासी, महिला, बालबालिका, शरणार्थी, आप्रवासी श्रमिक, किसान, मजदुर आदि उत्पीडित समूहहरूको प्रतिनिधित्व गर्दछ। अन्ततः, सबाल्टर्न इतिहासकारहरू ती हुन् जसले औपनिवेशिक, ओरियन्टलिस्ट र अभिजात वर्गीय इतिहास लेखनको आलोचना गर्दै उत्पीडितहरूको पक्षबाट बोल्छन्। स्पिभाकका अनुसार सबाल्टर्न

इतिहासकारहरूले केवल वैकल्पिक कथा प्रस्तुत गर्दैनन्, बरु इतिहासका स्थापित अवधारणा र सिद्धान्तलाई नै पुनर्विचार र विघटन गर्छन् ।

मानव सभ्यताको सुरुवातदेखि नै मानिसले प्रकृतिसँग जुध्दै र शक्तिशाली तथा कमजोर वर्गका बिचको द्वन्द्वसँगै इतिहासको रचना गरेको हो । यो द्वन्द्व कहिले प्रत्यक्ष त कहिले अप्रत्यक्ष रूपमा अगाडि बढ्दै आजको सभ्यतासम्म आइपुगेको छ । यस क्रममा समाजमा भएका विभिन्न क्रान्तिले शोषण र दमनको अन्त्य गर्दै सामाजिक विभेदहरूलाई हटाए पनि शक्तिशाली वर्गले आफ्नो अनुकूल नीति, नियम, सिद्धान्त, धर्म र आस्था निर्माण गर्दै आफ्नो शक्ति कायम राखी नै रह्यो । यसकै कारण समाजमा एउटा प्रभुत्वशाली वर्ग र अर्को अधीनस्थ वर्ग बन्थ्यो । यसरी संसारलाई केन्द्र र किनारामा बाँडियो जहाँ केन्द्रमा शक्तिशाली वर्ग र किनारामा शक्तिहीन, अधिकारहीन तथा इतिहासविहीन वर्ग रह्यो । सामाजिक, राजनीतिक, भाषिक, भौगोलिक र लैङ्गिक आधारमा पछि पारिएका यस्ता वर्गहरूलाई नै समग्रमा सबाल्टर्न वर्ग भनिन्छ । उनीहरूकै बारेमा गरिएको अध्ययन नै सबाल्टर्न अध्ययन हो ।

सबाल्टर्न शब्द सर्वप्रथम इटालीका सांस्कृतिक चिन्तक एन्टोनियो ग्राम्सीद्वारा प्रयोग भएको हो । यस शब्दले सदियौँदेखि शासित, आवाजविहीन तथा इतिहासविहीन वर्गलाई जनाउँछ (श्रेष्ठ, २०६८ : ३) । यसरी सबाल्टर्न वर्ग भनेको हरेक किसिमले निम्न दर्जाका व्यक्ति, समूह हो र उनीहरूको समाजको आर्थिक संरचनामा महत्त्वपूर्ण भूमिका रहे पनि ती वस्तुहरूको उपभोगका दृष्टिमा चाहिँ उपेक्षित गरिएको हुन्छ । यसर्थ यो वर्ग स्वयम्ले र बौद्धिक क्षेत्रका लेखक, सर्जक र बुजुकहरूले सबाल्टर्न अध्ययनलाई अघि बढाएका छन् । “युगौँदेखि इतिहास लेखन गर्ने उद्देश्यले सन् १९८२ देखि दक्षिण एसियामा सबाल्टर्न अभियान समूह इतिहासविद् रञ्जित गुहाको नेतृत्वमा सञ्चालन भएको हो” (श्रेष्ठ २०६८:२) । सबाल्टर्न जित्नेको मात्र नभई हार्ने, हराउने, थिचिएका, मिचिएका, उत्पीडनमा परेका तथा पारिएका वर्गको समेत खोजी गर्ने कला हो ।

नेपाली समाजमा यो वर्गको पहिचान खेती कार्यमा, सेवा तथा आगत-भागत कार्यमा, सेवक-सेविकाको रूपमा, कमैया, वादी, हलीका रूपमा रहेको देखिन्छ, जसले उत्पादनको क्षेत्रमा महत्त्वपूर्ण भूमिका निर्वाह गरेको विभिन्न अध्ययनहरूले देखाएको छ । नेपालमा २०६२/०६३ को जनआन्दोलन पछि कानुनी रूपमा यी वर्गले मुक्ति पाए पनि बेला-बेला अवशेषका रूपमा विभिन्न रूपमा अझै पनि नेपाली समाज सबाल्टर्नबाट मुक्ति पाउन सकेको छैन । नेपालको ग्रामीण भेग र खास गरी पानी नचल्ने भनिएका दलित, गरिब, अपहेलित तथा परम्परादेखि अँगाल्दै आएका पेसा, व्यवसायको आधारमा तिनका बालबच्चा समेतलाई बलपूर्वक गराइएका कतिपय कार्यहरू जस्तै: सिनो नफाल्दा पाएका उत्पीडन, बोक्सीको नाममा मानव मलमुत्र खुवाउने अमानिय घटनाहरू नेपाली समाजमा अझै कलङ्कको रूपमा रहेको छ । यसरी सीमान्तकृत बनाइदै आएको तथ्यलाई प्रस्तुत गर्ने

उद्देश्यले यो वर्गको इतिहास लेखनमा यो समूहले प्रमुख जोड दिएको पाइन्छ (श्रेष्ठ, २०६८:२) । सबाल्टर्न अध्ययनको प्रमुख उद्देश्य सामाजिक इतिहासको पुनर्लेखन गर्नु रहे पनि पछिल्लो समस्या इतिहासबाट राजनीति, समाजशास्त्र, अर्थशास्त्र हुँदै साहित्यिक अध्ययनसँग सम्बन्ध गाँस्न आइपुगेको देखिन्छ । सबाल्टर्न अध्ययनलाई सर्वप्रथम साहित्यिक रूप दिने काम समाजशास्त्री तथा इतिहासविद् गायत्री चक्रवर्ती स्पिभाक हुन् । उनको *क्यान दि सबाल्टर्न स्पिक* विश्वप्रसिद्ध लेखमा उनले बङ्गाली लेखिका महाश्वेता देवीको कथाहरुको समीक्षा गरेर यस विषयलाई अधि बढाएकी थिइन् । यसबाट साहित्यिक अध्ययनमा सबाल्टर्नले प्रवेश गरेको हो (सुवेदी २०६८ : १३२) ।

यस क्षेत्रमा कलम चलाउने अन्य विद्वान् तथा समीक्षकका रूपमा तारालाल श्रेष्ठलाई लिन सकिन्छ । उनले 'शक्ति, स्रष्टा र सबाल्टर्न' का माध्यमबाट नेपाली साहित्यको विधामा सबाल्टर्नको अध्ययन गरेर नेपाली साहित्यको सबाल्टर्न अध्ययनलाई साहित्यिक रङ्ग दिएका छन् । उनले आफ्नै पुस्तकमा सबाल्टर्नका विषय आफ्ना अभिमत राख्दै भनेका छन् - "कर्णालीका विधवा महिला सबाल्टर्न हुन्" (श्रेष्ठ, २०६८ : २२) । संसारका सबै र परिवर्तनमा सबाल्टर्न वर्गकै गहन भूमिका रहेपछि र उनीहरु नै समाजका हरेक संलग्न कार्यमा भएर पनि सधैं उपेक्षित छन् । तसर्थ सबाल्टर्न अध्ययन गर्नेले विशिष्ट उपेक्षित इतिहासका सबै कालखण्डहरुको अध्ययन गर्नुपर्छ भन्ने मान्यता राखेको पाइन्छ । साहित्यका क्षेत्रमा पनि यी वर्गका उपस्थिति र कार्य अपरिहार्य छ । सबाल्टर्न वर्गकै कथाव्यथाको प्रस्तुति र विश्लेषणबाट साहित्यमा साहित्यिक भावसज्जाको निर्माण भएको हुन्छ । यसै सम्बन्धमा साहित्य बहुआयामिक क्षेत्र भएकाले एकतर्फी ढङ्गले सोच्नु पनि हुन्न । साहित्य यस्तो वस्तु हो जहाँ मानकहरु निर्माण हुन्छ र त्यसको विनिर्माण पनि हुन्छ । सबाल्टर्न अध्ययन अर्थविहीन, इतिहास विहीनलाई यसै प्रक्रियाबाट प्रभावकारी स्थान दिने प्रयत्न गरिएको छ (श्रेष्ठ, २०६८ : २४) । सन् १९८२ यतादेखि रञ्जित गुहा, गायत्री चक्रवर्ती स्पिभाक आदिद्वारा अभियानकै रूपमा थालिएको र विश्वव्यापी मान्यता र लोकप्रियता हासिल गर्दै गएको छ । साहित्यमा यसको निश्चित सैद्धान्तिक अवधारणा निर्माण भई नसके तापनि सबाल्टर्नको पहिचान, प्रतिनिधित्व र प्रभुत्व चेतना, सबाल्टर्नका आवाज आदि मूलभूत कोणबाट कृतिको सबाल्टर्न अध्ययन गर्न सकिन्छ । प्रस्तुत अध्ययनमा यिनै मूलभूत ढाँचाहरुलाई विश्लेषणको मूल आधारका रूपमा सापटी लिई विश्लेषण गरिएको छ ।

पूर्व साहित्यको सिंहवलोकन

समकालीन नेपालमा उग्र (Redical) सबाल्टर्न आवाज

(क) **नेपाली सिनेमामा सबाल्टर्न** ले नेपालको फिल्म उद्योगलाई माध्यम बनाएर सबाल्टर्न चेतना, प्रतिरोध र प्रतिनिधित्वलाई उजागर गरेको छ । यस एक दशक लामो माओवादी जनयुद्ध अधि र त्यसपछि परिवर्तनशील राजनीतिक-सांस्कृतिक परिदृश्यभित्र सबाल्टर्न प्रतिरोधका विभिन्न

आयामहरूलाई विश्लेषण गर्दछ। फिल्महरू जस्तै नुमाफुङ्ग, बाटोमुनिको फूल, उमा आदिमा वर्ग, जाति, लिङ्ग तथा जातीय विभिन्नतालाई केन्द्रमा राखेर सबाल्टर्न आवाजको स्वरूप र आत्म-गठन देखाइएको छ (श्रेष्ठ र अन्य, सन् २०२१)।

(ख) लोकसाहित्य तथा दोहोरी गीतमा सबाल्टर्न

लोक साहित्यको एक रूप नेपाली दोहोरी गीतले समेत नेपाली समाजमा विद्यमान विभेद तथा पीडक, शोषित, उत्पीडित समुदायहरूको पीडा, दुःख र अधीनस्थ जीवनलाई मौखिक शैलीमार्फत दर्साएको छ। यसले मौखिक परम्परामा विद्यमान सामाजिक असमानता र सबाल्टर्नका अनुभवजन्य कथाहरूलाई उजागर गर्दछ (वाग्ले, २०२३)।

(ग) मसान' नाटकमा नारी सबाल्टर्न

प्रसिद्ध नाटककार गोपाल प्रसाद रिमालद्वारा रचित नेपाली नाटक 'मसान' नाटकमा नारी सबाल्टर्नको स्थिति र विद्रोहलाई पाठ्य-सांस्कृतिक दृष्टिले विश्लेषण गरिएको छ। अध्ययनले पुरुष सत्तात्मक संरचना, सामाजिक र पारिवारिक दबाबले महिला सबाल्टर्नलाई कस्तो गरी सीमित बनाइदिएको छ र कसरी सामाजिक हिंसा र कुसंस्कार विरुद्ध विद्रोहको चेतना उत्पन्न हुन्छ भन्ने निष्कर्ष प्रस्तुत गरेको छ (मरहट्टा, २०२३)।

(घ) दलित प्रतिरोध र प्रतिनिधित्व

प्रस्तुत लेखले दलित, छुवाछुत र सामाजिक बहिष्करण विरुद्ध उत्तर-विमर्शको प्रस्तुति गरेको छ। यसमा कविताहरूले प्रतिनिधित्व गरी दलित समुदायले कसरी परम्परागत सामाजिक विभेद तथा अमानवीय अभ्यासहरूको विरुद्ध आवाज उठाएका छन् (मग्राती र विष्ट, २०२५)।

(ङ) शक्ति र वर्गीय संरचनाको विश्लेषण

नेपालको सामाजिक संरचनामा शक्ति, वर्ग, जाति र अधिकारहरूको अन्तरक्रियाले कस्तो प्रकारको सामाजिक विभेदलाई प्रस्थापित गरेको छ भन्ने विषयमा गहिरो विश्लेषण गरिएको छ। यस अध्ययनले सामन्ती र सामाजिक-आर्थिक विभेदका कारण उत्पन्न सबाल्टर्न स्थितिहरूलाई आधुनिक सन्दर्भमा बुझ्न मद्दत गर्दछ।

अध्ययन विधि

यस अध्ययनमा प्राथमिक स्रोतको रूपमा काठमाडौँ शिक्षा क्याम्पसमा कक्षा ११ मा अध्ययनरत विद्यार्थीहरूमा सबाल्टर्नका विभिन्न पक्षसम्बन्धी बुझाइ संकलन गर्न परिमाणात्मक अनुसन्धान विधि विधिमा आधारित छ। आवश्यक तथ्याङ्क सङ्कलनका लागि बहुविकल्पीय प्रयोग गरिएको छ। प्रश्नहरू सबाल्टर्नको अर्थ, भूमिका, समस्या, प्रतिनिधित्व, शक्ति सम्बन्ध, भाषा, साहित्य तथा सामाजिक

सन्दर्भसँग सम्बन्धित गरी तयार गरिएका थिए। विद्यार्थीहरूको प्रतिक्रिया पूर्वनिर्धारित विकल्पहरूमध्ये चयन गराई सङ्कलन गरिएको छ। प्राप्त तथ्याङ्कलाई प्रतिशतका आधारमा विश्लेषण गरी विद्यार्थीहरूको समग्र अवधारणात्मक बुझाइ मूल्याङ्कन गरिएको छ।

यसै गरी द्वितीय सामग्रीको रूपमा रमेश विकलद्वारा रचित फुटपाथ मिनिस्टर कथामा सबाल्टर्नले बालमनोविज्ञानमा पारेको असर बारे विवेचना गरिएको छ। पुष्ट्याईको रूपमा यससँग सम्बन्धित विभिन्न लेख, रचना, गीत, सङ्गीत, सिनेमा, लोकगीत तथा सांस्कृतिक, धार्मिक एवम् अन्य पौराणिक अवधारणाहरूलाई समेत स्रोत सामग्रीको रूपमा लिई वर्णात्मक विधिद्वारा विवेचना गरिएको छ। कथाकार रमेश विकलद्वारा लिखित फुटपाथ मिनिस्टर कथालाई प्राथमिक स्रोत र कथा विश्लेषणका लागि प्रसिद्ध साहित्यकार ग्राम्सीद्वारा प्रतिपादित सैद्धान्तिक अवधारणालाई द्वितीयक स्रोतका सामग्रीका रूपमा प्रमुख रूपमा प्रयोग गरिएको छ। वर्णात्मक तथा गुणात्मक दुबै ढाँचामा संरचित प्रस्तुत अध्ययनका लागि आवश्यक सामग्री सङ्कलन पुस्तकालयीय पद्धतिबाट गरिएको छ भने तिनको आवश्यक व्याख्या, विश्लेषण भाषिक वर्णन तथा कथाका विभिन्न साक्ष्यहरूबाट पुष्टि गरिएको छ।

परिणाम तथा छलफल

कुनै पनि सिद्धान्त तथा आधारविना कथामा सबाल्टर्न पहिचान गर्न सकिदैन। त्यसैले सबाल्टर्न पहिचानका लागि प्रसिद्ध साहित्यकार ग्राम्सीद्वारा अधि सारिएका सांस्कृतिक अध्ययनभित्रको नवीन सैद्धान्तिक अवधारणा सबाल्टर्न सिद्धान्तलाई मुख्य आधार बनाइएको छ। यस अध्ययनमा सबाल्टर्न पहिचानका लागि आवश्यक सिद्धान्तलाई विभिन्न उपशीर्षकहरूमा चर्चा गरिएको छ।

‘फुटपाथ मिनिस्टर’ कथाको आख्यान सन्दर्भ

प्रस्तुत कथा आमाबाबु नभएका टुहुरा बालबालिकाहरू सहरी सभ्यतामा कसरी जीवन गुजारा गर्छन् भन्ने कथ्यमा आधारित छ। यस कथामा ज्ञान शक्तिका आडमा ती पीडित र शोषितहरू विसङ्गति र सामाजिक असमानताको सिकार कसरी बन्दछन् भन्ने विषयवस्तु समेटिएको छ। अभिभावक गुमाउँदा राज्यले आफ्नो जिम्मेवारीमा नसमेटेको सडक बालबालिकाहरू कसरी बाँच्न विवश छन् भन्ने वास्तविकतालाई कथाले आम पाठकमाभ उजागर गरेको छ।

यस अध्ययनमा प्रभुत्वशाली वर्गद्वारा संवेदनहीन व्यवहारले किनारामा पारिएका अधीनस्थ वर्गका अमानवीय जीवन जिउन बाध्य वेसाहाराहरूको अवस्था चित्रित छ। सडकमा मागेर खाने त्यहीँ उनीहरूको आफ्नो छुट्टै संसारको कारुणिक चित्र कथामा देखाइएको छ। ती असहाय केटाकेटीहरू यौवनावस्थामा प्रवेश गर्दाका क्षण र यौन शोषण आदि समस्या कथामा विवेच्य भएर रहेका छन्। शक्ति र ज्ञानका आडमा मगन्ते उपनाम पाएका पीडित बालबालिकाहरूको नसुनिएको आवाजलाई

कथाले कारुणिक तरिकाले प्रस्तुत गरेको छ। गाँस, बास र कपासको सामान्य आधारभूत आवश्यकता उनीहरूको कल्पनाभन्दा बाहिरका विषय हुन्। यसरी राज्यद्वारा वास्ता नगरिएका ती बालबालिकाहरू कथामा जीवन गुजारा गर्नका लागि भौतारिरहेको देखाइएको छ। चेतनाको वृद्धिसँगै उनीहरूलाई पनि सफा लुगा लगाउने, मिठो खाना खाने, सिनेमा हेरेर मनोरञ्जन लिने चाहनाले सताएको छ। त्यसकै लागि सडक छाडेर होटेलको कामदार हुन पाएकोमा सुखद अनुभूति गर्न थालेको कथ्य सन्दर्भ यस कथामा रहेको देखिन्छ। यसरी सीमान्तकृत गरिएका, राज्यले वास्ता नगरेका यस कथाका पात्रहरू सबाल्टर्न अध्ययनभित्र समेटिएका छन् (शिवाकोटी, २०७१ : २१६)।

वर्गीय आधारमा सबाल्टर्न

‘फुटपाथ मिनिस्टर’ कथामा अभिभावक गुमाएका **गोरे, जघने, भोटे, टिकी** जस्ता बालबालिकाहरू सबाल्टर्न वर्गको रूपमा चित्रण गरिएका छन्। यस कथाका पात्रहरू वास्तविक रूपमा निमुखा र सबैभन्दा तल्लो तहमा पारिएका पात्र हुन्। यस कथाका पात्रहरू वर्गीय दृष्टिले सबाल्टर्न हुन्। शाह वंशीय तत्कालीन राजा पृथ्वी नारायण शाह (सन १७४३-१७६८) ले नेपाल चार वर्ण र छत्तीस जातको साभा फूलबारी रहेको धारणा व्यक्त गरेको इतिहासहरूमा पाइन्छ। यसले तत्कालीन समाजमा समेत सबाल्टर्नको अवस्थालाई चित्रण गर्दछ। यसरी नेपाली समाज परापूर्व कालदेखि विविध वर्गमा विभाजित थियो, छ र रहिरहने छ। यो वर्गले पहिलेदेखि नै सामन्ती टाठाबाठाहरूबाट शोषण र उत्पीडन खेप्दै आएका विभिन्न लेख रचनाहरू तथा टुहुरा गोरे, जघने जस्ता पात्रहरूको न त बस्ने घर छ, न त खाने अन्न, न त लाउने व्यवस्था नै छ। सबै कारणबाट यो वर्ग बञ्चित छ। सडक नै उनीहरूको घर हो। विचल्ली भएर सहर पसेर मागेर खाने यी सबाल्टर्न पात्रहरू कसरी घृणित र अपमानित अनि सीमान्तकृत भएर जिउनु परिरहेको छ। त्यस तथ्यलाई कथामा यसरी प्रस्तुत गरिएको छ :

“उसकी आमा त धेरै पहिले कहिले हो कहिले गइसकेकी थिइन्। एक दिन बाबु पनि अचानक मरिदिएछन्। अनि त जालभेल र प्रपञ्चद्वारा लखेटिएका गोरे, गाउँ छोडेर सहर पस्यो। एक दिन रनभुल्लमा परेर रानीपोखरीको डिनको फुटपाथमा उभिन पुगेथ्यो (पृ. ६३)।”

यो साक्ष्यहरूबाट के प्रस्ट हुन्छ भने अभिभावक गुमाएका बालबालिकाहरू बाँच्नका लागि बाध्य छन् भन्ने तथ्यलाई पुष्टि गर्दछ। समाज, राज्यले टुहुरा बालबालिकाप्रति कुनै प्रकारको जिम्मेवारी महसुस गर्दैन। समाज, राज्य र गन्यमान्यहरू मानवीय संवेदनाहीन शून्यभावले उनीहरूको विवशताको मूक दर्शक बन्दै ठुला ठुला भाषण ठोकेर हिडिरहेका छन्।

जातीयता आधारमा सबाल्टर्न

नेपाली साहित्यमा सबाल्टर्न वर्गको प्रतिनिधित्व गर्ने अर्को महत्त्वपूर्ण आधार जातीयता हो । यसले नेपाली समाजको विभाजनलाई प्रतिबिम्बित गर्दछ । प्रस्तुत कथामा जातीयतामा आधारित सबाल्टर्नको पक्ष प्रत्यक्ष रूपमा बलियो नदेखिए पनि केही पात्रहरूको नामकरण र सम्बोधनले यस पक्षलाई सूक्ष्म रूपमा उजागर गरेको छ । कथामा गोरे, जघने जस्ता पात्रहरूलाई नाममा 'एकार' जोडेर बोलाइएको छ, जसले उनीहरूको सीमान्तकृत अवस्थालाई जनाउँछ । यसै गरी भोटे नामक पात्रलाई त नाम नै नदिई उनको जातको आधारमा मात्र सम्बोधन गरिएको छ । यसले उनलाई सीमान्तकृत पात्रको रूपमा प्रस्तुत गर्दछ । यसलाई कथाको एउटा अंशले यसरी पुष्टि गर्न सकिन्छ "भोटेले भन्यो, म एकलै छु तै पनि पुलिसले कतिपल्ट लखेटिसक्यो । चिम्टे, टिकी, घैटे कोही पनि छैनन् म एकलै छु (पृ. ६५) ।" यस कथनले सबाल्टर्न वर्गभित्र पनि भोटे एक्लो र असहाय भएको चित्रण गर्दछ । यसरी, 'फुटपाथ मिनिस्टर' कथामा जातीयतालाई सबाल्टर्न पात्रहरूको निर्माणको आधार बनाइएको छ ।

लैङ्गिकताका आधारमा सबाल्टर्न

सबाल्टर्न वर्गको पहिचानको अर्को महत्त्वपूर्ण आधार लैङ्गिकता हो । 'फुटपाथ मिनिस्टर' कथामा किशोरी पात्र टिकीको भूमिकालाई सूक्ष्म तर सशक्त रूपमा प्रस्तुत गरिएको छ । टिकीको चरित्रले लैङ्गिक असमानता र शोषणको यथार्थ चित्रण गरेको छ । यस कथामा टिकीलाई सडकमा बस्ने अन्य किशोर पात्रहरूबाट हुने शारीरिक शोषणको समस्याबाट ग्रसित भएको देखाइएको छ । सुरुमा जघनेले टिकीमाथि शोषण गर्छ र टिकी मन नपराईकन उसको दुराचारलाई सहन बाध्य हुन्छिन् । पछि गोरेको आगमनपछि उसले पनि टिकीमाथि अधिकार जमाउन खोज्छ । यसरी कथामा सडकमा बस्ने किशोरीहरूको दयनीय र पीडादायी जीवनको सबाल्टर्न अवस्थालाई मार्मिक ढङ्गबाट स्पष्ट पारिएको छ । यस भनाइलाई कथांशमा टिकी मार्फत यसरी प्रस्ट पारिएको छ : "त्यो जघने मोरो त साह्रै बदमास छ, मागेको पैसा पनि लुट्छ, म जहाँ गए पनि लखेटिरहन्छ उसकै स्वास्नी जस्तो । मलाई त्योसँग सुत्न पनि मन लाग्दैन (पृ. ६५) ।" यस कथनले टिकी यौन शोषणको सिकार भएकी र उनको कारुणिक तथा निरीह अवस्थालाई स्पष्ट पार्दछ । यसर्थ लैङ्गिक आधारका कारण टिकीलाई कथामा एक सबाल्टर्न पात्रको रूपमा प्रस्तुत गरिएको छ ।

कथा लेखक रमेश विकलको सबाल्टर्नप्रतिको दृष्टिकोण

विकलद्वारा रचित 'फुटपाथ मिनिस्टर' कथा प्रगतिशील कथाहरूमध्ये यो कथा एक उत्कृष्ट हो । उनी एक सबाल्टर्न-मैत्री कथाकार पनि हुन् । यस कथामा उनले पात्रहरू गोरे, जघने, टिकी र भोटे जस्ता सीमान्तकृत वर्गका पात्रहरूको पक्षमा आफ्नो अभिमत प्रकट गरेका छन् । मध्यम वर्गीय पृष्ठभूमि भए पनि लेखकको यिनै पात्रहरूको दयनीय अवस्थाप्रति गहिरो सहानुभूति रहेको देखिन्छ ।

यसै सहानुभूतिका कारण उनले यो कथा लेखेको अनुमान गर्न सकिन्छ । कथामा गोरेको प्रसङ्गमा गरिएको टिप्पणीले लेखकको दृष्टिकोणलाई अझ स्पष्ट पार्दछ । “एघार वर्षको गोरेले यो फराकिलो संसारको विचित्र कोलाहलको माझमा एकदिन आफूलाई बिलकुल असहाय र एक्लो उभिएको पाएथ्यो (पृ. ६६) ।” यो कथनबाट के स्पष्ट हुन्छ, भने मार्क्सवादको आदर्शलाई आत्मसात् गर्दै प्रगतिशील कथा लेख्ने विकल यस कथामा सिर्जना गरिएका सबाल्टर्न पात्रहरूको अवस्था र सङ्घर्षप्रति पूर्ण रूपमा पक्षधर रहेका छन् । उनको लेखनकलाले यी पात्रहरूको पीडा र एक्लोपनलाई मात्र देखाउँदैन, वरु समाजले उनीहरूलाई कसरी सीमान्तकृत गरेको छ, भन्ने यथार्थलाई पनि प्रस्ट पारेको छ ।

प्रभुत्वशाली संस्कृतिको प्रभाव

‘फुटपाथ मिनिस्टर’ कथामा प्रभुत्वशाली संस्कृतिको प्रभाव सबाल्टर्न पात्रहरूमा स्पष्ट रूपमा पारेको देखिन्छ । यसको उदाहरण गोरे र जघने जस्ता पात्रहरूको व्यवहारमा पाइन्छ । जब जघनेले गोरेलाई ‘तँ के हेर्न आएको, तेरो ठाउँ हो त... (पृ.६७)’ भन्दै उसको कठालो समात्न खोज्छ, यसले सबाल्टर्नहरूभित्र पनि एकअर्कालाई दबाउने र प्रभुत्व जमाउने चाहना रहेको देखाउँछ । यस व्यवहारले सबाल्टर्न पात्रहरू प्रभुत्वशाली वर्गको अधीनस्थ संस्कृतिबाट प्रभावित भएको र उनीहरूले आफूमाथि भएको दमनलाई नै एकअर्कामा प्रयोग गर्न थालेको कुरा स्पष्ट पार्दछ । यसको अर्थ उनीहरूले शक्तिशाली वर्गको संस्कृति र व्यवहारलाई आत्मसात् गरेका छन् र आफू पनि त्यस्तै शक्तिशाली बन्ने प्रयासमा छन् । यसले समाजमा स्थापित प्रभुत्वशाली संस्कृतिलाई अप्रत्यक्ष रूपमा समर्थन गरेको देखिन्छ ।

यसरी कथाले सबाल्टर्न वर्गका पात्रहरू केवल पीडित मात्र नभई, प्रभुत्वशाली संस्कृतिको नक्कल गर्दै आफैँभित्र पनि शक्ति संरचना निर्माण गर्न खोज्दैछन् भन्ने जटिल यथार्थलाई प्रस्तुत गरेको छ । यसले सबाल्टर्न अध्ययनको एउटा महत्त्वपूर्ण पक्षलाई कसरी तल्लो तहसम्म शोषण र प्रभुत्वको चक्र फैलाएका हुन्छन् भन्ने तथ्यलाई स्पष्ट पारेको छ ।

कथामा देखिएको सबाल्टर्नको आवाज

कथाकार विकलले यस कथामा सामाजिक विसङ्गतिका कारण उब्जिएका समस्याहरूलाई सूक्ष्म ढङ्गबाट उठान गरेका छन् । समाजका हुने खाने, ठालु तथा प्रभुत्वशाली वर्गका अगाडि गोरे, जघने, भोटे, टिकी, चिम्टेजस्ता सबाल्टर्न पात्रहरू बोल्न सक्ने अवस्थामा छैनन् । सबाल्टर्नका तर्फबाट लेखकले आफैँ बोलेका छन् । सबाल्टर्नहरू मौन संस्कृतिका रहेका छन् । “गोरेलाई कहाँ जाऊँ र के गरौँ भइहेको थियो । सहरमा चिने जानेका इष्टमित्र पनि त कोही थिएनन् । ऊ के गरोस् अब ? उसलाई एकै पटक रुन मन लागेर आयो अनि त्यहाँ आँसुले भरिएका आँखाले उसले आफ्नो वरिपरि हेयो (पृ.६३) ।” यस कथनबाट के स्पष्ट हुन्छ भने कथामा सबाल्टर्न पात्रका पक्षमा

लेखकले नै आवाज उठाएका छन् । सबै सबाल्टर्न पात्रहरु मौन छन् । सबाल्टर्न पात्रहरुले प्रतिरोध तथा प्रतिक्रिया केही गरेका छैनन् । तसर्थ “यस कथामा सबाल्टर्न स्वयम् आवाज र सर्तहरु बोल्नमा सिपालु हुन सकेका छैनन् । पात्रहरु बाचल हुन नसक्नुका पछाडि तत्कालीन विसङ्गत सामाजिक परिवेशले प्रमुख भूमिका खेलेको देखिन्छ (शिवाकोटी, २०७१ : २२१) ।” यो संसारमा टुहुराहरुको आफ्नो भन्ने कोही छैन । उनीहरु जसरी भए पनि बाँच्नु छ । उनीहरुको यस्तो दयनीय अवस्थालाई कसैले पनि सम्बन्धित निकायसामु पुऱ्याएका छैनन् । विभिन्न साहित्य मार्फत भए पनि साहित्यकारहरुले ती सबाल्टर्नहरुका पक्षमा आवाज उठाएका छन् । यो नै लेखकीय सबाल्टर्नप्रतिको आवाज हो ।

कथामा सबाल्टर्नको प्रतिनिधित्व र प्रभुत्व

‘फुटपाथ मिनिस्टर’ कथामा लेखकले टुहुरा बालबालिकालाई सबाल्टर्न पात्रका रूपमा सशक्त ढङ्गले प्रस्तुत गरेका छन् । यी पात्रहरु जस्तै **गोरे, जघने, टिकी र भोटे**, सामाजिक विसङ्गतिका कारण नारकीय जीवन बिताउन बाध्य छन् । उनीहरु दुर्गन्धित र असुरक्षित स्थानमा सुत्छन् । मागेर जीवन निर्वाह गर्छन् । कुनै पनि आधारभूत मानवीय अधिकारबाट उनीहरु वञ्चित छन् । कथामा वर्णित यस्ता घटनाहरुले सबाल्टर्नको दयनीय अवस्थालाई प्रत्यक्ष रूपमा चित्रण गरेको छ । उनीहरुको न बस्ने बास छ, न खाने गाँसको ठेगान छ, न त उनीहरुको हेरचाह गर्ने कुनै आफन्त नै छन् । यसरी लेखकले कथाभरि सबाल्टर्नको बलियो उपस्थिति देखाएका छन् । कथामा ‘भोक लाग्यो । लौन हजुर । एक पैसा’ (पृ. ६४) । जस्ता कथनले उनीहरुको निरीह अवस्था र दैनिक सङ्घर्षलाई अझ स्पष्ट पारेको छ । यी पात्रहरुको माध्यमबाट कथाकारले सीमान्तकृत वर्गको पीडा, उनीहरुको आवाजविहीनता र समाजको उपेक्षालाई प्रस्तुत गरेका छन् । उनीहरुलाई समाजले कसरी किनारामा धकेलेको छ र उनीहरुको जीवन कति कष्टकर छ भन्ने यथार्थलाई कथाले गहिराइमा पुगेर प्रस्तुत गरेको छ । त्यसैले यो सबाल्टर्न वर्गको जीवन र सङ्घर्षको प्रतिनिधित्व गर्ने एक सशक्त कथा हो भन्न सकिन्छ ।

ज्ञान र शक्तिको सम्बन्धमा सबाल्टर्न

‘फुटपाथ मिनिस्टर’ कथाका पात्रहरु समाजद्वारा लत्याइएका र हेला गरिएका सबाल्टर्न पात्र हुन् । समाजमा उनीहरुको कुनै मूल्य र मान्यता छैन । उनीहरुले आफ्ना अभिभावक गुमाएपछि समाजले उनीहरुको जिम्मेवारी लिन अस्वीकार गरेको छ । यसले गर्दा उनीहरु सीमान्तकृत हुन बाध्य भएका छन् । समाजको शक्तिशाली वा केन्द्रमा रहेको वर्गले सधैं आफ्नो प्रभुत्व कायम राख्न खोज्छ र कमजोर वर्गलाई आफूसँग बराबर हुन दिँदैन । यो वर्गले आफूलाई ज्ञानको प्रतिपादक र सत्यको वाहकका रूपमा प्रस्तुत गर्दै सीमान्तकृत वर्गलाई अज्ञानी र अबुझको संज्ञा दिई आफू अनुकूल काम गराउँछ । शक्ति र प्रभुत्वको आडमा यो वर्गले आफूलाई फाइदा हुने नियम कानुन बनाउँछ ।

कथाको गोरे नामक पात्रलाई पनि यस्तै जालभेल र षड्यन्त्रका कारण गाउँ छोडेर सहर पस्न बाध्य पारिएको थियो । सहरमा पुगेर ऊ रानीपोखरीको डिलमा असहाय अवस्थामा उभिन पुग्छ । यस कथनले यो तथ्यलाई पुष्टि गर्दछ कि जो शक्तिमा रहेको हुन्छ, उसकै ज्ञानको बोलवाला चल्छ, र कमजोरको कुरा कसैले सुन्दैन । यसरी कथाले समाजमा उच्च वर्गले निर्माण गरेको ज्ञानलाई अकाट्य सत्यको रूपमा कसरी स्थापित गरिन्छ, भन्ने वास्तविकतालाई स्पष्ट पारेको छ ।

तालिका १ फुटपाथ मिनिस्टर कथाबाट सबाल्टर्न सम्बन्धी अवधारणामा विद्यार्थीको बुझाइ

क्र.सं.	प्रमुख विषय	प्रतिक्रिया	सहभागी विद्यार्थी	बुझाइको प्रतिशत	व्याख्या
१	सबाल्टर्नको मूल अर्थ बोध	पछाडी पारिएका समुदाय वा वर्ग	३०	८६	अधिकांश विद्यार्थीले सबाल्टर्नलाई दलित, महिला, बालबालिका, श्रमिक जस्ता समूहसँग जोडेर बुझेका छन्।
२	२१ औं शताब्दीमा सबाल्टर्नको अवस्था	शक्तिको विरोधमा उभिने सशक्त आवाज	२८	८०	सबाल्टर्न अब मौन होइन, अचेत र पतिरोधी समूह हो भन्ने बुझाई देखिन्छ ।
३	शक्ति र शक्तिविहीनता विचको द्वन्द्व	सत्ता तथा निर्णाय प्रक्रियामा निर्णायक भूमिका नहुनु	२९	८३	सबाल्टर्नको मुख्य समस्या शक्ति संरचनामा पहुँच नहुनु हो ।
४	सबाल्टर्नको आवाज व्यक्त हुने माध्यम	साहित्य मिडिया र सामाजिक आन्दोलन	३१	८९	साहित्य, सामाजिक सञ्जाल र आन्दोलनलाई प्रभावकारी माध्यम ठानेका छन् ।
५	सबाल्टर्न शब्दको अस्पष्टता	बहुआयामिक र सन्दर्भ अनुसार अर्थ बदलिने	२७	७७	अवधारणा कमजोर नभई जटिल र बहुअर्थक भएको बुझाइ
६	फुटपाथ मिनिस्टरका पात्रका वर्गीय पहिचान	सडक जीवन बिताउने पिछ्छाडिएका बालबालिका	३३	९४	कथाले वास्तविक सबाल्टर्न बालजीवनलाई प्रतिनिधित्व गरेको ठहर
७	कथामा सबाल्टर्न प्रस्तुति	यथार्थ जीवनको चित्रण	३२	९१	कथाले मनोरञ्जनभन्दा सामाजिक यथार्थ उजागर गरेको प्रतिक्रिया
८	बालमस्तिष्कमा पर्ने मनोवैज्ञानिक प्रभाव	सहानुभूति र सामाजिक चेतना	३०	८६	विद्यार्थीमा करुणा, संवेदनशीलता र सामाजिक जिम्मेवारी बढेको देखिन्छ
९	शक्ति संरचना सम्बन्धी बोध	समाजमा असमान शक्ति संरचना छ	२८	८०	गरिबी व्यक्तिगत कमजोरी होइन भन्ने स्पष्ट बुझाइ
१०	सीप तथा मूल्य	आलोचनात्मक	३१	८९	पाठले परीक्षामुखीभन्दा

	विकास	सोच र सामाजिक उत्तरदायित्व			जीवनोपयोगी सीप विकास गरेको निष्कर्ष
११	विभेदको व्यक्तिगत अनुभूति	अपमान, पीडा, मौनता, आत्मसम्मानमा चोट	२६	७४	भाषा, व्यवहार र शक्ति प्रयोगबाट विभेद हुने अनुभव व्यक्त
१२	अवस्था सुधारका सुझाव	समावेशी भाषा, समान व्यवहार, भेदभाव अन्त्य	२९	८३	बहुसंख्यकले भाषा सुधार र गैर-भेदभाव नै समाधानको बाटो भने
१३	कथाको मुख्य सन्देश	समानता, मानवता, अवसरको न्याय	३०	८६	सबाल्टर्न बालबालिकाको आवाज सुन्नुपर्छ भन्ने सन्देश प्रमुख

प्रस्तुत तालिकाले कक्षा ११ का विद्यार्थीहरूमा सबाल्टर्न अवधारणा र 'फुटपाथ मिनिस्टर' कथाको शैक्षिक-सामाजिक प्रभाव स्पष्ट रूपमा उजागर गरेको छ। ८६ प्रतिशत विद्यार्थीहरूले सबाल्टर्नलाई दलित, महिला, बालबालिका, श्रमिक जस्ता समूहसँग जोडेर बुझेका छन् भने ८० प्रतिशत विद्यार्थीहरूले यसलाई मौन होइन, अचेत र प्रतिरोधी समूहको रूपमा बुझेका छन्। यसै गरी ८३ प्रतिशत विद्यार्थीहरूले सबाल्टर्नको मुख्य समस्या शक्ति संरचनामा पहुँच नहुनु रहेको र ८९ प्रतिशत विद्यार्थीले यसलाई साहित्य, सामाजिक सञ्जाल र आन्दोलनको माध्यमबाट प्रभावकारी रूपमा बुझेका छन्। यसै गरी, ७७ प्रतिशत विद्यार्थीहरूले सबाल्टर्नको अवधारणा कमजोर नभई जटिल र बहुअर्थक भएका व्यक्त गरेका छन् भने सबैभन्दा बढी ९४ प्रतिशत विद्यार्थीले निरीह तथा गरिब बालजीवनलाई प्रतिनिधित्व गरेको अनुभूति गरेका छन्। फुटपाथ मिनिस्टर कथाले मनोरञ्जनभन्दा सामाजिक यथार्थ उजागर गरेको प्रतिक्रिया ९१ प्रतिशत विद्यार्थीहरूले दिएका छन् भने ८६ प्रतिशत विद्यार्थीहरूले यसलाई करुणा, संवेदनशीलता र सामाजिक जिम्मेवारीका बारेमा बुझेका छन्। नेपालमा गरिबी व्यक्तिगत कमजोरी मात्र नभएको बुझाई ८० प्रतिशत विद्यार्थीहरूमा रहेको देखिन्छ। यसै क्रममा यस कथा ८९ प्रतिशत विद्यार्थीहरूका लागि परीक्षामुखी भन्दा जीवनोपयोगी सीप विकासको रूपमा रहेको प्रतिक्रिया रहेको छ भने ७४ प्रतिशत विद्यार्थीहरूले यसलाई भाषा, व्यवहार र शक्ति प्रयोगबाट विभेद हुने कुरामा सहमती व्यक्त गरेका छन्। यसै गरी, ८३ प्रतिशत विद्यार्थीहरूले भने भाषा सुधार र गैर-भेदभाव नै समाधानको बाटो भन्ने अर्थमा यसलाई चित्रण गरेका छन् भने ८६ प्रतिशत विद्यार्थीहरूले सबाल्टर्न बालबालिकाको आवाज हरेक निकायले सुन्नुपर्छ भन्ने भावना व्यक्त गरेको देखिन्छ।

निष्कर्ष

रमेश विकलको चर्चित प्रगतिवादी कथा 'फुटपाथ मिनिस्टर' कथाले शोषणप्रति घृणा र शोषितप्रति गहिरो सहानुभूति व्यक्त गरेको छ। इतिहासविहीन, आवाजविहीन, निमुखा वर्ग र सीमान्तकृत

पात्रहरूको जटिल जीवनलाई मुख्य विषयका रूपमा उठाएर उनीहरूको पीडालाई जस्ताको तस्तै प्रस्तुत गरेको छ। कथाका पात्रहरू **गोरे, जघने, टिकी, भोटे** लगायत अरू पनि सबाल्टर्न पात्रहरू हुन्। उनीहरू गाँस, बास र कपासको अभावमा कष्टकर जीवन बिताउन बाध्य छन्। उनीहरू सडकमा बसेर माग्छन्। पानी चुहिने पाटीमा गुडुल्को परेर सुत्छन्। यस्तो अवस्थामा पनि उनीहरूमा प्रतिरोधको चेतना विकसित भइसकेको छैन। यस्तै अवस्थामा पनि उनीहरू रमाइरहेका छन्। अध्ययनले केन्द्रको प्रभुत्वसँग जुध्न र आफ्नो अधिकारका लागि आवाज उठाउन ज्ञानको प्रादुर्भाव हुन आवश्यक रहेको विचारलाई जोड दिएको छ।

कक्षा ११ का विद्यार्थीहरूमा सबाल्टर्न अवधारणा र 'फुटपाथ मिनिस्टर' कथाले गहिरो शैक्षिक-सामाजिक प्रभाव पारेको स्पष्ट देखिन्छ। विद्यार्थीहरूले सबाल्टर्नलाई केवल पिछडिएका समूह नभई सचेत, प्रतिरोधी र सामाजिक संरचनामा आवाज उठाउन सक्ने पात्रका रूपमा बुझ्न थालेका छन्, जसले पाठ्यक्रम र कथाको प्रभावकारिता पुष्टि गर्छ। कथाले सहानुभूति, सामाजिक चेतना, आलोचनात्मक सोच र जिम्मेवारी विकासमा महत्वपूर्ण योगदान पुऱ्याएको देखिन्छ। पाठ्यक्रमले सामाजिक असमानता, शक्ति-शक्तिहीनताको द्वन्द्व र सामाजिक विभेदबारे विद्यार्थीलाई आलोचनात्मक दृष्टिले सोचन उत्प्रेरित गरेको छ। केही विद्यार्थीले व्यक्तिगत अनुभव खुलस्त रूपमा व्यक्त नगरेको वा सामाजिक दबावका कारण प्रतिक्रिया सीमित भएको पाइएको छ, जसले पाठ्यक्रम र कथामा अभि संवादमुखी र स्पष्ट बनाउने आवश्यकता संकेत गर्छ। समग्रमा, 'फुटपाथ मिनिस्टर' कथाले साहित्यको सीमित मनोरञ्जनात्मक मूल्यभन्दा पर, सामाजिक शिक्षाको सशक्त माध्यमको रूपमा काम गरेको छ। कथाले समावेशी भाषा, समान व्यवहार र गैर-भेदभावलाई सामाजिक रूपान्तरणको आधारको रूपमा स्थापित गर्दै विद्यार्थीमा नैतिक चेतना र सामाजिक उत्तरदायित्वको विकासमा योगदान पुऱ्याएको निष्कर्षमा पुगिन्छ।

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लेखसार

प्रस्तुत लेखको उद्देश्य २०२८ देखि २०७८ सम्मका कक्षा चारका नेपाली पाठ्यक्रममा व्याकरणका विषय वस्तुको छनोट, स्तरण तथा व्याकरणका विषय वस्तुमा भएका परिवर्तनको विश्लेषण गर्नु रहेको छ। गुणात्मक ढाँचा तथा पुस्तकालयीय विधिमा आधारित यस लेखमा प्राथमिक स्रोतका रूपमा २०२८ देखि २०७८ सम्म पाठ्यक्रम विकास केन्द्रद्वारा प्रकाशित कक्षा चारका छ ओटा नेपाली पाठ्यक्रममा प्रस्तुत व्याकरणका विषय वस्तुलाई लिइएको छ। पाठ्यक्रममा व्याकरणका विषय वस्तुको प्रयोगसँग सम्बन्धित भएर गरिएका कार्यहरूलाई द्वितीयक स्रोतको रूपमा उपयोग गरिएको छ। लेखकद्वारा गरिएका दावी पुष्टि गर्न पूर्ववर्ती अध्येताका सन्दर्भहरू उद्धृत गरेर प्रमाण र उदाहरणका रूपमा पेस गर्दै निष्कर्षमा पुगिएको छ। २०२८ देखि २०७८ सम्मका कक्षा चारका छ ओटा नेपाली पाठ्यक्रममा व्याकरणका विषय वस्तु छनोट र स्तरणमा विविधता देखिन्छ। पाठ्यक्रममा व्याकरणका विषय वस्तुलाई व्यवस्थित र स्पष्टसँग प्रस्तुत गर्ने पहिलो कार्य २०२८ को पाठ्यक्रमले गरेको देखिन्छ भने २०४९ र २०७८ मा यसलाई अझै प्रभावकारी बनाउँदै लिएको पाइन्छ। व्याकरणका विषय वस्तुको पाठसँगको आवश्यकता, विषय वस्तु प्रयोगको व्यापकता र आंशिक रूपमा चक्रीय स्तरणको प्रयोगले २०७८ को पाठ्यक्रम उपयुक्त देखिन्छ। कक्षा चारका नेपाली पाठ्यक्रममा व्याकरणका विषय वस्तुलाई कसरी स्तरण गर्ने भन्ने सन्दर्भमा २०७८ अघिका कुनै पनि पाठ्यक्रमले स्पष्ट सङ्केत नगरेकोमा २०७८ को पाठ्यक्रममा भने व्याकरणको कुन विषय वस्तु कुन पाठक्रम र कुन विधाको पाठमा राखेर सिकाउने भन्ने निर्धारण गरिएको पाइन्छ।

कुञ्जी शब्द : नेपाली पाठ्यक्रम, व्याकरणका विषय वस्तु, छनोट, स्तरण, परम्परा ।

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परिचय

भाषाको औपचारिक ज्ञान र सिप हासिल गर्न गराउनका लागि विभिन्न पाठ्य सामग्रीहरु विकास गरिएको हुन्छ। यी पाठ्य सामग्रीमध्ये पाठ्यक्रमलाई मुख्य मानिन्छ। पाठ्यक्रममा सम्बन्धित विषय अध्ययन गर्नुका उद्देश्य, विषय वस्तु, शिक्षण सहजीकरण क्रियाकलाप र मूल्याङ्कन प्रक्रिया समेत निर्धारण गरिएको हुन्छ। पाठ्यक्रमकै आधारमा पाठ्य पुस्तक, शिक्षक निर्देशिका, विशिष्टीकरण तालिका आदि निर्माण हुन्छन्। नेपाली भाषाको औपचारिक शिक्षण सिकाइका लागि पनि विभिन्न कालखण्डमा विभिन्न तह र कक्षाका लागि पाठ्यक्रमहरु निर्माण गरी कार्यान्वयन गरिँदै आइएको छ। यी पाठ्यक्रममा विधा, तिनका विषय क्षेत्र र पूरक रूपमा व्याकरणलाई समावेश गरिएको हुन्छ।

व्याकरणको औपचारिक शिक्षणका लागि आवश्यक पर्ने विषय वस्तुहरुको निर्धारण गर्ने काम भाषा पाठ्यक्रममा गरिएको हुन्छ। नेपाली भाषा शिक्षणका सन्दर्भमा २०२८ साल पूर्व व्याकरणलाई भाषा पाठ्यक्रम र पाठ्य पुस्तकमा राख्ने प्रचलन थिएन। त्यतिबेला व्याकरणका छुट्टै पुस्तक पढाउने गरिन्थ्यो। २०२८ पश्चात् भने व्याकरणलाई पनि भाषासँगै सिकाउने कार्यको थालनी भएको छ (अधिकारी, २०६९)। यो परम्परा आजसम्म चलिरहेको छ। यसै सन्दर्भमा २०२८ देखि २०७८ सम्मका कक्षा चारका नेपाली पाठ्यक्रममा व्याकरणका के कस्ता विषय वस्तु छानिएको रहेछ र छानिएका विषय वस्तुहरुलाई कसरी स्तरण गरिएको रहेछ भन्ने कुराको अध्ययन गर्ने उद्देश्य यस लेखमा राखिएको छ। सर्वप्रथम यहाँ व्याकरणको परिचय, व्याकरण शिक्षणको आवश्यकता र व्याकरणका विषय वस्तु छनोट तथा स्तरण गर्ने आधारका सम्बन्धमा गरिएका अध्ययन अनुसन्धानको समीक्षा गरिएको छ।

व्याकरण भनेको सम्बन्धित भाषाका मूल वक्ताहरुको भाषा प्रयोगमा पाइने संरचनागत विशेषता हो। व्याकरणलाई “भाषामा निहित व्यवस्थाको वर्णन” भनेर अधिकारी र शर्मा (२०६५, पृ. १२७) ले चिनाएका छन्। व्याकरण भाषा प्रयोक्ताले प्रयोग गरेको भाषिक अभिव्यक्तिमा नै अन्तरनिहित हुन्छ भन्ने उनीहरुको धारणा छ। अधिकारी (२०६९) का विचारमा पनि व्याकरण कुनै पनि भाषाका रूपगत तथा वाक्यगत संरचनाको वर्णन तथा विश्लेषणसँग सम्बन्धित भएकाले भाषासँग यसको अभिन्न सम्बन्ध रहन्छ। उनका विचारमा भाषाविना व्याकरणको कल्पना निरर्थक हुन जाने हुनाले भाषाबाट यसलाई अलग्याउनु स्वाभाविक हुँदैन। भाषाका आन्तरिक नियम र व्यवस्थाको जानकारी र धारणा प्रदान गरी उच्च स्तरीय भाषिक सिप विकास गर्न मद्दत गर्ने भएकाले यसको औपचारिक शिक्षण आवश्यक पर्छ। यही कारणले गर्दा भाषा पाठ्यक्रमका पाठ्यवस्तुहरुमध्ये व्याकरणलाई भाषा संरचना र भाषाको प्रयोग प्रयुक्ति बढाउने सबैभन्दा महत्त्वपूर्ण एकाइ मानिन्छ।

कुनै पनि भाषामा भएका रूपगत र वाक्यगत संरचनालाई सिक्ने सिकाउने प्रक्रिया व्याकरण शिक्षण हो। वर्णबोध, शब्दबोध, शब्द संरचना, वाक्य रचना र शुद्ध एवम् मानक भाषाको प्रयोग क्षमता उत्पन्न गराउनु व्याकरण शिक्षणको मूल अभिप्राय देखिन्छ (शर्मा, शर्मा र नागौरी, सन् १९९७)। व्याकरणको शिक्षणले भाषिक अनुशासन कायम गर्न, भाषिकागत र शैलीगत विचलन हटाउन, दोस्रो भाषाको प्रयोगमा पहिलो भाषाको प्रभाव हटाउन, औपचारिक र अनौपचारिक सन्दर्भमा भाषा प्रयोग गर्न सक्ने तुल्याउन, शुद्ध र परिष्कृत भाषाको प्रयोग गर्ने सक्षमता दिलाउन र उपयुक्त संरचना प्रयोग गरी तार्किक एवम् सिर्जनात्मक क्षमता विकास गर्न मद्दत पुऱ्याउँछ (ढकाल र खतिवडा, २०७३)। मार्ट (सन् २०१३) का अनुसार व्याकरण जटिल विषय भएकाले सिकारुलाई सरल र बोधगम्य बनाउन तथा भाषाको प्रभावकारी ज्ञान हासिल गर्न व्याकरणको ज्ञान अनिवार्य हुन्छ। अधिकारी (२०६२) का अनुसार भाषा सिकाइमा विद्यार्थीहरूका कठिनाइहरू पहिल्याउन र तिनको समाधान गर्न व्याकरणको शिक्षण आवश्यक छ। व्याकरणको शिक्षणले भाषाको प्रयोग गर्दा आवश्यक हुने शुद्धता, स्वीकार्यता र उपयुक्तताप्रति सचेतना बढाउन, भाषाले कसरी कार्य गर्छ भन्ने सुझ प्रदान गर्न तथा भाषाको मानक भेद सिक्नका लागि सघाउँछ।

यसरी भाषिक अनुशासन कायम गर्न, भाषिक ज्ञानको उपयुक्त स्तरण र परिष्कार गर्न, भाषाको खास संरचना पहिल्याउने क्षमताको विकास गर्न, भाषिकागत एवम् शैलीगत विचलन हटाउन, दोस्रो भाषाको प्रयोगमा पहिलो भाषाको प्रभाव हटाउन, भाषाको मानक रूप सिकाउन तथा उपयुक्त संरचना प्रयोग गरी तार्किक र सृजनात्मक क्षमताको विकास गर्न समेत व्याकरण शिक्षण अत्यावश्यक रहेको देखिन्छ।

शैक्षणिक व्याकरणका विषय वस्तुहरूको छनोटका सम्बन्धमा अधिकारी (२०६२) ले मनोभाषा विज्ञान र समाज भाषा विज्ञानका सिद्धान्त अपनाउनु पर्ने तथा विषय वस्तुहरू स्तरणको सिद्धान्त अनुसार सरलबाट जटिलको क्रममा चक्रीय रूपमा स्तरण गर्नु पर्ने धारणा राखेका छन्। श्रीवास्तव (सन् १९९२) ले शिक्षणको उद्देश्य एवम् आवश्यकता, पाठको छनोट, स्तरण र प्रस्तुतीकरण तथा शिक्षण विधि र प्रविधिको प्रयोगलाई ध्यानमा राखी शैक्षणिक व्याकरणका विषय वस्तु निर्धारण गर्नु पर्ने धारणा राखेका छन्। व्याकरण शिक्षणका लागि प्रयोगात्मक व्याकरण उपयोगी हुने उनको विचार छ। शर्मा, शर्मा र नागौरी (सन् १९९७) का विचारमा व्याकरणको संयोजन गर्दा व्यावहारिक किसिमले गर्नु उपयुक्त हुन्छ र यसरी संयोजन गर्दा पाठमा सिकेका नियमलाई विभिन्न पाठमा प्रयुक्त उदाहरणसँग सम्बन्धित गराएर प्रस्तुत गर्नु उपयुक्त हुन्छ।

थर्नवरी (सन् १९९९) ले व्याकरणका पाठ्यवस्तु चयन र विन्यासका सम्बन्धमा छनोट र स्तरण सिद्धान्त प्रस्तुत गरेका छन्। उनले व्याकरणका पाठ्यवस्तु छनोट गर्दा उपयोगिता र आवृत्तिलाई ध्यान दिनु पर्ने चर्चा गरेका छन्। उनका अनुसार बारम्बार आवृत्त हुने भाषिक एकाइ कम आवृत्त

हुने एकाइका तुलनामा बढी उपयोगी हुन्छन् । उपयोगिताको सन्दर्भ चाहिँ जुन कुरा सिकारुका लागि बढी आवश्यक हुन्छन् ती कुरा उनीहरूका लागि बढी उपयोगी हुन्छन् । स्तरणका सन्दर्भमा जटिलता, सिकाइ सामर्थ्यता र शिक्षण योग्यतालाई ध्यान दिनु पर्ने उनको मत छ । व्याकरणका पाठ्यवस्तुहरूको स्तरण गर्दा सरलता, क्रमबद्ध सिकाइमा आधारित, सिकारुको क्षमतामा आधारित र कार्यमूलक ढाँचामा संयोजन गर्नु पर्ने उनको विचार रहेको छ । उनले व्याकरणलाई प्रस्तुत गर्ने मुख्य दुई ढाँचा चर्चा गरेका छन् । पहिलो ढाँचा प्रस्तुतीकरण अभ्यास उत्पादन ढाँचामा शिक्षकले सर्वप्रथम प्रस्तुतीकरण गर्ने, दोस्रो चरणमा विद्यार्थीलाई प्रशस्त अभ्यास गराउने र अन्तिममा उत्पादन गर्न लगाउने काम गरिन्छ । उनको दोस्रो ढाँचा वैकल्पिक ढाँचामा कार्य शिक्षण कार्यको क्रम रहन्छ ।

नुनान (सन् २००१) ले व्याकरणका दृष्टिले धेरैजसो विदेशी भाषा शिक्षण कार्यक्रम र शिक्षण सामग्रीहरू रैखिक ढाँचामा सङ्गठित गरिएको उल्लेख गर्दै मौलिक पद्धतिको प्रयोग गर्न सुझाव दिएका छन् । यस पद्धतिमा सिकारुलाई आआफ्नै गति र समयमा सिक्न दिइन्छ । पाठलाई एकैपटक पूर्ण रूपमा सिकाउने लक्ष्य राखिँदैन । कक्षाकोठालाई अन्वेषणात्मक र सहकार्यात्मक कार्यमा आधारित बनाइन्छ । पाठहरू पटक पटक पुनरावृत्त हुन्छन् र ती सन्दर्भपरक पनि बनाइएका हुन्छन् । हार्मर (सन् २००१) ले भाषा पाठ्यपुस्तकका पाठ्यवस्तुलाई सङ्गठित गर्ने प्रमुख आधारहरू सिकाइ क्षमता, आवृत्ति, व्यापन र उपयोगी गरी चार ओटा औल्याएका छन् । उनले पाठ्यवस्तु सङ्गठनका विभिन्न प्रकारहरू : व्याकरणात्मक पाठ्यवस्तु, शब्दावली पाठ्यवस्तु, प्रकार्यात्मक पाठ्यवस्तु, अवस्थाकेन्द्री पाठ्यवस्तु, विषयकेन्द्री पाठ्यवस्तु र कार्यमा आधारित पाठ्यवस्तुको चर्चा गरी यी छ ओटै तरिकालाई एकीकृत गरी बहुपाठात्मक ढाँचा अपनाउन सुझाएका छन् । एउटै विषय वस्तुबाट व्याकरण, शब्दभण्डार र भाषिक सिप सिकाउने दृष्टिकोण नै बहुपाठात्मक पाठ्यवस्तु सङ्गठन हो । यसमा व्याकरण, शब्दभण्डार, भाषिक कार्य, परिस्थिति, विषय, कार्य, विभिन्न भाषिक सिपगत कार्य र उच्चारणगत पक्षहरूलाई समेटिएको हुन्छ ।

म्याग्राथ (सन् २००२) ले व्याकरणका पाठ र अभ्यासहरू सङ्गठन गर्दा सर्वप्रथम व्याकरण शिक्षणको उद्देश्यमा ध्यान दिनु पर्ने बताएका छन् । उनका विचारमा व्याकरण शिक्षणका मुख्य दुई उद्देश्य हुन्छन् : १. ज्ञानको प्रसार गर्नु २. सिप विकासमा सघाउनु । व्याकरणिक तत्त्वहरूको पूर्ण र प्रभावकारी सञ्चारका लागि ज्ञानका विभिन्न रूप र सिपहरूको संयोजन आवश्यक हुन्छ । दोस्रो महत्त्वपूर्ण कार्य भनेको व्याकरणका अभ्यासको सन्दर्भपूर्ण प्रस्तुति रहेको विचार उनको छ । त्यस्तै रोज (सन् २०१२) ले व्याकरणका विषय वस्तुहरू प्रयोगमा आधारित गरेर सङ्गठन गर्नु पर्ने धारणा अधि सारेका छन् । उनका अनुसार प्रयोगवादी चिन्तनले साञ्चारिक क्रिया अर्थात् सम्पादनकारी क्रिया जस्तै : अनुरोध, धन्यवाद, विदाइ, क्षमा आदिको उपयोगबाट व्याकरणको ज्ञान गराउन सकिने मान्यता अधि सारेको छ ।

उपर्युक्त चर्चाका आधारमा व्याकरण भनेको सम्बन्धित भाषाका मूल वक्ताहरूको भाषा प्रयोगमा पाइने संरचनागत विशेषता हो र यो भाषा प्रयोक्ताले प्रयोग गरेको भाषिक अभिव्यक्तिमा नै अन्तर्निहित हुन्छ भन्ने प्रस्ट हुन्छ। व्याकरणको शिक्षणले भाषिक अनुशासन कायम गर्ने, भाषिकागत र शैलीगत विचलन हटाउने, दोस्रो भाषाको प्रयोगमा पहिलो भाषाको प्रभाव हटाउने, औपचारिक र अनौपचारिक सन्दर्भमा भाषा प्रयोग गर्न सक्ने तुल्याउने, शुद्ध र परिष्कृत भाषाको प्रयोग गर्ने सक्षमता दिलाउने र उपयुक्त संरचना प्रयोग गरी तार्किक एवम् सिर्जनात्मक क्षमता विकास गर्न मद्दत पुऱ्याउने भएकाले यसको शिक्षण अपरिहार्य हुन्छ। पाठ्यक्रममा शैक्षणिक व्याकरणका विषय वस्तुहरूको निर्धारण गर्दा मनोभाषा विज्ञान र समाज भाषा विज्ञानका सिद्धान्त अपनाउनु पर्ने, छानिएका विषय वस्तुलाई सरलबाट जटिलको क्रममा चक्रीय रूपमा स्तरण गर्नु पर्ने, व्याकरणका विषय वस्तुहरू प्रयोगात्मक र व्यावहारिक हुनु पर्ने तथा सरल, क्रमबद्ध सिकाइमा आधारित, सिकारूको क्षमतामा आधारित र कार्यमूलक ढाँचामा संयोजन गर्नु पर्ने निष्कर्ष प्राप्त गर्न सकिन्छ। व्याकरणका विषय वस्तुहरू पाठ सम्बद्ध र सन्दर्भपूर्ण हुनु पनि उत्तिकै जरुरी देखिन्छ।

अध्ययन विधि

कक्षा चारका नेपाली पाठ्यक्रममा प्रयुक्त व्याकरणका विषय वस्तुमा आएका परिवर्तन निरूपण गर्ने उद्देश्यले तयार पारिएको प्रस्तुत लेख गुणात्मक ढाँचामा आधारित रहेको छ। अध्ययनका लागि सामग्री सङ्कलन पुस्तकालयीय पद्धतिबाट गरिएको छ। अध्ययनमा प्राथमिक स्रोतका रूपमा आधारभूत तह अन्तर्गत २०२८ देखि २०७८ सम्म नेपाल सरकार, पाठ्यक्रम विकास केन्द्रद्वारा प्रकाशित कक्षा चारका छ ओटा नेपाली पाठ्यक्रममा प्रस्तुत व्याकरणका विषय वस्तुलाई लिइएको छ। लेखमा प्रत्येक पाठ्यक्रममा राखिएका व्याकरणका विषय वस्तुलाई विश्लेषणका एकाइ मानेर तुलनात्मक चर्चा गरिएको छ। परिचय र छलफल स्तम्भमा भाषा पाठ्यक्रममा व्याकरणका विषय वस्तुको प्रयोगसँग सम्बन्धित भएर लेखिएका सैद्धान्तिक पुस्तक, लेख तथा शोधकार्यहरू आदि द्वितीयक स्रोतको उपयोग गरिएको छ। लेखकद्वारा गरिएका दावी पुष्टि गर्न पूर्ववर्ती अध्येताका सन्दर्भहरू उद्धृत गर्दै विभिन्न तर्क, प्रमाण र उदाहरणहरू पेस गरिएको छ। प्राथमिक स्रोतका रूपमा रहेका निर्धारित नेपाली पाठ्यक्रमका छ ओटा स्तम्भहरू परिचय, तहगत सक्षमता, कक्षागत सिकाइ उपलब्धि, विषय वस्तुको क्षेत्र, क्रम र विस्तृतीकरण, सिकाइ सहजीकरण प्रक्रिया र विद्यार्थी मूल्याङ्कन प्रक्रियामध्ये विषय वस्तुको क्षेत्र, क्रम र विस्तृतीकरण शीर्षक अन्तर्गतको व्याकरणका विषय वस्तुको मात्र अध्ययन गर्नु यस लेखको सीमा रहेको छ।

परिणाम तथा छलफल

कक्षा चारका नेपाली पाठ्यक्रम हालसम्म २०२८, २०३८, २०४९, २०६०, २०६५ र २०७८ गरी छ पटक परिवर्तन भएका पाइन्छन्। यी पाठ्यक्रममा राखिएका व्याकरणका विषय वस्तुहरु यस प्रकार रहेका छन् :

कक्षा चारका पाठ्यक्रममा प्रयुक्त व्याकरणका विषय वस्तु

२०२८	२०३८	२०४९	२०६०	२०६५	२०७८
प्रथम पत्रमा स्वर-व्यञ्जन, गति, यति, बलाघात र स्वराघातको बोध, शब्द भण्डार र निपात तथा द्वितीय पत्रमा स्वर-व्यञ्जन, गति, यति, बलाघात र स्वराघातको बोध, शब्द भण्डार, निपात, धातु र व्युत्पन्न धातु (नाम, विशेषण, अव्यय आदिबाट बनेका)	१. नाम, २. नाम, सर्वनाम, ३. क्रियापद, ४. वचन ज्ञान, ५. काल (भूत काल, वर्तमान काल, भविष्य काल), ६. लिङ्ग-ज्ञान, ७. चिन्ह-परिचय (विराम चिन्ह र प्रश्न चिन्ह)	विभक्ति, नाम, सर्वनाम, विशेषण, लिङ्ग, वचन, क्रिया, काल, पद सङ्गति, अव्यय, निपात, लेख्यचिन्ह, हिज्जे, उखान र टुक्का	पद सङ्गति र क्रियाका काल, हिज्जे र लेख्यचिन्हलाई लेखाइ अन्तर्गत राखिएको	पद सङ्गति र क्रियाका काल, हिज्जे र लेख्यचिन्हलाई लेखाइ अन्तर्गत राखिएको	पाठक्रम र विधा अनुसार विषय वस्तुको सूक्ष्म विभाजन; नाम, सर्वनाम, विशेषण, क्रियापद, नामयोगी, संयोजक, निपात, लेख्यचिह्न, शब्द निर्माण, भूतकाल, वर्तमान काल, भविष्यत् काल, कालका अपूर्ण र पूर्ण पक्ष, पदक्रम मिलान, विभक्ति, लिङ्ग, वचन, पुरुष र आदर सङ्गति, वर्ण विन्यास (ह्रस्व इकार, दीर्घ ईकार, ह्रस्व उकार, दीर्घ ऊकार, ब/व, य/ए, श/ष/स, छय/क्ष, चन्द्रविन्दु र शिरविन्दु, पञ्चम वर्ण, हलन्त र अजन्त, र का विभिन्न रूप, पदयोग र पद वियोग)

तालिकामा प्रस्तुत २०२८ देखि २०७८ सम्मका कक्षा ४ का नेपाली पाठ्यक्रममा समाविष्ट व्याकरणका विषय वस्तुको अध्ययन गर्दा व्याकरणका विषय वस्तु प्रयोग र राखिने स्थानमा विविधता देखिन्छ।

२०२८ को शिक्षा संरचना अनुसार कक्षा ४ मा २०० पूर्णाङ्कको नेपाली राखिएको र प्रत्येक पत्रमा व्याकरणका विषय वस्तु समावेश गरिएको देखिन्छ। जस अनुसार प्रथम पत्रमा स्वर-व्यञ्जन, गति, यति, बलाघात र स्वराघातको बोध, शब्द भण्डार र निपात रहेका छन् भने द्वितीय पत्रमा पनि स्वरव्यञ्जन, गति, यति, बलाघात र स्वराघातको बोध, शब्द भण्डार र निपातका साथै धातु र व्युत्पन्न धातु थप गरिएको देखिन्छ। यो पाठ्यक्रममा राखिएका स्वर व्यञ्जन; गति, यति, बलाघात

र स्वराघातको बोध तथा धातु र व्युत्पन्न धातुलाई यसपछि परिवर्तन भएका कुनै पनि पाठ्यक्रममा समावेश गरिएको देखिँदैन ।

२०२८ को नेपाली पाठ्यक्रममा शब्द भण्डारलाई पनि व्याकरणमा राखिएको पाइन्छ । यसपछिका सबै पाठ्यक्रममा शब्द भण्डारलाई व्याकरणबाट हटाई छुट्टै स्तम्भमा राखिएको पाइन्छ । उखान र टुक्कालाई २०३८ को पाठ्यक्रमले स्थान दिएको देखिन्छ । २०३८ अघि र २०३८ पछिका कुनै पनि पाठ्यक्रममा उखान र टुक्कालाई व्याकरणमा राखिएको पाइँदैन ।

२०२८ को पाठ्यक्रमले लेख्यचिह्न र वर्ण विन्यासलाई व्याकरणमा समावेश गरेको पाइँदैन । २०३८ को पाठ्यक्रमले चाहिँ वर्ण विन्यासलाई व्याकरणमा राखेको छैन तर चिह्न परिचय अन्तर्गत विराम चिह्न र प्रश्न चिह्नलाई समावेश गरेको देखिन्छ । यसपछिका सबै पाठ्यक्रमले लेख्यचिह्न र वर्ण विन्यासलाई पाठ्यक्रममा समावेश गरेका छन् । २०४९ र २०७८ का पाठ्यक्रमले चाहिँ लेख्यचिह्न र वर्ण विन्यासलाई व्याकरणमा राखेको पाइन्छ । २०६० र २०६५ का पाठ्यक्रमले वर्ण विन्यास र लेख्यचिह्नलाई व्याकरणबाट हटाएर लेखाइ अन्तर्गत समावेश गरेको देखिन्छ ।

शब्दवर्ग अन्तर्गत २०२८ को पाठ्यक्रमले निपात मात्र समावेश गरेको देखिन्छ । २०३८ को पाठ्यक्रममा शब्दवर्गका नाम, सर्वनाम र क्रियापद समावेश गरिएको पाइन्छ । २०४९ को पाठ्यक्रममा नाम, सर्वनाम, विशेषण, क्रिया, अव्यय र निपात समावेश गरी शब्दवर्गको क्षेत्र विस्तार गरिएको पाइन्छ । त्यस्तै २०७८ को पाठ्यक्रममा नाम, सर्वनाम, विशेषण, क्रियापद, नामयोगी, संयोजक र निपात समावेश गरिएको पाइन्छ । २०६० र २०६५ का पाठ्यक्रममा शब्दवर्गका कुनै पनि पाठ्यवस्तु समावेश गरिएको पाइएन । यस आधारमा शब्दवर्गका प्रकारहरु पाठ्यक्रममा राख्ने सन्दर्भमा २०७८ को पाठ्यक्रम बढी व्यापक देखिन्छ ।

पद सङ्गति २०२८ को पाठ्यक्रममा राखिएको पाइँदैन । यसपछिका सबै पाठ्यक्रममा पद सङ्गतिले प्राथमिकता पाएको देखिन्छ । २०३८ र २०४९ मा वचन र लिङ्ग मात्रै समावेश गरिएकोमा २०६० र २०६५ का पाठ्यक्रममा मुख्य जोड नै यसलाई दिइएको पाइन्छ तर यसका प्रकार तोकिएको देखिँदैन । २०७८ को पाठ्यक्रममा भने लिङ्ग, वचन, पुरुष र आदर भनेर स्पष्ट तोकिएको देखिन्छ ।

२०२८ को पाठ्यक्रममा कालको प्रयोग गरिएको पाइँदैन । यसपछिका सबै पाठ्यक्रममा काललाई अनिवार्य प्रयोग गरिएको देखिन्छ । अझ २०६० र २०६५ का पाठ्यक्रमले त कक्षा चारमा व्याकरणमा काल र पद सङ्गति मात्रै सिकाउने दृष्टिकोण राखेको देखिन्छ । २०७८ को पाठ्यक्रम अझ अग्रगामी बन्दै कालका अपूर्ण र पूर्ण पक्ष समेत समावेश गरेको देखिन्छ । त्यस्तै विभक्तिको प्रयोग २०४९ र २०७८ का पाठ्यक्रममा मात्रै गरिएको देखिन्छ भने अन्य पाठ्यक्रममा यसको प्रयोग गरिएको पाइँदैन ।

व्याकरणका विषय वस्तु प्रयोगका हिसाबले २०७८ को पाठ्यक्रम व्यापक देखिन्छ। माथि उल्लिखित विषय वस्तुका अतिरिक्त यस पाठ्यक्रममा शब्द निर्माण र पदक्रम मिलान समेत राखिएको छ। त्यस्तै २०२८ र २०३८ का पाठ्यक्रममा वर्ण विन्यास नराखिएकोमा यसपछिका सबै पाठ्यक्रममा यसलाई समेटिएको देखिन्छ तर २०४९, २०६० र २०६५ का पाठ्यक्रममा यसका क्षेत्रहरु निर्धारण गरिएको पाइँदैन। २०७८ को पाठ्यक्रम चाहिँ यस विषयमा पनि स्पष्ट हुँदै १३ ओटा क्षेत्रहरु तोकेको छ तर वर्ण विन्यासका यति धेरै विषयक्षेत्रका बारेमा कक्षा चारमै ज्ञान दिँदा शिक्षक र विद्यार्थीहरुलाई समस्या हुन सक्ने देखिन्छ।

कक्षा चारको नेपाली पाठ्यक्रममा व्याकरणका विषय वस्तुलाई कसरी स्तरण गर्ने भन्ने सन्दर्भमा २०७८ अघिका कुनै पनि पाठ्यक्रमले स्पष्ट सङ्केत गरेको देखिएन। २०७८ को पाठ्यक्रममा भने व्याकरणको कुन पाठ्यवस्तु कुन पाठक्रम र कुन विधाको पाठमा राखेर सिकाउने भन्ने निर्धारण गरिएको पाइयो। यसले गर्दा विभिन्न प्रकाशन गृहबाट प्रकाशित हुने पाठ्य पुस्तकमा व्याकरण प्रयोग गर्ने सन्दर्भमा एकरूपता आएको देखियो। पाठ्यक्रमकै आधारमा मात्र पनि व्याकरण सिकाउने सहजता शिक्षकलाई प्राप्त हुने देखियो तर व्याकरणलाई साहित्यिक पाठकै भाषा संरचनामा आबद्ध गरेर सिकाउने पाठ्यक्रम विकास केन्द्रको दृष्टिकोण चाहिँ पुरा नहुने सम्भावना देखिन्छ। यसको प्रमुख कारण भनेको पाठ्यक्रममा राखिने पाठको विधा र विषय क्षेत्र त निर्धारण गरियो तर पाठ्य पुस्तक लेखकले त्यो पाठ कस्तो प्रकृतिको छान्छन् ? त्यसको भाषिक संरचना कस्तो हुन्छ ? अनि त्यस पाठका लागि निर्धारण गरिएको व्याकरणको संरचना त्यो पाठमा पर्छ नै भन्ने भएन। यसो गर्नाले व्याकरणको प्रस्तुति निरस, कृत्रिम र सन्दर्भ विहीन हुन सक्ने देखिन्छ।

यसरी कक्षा चारका नेपाली पाठ्यक्रममा व्याकरणको विषय वस्तु समावेश गर्ने सन्दर्भमा पूर्ववर्ती पाठ्यक्रमभन्दा २०७८ को पाठ्यक्रम व्यापक रहेको देखिन्छ तर छनोटमा परेका उक्त विषय वस्तु के आधारमा यति धेरै छानियो र तिनको स्तरण कसरी गरियो भन्ने कुरामा यो पाठ्यक्रममा स्पष्ट गरिएको पाइँदैन। यसले पाठ्यक्रममा व्याकरणका विषय वस्तुको छनोट र स्तरणमा अन्याय रहेको स्पष्ट भएको छ।

भाषा पाठ्यक्रममा व्याकरणका विषय वस्तु छनोट र स्तरणका सम्बन्धमा माथि चर्चा गरिएका मान्यतासँग कक्षा चारका उपर्युक्त पाठ्यक्रममा समाविष्ट विषय वस्तुको तुलना गरेर अध्ययन गर्दा कति पनि तालमेल भएको पाइँदैन। शैक्षणिक व्याकरणका विषय वस्तुहरुको छनोटका सम्बन्धमा अधिकारी (२०६२) ले भने भैँ कुनै पनि पाठ्यक्रमले मनोभाषा विज्ञान र समाज भाषा विज्ञानका सिद्धान्त अपनाएको पाइँदैन। अधिकारी (२०६२), थर्नवरी (सन् १९९९) र नुनान (सन् २००१) ले भने भैँ २०७८ को बाहेक अन्य पाठ्यक्रममा व्याकरणका विषय वस्तुहरुलाई चक्रीय रूपमा स्तरण नगरी रेखीय रूपमा स्तरण गरिएको पाइँन्छ। व्याकरणका विषय वस्तुहरु प्रयोगात्मक र व्यावहारिक

हुनु पर्ने शर्मा, शर्मा र नागौरी (सन् १९९७) तथा श्रीवास्तव (सन् १९९२) को मान्यता विपरीत सबै पाठ्यक्रममा परम्परानिष्ठ ढङ्गले व्याकरणका विषय वस्तुहरु निर्धारण गरिएका देखिन्छन् ।

थर्नवरी (सन् १९९९) ले भने भैं पाठ्यक्रममा व्याकरणको प्रस्तुति ढाँचा अध्ययन गर्दा २०७८ को पाठ्यक्रममा आंशिक रूपमा प्रस्तुतीकरण-अभ्यास-उत्पादन ढाँचा तथा अरू बाँकी सबैमा कार्य शिक्षण कार्यको क्रम अपनाइएको देखिन्छ । हार्मर (सन् २००१) ले भनेको बहुपाठात्मक पाठ निर्माण गरेर त्यही पाठबाट व्याकरण, शब्द भण्डार र भाषिक सिप सिकाउने दृष्टिकोण आंशिक रूपमै भए पनि २०७८ को पाठ्यक्रममा लागु गरिएको पाइन्छ भने अरू पाठ्यक्रममा पाठ र व्याकरणको सम्बन्ध स्थापित गरिएको देखिँदैन । म्याग्राथ (सन् २००२) ले भनेका व्याकरणका मुख्य दुई उद्देश्य ज्ञानको प्रसार गर्नु र सिप विकासमा सघाउनुमध्ये सबै पाठ्यक्रममा भाषिक सिपलाई भन्दा व्याकरणका विषय वस्तुको ज्ञान प्रसार गर्ने लक्ष्य राखिएको पाइन्छ । त्यस्तै रोज (सन् २०१२) ले भने भैं व्याकरणका विषय वस्तुहरुलाई साञ्चारिक क्रिया अर्थात् सम्पादनकारी क्रियासँग तादात्म्य गरेर विन्यास गर्नु पर्ने अवधारणा उपयोगको अवस्था अध्ययन गर्दा २०७८ को पाठ्यक्रममा व्याकरणबाट पृथकीकृत गरेर राखिएको छ भने अन्य पाठ्यक्रममा यो अवधारणाले प्रवेश पाएको देखिँदैन । यसरी व्याकरणका विषय वस्तु चयन र स्तरणका मान्यतासँग तुलना गरेर अध्ययन गर्दा व्याकरणका विषय वस्तुको पाठसँगको आवद्धता, कार्यमूलक प्रस्तुति र आंशिक रूपमा चक्रीय स्तरणको प्रयोगले वर्तमान समयमा कार्यान्वयनमा रहेको २०७८ को पाठ्यक्रम प्रभावकारी देखिन्छ ।

निष्कर्ष

२०२८ देखि २०७८ सम्मका कक्षा चारका छ ओटा नेपाली पाठ्यक्रमलाई अध्ययन गर्दा व्याकरणका विषय वस्तुलाई व्यवस्थित र स्पष्टसँग प्रस्तुत गर्ने पहिलो कार्य २०२८ को पाठ्यक्रमले गरेको देखिन्छ भने २०४९ र २०७८ मा यसलाई अभै प्रभावकारी बनाउँदै लिएको देखिन्छ । व्याकरणका विषय वस्तु प्रयोगका हिसाबले २०७८ को पाठ्यक्रम व्यापक देखिन्छ । कक्षा ४ को नेपाली पाठ्यक्रममा व्याकरणका विषय वस्तुलाई कसरी स्तरण गर्ने भन्ने सन्दर्भमा २०७८ अधिका कुनै पनि पाठ्यक्रमले स्पष्ट सङ्केत गरेको देखिएन । २०७८ को पाठ्यक्रममा भने व्याकरणको कुन विषय वस्तु कुन पाठक्रम र कुन विधाको पाठमा राखेर सिकाउने भन्ने निर्धारण गरिएको पाइन्छ । यसले एकातिर सबै प्रकाशन गृहबाट प्रकाशित हुने कक्षा चारका नेपाली पाठ्य पुस्तकमा व्याकरणको प्रस्तुतिमा एकरूपता ल्याउन सहयोग गरेको छ, शिक्षकले पनि पाठ्यक्रमकै सहायतामा व्याकरण शिक्षण गर्न सक्ने आधार प्रदान गरेको छ । अर्कोतिर पाठ्यक्रममा नै हरेक पाठसँग व्याकरणका विषय वस्तु निर्धारण गरिदिनाले पाठ्य पुस्तकमा पाठ अनुसार व्याकरण संयोजन गर्न कठिनाइ परेको देखिन्छ । यसरी विगतका पाठ्यक्रमको तुलनामा वर्तमान प्रयोगमा रहेको २०७८ को

पाठ्यक्रम व्यापक र स्पष्ट देखिए पनि यसलाई अब्धै स्पष्ट बनाउन व्याकरणका विषय वस्तुलाई विधा अनुसार विन्यास गर्नु पर्ने देखिन्छ ।

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सहिद कथामा सांस्कृतिक अध्ययन

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लेखसार

गुरु प्रसाद मैनालीद्वारा रचित 'सहिद' कथा 'नासो' कथा सङ्ग्रहमा सङ्ग्रहित एक कालजयी कथा हो। कथामा एक शिक्षक पात्रले तत्कालीन राणाकालीन सामन्ती व्यवस्था (वि.सं. १९५७-२०२८) मा विद्यमान वग सङ्घर्ष, शोषण, उत्पीडन, सामाजिक तथा लैङ्गिक विभेद लगायत सांस्कृतिक, धार्मिक एवम् शैक्षिक सीमितताका बेला समेत शैक्षिक एवम् सांस्कृतिक जागरणका लागि कथाका माध्यमबाट खेलेका भूमिका र सामाजिक कार्यहरूको यथार्थ चित्रण प्रस्तुत गरेको छ। यस लेखको मुख्य उद्देश्य सहिद कथाको आधारमा तत्कालीन समाजमा विद्यमान शैक्षिक तथा सांस्कृतिक अवस्थाको विश्लेषण गर्नु र कथामार्फत नेपाली समाजको यथार्थ, ग्रामीण जीवन, मानवीय संवेदना र पछि पारिएका वर्गको अवस्थालाई उजागर गर्नु तथा नेपाली कथासाहित्यमा मैनालीको योगदान र महत्व स्पष्ट गर्नु हो। यस अनुसन्धान लेख गुणात्मक विधिमा आधारित छ। गुरुप्रसाद मैनालीको 'सहिद' कथालाई मुख्य पाठका रूपमा लिएर पाठ-विश्लेषण गरिएको छ। कथामा प्रयुक्त विषयवस्तु, पात्र, सांस्कृतिक सन्दर्भ, भाषा र सामाजिक यथार्थलाई व्याख्यात्मक विधिबाट अध्ययन गरिएको छ। साथै सम्बन्धित पुस्तक, जर्नल लेख र समीक्षाहरूको द्वितीयक स्रोतका रूपमा प्रयोग गरी विश्लेषणलाई सैद्धान्तिक आधार प्रदान गरिएको छ। सहिद कथाले व्यक्तिगत परोपकारले मात्र शोषणकारी समाज परिवर्तन गर्न नसकिने देखाउँछ। सामन्ती, आर्थिक र राजनीतिक संरचना विरुद्ध सामूहिक चेतना र विद्रोह आवश्यक ठहरिन्छ। नैतिकता र पारिवारिक स्वार्थविचको द्वन्द्वले सामाजिक न्यायको प्राथमिकता उजागर गर्छ। कथाले राणाकालीन यथार्थ उजागर गर्दै व्यक्तिगत साहसभन्दा सामूहिक बलिदान र चेतनालाई सामाजिक परिवर्तनको आधार मानेको छ।

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कुञ्जी शब्द : सहिद, बलिदान, अन्धविश्वास, चेतना, शोषण, मानवता, जामिनदार, परिवर्तन।

परिचय

गुरुप्रसाद मैनाली (वि.सं. १९५७-२०२८) नेपाली आधुनिक कथाका अग्रणी यथार्थवादी कथाकार मानिन्छन्। उनी नेपाली कथालाई रोम प्रवृत्तिबाट हटाई ग्रामीण जीवन, गरिबी, सामाजिक अन्याय, मानवीय संवेदना र नैतिक द्वन्द्वतर्फ उन्मुख गराउने प्रमुख स्रष्टा हुन्। सहिद उनको अविस्मरणीय र सामाजिक यथार्थ बोधमा केन्द्रित कथा मध्ये एक हो। मैनालीले आफ्नो कथामा नेपाली समाजका परम्परा, सामाजिक गतिशीलता, नैतिकता र सांस्कृतिक मूल्यहरूलाई सूक्ष्म रूपमा भल्काएका छन्, जसले पाठकलाई तत्कालीन सामाजिक संरचना र मानवीय सङ्घर्षको गहिराइमा प्रवेश गराउँदछ। सहिद कथामा प्रस्तुत पात्र र घटनाबिचको सम्बन्ध नेपाली ग्रामीण र परम्परागत संस्कृतिको सांस्कृतिक छायाँमा लिप्त भएको पाइन्छ, जहाँ व्यक्तिगत बलिदान, सामाजिक अपेक्षा तथा मान्यता-परम्पराको द्वन्द्व पाठकसमक्ष यथार्थपरक ढङ्गले प्रस्तुत गरिएको छ। मैनालीका कथाहरू सामाजिक यथार्थलाई उजागर गर्ने विशेषताको लागि चिनिन्छन्, जसले सामान्य मानिसका अनुभवलाई मानवीय र सांस्कृतिक दुवै दृष्टिले अर्थपूर्ण बनाएको देखिन्छ।

नेपाली सांस्कृतिक संरचनामा सहिद जस्तो कथा बलिदानी भावनाका प्रतीकको रूपमा स्थापित हुन्छ, जहाँ पात्रका निर्णय र क्रियाकलापले व्यक्तिगत कर्तव्य तथा समाजको अपेक्षाबिचको तनावलाई प्रकट गर्छ। मैनालीले पात्रको मनोवैज्ञानिक अवस्था र सामाजिक पृष्ठभूमि मार्फत नेपाली परिवेशमा चलिरहेको सांस्कृतिक विरोधाभासलाई उजागर गरेका छन्। यस प्रकारको कथाले केवल कथा-कलेवर भित्र सीमित नरहएर सामाजिक मान्यताका मूल्य, परम्परा, शक्ति सम्बन्ध, र नैतिक प्रश्नहरूलाई सार्वजनिक विमर्शमा ल्याउँछ। यो शैली नेपाली कथासाहित्यमा मैनालीको महत्वपूर्ण योगदानको द्योतक हो, जसलाई आधुनिक नेपाली साहित्यिक विचार तथा विश्लेषणले गहिराइका साथ अध्ययन गरेको छ (फुँयाल, २०२५)।

यो कथा केवल एक व्यक्ति वीर बहादुरको जीवनयात्रा मात्र नभई, तत्कालीन नेपाली समाजको सांस्कृतिक अवस्थाको एउटा विस्तृत र सूक्ष्म अध्ययन पनि हो। यस कथाको सेरोफेरोमा रहेर सांस्कृतिक पक्षको परिचयलाई दुई पृष्ठ बराबरको अनुच्छेदमा यस प्रकार प्रस्तुत गर्न सकिन्छ

‘सहिद’ कथामा सवैभन्दा प्रमुख सांस्कृतिक पक्षका रूपमा गरिबी र अभावबाट उत्पन्न भएको जीवनशैलीलाई प्रस्तुत गरिएको छ। कथाको प्रारम्भ आर्थिक समस्या र अभावको वरिपरि घुमेको छ। मानिसहरूले आफ्नो दैनिक जीवन धान्नका लागि धेरै सङ्घर्ष गर्नु परेको समयमा नेपाली समाजमा विद्यमान गरिबीको कारण धेरै पुरुषहरू जीविकोपार्जनका लागि आफ्नो घरपरिवार र गाउँ छोडेर विदेश जानुपर्ने बाध्यतालाई चित्रण गरिएको छ। समाजमा फरक संस्कृतिका कारण अभाव र वियोगले पारिवारिक सम्बन्धमा समेत तनाव पैदा गर्थ्यो। मैनालीले कथाको माध्यमबाट तत्कालीन

समाजमा व्याप्त आर्थिक दुरावस्था र त्यसले सिर्जना गरेको सांस्कृतिक जटिलतालाई सूक्ष्म ढङ्गले उजागर गरेका छन् ।

पुरुष प्रधान समाजको वर्चस्व र पारिवारिक सम्बन्धको जटिलताले कथाका पात्रहरूमा लोग्ने स्वास्नीको सम्बन्धमा पुरुषको निर्णयलाई प्राथमिकता दिइएको देखिन्छ । महिलाको भूमिका प्रायः पुरुषको निर्णयलाई स्वीकार गर्नेमा सीमित देखाइएको छ भने लैङ्गिक असमानतालाई समेत सांस्कृतिक रूपमा उजागर गरिएको छ । मैनालीले पारिवारिक मूल्य मान्यता र सम्बन्धको महत्त्वलाई पनि उत्तिकै बलियोसँग प्रस्तुत गरेका छन् । कथामा लोग्ने स्वास्नी, बाबु छोरा तथा अन्य नाता सम्बन्धको वर्णन पाइन्छ । परिवारभित्र हुने सामान्य मतभेद, कलह र त्यसलाई सुल्झाउने तरिकाले तत्कालीन नेपाली समाजको यथार्थतालाई दर्साउँछ । परिवारमा एकअर्काप्रति रहेको विश्वास, स्नेह र जिम्मेवारीको भावनालाई पनि उजागर गर्छ । सामाजिक रूपमा मानिसहरू एकअर्कासँग कसरी जोडिएका थिए र पारिवारिक बन्धनलाई कति महत्त्व दिइन्थ्यो भन्ने कुरालाई कथाले प्रस्ट पार्छ । कथामा सामाजिक शोषण र अन्याय विरुद्धको सङ्घर्षलाई पनि सांस्कृतिक आयामको रूपमा प्रस्तुत गरिएको छ । तत्कालीन नेपाली समाजमा राणा शासनको निरङ्कुशता र त्यसले निम्त्याएको सामाजिक विभेद र अन्याय व्याप्त भई नागरिकको जीवनलाई कष्टकर बनाएको थियो । नायक वीर बहादुरले आफ्नो व्यक्तिगत पीडा र सामाजिक अन्यायबाट उत्प्रेरित भई अन्याय विरुद्ध सङ्घर्ष गर्ने निर्णय गरी तत्कालीन समाजमा व्याप्त राजनीतिक चेतना र परिवर्तनको चाहनालाई देखाएको छ । मानिसहरू अन्याय विरुद्ध एक हुने र आफ्नो अधिकारका लागि बोल्ने साहस गर्दै थिए । कथाले सामाजिक र राजनीतिक चेतनाको सांस्कृतिक आन्दोलनलाई पनि परोक्ष रूपमा प्रस्तुत गरेको छ । अन्य सांस्कृतिक पक्षका रूपमा कथामा धार्मिक आस्था र परम्परालाई पनि समेटिएको छ । मैनालीका कथाहरूमा प्रायः हिन्दू संस्कृति र परम्पराको प्रभाव देखिन्छ, र सहिद कथामा पनि पात्रहरूको सोच र व्यवहारमा हिन्दू आस्था र विश्वासको झलक पाउन सकिन्छ । यो तत्कालीन नेपाली समाजको धार्मिक पक्ष र मानिसको दैनिक जीवनमा धर्मले पारेको गहिरो प्रभावलाई दर्साउँछ ।

प्रस्तुत कथाले तत्कालीन समाजको आर्थिक दुरावस्था र त्यसले सिर्जना गरेको सांस्कृतिक जटिलतालाई देखाउँछ । कथाले पुरुषप्रधान समाजको वर्चस्व र पारिवारिक सम्बन्धको जटिलतालाई पनि उजागर गरी महिलाको भूमिका पुरुषको निर्णयमा सीमित देखाइएको छ । यद्यपि पारिवारिक बन्धन र प्रेमको महत्त्वलाई पनि उत्तिकै बलियोसँग प्रस्तुत गरिएको छ । कथाका पात्रहरू (देवता बाबु, वीर बहादुर, डल्ली, राम, धने र क्षेत्रिनी) तत्कालीन समाजका प्रतिनिधि हुन् । देवता बाबुले परम्परागत सोचलाई, वीर बहादुरले अन्याय विरुद्धको चेतनालाई, डल्लीले महिलाको त्यागलाई र क्षेत्रिनीले जातीय विभेदलाई प्रतिनिधित्व गर्छन् । यसरी कथाले तत्कालीन समाजमा व्याप्त गरिबी,

सामाजिक शोषण, राजनीतिक चेतना र जातीय विभेद जस्ता सांस्कृतिक पक्षहरूलाई यथार्थवादी ढङ्गले प्रस्तुत गरेको छ ।

निष्कर्षमा भन्नुपर्दा, गुरु प्रसाद मैनालीको सहिद कथा केवल एक साहित्यिक रचना मात्र नभई, तत्कालीन नेपाली समाजको सामाजिक, आर्थिक, राजनीतिक र धार्मिक जीवनको सांस्कृतिक दर्पण हो । कथाले गरिवी, पारिवारिक सम्बन्ध, सामाजिक शोषण र मानिसको सङ्घर्षलाई यथार्थवादी ढङ्गले प्रस्तुत गरी नेपाली समाजको सांस्कृतिक पक्षलाई उत्कृष्ट ढङ्गले उजागर गरेको छ । तत्कालीन समाजमा विद्यमान गरिवीले निम्त्याएको जीवन शैली, पुरुष प्रधान सामाजिक संरचना, पारिवारिक मूल्य मान्यता र अन्याय विरुद्धको सङ्घर्ष जस्ता सांस्कृतिक पक्षहरूलाई जीवन्त रूपमा प्रस्तुत गरेको छ । यसरी सहिद कथा तत्कालीन नेपाली समाजको सांस्कृतिक जीवनशैलीलाई बुझ्ने एउटा महत्वपूर्ण स्रोत पनि हो ।

अध्ययनका उद्देश्यहरू

यस अध्ययनका प्रमुख उद्देश्यहरू निम्नानुसार छन् :

- गुरुप्रसाद मैनालीको सहिद कथामा प्रतिबिम्बित सामाजिक यथार्थ, सांस्कृतिक मूल्य र नैतिक द्वन्द्वको विश्लेषण गर्नु,
- नेपाली ग्रामीण तथा परम्परागत समाजमा व्यक्तिगत बलिदान र सामाजिक अपेक्षाबीचको सम्बन्ध पहिचान गर्नु,
- सहिद कथामार्फत शक्ति सम्बन्ध, सामाजिक संरचना र मानवीय संघर्षको प्रस्तुतीकरण मूल्याङ्कन गर्नु। नेपाली कथासाहित्यमा मैनालीको यथार्थवादी दृष्टिकोण र योगदान स्पष्ट गर्नु ।

अध्ययन विधि

यस अध्ययन गुणात्मक अनुसन्धान विधि अन्तर्गत सञ्चालन गरिएको छ । गुरुप्रसाद मैनालीको सहिद कथालाई मुख्य पाठका रूपमा प्रयोग गरि सामाजिक यथार्थ, सांस्कृतिक संरचना, नैतिक द्वन्द्व र व्यक्तित्वगत बलिदानलाई विश्लेषण गरिएको छ । कथामा प्रस्तुत पात्र, घटना, संवाद र सांस्कृतिक प्रतीकहरूको सूक्ष्म अध्ययन गरी पाठ-विश्लेषण विधि प्रयोग गरिएको छ । यस प्रक्रियामा कथाको सामाजिक, सांस्कृतिक, आर्थिक र राजनीतिक पृष्ठभूमि तथा त्यसले प्रतिबिम्बित सामाजिक संरचना र शक्ति सम्बन्धको विश्लेषण गरिएको छ । यसका साथै सम्बन्धित **द्वितीयक स्रोतहरू** जस्तै नेपाली साहित्यिक समीक्षा, जर्नल लेख, शोध प्रबन्ध तथा डिजिटल तथ्याङ्कहरू अध्ययनका लागि समावेश गरिएका छन् । यी स्रोतहरूले मैनालीको कथासाहित्यमा यथार्थवादी दृष्टिकोण, सामाजिक विमर्श र सांस्कृतिक चेतनाको सैद्धान्तिक आधार उपलब्ध गराउँछन् (फुयाँल, २०२५०) ।

अनुसन्धानमा सैद्धान्तिक ढाँचा सामाजिक यथार्थवाद र सांस्कृतिक अध्ययनबाट लिइएको छ। यसले कथामा देखिएका सामन्ती संरचना, नैतिक द्वन्द्व, बलिदानी भावनाहरू र सामूहिक चेतनालाई स्पष्ट रूपमा मूल्याङ्कन गर्न सहयोग पुर्याएको छ। अन्ततः, यो विधि गुणात्मक व्याख्यात्मक दृष्टिकोणमा आधारित रहेर सहिद कथालाई नेपाली समाज, सांस्कृतिक मूल्य र मानवीय सङ्घर्षको दृष्टिले अध्ययन गर्ने उद्देश्य राख्दछ। यसले केवल साहित्यिक विश्लेषण नभई सामाजिक संरचना र सांस्कृतिक विमर्शमा योगदान पुर्याउने माध्यमको रूपमा कथाको महत्व पुष्टि गर्दछ।

परिणाम र छलफल

‘सहिद’ कथाको गहन अध्ययन र विश्लेषणले राणाकालीन समाजको यथार्थवादी चित्रण मात्र होइन सामाजिक आर्थिक अन्यायको जड र त्यसलाई चिर्ने वैचारिक आधार तयार गर्छ। कथाको सबैभन्दा महत्त्वपूर्ण परिणाम व्यक्तिगत, परोपकार, सीमा र संरचनागत परिवर्तनको अपरिहार्यतामा केन्द्रित छ। वीर बहादुरले हैजाको महामारीमा आफ्नो जीवनको प्रवाह नगरी गरेको निःस्वार्थ सेवाभावले उदात्त मानवतावाद को प्रतिनिधित्व गर्छ, तथापि व्यक्तिगत नैतिकता समाजमा व्याप्त सामन्ती शोषणको जड र आर्थिक विषमतालाई हटाउन पूर्णतः असफल देखिन्छ। वीर बहादुरको कार्यले अप्रत्यक्ष रूपमा शोषणकारी व्यवस्थालाई कसरी मद्दत गर्‍यो, जमिनदार र राज्य जनताको दुःखप्रति उदासीन कसरी रहन्छन्। यसबाट जनताले क्षणिक राहत त पाउँछन्, तर उनीहरूको दुःखको मूल कारण उत्पादन र वितरण प्रणालीको असमानता जस्ताको तस्तै रहन्छ। जनताको ध्यान संरचनागत अन्यायबाट भट्किन्छ र परोपकारको सतही महिमा मात्र स्थापित हुन्छ। यसरी कथाले मार्क्सवादी तथा प्रगतिवादी समालोचनाको सिद्धान्तलाई बल दिँदै व्यक्तिगत हृदय परिवर्तन भन्दा पहिले सामूहिक चेतना र संरचनागत परिवर्तनको आवश्यकतालाई जोड दिन्छ। वीर बहादुरको परोपकारले शोषणको समुद्रलाई सुकाउन सकेन त्यसैले चन्द्रकान्तको सङ्गठित प्रयासलाई कथामा उच्च महत्त्व दिइएको छ। कथाकार मैनालीले आदर्शोन्मुख यथार्थवाद प्रयोग गरी नेपाली समाजलाई शान्त सेवा भन्दा माथि उठेर क्रान्तिकारी चेतनातर्फ प्रेरित गरेका छन्। यसका अतिरिक्त कथाले नैतिक आदर्श र पारिवारिक स्वार्थ बिचको सांस्कृतिक द्वन्द्वलाई पनि उच्च प्राथमिकता दिएको छ। “आमाको पुकारभन्दा स्वास्नी र छोराछोरीको पुकार ठुलो होइन” कथनले व्यक्तिगत पारिवारिक सुखको त्याग गरी बृहत्तर सामाजिक न्याय र राष्ट्रिय आह्वानलाई स्थापित गर्छ, जसले तत्कालीन राणा विरोधी आन्दोलनमा सहभागी योद्धाहरूको भावनालाई प्रतिनिधित्व गर्ने एक सांस्कृतिक प्रतीक हो। यसले नेपाली समाजमा व्यक्तिगत सुखभन्दा माथि राष्ट्रिय जिम्मेवारीको नयाँ आदर्शवादी संस्कृतिको जग बसालेको छ।

समाजमा व्याप्त अन्धविश्वास र चेतनाको अभावले निम्त्याएको सामाजिक परिणामलाई गहिरोसँग उजागर गर्दै शोषणकारी संस्कृतिलाई देखाएको छ। हैजा जस्तो महामारीमा पनि गाउँलेहरू वैज्ञानिक

उपचारको सट्टा धामी, भौँक्री र बलिमा विश्वास गर्नुले समाजमा तर्कहीनता र भाग्यवादी नियतिवाद कति गहिरोसँग जरो गाडेको थियो भन्ने देखाउँछ। अन्धविश्वासी संस्कृतिले जनतालाई निष्क्रिय र असहाय बनाउँथ्यो। यसले गर्दा उनीहरू शोषणको विरोधमा उठ्न सक्षम हुँदैनथे। अन्धविश्वास र सामन्ती शोषण एकअर्काका पूरक शक्ति थिए भन्ने परिणाम देखिन्छ। यसै क्रममा शिक्षक चन्द्रकान्तको आगमन एक प्रगतिशील सांस्कृतिक हस्तक्षेप हो। उनको शिक्षा केवल अक्षर ज्ञान मात्र नभई तर्क, विवेक र वैज्ञानिक दृष्टिकोणमा आधारित नयाँ चेतनाको संस्कृतिको स्थापना थियो। उनले हैजाको रोकथामबारे सिकाउनु र शोषण विरुद्ध आवाज उठाउन प्रेरित गर्नुले सामाजिक सांस्कृतिक परिवर्तनको मूल आधार शिक्षा र चेतना नै हो भन्ने स्थापित गर्छ। चन्द्रकान्तको मृत्युलाई तत्कालीन व्यवस्थाले राजद्रोहीको पराजयको रूपमा लिए पनि कथाले त्यसलाई पुरानो शोषणकारी व्यवस्था माथिको प्रहार र भविष्यमा हुने क्रान्तिको बीजको रूपमा प्रस्तुत गर्छ। चन्द्रकान्तको बलिदानले नेपाली समाजमा सहिदको अवधारणालाई सामाजिक जागरणको अग्रदूत र परिवर्तनको सम्बाहक स्थापित गर्छ। यसरी मैनालीले शोषणकारी संरचनालाई हटाउन व्यक्तिगत नैतिकता पर्याप्त छैन बरु सामूहिक चेतना, नयाँ सांस्कृतिक आदर्श र त्यसबाट प्रेरित सर्वोच्च बलिदानको स्थापना अपरिहार्य हुन्छ। समग्रमा, सहिद कथा एक कालजयी कृति हो जसले नेपाली समाजको यथार्थवादी चित्रणलाई आदर्शवादी भविष्यको आशासँग जोड्दै सामाजिक रूपान्तरणका लागि वैचारिक आधार प्रदान गरेको छ।

सांस्कृतिक अध्ययनको अवधारणा

गुरु प्रसाद मैनालीको 'सहिद' कथामा सांस्कृतिक अवधारणाको सुरुवात तत्कालीन समाजको बहुआयामिक चित्रणबाट भएको छ। कथाको प्रारम्भिक चरणमा नै ग्रामीण परिवेश र त्यसमा हावी सामन्ती व्यवस्थाको यथार्थ चित्रण गरिएको छ। जमिनदारहरूको विलासी जीवनशैली र गरिव किसानहरूको दयनीय अवस्थाको तुलनात्मक प्रस्तुतिले एक कठोर शोषणकारी संस्कृतिको अवधारणालाई स्थापित गरेको छ। जमिनदारको इच्छा नै कानुन बन्छ र किसानहरूको श्रममाथि एकाधिकार हुन्छ। उनीहरूले शोषणलाई नियति मान्न बाध्य हुन्छन्। यो केवल आर्थिक असमानता मात्र नभई सामाजिक वर्गीकरणमा आधारित एउटा सांस्कृतिक प्रणाली हो, जहाँ मानिसको स्थान उनको धनमा आधारित हुन्छ र नैतिकता तथा मानवताको कुनै मूल्य हुँदैन (फुयाँल, २०२५०)।

कथामा अन्धविश्वास र कुरीतिको प्रस्तुतिले अर्को महत्त्वपूर्ण सांस्कृतिक अवधारणाको सुरुवात गर्छ। जब गाउँमा हैजा जस्तो रोगको महामारी फैलिन्छ तब मानिसहरू वैज्ञानिक उपचार र सरसफाइमा ध्यान दिनुको सट्टा धामी भौँक्रीमा विश्वास गर्छन्। बोकाको बलि दिन्छन् र देवी देवतालाई खुसी पार्ने प्रयास गर्छन्। यो व्यवहारले समाजमा व्याप्त अशिक्षा, चेतनाको अभाव र भाग्यवादी संस्कृतिलाई उजागर गर्छ। यस्तो संस्कृतिले मानिसहरूलाई निष्क्रिय र असहाय बनाउँछ।

उनीहरूले आफूमाथि भइरहेको अन्याय र दुःखको विरुद्धमा आवाज उठाउन सक्दैनन्। यो अन्धविश्वासी सोचले शोषक वर्गलाई नै पनि फाइदा पुऱ्याउँछ। यी दुई परम्परागत र शोषणकारी सांस्कृतिक अवधारणाहरूका विरुद्धमा कथामा चन्द्रकान्त नामक आदर्शवादी शिक्षकको आगमनले नयाँ परिवर्तनको संस्कृतिको अवधारणालाई जन्म दिन्छ। चन्द्रकान्तले विद्यालय स्थापना गरेर मानिसहरूलाई केवल किताबी ज्ञान मात्र नभई सामाजिक चेतना, तर्कशक्ति र विवेकशीलताको पाठ पढाउँछन्। उनी गाउँलेहरूलाई अन्धविश्वास त्यागेर वैज्ञानिक दृष्टिकोण अपनाउन शोषणका विरुद्धमा एकताबद्ध हुन् र आफ्नो अधिकारका लागि लड्न प्रेरित गर्छन्। उनको यो कार्यले परम्परागत सामन्ती र अन्धविश्वासी संस्कृतिलाई सिधै चुनौती दिन्छ। यो चन्द्रकान्तको प्रगतिशील सोच र समाजमा विद्यमान रूढिवादी सोचबिचको वैचारिक सङ्घर्ष नै कथाको मूल आधार बन्छ। यसरी 'सहिद' कथामा सांस्कृतिक अवधारणाको सुरुवात, तत्कालीन समाजको शोषणकारी र अन्धविश्वासी यथार्थबाट हुन्छ र त्यसलाई चुनौती दिने नयाँ चेतना र जागरणको प्रवेशले कथाको मूल दिशा तय गर्छ जुन अन्ततः परिवर्तन र बलिदानको बाटोमा गएर टुङ्गिन्छ।

सांस्कृतिक पक्षको विश्लेषण

'सहिद' कथाले तत्कालीन समाजको सांस्कृतिक अवस्थालाई एक जटिल र बहुआयामिक सन्दर्भमा विश्लेषण गरेको छ। सामाजिक अन्याय, आर्थिक असमानता र राजनैतिक निरङ्कुशताले एकअर्कालाई बल दिँदै आएका छन्। समस्याको समाधानका लागि शिक्षा, चेतना र बलिदानको नयाँ सांस्कृतिक जागरण अपरिहार्य हुन्छ। गुरु प्रसाद मैनालीको 'सहिद' कथामा संस्कृतिको विश्लेषण तत्कालीन नेपाली समाजका दुई परस्पर विरोधी सांस्कृतिक धारहरुबिचको द्वन्द्व र त्यसको गम्भीर परिणाम मार्फत गम्भीर रूपमा गरिएको छ। जमिनदारको शोषणलाई केवल आर्थिक लेनदेनको रूपमा मात्र नहेरी त्यसलाई एक सामाजिक सांस्कृतिक व्यवस्थाको रूपमा विश्लेषण गरिएको छ। जमिनदारहरू किसानको दुःखमा रमाइलो गर्ने, उनीहरूलाई मानव नभई सम्पत्तिको रूपमा हेर्ने र आफ्नो शक्ति प्रदर्शन गर्न अनावश्यक खर्च गर्ने जस्ता व्यवहारले तत्कालीन सामन्ती वर्गको अहङ्कारी संस्कृतिलाई उजागर गर्छ। यो संस्कृतिले समाजमा मालिक र सेवकको सम्बन्धलाई स्थापित गर्छ, किसानहरूले आफ्नो अधिकारबारे सोचन पनि सक्दैनन्।

कथाको महत्त्वपूर्ण सांस्कृतिक विश्लेषण भनेको समाजमा गहिरोसँग जरा गाडेको अन्धविश्वास र रूढिवादी संस्कृतिको चित्रण हो। हैजालाई मानिसहरूले दैवी प्रकोप मानेर धामी, भाँक्रीको भर पर्छन् र विभिन्न प्रकारका पशु बलि दिने गर्छन्। चेतनाको अभावमा मानिसहरूमा रहेको भय र निष्क्रियताको संस्कृतिलाई देखाउँछ। यो संस्कृतिले मानिसहरूलाई तर्कभन्दा भावना र अन्धविश्वासमा बढी निर्भर बनाउँछ, जसले गर्दा उनीहरूमाथि हुने अन्यायको विरोध गर्ने शक्ति हराउँछ।

सामाजिक पक्षको विश्लेषण

गुरु प्रसाद मैनालीको प्रसिद्ध कथा 'सहिद' केवल राजनीतिक सङ्घर्षको दस्तावेज मात्र नभई तत्कालीन ग्रामीण नेपाली समाजको सामाजिक यथार्थको जीवन्त चित्रण हो। यस कथाले परम्परागत पारिवारिक मूल्य, ग्रामीण जीवनशैली र त्यागको सांस्कृतिक महिमालाई प्रस्तुत गर्छ। कथामा रणे र उनका बुबाबिचको सम्बन्ध केवल बाबुछोराको नभई एकअर्काप्रतिको गहिरो सम्मान र जिम्मेवारीमा आधारित छ, "ओहो ! एक पटक खबर पनि दिएनन् । साँच्चै नेपालको मानिसलाई माया मोह भनेको एक जात हुँदैन । अब लौ, मेरी डल्लीलाई खत (चिठी) कस्ले लेखिदिन्छ," (मैनाली २०२६ : ५७) । जसले नेपाली समाजमा पारिवारिक मर्यादा र त्यागको भावनालाई प्रतिबिम्बित गर्छ। कथामा ग्रामीण जीवनको सरलता र प्राकृतिक जीवनशैलीको यथार्थपरक चित्रण पाइन्छ। पात्रहरूको सोचाइ र बोलीचालीले ग्रामीण परिवेशलाई जीवन्त बनाएको छ। सबैभन्दा महत्त्वपूर्ण कुरा; "हेर वीर बहादुर ! तिमीलाई मेरो कुरा सुनेर दुःख लाग्ला । मेरो पनि भदौमा जहान परलोक भैछन् । काखको छोरालाई दिदीले लगेर पाल्नु भएको छ । उता सरकारले घरखेत जफत गरिराखेको छ । आफू चन्दा मागेर खान्छु । भन त मेरो मन कस्तो भएको होला ? तर याद राख, आमाको पुकार भन्दा स्वास्थ्यी, छोरा छोरीको पुकार ठुलो होइन । आमाको बन्धन हामी सबै मिलेर तोड्नुपर्छ" (मैनाली २०२६ : ६४) । यो कथाले त्याग र बलिदानलाई दिइने उच्च सम्मानलाई देखाउँछ। रणेको बलिदानलाई उनको परिवार र गाउँलेले सहिदको रूपमा स्विकार्नुले समाज र राष्ट्रका लागि त्याग गर्ने व्यक्तिलाई सर्वोच्च सम्मान दिइन्थ्यो भन्ने सांस्कृतिक मान्यतालाई पुष्टि गर्छ। यसरी, 'सहिद' कथाले राजनीतिक आन्दोलनको पृष्ठभूमिमा नेपाली समाजको सरलता, त्याग र सामाजिक मूल्य मान्यताहरूलाई गहन रूपमा उजागर गरेको छ।

राजनैतिक पक्षको विश्लेषण

सहिद कथाको प्रमुख पात्र वीर बहादुर साहुको ऋण तिर्नका लागि विदेसिएको छ। विदेशमा धन कमाउँदै गर्दा गाउँबाट आफ्नो श्रीमती र छोराको बारेमा अप्रिय खबर सुनेपछि ऊ भावुक हुन्छ। श्रीमती एकलै दुःख र पीडामा छिन् भन्ने सोचेर ऊ तुरुन्तै नेपाल फर्कन्छ। गाउँ फर्किने क्रममा बाटोमा उसले देवता बाबुलाई भेट्छ, जसले उसलाई तत्कालीन राजनीतिक अवस्थाबारे अवगत गराउँछन्। देवता बाबुको प्रेरणाले वीर बहादुरले आफ्नो व्यक्तिगत दुःख बिसर्पेर राजनीतिक आन्दोलनमा होमिने निर्णय गर्छ। उनीहरू मिलेर पूर्वतिरको मोर्चा सम्हाल्छन् र आन्दोलनलाई थप सशक्त बनाउँछन्। आन्दोलनका क्रममा वीर बहादुरले आफ्नो जीवनलाई राष्ट्रका लागि समर्पित गर्छ र अन्ततः सहिद बन्छ। यस कथामा वीर बहादुर र देवता बाबु जस्ता पात्रहरूको माध्यमबाट लेखकले तत्कालीन सामन्ती सामाजिक र राजनीतिक संस्कृतिको गहिरो चित्रण गरेका छन्। कथाले वीर बहादुरको व्यक्तिगत जीवन र उनको राजनैतिक चेतनाको विकासलाई जोडेर तत्कालीन

समाजमा राजनीतिको प्रभाव कस्तो थियो भन्ने देखाउँछ। यसरी कथाले सामाजिक संस्कृतिभित्र लुकेको राजनीतिक संस्कृतिको प्रभावलाई स्पष्ट पार्छ र वीर बहादुरलाई सहिदको बाटोमा डोऱ्यायो।

राजनैतिक युद्धमा लाग्नेहरूको एउटै मात्र लक्ष्य रहेको हुन्छ कि त मर्ने, कि त मार्ने यस्तो भावलाई प्रस्तुत लक्ष्यबाट स्पष्ट पार्न सकिन्छ, “एकदिन मर्नु त छँदैछ, मानिसले मर्न जान्नुपर्छ। जुन जाति मर्न जान्दछ, बाँच्न पनि त्यसैले जानेको हुन्छ (मैनाली, २०२६ : ६९)। राजनीतिको लागि लडाकु बनेर राजनैतिक युद्ध मैदानमा उत्रेपछि, उसको कर्तव्य भनेकै आफ्नो दुस्मनहरूलाई पछि लगाउने हो। यदि दुस्मन शक्तिशाली छ भने आफूले हाँसीहाँसी मर्नको लागि वा शासित हुन पनि तयार हुनुपर्दछ, भन्ने कुराको सङ्केत स्पष्ट रूपमा पाउन सकिन्छ।

आफन्त स्वास्नी छोराछोरी भन्दा पनि देशप्रेम मातृभूमि जन्मभूमि भन्दा ठुलो अरू केही होइन। देश रहे भोलिका पिढीहरू आनन्दले सास फेर्न पाउँछन्। मर्न र मार्नका लागि राजनीतिमा लागेका व्यक्तिहरूका लागि माया, प्रेम र जीवनको कुनै महत्त्व हुँदैन, मूल्य हुँदैन। मर्न र मार्नमा मात्र उनीहरूको मूल्य हुन्छ। उनीहरू संवेदनाहीन हुन्छन्। आफ्ना दुःख पीडा सबै भुलेर राजनीतिका लागि तयार हुन्छन्। यसलाई यस कथांशका आधारमा यसरी प्रस्ट पार्न सकिन्छ, “अनि उहाँले भन्नु भो हेर वीर बहादुर ! तिम्रीलाई यो कुरा सुनेर दुःख लाग्ला। मेरो पनि भदौमा जहान परलोक भैछन्। काखको छोरालाई दिदीले लगेर पाल्नु भएको छ अरे सेनामा भर्ती हुनुपर्छ” (मैनाली, २०२६ : ६९)। छोरो मरेको र श्रीमती एकलै परेको अवस्थामा पनि देवता बाबु आमाको पुकार भन्दा छोराछोरीको पुकार ठुलो होइन भन्ने वाक्यांशबाट प्रभावित भएर राजनैतिक युद्धको संस्कृतिमा लागेर परिधीय संस्कृति भएकाहरूले केन्द्रमा जानका लागि प्रयास गरेको देखिन्छ।

देशप्रेमले गर्दा घर परिवारको माया, ममता एकाएक देशप्रति पोखिन्छ र तुरुन्तै राजनीतिक युद्धका लागि उसका नसा नसामा रक्त धमनीहरू सञ्चार हुन्छ। सहिद कथाको पात्र वीर बहादुर आफूभित्र रहेको युद्धकलाको पूर्व ज्ञानको आधारमा राजनैतिक युद्ध मोर्चामा संलग्न हुन आतुर देखिन्छ। युद्ध कलामा ऊ निपुर्ण पनि देखिन्छ। बर्माको दोस्रो ठुलो लडाइँ समेत लडेको अनुभव वीर बहादुरमा रहेको छ। उसको भनाइ कथामा यसरी व्यक्त भएको छ, “अघि मैले दुईचार गोर्खा रेजिमेन्टमा पाँच साल नोकरी गरेको थिएँ। दोस्रो ठुलो लडाइँमा हाम्रो पल्टन बर्माको लड्यो” (मैनाली, २०२६ : ७०)। यसरी वीर बहादुरले लडाइँमा आफ्नो देशको लागि जीवन बलिदान दिन तत्पर रहेको देखिन्छ।

राजनैतिको हावाले छोएपछि मानिसले सबै कुरा बिर्सन्छ र खाली राजनैतिक युद्ध मात्र देख्दछ। उसका आँखा वरपर राजनीति मात्रै नाचिरहन्छ। त्यसमा पनि आफ्नो देश र जन्म भूमिमाथि कसैले कुठाराघात गर्दछ भने केही नयाँ सोच र उन्माद ल्याउने आशले परिवर्तनकारी विचारधारालाई आत्मसाथ गर्दै आदर्श नेपालको कल्पना गर्दै अगाडि बढ्ने गर्दछ। यस भनाइलाई यसरी पुष्टि गर्न

सकिन्छ। “सरकारले घरखेत जफत् गरिराखेको छ। आफू चन्दा मागेर खान्छु” (मैनाली, २०२६ : ६९)। “आफ्नो भएभरको जायजेथा निरङ्कुश सरकारले हडपे पनि आफू मागेर खान पछि, पदैन तर राजनैतिक युद्धद्वारा शक्तिशाली हुन निरन्तर प्रयासरत हुन्छ, भन्ने सङ्केत स्पष्ट रूपमा देखा परेको छ।

राजनैतिक युद्धले जवानहरुमा जोस थपिदिन्छ। यो जोस र जाँगर उर्लेर आएपछि आफ्नो परिवारको मायाभन्दा माथि उठेर राष्ट्रिय स्वाभिमानका लागि कि मर्छु वा मार्छु भनेर युद्धमा होमिन्छन्। यस भनाइलाई वीर बहादुरको माध्यमबाट यसरी प्रष्ट्याइएको छ, “वीर जवान हो ! आज मर्ने र मार्ने दिन हो। खबरदार ! कोही पछि नहटून् एक जवान र एक गोली शेष रहेसम्म पनि दुस्मनलाई एक पाइलो अगाडि बढ्न दिनुहुन्न। सङ्ख्यामा थोरै भए पनि हामीसँग सत्य र ईश्वरको बल छ। दुश्मनको मुटु हल्लिसकेको छ। बहुते चाँडो हाम्रो विजय हुनेछ,” (मैनाली, २०२६ : ७०)। यहाँ आफूभन्दा सत्रुहरुको सङ्ख्या कैयौँ बढी भएको र उनीहरु हातहतियारले भरिपूर्ण भएको थाहा हुँदाहुँदै पनि राजनैतिक युद्धमा लागेको मान्छे आफ्ना सिपाहीहरुमा जोस र उर्जाका साथ लडिरहन्छ र भन्दछ, सास रहुन्जेल आश हुन्छ, र भगवानले हाम्रो साथ दिन्छन् भन्ने सोचेर हौसला प्रदान गरिरहेको हुन्छ।

वीर बहादुर एक सच्चा देशभक्त नेपाली युवा हो। ऊ गरीब छ तर देशै नरहे म कसरी रहूँला भन्ने भावना उसको रहेको छ। देशको लागि सहिद बनेर मर्नुको जति महत्व हुन्छ, जीवनलाई निरर्थक मृत्युबाट जस्तोसुकै परिस्थितिमा पनि बचाउनु नै महत्त्वपूर्ण हुन्छ। मर्नुका लागि राजनीतिमा लागेका व्याक्तिहरु रोग, भोकले सताए पनि निरर्थक मर्नुभन्दा बाँच्ने चाहना नै तीव्र हुन्छ। राजनैतिक योद्धाहरुलाई कमाण्डो सम्हालेका कमाण्डरहरुले उर्जा र जोश थपेमा कसरी राजनैतिक युद्ध गर्छन् भन्ने कुरामा कथाको नायक वीर बहादुरबाट यसरी प्रस्तुत भएको छ, “अनि मेरा जवानहरुले फेरि आफ्नो शौर्य र पराक्रम देखाउन थाले” (मैनाली, २०२६ : ७०)। यस्तो वीर बहादुरको भनाइबाट थाहा हुन्छ कि राजनैतिक युद्धमा होमिएका मान्छेहरुले आफ्नो परिवारको मायाभन्दा र आफ्नै देशको माया गर्छन्। पटकपटक मर्नुभन्दा एकपटक देशका लागि सहिद हुनु सबैभन्दा महान् हो भन्ने भाव यस अध्ययनबाट प्राप्त भएको छ।

आर्थिक सिद्धान्तको विश्लेषण

गुरु प्रसाद मैनालीको सहिद कथामा आर्थिक पक्षलाई विस्तृत रूपमा विश्लेषण गरिएको छैन। कथाका मुख्य पात्र रणे र उनका बुबा दुवै सामान्य किसान हुन्, जसको जीवन खेतीपाती र दैनिक ज्यालामा निर्भर छ। उनीहरुको सङ्घर्षपूर्ण जीवनले तत्कालीन नेपाली ग्रामीण समाजको आर्थिक अवस्था कस्तो थियो भन्ने कुराको सङ्केत गर्छ। रणेले राजनीतिक आन्दोलनमा लागेर आफ्नो ज्यान गुमाउँदा उनको परिवारले आर्थिक रूपमा ठुलो क्षति बेहोरेको पक्षलाई भावनात्मक तरिकाले प्रस्तुत

गरिएको छ। यसले के देखाउँछ भने, “बेवारिसे मुर्दालाई कसले पुऱ्याउँथ्यो बाबु ! डुममेहतरले कुकुर बिरालो फाले भैं घिच्याएर फालिदिन्छन्। मैले भेटेका जतिलाई घाटमा पुऱ्याएर जलाइदिने गरेको छु तर के गर्नु बाबु बोक्ने मान्छे, र दाउरा बडो मुस्किल पर्छ। नेपालीहरूलाई भन्न गयो भने यो जात र ऊ जात भन्न थाल्छन्। कफन दाउरामा गरेर मेरो हरसाल सौ सवासौ रूपैया खर्च हुन्छ। अब के गर्ने त आफ्ना देशका मानिस हुन्, अर्थोक नभए पनि धर्म होला” (मैनाली, २०२६ : ६२)। राजनीतिक क्रान्ति र परिवर्तनको मूल्य केवल जीवनको बलिदानले मात्र नभएर आर्थिक अभाव र कष्टले पनि चुकाउनु पर्छ। यसरी मैनालीले सहिद कथामा आर्थिक पक्षलाई राजनीतिक आन्दोलनको एउटा अप्रत्यक्ष तर महत्त्वपूर्ण पाटोको रूपमा चित्रण गरेका छन्।

निष्कर्ष

कालजयी कृति सहिद कथाले तत्कालीन नेपाली समाजको यथार्थलाई सूक्ष्म रूपमा चित्रण गरेको छ। कथामा सामन्ती शोषण, हैजा महामारी र शिक्षक चन्द्रकान्तको सामाजिक कार्यहरूको सिधा विवरण दिन्छ, जसले कथाको बाह्य स्वरूपलाई बुझ्न मद्दत गर्छ। सामाजिक सांस्कृतिक महत्त्वलाई उजागर गर्दै जमिनदारको शोषण किन हुन्थ्यो ? समाजमा अन्धविश्वास किन हावी थियो ? र चन्द्रकान्तले विद्रोह किन गरे ? यी दुई विधिको संयोजनबाट निस्कने परिणाम र छलफलका विषयहरू गहन छन्। वीर बहादुरको मानवतावादी भाव भए पनि सामन्ती व्यवस्थाको जगलाई हल्लाउन उनको प्रयास पर्याप्त भएन, जसले गर्दा समाजको संरचनात्मक समस्या समाधानका लागि सामूहिक चेतना र विद्रोह आवश्यक पर्छ भन्ने कुरामाथि गम्भीर छलफल गर्न प्रेरित गर्छ। कथाले नैतिक मूल्य र पारिवारिक स्वार्थबिचको द्वन्द्वलाई पनि उजागर गर्छ, ‘आमाको पुकारभन्दा स्वास्थ्य र छोराछोरीको पुकार ठुलो होइन,’ भन्ने भनाइले व्यक्तिगत सुखभन्दा माथि सामाजिक न्याय र मानवताले नैतिक आदर्शको स्थापना गर्छ।

सामाजिक र सांस्कृतिक रूपमा कथाले सामन्ती शोषण र अन्धविश्वासमा आधारित पुरानो संस्कृतिलाई प्रस्तुत गर्छ। राजनैतिक रूपमा तत्कालीन निरङ्कुश शासनले जनताको समस्याप्रति उदासीनता देखाउँछ। शिक्षक चन्द्रकान्तले नयाँ परिवर्तनको संस्कृतिको अवधारणालाई अगाडि सार्छन्, जसले शिक्षालाई ज्ञानको स्रोत र सामाजिक चेतना जगाउने हतियारको रूपमा प्रयोग गर्छ। यो अभियान परम्परागत र आधुनिक संस्कृति बिचको द्वन्द्व हो। कथाको अन्त्यमा चन्द्रकान्तको बलिदानले यस सांस्कृतिक द्वन्द्वलाई एउटा नयाँ मोड दिन्छ। उनको मृत्युलाई पुरानो व्यवस्थामाथिको प्रहार र भविष्यमा हुने परिवर्तनको प्रतीकका रूपमा प्रस्तुत गरिएको छ। समग्रमा, ‘सहिद’ कथाको विवेचनात्मक अध्ययनले यो निष्कर्षमा पुऱ्याउँछ कि नेपाली समाजको इतिहास र भविष्य दुवैलाई जोडेर हेर्ने एक महत्त्वपूर्ण वैचारिक आधार प्रदान गरेको छ, जहाँ व्यक्तिगत साहस

र नैतिकता मात्र पर्याप्त नभई सामूहिक चेतना र बलिदानको नयाँ सांस्कृतिक जागरण अपरिहार्य हुन्छ ।

यो कथामा वर्णनात्मक र विश्लेषणात्मक दुवै विधिबाट तत्कालीन समाजमा व्याप्त गरिबी, सामन्ती शोषण र अन्धविश्वास जस्ता शोषणकारी सांस्कृतिक पक्षहरूको यथार्थवादी चित्रण गरिएको छ । व्यक्तिगत नैतिकता र मानवतावादले मात्रै समाज परिवर्तन हुँदैन; त्यसका लागि सामूहिक चेतना, विद्रोह र बलिदानको आवश्यकता पर्छ । पुरानो शोषणकारी संस्कृति र नयाँ परिवर्तनको चेतनाविचको अपरिहार्य द्वन्द्वलाई उजागर गर्दै व्यक्तिगत साहस र नैतिकताभन्दा माथि उठेर सामूहिक जागरण र बलिदानको नयाँ सांस्कृतिक जागरण नै समाज रूपान्तरणको लागि अपरिहार्य भएको छ ।

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