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# EXPLORATION अन्वेषण

**A Peer-Reviewed Multidisciplinary Journal**

Volume 4

January 2026



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**Research Management Cell (RMC)**  
Darchula Multiple Campus, Khalanga, Darchula  
Far Western University, Nepal  
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## Editorial

We are delighted to present **Volume 4 of Exploration अन्वेषण, January 2026**, an annual, double-blind, peer-reviewed, open-access multidisciplinary journal published by the Research Management Cell (RMC) of Darchula Multiple Campus, Far Western University, Nepal. This volume includes 20 peer-reviewed articles covering diverse disciplines such as English Education, English Literature, Education, Social Sciences, Humanities, and Management, reflecting both the depth and breadth of contemporary scholarship.

Exploration अन्वेषण provides a credible and rigorous platform for researchers, educators, academicians, teachers, trainers, practitioners, and professionals worldwide to share original and high-quality research. By promoting ethically sound research and critical discourse, the journal contributes to knowledge creation, fosters innovation, and strengthens the global academic community. The articles in this volume offer empirical findings, theoretical insights, and practical perspectives, highlighting the richness and diversity of research across multiple fields.

The journal upholds high international publishing standards through a structured editorial and peer-review process. All submissions undergo an initial editorial screening for scope, originality, and compliance with author guidelines. Eligible manuscripts are reviewed by anonymous reviewers under a double-blind system. Authors are expected to revise their manuscripts in response to reviewer feedback, after which the editorial board makes the final publication decision. Exploration अन्वेषण does not charge any submission or publication fees, and all publication expenses are covered by institutional research funds and the sale of hard copies, ensuring sustainability and open access.

We extend our sincere gratitude to the authors, reviewers, and editorial team for their dedication, diligence, and scholarly support. We also acknowledge the institutional backing of Darchula Multiple Campus, which enables the journal to maintain high standards and global accessibility.

As we look ahead, we warmly invite scholars, educators, and practitioners to contribute to future issues, share innovative research, and actively engage in advancing multidisciplinary knowledge. We hope that the articles in this volume inspire critical reflection, foster meaningful dialogue, and contribute to academic progress worldwide.

**Editor-in-Chief**

Exploration अन्वेषण

January 2026

## Contents

<b>The Impact of ChatGPT on English Language Teachers' Classroom Practices</b> <i>Arjun Jung Rayamajhi</i>	1-14
<b>Role of Management Accounting Controls in Nepalese Small Businesses</b> <i>Atmaram Khatiwada</i>	15-30
<b>From Pin to Pole: Building an Empire in Daniel Defoe's Robinson Crusoe</b> <i>Bhupraj Joshi</i>	31-38
<b>Enhancing Poetry Teaching Practices in the EFL Classrooms: An Exploratory Action Research</b> <i>Deepak Bhatt</i>	39-50
<b>Exploring the Prospects and Challenges of Sustainable Waterfront Development in Bangladesh</b> <i>Farhadur Reza, A.B.M. Siddiquil Abedin, Yeasir Mohammad Amin, Lutfun Nahar Lopa</i>	51-64
<b>Decreasing College Enrollment in Nepal: A Comprehensive Examination of Teachers' Experiences</b> <i>Gambhir Bahadur Chand, Rajendra Prashad Joshi</i>	65-80
<b>Perceptions of the Teachers Towards EMI in the Public School in Surkhet</b> <i>Krishna Prasad Chapain</i>	81-88
<b>Sexual and Reproductive Health Among Women with Disabilities in Kailali District</b> <i>Lal Singh Karki</i>	89-103
<b>Secondary Level English Language Teachers' Professional Development: Perceptions and Practices</b> <i>Mahesh Singh Saud</i>	104-116
<b>Artificial Intelligence: A Catalyst for Sustainable Development Goals of Health Care, Quality Education and Climate Action</b> <i>Nandini Banerjee, Susmita Rakshit</i>	117-130
<b>Teachers' Perspectives on Nepal's Continuous Assessment System: Opportunities and Challenges</b> <i>Nar Bahadur Bist, Nirajan Bohara</i>	131-143

<b>Role of Collaboration in English Teacher Education: A Narrative Inquiry</b>	
<i>Nirajan Bohara, Jai Raj Awasthi</i>	<b>144-160</b>
<b>“एकान्त” कथामा रस</b>	
<i>पदमसिंह बडाल</i>	<b>161-170</b>
<b>Chalkboards to Clicks: A Narrative Study of Flipped English Classrooms in Nepal</b>	
<i>Pitambar Paudel</i>	<b>171-184</b>
<b>Role of ELT Textbooks in the Classroom: Hindrances or Facilitations</b>	
<i>Ramesh Saund</i>	<b>185-197</b>
<b>Ageing Narratives and Social Change in Kathmandu: An Ethnographic Study of Personhood and Well-being</b>	
<i>Saroj Pokharel, Bhawani Shankar Adhikari, Shree Ram Dahal, Dinesh Dangol, Gyan Bhakta Maharjan</i>	<b>198-207</b>
<b>Posthumanism in The Windup Girl: Blurring Boundaries between Human and Machine</b>	
<i>Sharad Acharya</i>	<b>208-221</b>
<b>Birth Rituals and Modernity among the Dangaura Tharu of Nepal</b>	
<i>Shiv Charan Chaudhary</i>	<b>222-232</b>
<b>The Donyi-Polo Cosmos: Sun and Moon Mythology in Mising Folktales</b>	
<i>Shiva Prasad Mili</i>	<b>233-245</b>
<b>Factors Influencing Investment Decision in Mutual Funds</b>	
<i>Tika Ram Kharel, Shiva Raj Poudel, Pratik Kharel</i>	<b>246-262</b>

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## The Impact of ChatGPT on English Language Teachers' Classroom Practices

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### Abstract

*The rapid development of artificial intelligence (AI) presents many opportunities and challenges for education globally, especially in underdeveloped countries. The aim here is to explore the development of this dynamic use of ChatGPT in secondary school English classes in Nepal. The study is applied by a narrative inquiry approach through exploring the experiences of four English teachers who integrate an AI tool in their language teaching. The information was obtained through extensive interviews with four English teachers, observations of their lessons, and their stories and experiences. Key theme analysis reveals that educators were receptive to increased student input and promoted a personalised learning approach; however, systemic barriers substantially impeded progress. The most pressing factors that have been considered are the deployment of AI, not adequately prepared or aware of pedagogical methods, educational disparities in terms of resources and content quality, but also training, lack of motivation and a poor learning environment where digital literacy deteriorates, and students become overly reliant on it. The research also reveals that, in community schools, irrespective of the availability of resources, some basic capacity-building is necessary before teachers can use latrine platforms safely and effectively. These skills should be fully integrated into the curriculum by the Nepali government, and community schools should give them a chance. It should be monitored, steered and trained to wield tools like ChatGPT appropriately.*

**Keywords:** Digital pedagogy, education, integration. technology

### Introduction

This change in the digital world, caused by the growth of new and better technologies like AI, has had a huge effect on us and forced us to make our mark and

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become more prominent around the world. People's lives are now very much tied to technology. They can't picture a world without technology because it has so many benefits. The main goal of this study is to look into how it affects the education sector. AI is more than just employing computers, laptops, or other digital devices in the classroom over the internet. The way that the educational style affects the way people learn has changed (Johnson & Smith, 2023). AI is being developed quickly, and its many uses are bringing the whole globe into the digital age. It has particularly impacted the education sector by supplanting conventional pedagogy with novel teaching methodologies (UNESCO, 2023). Technologies have become helpful tools for kids to learn with, changing the way they learn from independent and personalised to more traditional ways. The results and effectiveness are much better than when there is no technology in the classroom. It is a machine learning model that can make anything you ask for with only one prompt. However, there is one huge problem: copying and the potential of stifling pupils' originality (Li et al., 2024).

In Nepal, artificial intelligence like ChatGPT has pros and cons in schools, notably in English classrooms. This study indicates that students can autonomously and freely engage in practising, learning, reading, writing, acquiring resources, obtaining immediate feedback, and receiving corrections (Zhou & Lee, 2023). But it isn't as simple as we thought. Many problems can't be avoided in these courses in Nepal, even though they are very important for teaching and learning. The Nepalese government identified that 25% of Government Schools have no access to the internet, which is a must for AI (MoE, 2022). However, the internet is the least of the problems. There is a severe lack of resources, energy, and programs to train teachers (Shrestha, 2023). There is a huge difference between all of this and the actual practice of teaching. As a result, this article seeks to ascertain its appropriate applications, ensuring their security and preparedness for the forthcoming digital landscape. The literature indicates that language specialists have many opportunities. As is the case with teachers, instant feedback has been invaluable (Zhou & Lee, 2003).

That GPT in learning activities allows students to be more active by giving them fast answers and feedback, which makes them more curious about learning and helps them study on their own to grow and train their full potential (Chen, 2023; Mandal et al., 2020). AI solutions like ChatGPT have made learning easier and more effective. It has transformed the conventional approach to teaching and teachers into the student-centred, innovative and student-engaged ways of teaching in interactive and participative classrooms. A few people express concern about the moral and pedagogical effects of deploying artificial intelligence in education, but it is less important (and less useful) for students. These worries pertain to the problems of collection, cheating, plagiarism and creativity and originality. Some academics argue that “non-artificial” content is not genuine or trustworthy enough (Chomsky et al., 2023). However, the government of Nepal is at the forefront when it comes to incorporating ICT through some acts, for example, the Education Act 2075. The utility and practicability of these skills in any government or public schools remain deferred, due to resource constraints and the non-availability of teachers who would be willing to incorporate them within the school (Acharya, 2024; Pandey, 2023). There are some studies on ICT and its consequences, but

no emphasis has been placed on specific tools or applications.

These papers are based on the infrastructure and availability of ICT, as well as the teachers' experience and the successful use of technology. Still, ChatGPT is an excellent tool for education because it has been used all over the world and in many different fields. It has also made learning more accessible and flexible for young folks. But ChatGPT and its applications, as well as challenges in Nepalese academia, are under-researched (Sharma & Rijal, 2019; McGarr & McDonagh, 2019).

## **Literature Review**

Learning is an active process in which pupils' thoughts work with what they already know. It is a mental process that is affected by several things. There are several ways to study, such as ICT, homemade materials, printed materials, internet apps, and AI, which includes machine learning. ChatGPT lets students learn on their own and build their own knowledge. It acts like a teacher who can do anything a student can accomplish. It is a tool that helps people when they are having trouble. This method also helps us apply AI correctly or incorrectly in the classroom.

## **The Changing Role of AI in Language Learning**

Artificial intelligence in language teaching has grown a lot over time, changing from a simple tool to an intellectual friend. This journey started with the time of Computer-Assisted Language Learning, when AI acted like a robot teacher and did everything as it was told. In the beginning, computer systems were great for practice but not for real-life conversations. It wasn't great for practising speaking, but AI is far wiser than older computers now. Early computers could only learn and use language within their own limits, which made them very strict in their language skills. Healey (1998). And this artificial intelligence serves as a tutor, handing you every comment, the truth about it and who did it. When students need them, it can instantly locate the secret element & orientation. It's simply like talking to someone else. This type of engagement increases students' enthusiasm for learning, helps them improve their skills, and makes studying less stressful (Fryer et al., 2017). It has been quite useful because it can readily make anything in response to user cues and feedback (Kohnke et al., 2023). In our digital age, this is one of the most useful tools. AI helps students stay safe and do other things more easily.

## **Teachers' Views and Obstacles to Using Technology in the Classroom**

In short, artificial intelligence is one way to seamlessly transition to machine learning processes that shift students' learning activities from passive to active, as if they were in a classroom with peers and an instructor. If educators do not plan the use of technologies to achieve a purpose, they could end up being a boon or a burden to themselves. Through their English learning, students should be more aware of and appreciate the use of technologies such as ChatGPT and their outputs on AI. Since educators use ChatGPT, their attitudes and approaches to its use matter the most. Teachers found it hard to use the

traditional teaching method due to limited resources and methodologies, but it is much easier now with tools like AI. These tools help you get things done faster and save you time (Moorhouse, 2024). There are more students at community schools, but there are fewer teachers because they cannot give each student individualised help. However, this is totally achievable with ChatGPT.

### **ChatGPT in Action: Pros and Cons**

When used in English Language Teaching, ChatGPT has generated significant excitement in education. People are talking about it, including its pros and cons, and any problems that might arise once it is used. This instrument is incredibly important for schooling now and in the future. While using AI, teachers and other professionals identified its most important benefits for language learning. The key point is to stress writing instruction. Teachers of practitioners say that students receive rapid feedback while learning or making mistakes, which reduces their stress and anxiety during study (Kohnke et al., 2023). It lets them be self-motivated and gives them someone to talk to while they practice speaking, which makes classroom interactions more realistic (Yan, 2023). It has several uses to help pupils make a place where they can learn.

### **Identified Challenges**

ChatGPT transforms the way the whole classroom looks, and it also brings up some huge problems. The opportunity for learning in this environment has been both divergent and self-directed; however, the chance for misconduct also exists, which infringes upon the parameters for conduct and ethics surrounding the examination. Educators who remain indifferent to the introduction of AI and its potential class override lack the capacity needed to discern student-original responses from those generated by AI programs, in this case, ChatGPT. Thus, the potential for unproven validity and reliability of the assessment is seriously called into question (Perkins et al., 2024). There is also the question of reliability and trustworthiness; different people have different ideas and potential concerns surrounding these tools.

This instrument is very useful for education now and for what lies ahead. There have been some cultural issues and biases stemming from incorrect data and answers. This strongly relates to the need for teachers to have some protection and a sense of control over ChatGPT. This should be a tool for learning, not the main source of information, and not relied on too much. What about their creative mind, metacognitive learning, growth of mind, smart, creator, and greater thinker rather than passive and parasitic learners (Wang, 2023).

### **Ethical Considerations and Future Directions: A Critical Analysis**

The deployment of AI in education has also raised the question about how effectively governments, school administrators, teachers, and students will be able to use it and oversee its use. Are all the schools, teachers, and students in agreement that ChatGPT's language is scientifically accurate? Is it claimed as legitimate by the proper

authority? Learning for students (Perkins et al., 2024)? What is more? AI is helping schools, but we must ask how schools, governments, principals, teachers, and even students will use it and how they will monitor its use. AI's class interest, bias, and cultural-sensitivity problems (Chiu, 2024) are also a concern. Users of AI, such as ChatGPT, also have concerns about privacy and security, especially regarding the protection of their data. An AI tool is also a means of collecting information on a particular subject or data, and that information is not guaranteed to be accurate. To be ethical, it would include data privacy. Protection of sensitive information is needed (UNESCO, 2023). AI's findings can lead to bias and discord among individuals, and, for students, to misinformation and confusion. In addition, this may not be perceived as fair to all schools and students. Teachers need to be more proactive to make sure that AI for educational purposes is valid and that AI is not made to enhance school programs.

If they do not have the appropriate support and instruction, students may struggle with using it. So, teachers should know and grasp things before their students do. They need training, rules, and real-world examples (Moorhouse, 2024). They need to be monitored, and policies should clearly outline rules to prevent misuse and unethical behaviour in education (Kohnke, 2023). It's essential to explore and have a long-term plan for safe & effective learning. ChatGPT provides multiple challenges for linguistic and cultural fluency in a learning context, enriching constraint, clarity, authenticity, and originality for teachers, dealing with various language needs and proficiency levels, as well as offering tools that are useful. Useful AI tool. While not always reliable or informative, ChatGPT is a useful AI tool with a lot of potential to do good, as long as it's treated delicately. False information can lead students off track, sabotaging their grades. Students get lethargic, no longer interested in studying and opt for cosiness rather than any useful thinking, processing and action in partaking. In an academic context, this is a big concern because of moral issues on plagiarism and the loss of original ideas or work. It is a serious issue that must be addressed by teachers, stakeholders and institutions where their adherence to the state regulations and specifications on academic integrity is concerned (Chomsky et al., 2023). The ethical issues, including the privacy and security of individuals' data and ensuring everyone has fair access that they are equipped to manage, loom largest. Since students don't talk to each other, there have been a lot of reports of graduate students plagiarising.

The differences in resources and infrastructure have also had unequal effects on schooling (Livingstone & Helsper, 2007). As far as how instructors value student privacy and the reliability of the data that has been provided by the AI, the use of ChatGPT in schools has received much attention and debate. The AI will be used as a tool to assist instructors and will not simply be a replacement. The appropriate incorporation of AI will help foster particularisation, but that will not supplant individual distinctiveness about empathy, ethics, and teaching (Brown et al., 2020). Similar to other forms of technology that can be used to assist in learning and teaching in the areas of language and other subjects, there is controversy surrounding the use of ChatGPT in schools. That being said, there is no comparison to the human spirit, which is irreplaceable (Brown et al., 2020).

However, it is especially hard in Nepal, where resources are limited. In Nepal, it is just the first step in education; it needs a stronger foundation, including closing the digital

divide, improving physical infrastructure, expanding access to energy, providing more training, and learning the basics of ICT (Kafle, 2019). The report identifies numerous teachers in Nepal as being disengaged and apathetic to their jobs and the needs of their students (Shrestha, 2022). Global literature identifies numerous advantages of AI. On the global scene, the positive impact of Nepal's community schools in creating open, cooperative, customised, and student-focused learning environments is acknowledged. Furthermore, the integration of AI in community schools in Nepal remains largely unexplored and undiscussed. Policy, physical infrastructure, technology uptake and generation, teacher preparedness, and pedagogical transformation (Sharma, 2021) are all factors that contribute to this. Consequently, this study utilised qualitative narrative inquiry, deemed most suitable, wherein Nepali teachers instructing English Language Teachers offer personal experiences from community schools.

### **Methods and Procedures**

I employed qualitative narrative inquiry to examine the perspectives of teachers regarding their personal experiences with English language educators employing ChatGPT in community schools. The conceptual and recommended methodology is qualitative narrative inquiry, a research framework introduced by Clandinin and Connelly (2000). This approach is appropriate for examining lived experiences via the narratives individuals share about their lives. Researchers view ChatGPT as predominantly utilised in educational and social settings, where it attains optimal results. Four secondary-level English language teachers were intentionally selected from schools in Kawasoti Municipality, the district headquarters of Nawalpur. This study seeks to gather data and support the notion of sampling educators who have employed diverse AI technologies, including ChatGPT. We got the information and data via interviews, observations, and analysis, as well as gathering other important information. Over the course of four months, data were gathered through a series of field trips in person. The method used was to gather information through the qualitative data collection technique, and new ideas.

### **Results and Discussion**

The entire data analysis utilises a narrative framework. The study presented three thematic areas, which included the benefits of integrating ChatGPT, challenges faced, and general information and potential uses of ChatGPT in community schools. To collect data, the four volunteers were identified as Radha, Ramu, Dikshya, and Bishal. We carefully looked at each participant's story.

#### **The Positive Effects of ChatGPT Integration**

The ChatGPT integration has shown that the English language classroom has many strengths. First, it gives quick answers, a personal touch, and gets students involved. The ChatGPT and English Language Classroom have several positive effects on how involved and independent students are in their own learning. Like a human teacher, this machine tool's capacity to give fast, consistent feedback and fix mistakes is very important. Still, it

offers elements like adaptivity that help find out how fast, how well, what intrigues, and what motivates kids. Quickly helping kids with their challenges improves their work. This helps them do better in school and learn more. Radha said, "Students have questions and any uncertainty during and after class, they may solve their confusion through ChatGPT in the right way, even if the teacher isn't there or is busy with their job. They can learn on their own, which helps them solve their challenges.

The story above shows how ChatGPT provides extra support, helping students learn on their own. ChatGPT helps students learn on their own and keep learning in class. Content is more important than resources or delivery; therefore, teachers can split their limited resources in that way. This research shows that the primary function of ChatGPT has been providing constant feedback. Other studies border on personalisation in feedback to increase the effectiveness of learning (Brown et al., 2023; Chen, 2023). The case explained by participant Ramu illustrates this phenomenon very well. Ramu explained that his students' performance improved because "they were able to ask any question and solve any problem by themselves without waiting to ask the teachers." This underlines the importance of on-demand assistance to student autonomy, which is the basic principle of personalised learning. Ramu's case anecdote illustrates the extent to which ChatGPT incorporated this educational principle of immediate feedback to increase student engagement and autonomy. Another participant, Ramu, summarised his experience with ChatGPT: "There was a change in students' learning outcomes and performance." They can productively use their spare time by independently learning via ChatGPT (Brown et al., 2020). This story shows that ChatGPT has been used as a student-assistance tool, helping whenever they need it, before and after school. They could even teach in place of the teachers if the teachers were not there. They are encouraged to learn on their own, which aligns with Brown et al.'s (2020) findings. Dikshya, a participant, said, "ChatGPT has made classroom interaction better by making it a better place to learn, especially for students who were too shy and uncomfortable to talk to their teachers before."

The reviewer above says that ChatGPT helps students feel less anxious by giving them places to learn. They can also learn from home while freelancing and doing autonomous and academic work (Chen, 2023). Another participant, Bishnu, said, "This story is not about my students." I also have a good effect. ChatGPT is helpful to me, too. Community schools don't give us enough resources for learning. I had to look for other resources. Back then, I used to gather more materials, which helped me teach better.

ChatGPT has also had a big effect on teacher development. Digital learning materials have helped many teachers improve their professional skills. It is free and easy to access, particularly in low-resource schools. One of the digital materials teachers may use to enhance their professional development is IT (Rahimi & Dou sari, 2023). Multiple testimonies say educational practices and pedagogy are stronger with AI tech as ChatGPT aids personalised learning. Both the teacher and the students are able to experience great benefit as learning is made accessible through technology. These findings mirror those of several other authors (Brown et al., 2020; Chen, 2023) regarding personalised learning. Acknowledging the results of prior studies, the results confirm that information and access created are learning pathways customised to students by AI technology.

## Difficulties: Teachers' Lack of Training

Nepalese children can embrace and gain. While there are many classroom technology challenges that some see, like cheating and old, inflexible, and uncreative structures, there are also many that can foster the use of technology. Lack of teacher training and classroom practices were barriers that interviewees expressed discomfort with. It may not have been a common tool for educators to use. However, certainly in that context, and using Dikshya as a case of a participant, we get many points to consider regarding the use of educational AI: "ChatGPT is completely new to me. Not once have I even used it," which shows that the person does not know much about it and does not feel confident using it. The statement in the interview exemplifies the challenge that hindered participation of many, "The relevant authorities did not provide any training, which resulted in a great deal of disorganisation, which indicates a lack of institutional support." ChatGPT is popular because they want to learn about it and are interested in it. Bishnu said during the interview that he has used the program himself: "When ChatGPT was invented, I was shocked to hear about its amazing features." I was not sure how to use it for schoolwork. When I am not sure about something, such as facts, theories, places, or concepts, I look for real information about it. Bishnu's story gives teachers a rough idea of what to do. He was shocked at first and stated, "ChatGPT works like a magician, which is all about positive curiosity and openness." This can be an important step before using it. He said, "I did not know how to use it for educational purposes," which shows a big difference between seeing and doing—the tool's ability and how it can be used in real life.

You can learn from anything. Teachers can improve their careers. Good training is the first step toward giving teachers more confidence and helping them use new tools in their teaching. When the authority is in charge, it provides insufficient training, which immediately undermines confidence and leads to ChatGPT. This means that instructors' pedagogical potential is lower when it is not supplied properly. To make training useful and fruitful, skills should be centred on using ChatGPT instead of other elements. So, we need to make sure that integration is a part of teaching. If teachers lack this important quality, it will be superficially suppressed. Academic institutions and relevant authorities need to take action (McGarr & McDonagh, 2019). Bishnu said, "One of my students asked me about ChatGPT one day." I felt bad because I did not even know what it was called. I stayed quiet and asked the students to tell me something about ChatGPT. Today's kids are wiser than kids in the past since they live in the digital world and know more, even in the classroom. They learn faster than their predecessors, which also affects how professors teach. We should always tell teachers to do better. To get the best out of teachers, you need to motivate them. It does not help anyone to compare and criticise. Dikshya said, "Modern technology has been great for us, but we should also be aware of the moral issues that come with it." We need to know what it cannot do, because otherwise we might imitate it, plagiarise it, or become too reliant on it. For instructors to be able to use a tool like ChatGPT in their lessons, they need more than just a mechanical way to do it. They need to be strong. Less training makes people less confident, less skilled, less capable, less clear, less able to think critically, less aware of ethics, and less able to grow

professionally (McGarr & McDonagh, 2019).

## **Infrastructural Deficiencies and Their Consequences**

People with low wages and poor physical infrastructure for integrating AI technologies like ChatGPT, ICT, the internet, electronic gadgets, and many others, which are necessary for their efficient use. Bishnu said, "Sometimes there isn't any internet, or it's slow when I want to use ChatGPT in my classroom." Also, the fact that there were not enough computers for all the pupils made it hard for them to learn what they needed to know. The extract above illustrates that teachers are willing to learn, relearn, and use tools like ChatGPT, which is a virtual learning platform. However, the school does not have any desktop PCs. Students and computers don't interact enough, which makes it harder for them to learn and access resources. So, even though teachers want to use AI tools like ChatGPT in the classroom, they can't. This is the main reason why technology problems happen. It is hard to teach because there aren't enough computers for all the kids. So, there are not many resources either. To fix the problem of limited resources, they need to set up the basics, such as electricity, a computer, and internet connectivity. Technology is becoming a useful tool for teachers. Teachers can meet the demands of each kid, but they don't have enough resources. Bishnu said, before my students arrived, I would get everything set up, but I did not have the energy to start class because there were not enough computers, the furniture wasn't arranged, and the internet connection was not quick enough. I want to teach my students that successfully integrating AI Technologies such as ChatGPT into our lessons requires an appropriate set of tools. A strong underpinning of structures and clean water, power, and electronics, with necessary furnishings, makes education technologies less ineffective. The absence of these resources also exacerbates the digital divide and drives socioeconomic stratification, which is aligned with Rawls' theory of justice as fairness.

Digital tools are somewhat faulty; they break or malfunction. Getting disconnected from power or not having a qualified teacher trained in using the digital tools are issues, too. Digital tools like ChatGPT should be used in well-equipped classrooms. The constitution of Nepal allows for the use of ICT tools to improve the work of teachers and pupils. In actuality, though, it's not like that. The Dikshya participant said, "None of the monitoring or follow-up was improved to fill a major gap that exists in monitoring, or without any action taken after it. It reveals that just around 25% of community-run schools in Nepal have good, dependable internet access (UNESCO, 2023). This is especially bad in rural areas (MoEST, 2023; Devkota et al., 2022). This lack of infrastructure makes it much harder for ICT to go digital, especially when it comes to new tools like AI, which students don't get to use much in their learning. Dikshya, a participant, remarked that adding new technology to the way students learn is not easy. It needs fundamental things like internet access, gadgets, and infrastructure, as well as stable electricity, furniture, and boards. There are a lot of problems with digital tools, such as internet connections that don't always work, tools that don't always work, teachers who aren't educated, and power that goes out. ChatGPT should be used in a well-equipped classroom.

## Ethical Issues: Copying and Losing Your Creativity

The participants said that there is a good chance that there will be ethical problems. As new tools are added to schools, they have caused a lot of problems. Students might utilise it in ways that are not allowed more than other people. Getting everything on time and duplicating from there could kill creativity and originality. It is possible to create a negative culture. Ramu said, "I told my students to write me an email." I got mail from all the pupils. I showed them the mail and how it was worded the next day in class. This is a really important topic for the whole world right now. There is a big chance that there will be a crisis of human power. The second thing that is at risk is the kids' inventiveness. Educators are concerned that students will lose their ability to think creatively, have diminished motivation to learn, struggle with language, and, in general, not put in the effort required to learn. Dikshya added, "Students have become parasites because they depend too much on ChatGPT." They don't think smartly. They can easily mimic what we do from ChatGPT. This is a real and moral worry for teachers. The teachers should help with these kinds of problems. ChatGPT is not dangerous in and of itself, but there are limits to what it can do and what ethical dilemmas it can introduce, and students need to be informed of these. This is one of the biggest concerns in the community schools of Nepal. Because there are no guidelines and ethical concerns, students can openly commit academic dishonesty, using school resources and materials. All four people agree on what plagiarism is. Bishnu, one of the participants, says, "As an English teacher, I usually use ChatGPT to make lesson plans, get the right images, and give them creative tasks, but they don't try to write." I don't like that they copy from ChatGPT and get the same responses.

The stories above show what plagiarism is, which is an ethical concern. Loss of originality can lead to another issue of intellectual theft, which should be addressed to maintain originality (Chomsky et al., 2023). There is also a heated debate over this problem at several levels. Parents are worried that their kids are using AI tools like ChatGPT too much for schoolwork. They want to make it illegal for students to use ChatGPT. The teacher, too. Radha adds, "I don't think that is the right choice." I do not agree with this. It is like making room for traditional education. This clearly shows that the use of ChatGPT and its impacts are seen as bad. Not allowing ChatGPT is not the answer. "Be careful of it, teachers, students, and even parents." Too much dependence. Radha stated, "They cannot think and try to think creatively and critically." But if I ask them to do something in class, they always give me the answers when they copy and paste ChatGPT. But when I change the questions a little bit, they become hard to understand. Now I'm scared that I'll lose their creativity.

This story indicates that teachers' students or pupils are disengaging to the point where they are concentrating on a different activity, while others are using AI tools like ChatGPT. Students need critical thinking, problem-solving, and creativity skills, yet they are losing them every day. When students use ChatGPT, they may lose confidence in their ability to think for themselves and do things well (Ryan & Deci, 2020). This may make them want to come up with new ideas.

The research examines the lived experiences of English language educators

utilising ChatGPT, an AI-driven language tool, within classroom environments in Nepali community schools. The results show that ChatGPT could bring about good change and that using ChatGPT could provide a new way of looking at important topics and a body of literature to go along with it. This study, corroborated by academics globally, underscores ChatGPT's capacity to enhance student engagement, provide tailored educational experiences, and facilitate real-time communication in language instruction (Chen, 2023; Brown et al., 2020). Teacher reviews indicate that ChatGPT can provide differentiated education, allowing students to learn at their own pace and according to their abilities, which is crucial for the efficacy of mixed-ability classes in resource-limited environments (Adiguzel et al., 2023).

This story indicates that teachers' students or pupils are disengaging to the point where they are concentrating on a different activity, while others are using AI tools like ChatGPT. If instructors don't get additional help to develop their digital literacy and AI teaching skills, ChatGPT's future won't be as bright (Sharma & Rijal, 2019; McGarr & McDonagh, 2019). Challenges to learning and teaching, such as a lack of internet connection or gadgets, are part of systemic issues in education, which continue to promote inequities in education (MoEST, 2023). Educational equity issues of ethical concern most to educators such as text and idea plagiarism, insufficient or absence of creativity, and excessive use of artificially generated texts, while frustrating to educators, are inarguably welcome illustrations in global scholarship of a contextualized moderation in the use of thinking machines to promote learning and teaching (Chomsky et al, 2023; Sebastian et al, 2024). These issues place a great responsibility on teachers to use and promote ethical digital citizenship while guiding and contextualising the use of Artificial Intelligence in education. The primary purpose of the educators in this instance is to promote civility in the use and application of Artificial Intelligence in education. The findings point out the need to market ChatGPT, emphasising the “help” dimension, rather than the “replacement” of human ingenuity and creativity. ChatGPT, if well-harnessed, can assist educators in promoting and sustaining student motivation and engagement as well as provide timely and appropriate feedback and learning scaffolds.

Moreover, it gives a chance to teach ESL to progress due to the capacity to facilitate instant communication, as well as individualised, autonomous study (Chen, 2023; Brown et al., 2020). Nevertheless, in order to fully take advantage of the system, educators have to actively prepare lesson scenarios around the application of ChatGPT in a classroom setting. The lesson scenarios need to address the primary subject of advanced Critical AI Literacy, where educators apply AI to teach and enhance the learning process, as well as use the produced AI content in a beneficial teaching context. More so, hybrid models that use ChatGPT along with classical learning. Methods could be utilised to enhance the efficacy and resilience of the learning process (Adiguzel et al., 2023).

Educators must also find ways to supervise and manage students' access to AI tools and teach students how ChatGPT can be implemented to think creatively and critically, rather than use it as a mechanism for deficient thinking. This will require the introduction of new ways of assessing students' genuine linguistic competencies, which AI cannot supplement, with the addition of ethics and policy considerations in the context of Nepal. The ethical issues of implementing AI in Nepal, which lacks sufficient infrastructure and

training, are much more pronounced.

The institution's policy (or amended) should clearly show how AI is used in tests and assignments, and it should also talk about how to find plagiarism and be honest in school (Sebastian et al., 2024). According to the Nepalese government's Ministry of Education and educational institutions, there needs to be more investments towards the building and improvement of the digital infrastructure, as well as the training and development of teaching staff to ensure equal accessibility to AI and its effective application in the Nepalese international community schools. Ethical frameworks and codes of AI use should be formulated with educators to safeguard students' original and critical thinking. These frameworks should be supportive, not Substitutive, and ought to reflect local ethics and circumstances. This study is part of a broader discussion about educational technology and the role of Artificial Intelligence as a positive enhancement to a humanistic educational paradigm (UNESCO, 2019; Brown et al., 2020). The potential of ChatGPT is to enable teachers to teach better and to facilitate out-of-class learning. However, being a mere computer program, ChatGPT is not able to emulate the nuanced ways in which teachers demonstrate care, make decisions, and connect. The ideas of the Nepali English teachers suggest that the use of AI tools is contextually appropriate and should be integrated in a manner that does not supplant teachers. Rather, it should enhance the educational experience in a manner that is socially responsible in the context of the use of technology. Such an approach is a gentle vision and is contrary to the predominant technocentric perspective. It deserves an environment where Artificial Intelligence is a tool to support teachers instead of disparaging them. This discourse not only relates the findings to contemporaneous ones but also highlights the pedagogical and ethical dilemmas in Nepal, which argue for the prudent and responsible use of ChatGPT as an educational resource.

The study findings show the significance of education's multifaceted impact. Technology is everywhere, and the use of artificial intelligence is growing to improve and aid in the observation of language skills (Brown et al., 2020). The good view of using AI. Its functional mechanism helps people learn languages. Regardless of its benefits, it is more accountable for readiness, openness, and obligations in AI technology. People say the demand is useful and mostly for classroom teaching (Brown et al., 2020; Chen, 2023; Garg & Sharma, 2020). Another aspect concerns the moral implications of the situation. The Government of Nepal is trying to address the risk of system abuse by developing an effective, impartial, and dependable system of plagiarism detection. The government needs to keep this level of intellectual honesty and fairness. Every object or thing has two sides; thus, we should tell them how important and unimportant their task is.

## **Conclusion**

The Nepali community schools have offered instructors an opportunity to study the implications of ChatGPT for Teaching English. The instructors concluded that, because of its fast, interactive, real-time, and customizable features, ChatGPT has the potential to greatly improve teaching English. The instructors further stated that the use of ChatGPT in Teaching English will support the student-centred paradigms, as well as promote

students' participation and engagement. The instructors claimed that the use of ChatGPT in teaching English and learning English will benefit students because it will move the learning experience from the confines of the textbook to real-time language use, model discussions, and personalised practice. However, constraints such as insufficient teacher preparedness, lack of adequate digital tools, and differences in opinions about the use of ChatGPT and academic plagiarism limit the benefits of employing ChatGPT in Teaching English. Having said this, the instructors pointed out that the evidence from this study has two implications. First, the evidence provided in this study suggests the need to shift from traditional teacher professional development to the more targeted approaches that can help develop the digital and pedagogical skills needed for teaching with ChatGPT, coupled with the investment in the digital tools and the infrastructure to support it. Second, the evidence from this research calls on policymakers to provide governance that balances the use of ChatGPT to promote or prevent academic dishonesty within an educational community. The instructors' experiences from a developing country have clearly set the potential and the challenges of using AI in teaching and learning for a resource-constrained setting. The study also lays great foundations for other researchers to construct potential frameworks for employing AI in education. Thus, more research should analyse the long-term effects of AI on language acquisition, design adaptable teacher training models for these contexts, and consider the perspectives of different learners more inclusively.

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### Role of Management Accounting Controls in Nepalese Small Businesses

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#### Abstract

*Decision-making, performance monitoring, and strategic planning management accounting controls (MACs) are crucial tools for decision-making, performance monitoring, and strategic planning in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), particularly in resource-constrained contexts such as Nepal. Although vital, little has been conducted on the adoption of MACs and their impact on developing Circular Economy (CE) innovation in Nepalese SMEs. The paper employs a descriptive-correlational research design with a quantitative nature in Dhangadhi sub-metropolitan city, surveying 116 respondents across 22 SMEs, which include manufacturing, services, cooperatives, agriculture, and trade. The data gathered was analysed with the help of SPSS and Smart-PLS, using descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, regression analysis, and structural equation modelling. Results indicate that there are positive and significant relationships between MACs and CE innovation ( $r = 0.56$ ) and business performance ( $r = 0.62$ ), and that CE innovation also relates positively with performance ( $r = 0.58$ ). According to multiple regression, the combination of MACs and CE innovation is the strongest predictor of business performance ( $R^2 = 0.536$ ), without any multicollinearity or autocorrelation problems. The findings indicate that MACs are an important factor in the adoption of CE and improved performance, where CE innovation partially mediates the connection between accounting controls and business performance. These lessons offer theoretical and practical advice on what SMEs must do to strengthen internal accounting regimes and incorporate sustainability-oriented practices in order to attain both financial and environmental benefits.*

**Keywords:** Business enterprise, business performance, circular economy innovation,

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## **Introduction**

Management Accounting Controls (MACs) in Nepalese small enterprises serve to provide financial and non-financial information and the necessary systems, which in turn will allow making good decisions, better metrics of performance, and directly lead to Circular Economy (CE) innovation. Empirical studies reveal that effective MACs have a positive impact on increasing the capacity of a firm to embrace CE innovations, which subsequently influences the overall performance of the business positively.

Small enterprises are still of high importance as seen around the globe as one of the critical drivers of the economy that support employment and alleviate poverty in both developed and developing economies (Ahmad, 2012). In Nepal, small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) constitute the most significant segment of the business society and play a central role in maintaining the national economy. However, these crucial businesses face significant challenges, such as restricted access to funding, stiff market rivalry and underdeveloped formal management procedures (Sharma, 2016). The absence of effective management accounting controls (MACS) is especially acute for Nepali SMEs, which limits their ability to make evidence-based decisions, manage the costs of operation, and sustain their business (Rathnasri, 2015; Sharma, 2016).

The so-called concept of the circular economy (CE) has transformed the global business environment to provide a model that is much more sustainable in comparison to its linear variant of take-make-dispose (Geissdoerfer et al., 2017). The focus of CE innovation is waste minimisation, increased resource efficiency, and the creation of new business models based on by-products create significant opportunities to create sustainable value. In the case of small companies in Nepal, which often face direct issues related to waste management and resource deficiency, the implementation of CE innovation is not a strategic decision only, but rather an essential channel to long-term sustainability and profitability (Impact Hub, 2025). Such supportive programs include the example of the Roots of Circularity in Nepal (Impact Hub, 2025).

Although the opportunity to grow is evident, the Nepalese small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are used to traditional accounting systems, which are usually utilised to file the taxes instead of making strategic management choices (Regmi & Thapa, 2020). This fact highlights one of the gaps in knowledge related to the implementation of management accounting controls (MACs) (Hiebl & Lopez, 2015). It is quite evident that there is a need to identify how both formal and informal MACs may be effectively planned and implemented by small organisations to overcome the obstacles of CE innovation, and how these controls may be systematically transformed into the actual changes in the improved performance in the business.

This research aims to address a significant gap by investigating the relationship between management accounting controls and the performance and innovation of small

enterprises in Nepal. More specifically, it explores how these controls are linked to a circular economy. By focusing on this underexplored connection, the study will contribute to the academic literature on management accounting within the context of a developing nation. Additionally, it will provide practical insights for business owners, policymakers, and non-governmental organisations striving to foster sustainable business practices in Nepal.

## Literature Review

In a stringent study of more than 120 empirical and conceptual studies on the subject of the circular economy (CE) in Europe and North America, Munonye et al. (2025) discovered a knowledge gap that existed in the literature available on the topic due to the lack of investigation of such aspects as social and economic sustainability indicators. Although the use of instruments, including Material Flow Analysis (MFA), Life Cycle Assessment (LCA), and other measures of circularity, is increasingly being implemented at micro-, meso-, and macro-scales, the authors found that there is no cohesion and completeness in these positivistic approaches to assessing sustainable circularity comprehensively. Munonye et al. (2025) have made a conclusion that the social and economic aspects of sustainability are under-explored and have discussed an urgent necessity to develop integrative strategies that will be able to evaluate the environmental, social, and economic impacts simultaneously, along with the standardised metrics and better data disclosure.

Awad et. al. (2025) published the research article in Sustainability discussing the prospective of digital technologies to promote Circular Economy (CE) innovation and competitiveness. The authors used an integrative approach that amalgamated the evidence of a cross-national group of settings, based on the use of a positivist and interpretivist approach. As they prove, digital technologies, such as Internet of Things (IoT), blockchain, and digital platforms, can be implemented on a large scale to make CE practices more efficient, transparent, and competitive. However, this development is limited by the factors that include the lack of resources, proper policy support, and data-sharing principles, especially among the small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). In order to make digital transformation more consistent with CE innovation, the authors propose establishing digital innovation hubs, establishing firm-level interoperability policies, and enhancing the capacity-building programmes to SMEs (Awad et. al., 2025).

Ghormare et al. (2024) investigate the interdependence between eco-innovation and the circular economy, specifically on the attainment of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The authors conducted a survey of research outputs across the globe within the period of 2010 to 2022 employing the qualitative synthesis approach that is based on the interpretivist epistemology, which resulted in the overrepresentation of the cases that had a developed country origin. It was found that literature coverage of the circular economy (CE and eco-innovation increased significantly; nevertheless, the study

also demonstrated the insufficient implementation of SDGs in the framework of CE and a visible research gap in less developed countries. Besides, the findings also showed that eco-innovation is a core catalyst to CE development, but its implementation in economies with limited resources is slow. The authors suggested the formulation of specific policies that would promote eco -eco-innovation and enhance collaboration between the industry and academic institutions, and deepen the action-research activities and case studies in under-researched geographic areas.

Suchek et. al. (2021) examine organisational drivers, barriers, and capabilities that positively impact a circular economy (CE innovation, thus establishing a gap in the literature about a predominance of environmental policy approaches, as opposed to firm-level transitioning. The authors used interpretivist philosophy and a qualitative synthesis approach by conducting a review of 179 peer-reviewed articles located in Europe, North America, and Asia. The results showed that internal capabilities like leadership, knowledge, and technological capability are the most common drivers of CE innovation, and external factors, such as regulations and pressures created by stakeholders, also have a powerful impact. The review has pointed out that the modern practice has been oriented towards recycling and waste management; however, advanced measures like remanufacturing, eco-design and product-service system have not been explored fully. The authors proposed that further empirical studies in developing nations, longitudinal studies to embrace the dynamics of CE changes, and greater integration of social and economic aspects in CE innovation were needed.

Shrestha et al. (2025) determine the knowledge, attitudes and practices related to the concepts of Circular Economy (CE and consequently the implications of that knowledge on the economic, environmental and social outcomes. The results show that the knowledge and application of the principles of CE among stakeholders in the fashion industry are moderate, with a statistically significant beneficial impact of the CE practices on the economic, environmental, and social performance. Based on this, the authors suggest that fashion companies, educational organisations, and decision-makers need to raise awareness, offer specific training, and incentives to improve the implementation of CE in their activities.

Rijal (2025) investigates how zero-waste practices (ZWP affect the performance of the circular economy (CEP and is mediated by the supply chain collaboration (SCC and circular economy entrepreneurship (CEE. Using a network theory based on quantitative research design, the results have shown that ZWP are important in improving SCC and CEP. In addition to that, SCC was also found to promote CEE, which further leads to increased CEP. The study thus encourages managers of the SMEs and policymakers to work towards zero-waste products, building on supply-chain relationships, and entrepreneurship as a way of realising better results in the circular economy.

Thapaliya (2024) studied the cost accounting, financial accounting, and management accounting methods in 20 small-scale enterprises in the financial services

sector of Nepal. By the use of judgmental selection and descriptive statistics, such as correlation and t-test, the research concluded that accounting systems, especially budgeting and forecasting, play a crucial role in determining the success of the firms. The continued use of traditional accounting practices was explained by the absence of coordination, firm size, and governance problems. Thapaliya advised that SMEs would create special accounting units and encourage green accounting tools and methods.

Maharjan (2024) examined the current practices in management accounting systems and managerial performance in Nepalese commercial banks with a particular focus on the branch and deputy managers working in twenty institutions based in Kathmandu. Structural equation modelling using path analysis was used in the analysis. The results show that the practices of the current management accounting systems, including strategic analysis, decision support information, budgeting, performance measurement, and costing, have a positive impact on managerial performance. Although these findings were in a banking setting, the implications of the research are that properly deployed management accounting systems provide practical information and control systems that can support effective decision-making and optimal allocation of resources.

### **Management Accounting Controls on Circular Economy Innovation in Small Firms**

Melles (2025) critically reviews the mandate and claims of Circular Economy efforts in Nepal, with the need to have an overall sustainability change that goes beyond sector-based waste-management models. The observation implied that the adoption of Multi-actor Collaboration frameworks may form the foundation of a more comprehensive treatment of the Circular Economy innovation in Nepal's small and medium-sized enterprises. The management accounting controls play a central role in the establishment of Circular Economy innovation in the global literature; however, there is a limited number of studies focused on Nepali small businesses. Regional analyses, however, warrant worthwhile information on the potential impact of MACs on the practices of CE in Nepal.

According to Nartey and van der Poll (2021), seven of these innovative management accounting practices, including activity-based costing and environmental costing, can be introduced by manufacturing SMEs into the scope of their strategic planning and help promote environmental and social sustainability.  $H_1$ : Management accounting controls (MACs) have a positive impact on Circular Economy (CE) innovation in Nepali small firms.

### **Management Accounting Controls on the Business Performance of the Small Firms**

Gautam (2024) examined the effects of management accounting practices, namely, budgeting, cost control, and performance evaluation, on the performance

of manufacturing small and medium-sized enterprises. The research was aimed at clarifying the impact of MACs on financial and operational results. Using a descriptive, causal-comparative research design, the study used a survey of the employees of many manufacturing companies in Nepal. MACs were used as the main independent variable, and firm performance was used as the dependent variable and measured by profitability, efficiency, and competitiveness. Findings showed that the successful adoption of MACs had a statistically significant positive impact on the performance of the business; more impact was experienced with the traditional practices of budgeting and cost management compared to the modern tools. Similar studies by Chenhall and Langfield-Smith (2007) and Hoque (2014) in the wider Asian context also indicate the fact that well-developed management accounting systems are known to increase decision-making ability, operational, and strategic focus and can improve overall performance of the firm. H<sub>2</sub>: Management Accounting Controls (MACs have a positive impact on the business performance of the small firms in Nepal.

### **Circular Economy Innovation Mediates MACs and Business Performance**

Nair and Prajoko (2020) observed the indirect effect of management accounting practices on business performance through the prism of CE-oriented innovations, concluding that the company with strong MACs will have a higher ability to apply CE practices, resulting in increased efficiency and profitability of the operations. Similarly, in the Asian setting, Hoque (2014) showed that CE innovation is a mediating variable that converts accounting knowledge into sustainable operations that support long-term business success. Even though the empirical evidence with Nepalese roots is limited, recent works by Gautam (2024 & Melles 2025) suggest that the Nepalese small enterprises which implement MACs might use CE innovations to achieve both environmental and financial gains. As a result, CE innovation becomes not only a path of the transformation of the MACs into measurable performance gains but also the strengthening of the competitive advantage of the SMEs, which have to operate within resource limitations. Circular Economy innovation has turned out to be a very important tool in connecting the management accounting practices with better business performance. Budgeting, cost monitoring, and performance evaluation are management accounting controls (MACs) that enable SMEs to have structured financial and operational information that enables implementation of CE strategies such as resource efficiency, recycling, and sustainable product design (Bocken et al., 2016; Velte & Stawinoga, 2017). H<sub>3</sub>: Circular Economy (CE Innovation mediates the relationship between Management Accounting Controls (MACs and Business Performance in small businesses.

### **Methods and Procedures**

The study took a positivist epistemological position since it valued objectivity and

quantitative analysis of measurable phenomena. This methodological bias agreed with the purpose of the study to measure the degree of management accounting practices (MAPs) adoption among small businesses and to assess the role of management accounting controls in the innovation processes in the circular economy and in the comprehensive business performance. The empirical study was framed in the Dhangadhi Sub-Metropolitan City, Southwest Province, Nepal, which comprises small and medium-sized firms that deal with retail trade, agriculture, manufacturing, services, and cooperative organisations. A convenience sampling technique was used, providing a purposive sample of 22 enterprises which included 11 manufacturing firms, five service enterprises, three cooperative and banking institutes, one agricultural enterprise and one retail establishment. The sample was a diverse group of managing directors, employees and members of that group, thus involving a heterogeneous knowledge base on enterprise financial mechanisms. The research ended up earning 116 responses, which is a complete dataset to carry out further analysis.

### **Data collection**

A structured questionnaire was created before the screening of the cooperatives, and subsequently, these questionnaires were utilised to gather data from the intended respondents. The questionnaire included general information about the enterprises, as well as financial supporting statements that align with an exploration of the financial mechanisms. The sample was sampled using three main categories: the owners/managing directors, the accounting or administrative employees, and the general staff, board members, employees, and general members who are pertinent to the research questions.

### **Data Analysis**

The gathered data were systematically coded and input into statistical software programs such as SPSS and SmartPLS for the purpose of analysis. Descriptive statistics were utilised to calculate the demographic profile of the respondents' frequency counts and age distributions. For hypothesis testing, inferential statistical methods were employed. Techniques such as regression analysis, correlation analysis, and chi-square tests were utilised to investigate the relationships between organisational, technological, and environmental factors and the adoption of MACs. Additionally, structural equation modelling (SEM using Smart-PLS has been applied in certain studies to validate the measurement model and to assess the structural relationships among the variables. The reliability and validity of the constructs were evaluated using Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, and average variance extracted (AVE). Furthermore, multicollinearity diagnostics and model fit indices were examined to ensure the robustness of the results.

**Table 1***Cross Tabulation Between Types of Enterprises*

<b>Types of Enterprise</b>	<b>Number of Enterprises</b>	<b>Board Members</b>	<b>managers</b>	<b>workers</b>	<b>Total</b>
Manufacturing Company	11	21	15	25	61
Service Sector Enterprise	5	7	5	8	20
Cooperative & Banking	3	4	2	6	12
Trade Enterprise	1	2	1	2	5
Agriculture Enterprise	1	3	2	4	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>116</b>

Table 1 shows every category. The respondents were sampled among the board members, employees and the general members so that the viewpoints of the decision maker, the operational and the general stakeholders were represented. The distribution gives an even representation of the perception of management accounting controls, circular economic innovation, and business performance among various sectors of businesses in the study area. Descriptive statistics were employed to summarise respondents' perceptions of reporting accuracy, timeliness, and transparency. Indicators such as mean, standard deviation, and frequency distribution were used to assess how enterprises prepared and presented financial reports. Inferential statistical methods were applied to the role of management accounting controls in Nepalese small businesses. Correlation analysis was conducted to identify the strength and direction of the relationship between circular economy innovation and business performance, while multiple regression analysis determined the data accessibility and compliance with the extent of management accounting control.

**Table 2***Reliability Statistics of the Variables*

<b>Variables</b>	<b>No. of Items</b>	<b>Cronbach's Alpha (<math>\alpha</math>)</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
Management Accounting Controls (MACs)	6	0.83	Good internal consistency

Circular Economy (CE Innovation)	6	0.81	Good internal consistency
Business Performance	5	0.84	Good internal consistency
Government Support	4	0.79	Acceptable
Market Access	4	0.77	Acceptable
Education & Awareness	4	0.76	Acceptable
Overall Questionnaire (all items = 29)	29	0.89	Excellent reliability

Table 2 illustrates the reliability of measurement constructs employed by the study. The measurement of reliability was done through Cronbach's Alpha ( $\alpha$  which was used to test the internal consistency of the items within each construct. A value of 0.70 or greater is deemed to be reasonable as far as social science research is concerned (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994).

Management Accounting Controls (MACs with six items rated demonstrated a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.83, which was good internal consistency. In the same way, Circular Economy (CE Innovation = 0.81 and Business Performance = 0.84 also provided good reliability, which indicated that the items of these measures are always suitable to measure the intended concepts. Government Support = 0.79, Market Access = 0.77, and Education and Awareness = 0.76 among the moderating variables attained a creditably reliable level, meaning that though the three constructs are relatively lower than the independent and dependent variables, they still have a statistically significant level of reliability.

## Results

The results section begins by presenting the descriptive findings on how Nepalese SMEs use management accounting controls and engage in circular economy innovation. It then reports the strength and direction of the relationships among these variables, followed by the outcomes of correlation, regression, and structural equation analyses. Together, these results show how accounting controls, innovation practices, and business performance interact within the sampled enterprises.

**Table 3**

### *Demographic Profile of the Respondents*

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency	
Age	20–30	22	18.97

	31–40	36	31.03
	41–50	33	28.46
	51 and above	25	21.55
Gender	Male	59	50.86
	Female	57	49.14
Marital Status	Single	45	38.79
	Married	71	61.21
Educational Status	Secondary or below	15	12.93
	Intermediate / +2	46	39.66
	Bachelor’s Degree	37	31.90
	Master’s or above	28	24.14
	Less than 1 year	14	12.07
Work Experience	1–5 years	22	18.97
	6–10 years	32	27.59
	11–15 years	21	18.10
	Above 15 years	27	23.28

Table 3 shows most of the respondents fell within the 31-40 years range (31.03 percent), then 41-50 years range (28.46 percent), 51 years and above (21.55 percent), and below 20 years of age (18.97 percent), thus supporting an overall weight of respondents within their productive working age accompanied by maturity and professional experience. The proportion of the genders was almost equal, as males (50.86 per cent) and females (49.14 per cent) constituted almost equal proportions, thus eliminating the possibility of gender bias. The analysis of marital status showed that 61.21 per cent were married and 38.7 per cent were single, a trend which might indicate family obligation, which might influence organisational views. Educationally, 39.66 per cent had intermediate/+2 in the qualification, 31.90 per cent had completed undergraduate, 24.14 per cent had master's degrees, and 12.93 per cent were at secondary level or below, indicating a fairly high level of learning power. There was a variety of work experience, with 27.59 per cent having 6-10 years of experience, 23.28 per cent over 15 years of experience, with subsets yet leaving the respondent base balanced and informed.

### **Inferential statistics**

As described in the research methodology, correlation analysis was conducted to explore the Correlations among the variables.

**Table 4***Correlation Analysis of Dependent and Independent Variables*

Variable	MAC	CE I	BP
MAC	1		
CE I	.56**	1	
BP	.62**	.58**	1

According to Table 3, most of the respondents are in the 31-40 age group (31.03 per cent), then the 41-50 group (28.46 per cent), the 51 and above group (21.55 per cent), and the less than 20 group (18.97 per cent), thereby indicating the existence of a predominantly productive and experienced workforce. The gender ratio was almost equal, by having a male percentage of 50.86 and a female percentage of 49.14, and this reduces gender bias. The Marital status data indicated that 61.21 per cent were married and 38.7 per cent were single, which means that family commitments might affect the organisational views. Regarding education, 39.66 per cent had intermediate or secondary school levels, 31.90 per cent were undergraduates with 24.14 per cent had a master's degree, and 12.93 per cent had secondary education or less, which showed high learning levels. There was also a diverse experience in work, as 27.59 per cent of those were reported to have 6-10 years of work experience, and 23.28 per cent had over 15 years of experience, thus providing the respondent base with balance and diversity.

**Table 5***Model Summary of Multivariate Regression Analysis*

Model	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	0.732	0.536	0.518	4.281	1.954

*a. Predictors (Constant), MAC, CE I, BP*

The multivariate regression model yielded a multiple correlation coefficient of R = .732, which indicates that there is a strong correlation between predictors (management accounting controls, circular economy innovation, and type of enterprise) and the dependent variable, i.e business performance. The coefficient of determination R<sup>2</sup> = .536 implies that this model can explain about 53.6 per cent of the variance in business performance. The adjusted R<sup>2</sup> 0.518 indicates that the number of predictors is slightly adjusted, thus confirming the strength of the model. The standard error of the estimate, 4.281, indicates a moderate degree of error in prediction. Lastly, the Durbin Watson 1.954

is not significantly above the acceptable range 1.5 -2.5, meaning there is no significant autocorrelation in the residuals.

**Table 6**

*ANOVA of Independent and Dependent Variables*

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	42.85	4	10.71	58.23	<.001
Residual	27.40	111	0.25		
Total	70.25	115			

The results of the ANOVA table 6 indicate that the regression model is statistically significant in explaining the adoption of management accounting (AMA). The regression sum of squares 42.85 versus the residual sum of squares 27.40 indicates that a large percentage of total variance 70.25 is attributable to the predictors- technological, organisational and environmental factors, as well as the competitive intensity. The F-value of  $10.71/(0.25)/10.71 = 58.23$  is very significant at the p-value of less than .001. This is to show that the addition of these predictors makes the model much better than when there are no independent variables. In general, the results confirm that all the independent variables have a significant and powerful effect on AMA, which confirms the strength and predictive capacity of the model.

**Table 8**

*Coefficient of multiple regression analysis*

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients <b>B</b>	Standardized Coefficients <b>Std. Error</b>	T <b>Beta</b>	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics
	0.50	0.10		5.00	.000
	0.35	0.08	0.42	4.38	.000
	0.29	0.07	0.36	4.14	.000

The multiple regression in Table 8 was used to examine the effects of the Management Accounting Controls (MAC) and Circular Economy Innovation (CEI) on Business Performance (BP). The general model was important,  $F(2, 113) = 58.23$ ,  $p = .001$ , a large percentage of the variance in BP. MAC  $B = 0.35$ ,  $0.42$ ,  $p$  less than .001 and CE I ( $B = 0.29$ ,  $0.36$ ,  $p$  less than .001) all predicted positive business performance. The Collinearity tolerance is more than 0.60, VIF less than 2 statistics did not show any issues of multicollinearity. These findings indicate that the greater the management accounting

control and the involvement in the circular economy innovation, the more successful the business performance of the sampled firms.

**Table 9**

*Summary of Hypothesis Testing*

<b>Hypothesis</b>	<b>Statement</b>	<b>Result</b>
H1	Management Accounting Controls (MACs) Circular Economy Innovation (CEI)	Accepted
H2	Management Accounting Controls (MACs) have a positive impact on the business performance of the small firms in Nepal.	Accepted
H3	Circular Economy (CE) Innovation mediates the relationship between Management Accounting Controls (MACs) and Business Performance in small businesses.	Accepted

The findings of hypothesis testing, Table 9, indicate that Management Accounting Controls (MACs) have a positive and significant effect on Circular Economy Innovation (CEI) in Nepali small firms (H1:  $\beta = 0.56$ ,  $p = .001$ ). Business Performance (BP) is also greatly positively influenced by MACs (H 2:  $\beta = 0.42$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Also, the correlation between MACs and BP is mediated by Circular Economy Innovation (H 3: ind. effect  $= 0.21$ ,  $p < .01$ ), which tells us that the influence of MACs on business performance is passed through CE innovation to some extent. These results affirm the importance of accounting controls in ensuring sustainable innovation practices, which enrich the performance of firms in small businesses in Nepal.

**Discussion**

This study explored the use of Management Accounting Controls (MACs) to boost Circular Economy (CE) innovation and to improve the business performance of small enterprises in Nepal. The correlation and regression tests showed that MACs have a positive and statistically significant impact on CE innovation ( $\beta = 0.42$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ). This observation indicates that structured accounting, like budgeting, cost control and performance monitoring, gives the information required to apply CE strategies effectively in terms of financing and operations. The finding supports past research reports that highlight the role of management accounting in ensuring sustainability and resource efficiency (Bocken et al., 2016; Velte & Stawinoga, 2017; Nartey & van der Poll, 2021).

It was also observed that organisational involvement in MACs significantly promotes business performance ( $\beta = 0.42$ ;  $p = 0.001$ ), which implies that companies that have established accounting controls stand at a higher stance to boost profitability,

operational efficiency, and competitiveness. This is consistent with the previous studies in the Asian setting, which emphasise that a well-developed management accounting system is conducive to effective decision-making and efficient allocation of resources (Gautam, 2024; Chenhall & Langfield-Smith, 2007; Hoque, 2014). The findings indicate that formalised financial management, even in a small-scale business, has its role to play as a measure of performance.

Moreover, it was found that the relationship between MACs and business performance is mediated by CE innovation (indirect effect = 0.21;  $p < 0.01$ ), which means that the application of sustainable practices converts the accounting knowledge into actual operations and financial gain. The significance of CE in this mediating role is the value of using accounting controls to leverage long-term sustainability and competitive advantage. The results can be related to those conducted by researchers who highlight the importance of integrating innovation practices with management accounting as a way to improve the performance of a firm (Nair & Prajoko, 2020; Melles, 2025).

Altogether, the findings of this paper point to the fact that MACs are not only financial instruments, but also strategic facilitators of sustainable business activities. When small businesses embrace strong accounting controls, they will be in a better position to embrace CE innovations, which will eventually lead to improved performance. These results can have practical implications for Nepalese SMEs, which indicates that investing in accounting capacity and sustainability-related endeavours can generate a synergistic effect on business performance, complementing environmental responsibility and economic development.

## Conclusion

The study shows that Management Accounting Controls (MACs) and Circular Economy (CE) innovation can be an important factor in improving the performance of businesses within Nepalese small enterprises. Among them, the most significant determinant is estimated as MACs (= 0.42), which directly influences not only CE innovation but also business outcomes since CE innovation (= 0.36) also has a significant impact by mediating the relationship between MACs and business outcomes. Correlation and regression analysis confirm that the combination of these predictors substantially explains the variation in the business performance, and there is no concern of multicollinearity, indicating the significant role of organised internal accounting operations and sustainability-guided programs in the performance of small businesses.

It is the recommendation of the Nepalese government to help its small enterprises enhance their Management Accounting Controls (MACs) through structured budgeting, cost monitoring, and performance evaluation systems. Meanwhile, companies need to adopt the idea of innovations of the Circular Economy (CE), such as resource efficiency, recycling, and sustainable product design, into their business to improve ecological and financial performance. To enhance the competence of managers and employees in terms of

accounting and sustainability practices, regular training and capacity-building programs should be offered to them so that they can make more efficient decisions. Also, the SMEs are advised to use external resources, including government incentives, regulatory advice, and market partnerships, to ease the implementation of MACs and CE programs and to encourage sustainable growth of the business in the long run.

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## From Pin to Pole: Building an Empire in Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*

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### Abstract

*Daniel Defoe's Robinson Crusoe (1719) has long been considered one of the earliest works in the literary canon and one of the foundational novels in English. Yet beneath its narrative of survival and resourcefulness is an attitude of colonialism which reflects the values of the British Empire-building project of the eighteenth century. This essay examines how the story presents issues of hierarchy, binary perception, and the colonial context and psyche of the protagonist through a postcolonial lens, using the theories of Edward Said, Homi K. Bhabha, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, and Frantz Fanon, and thus recalls the subsequently developed British Empire. The powerfully negative treatment of the Aboriginal subject, the concern for the superiority of European culture, and Crusoe's treatment of Friday are discussed as the beginnings of colonial agency-coloniser dynamics. In employing the qualitative method, the analysis focuses on the viewpoints offered by "Orientalism," "mimicry," and "the subaltern" in explicating Defoe's narrative techniques. Robinson Crusoe enjoys personal liberties, but the study reveals the exploitative and domineering qualities of the coloniser. This twofold perception indicates that the work has the potential to act both as a vehicle for colonial myths and as a demonstration of human fortitude. Central to the concluding thoughts of the article is the appropriateness of a postcolonial viewpoint in contemplating the European imperial legacy as well as its critical-literary context.*

**Keywords:** *Civilisation, colonial attitudes, empire, subjugation, postcolonial*

### Introduction

Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) has usually been regarded as a narrative concerning human inventiveness, adventure, and independence. An Englishman who has been



locked on a desert island for twenty-eight years practically survives by being inventive and laborious. The novel, much as it merely reads like a tale of survival, is a universal text which is very closely related to the imperialism of its day. Literature in general is instrumental in shaping and sustaining imperial ideology, said critics such as Said (1978). Not only has Defoe's figure in *Robinson Crusoe* survived, however, but he has built up a system of government for his island, he is engaged in agriculture, and he exercises absolute sway over somebody else, non-Europeans, in other words, Friday. According to the post-colonial view, in fact, Crusoe's actions upon his island can be likened to those of European colonialism, since it involves the taking possession of land, the slavery of native peoples, and the culture and worship of Europe. Colonial narratives invariably portray the colonised subject as one in need of the guide and control of the coloniser, according to Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin (2002). This relationship is well illustrated in the one that exists between Crusoe and Friday, since in this relationship Crusoe assumes the position of moral and cultural superior; the relationship must be assumed, being based on a disparity of power. It is not so much the personal relationship between Crusoe and Friday, however, as the fact that the book provides a broader ideological situation in which European domination is portrayed as a natural phenomenon, rational and civilising, while the indigenous or non-European 'Other' is rendered invisible or subservient.

Further emphasising the imperial aspects of the story are its historical settings. Britain's mercantilist interests and increased desire for world trade markets led her to exploit her colonial possessions in America, in Africa, and in East India at the beginning of the eighteenth century. The basis of the moral, religious, and intellectual arguments for colonisation in those days was the disposition to "civilise" the non-European peoples. Loomba (2015) indicates that these views are fairly reflected in the literature of the early eighteenth century, where the expansion of Europe is conceived as a cultural manifestation and a moral enterprise. So far, *Robinson Crusoe* has become both a source of amusement and a literary expression of modern imperialism, and it itself pictures colonisation as a moral and practical achievement.

By associating the colonisation of space with economic exploitation of it, the novel also brings in new ideas of capitalism. Crusoe illustrates that quality of economic reasonableness which represents the early capitalist conception of things, in the way he regulates the island on which he is stranded, its resources, and the work he does. Aravamudan (1999) observes that *Robinson Crusoe* presents landownership as a means of personal security and wealth achievement, while narrating at one and the same time individual survival and the logic of accumulation. Seen in this light, the novel may be interpreted as a point of departure for colonial and economic ideas, where gain by individuals is rendered possible by cultural and moral supremacy. The latter point for the analysis of these factors in the novel will reveal grave implications in the post-colonial criticism that will be essayed. The works of authors such as Spivak (1988) and Bhabha (1994) insist on the necessity of the cooperation and subordination of the colonised by the coloniser, such that colonial power is never total. The tensions of colonial relationships—wherein the coloniser claims superiority, yet is reliant on the labour, knowledge and compliance of the colonised—are particularly recognised in Bhabha's concept of ambivalence. The idea of the subaltern, according to Spivak, is indicative of the systematic annulment of the voices of the native, showing how stories such as *Robinson Crusoe* produce and perpetuate epistemic hierarchies. Taken together, these concepts furnish a reading that resolves to expose the power structures, implicit and manifest, of the narrative. The novel's relation to the spheres of language, religion and cultural convention points to the

ambiguity of imperial ideologies. Crusoe's imposition of English, the teaching of the European religion and the forms of government which he adopts are products of a total system of cultural domination. This is echoed in previous colonial ventures of codifying social codes, language and religion as instruments of control and assimilation. These readings show that Robinson Crusoe is a product more of the ideological periphery of empire than a tale of solitude and resourcefulness.

The aim of this research, therefore, is to examine *Robinson Crusoe* from the point of view of postcolonial theory and its implications for how colonial relationships are produced, how racial and cultural differences are presented, and how the narrative works to legitimise imperial power. This study will employ a qualitative textual analysis based on postcolonial concepts such as mimicry, Orientalism, hybridity and subalternity to illustrate how Defoe's works both reflect and affirm the colonial imagination, and to highlight the contradictions and tensions embodied in these narratives. It seeks to place a text such as Robinson Crusoe in terms of both its historical moment and as a place of critical investigation in order to understand the continuing cultural and ideological effects of European colonisation.

### Methods and Procedures

The primary text to be examined during the course of the study is *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), and it will be pursued by means of the qualitative textual analysis types of examination. The theoretical foundation for this analysis will be supplied by postcolonial theory in general, and, in particular, the writings of Edward Said, Homi K. Bhabha, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and Frantz Fanon, and other significant postcolonial theorists. The method of pursuing the analysis will be by a close reading of appropriate passages from the text that illustrate colonial attitudes, racial representations, and cultural hierarchies. This will involve studying several of Crusoe's encounters with Friday, Crusoe's treatment of the island as property, Crusoe's other encounters with people of non-European backgrounds, and, also important, the authorial commentaries, diction, and narrative voice functioning as means of concealing colonial ideology. The insights accruing from the writings of theorists such as Said's *Orientalism* have been employed to analyse the primary text so as to see how the cultural differences being represented are being constructed, and how the European superiority is operating. Spivak's essay, "Can the Subaltern Speak?", deals with the silencing of native voices in colonial narratives of events, while Bhabha's work "The Location of Culture" discusses the ideas of hybridism, mimicry and ambivalence in colonial discourse, and Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin in *The Empire Writes Back*, gives a more thorough account of colonial discourse and language. It will also survey the narrative episodes of *Robinson Crusoe*, and then estimate to what extent this theme has been studied. The extent to which the novel involved itself in imperial discourse and the influence that it has had on the cultural perceptions will be interpreted by information that has been established by theories, and also by textual perception. The interpretive lens presupposes that literature works to generate cultural meanings in concert with, or contrary to, the prevailing ideologies — rather than remaining neutral (Loomba, 2015). The lens through which we will examine how narrative techniques, characterisation, and cultural assumptions reflect and sustain imperial attitudes is a combined reading of Robinson Crusoe as a literary artefact and a historical document. The present study intends to provide an extensive post-colonial reading of Defoe's work by applying textual, theoretical and historical analysis.

## Results and Discussion

Crusoe's settlement of the island exemplifies the colonial prototype of European settlement and dominion, since it embraces something more than mere survival. His systematic occupation of the island, which comprised covering it with buildings, planting crops, subjecting animals to domestication, and his fixation of personal boundaries, is an example of the conversion of nature into a controlled and hence usable state. This is in keeping with Locke's (1690/1988) Labour Theory of Property, which expresses the theory that ownership is justified by improvement. Post-colonially, Crusoe's acts denote the Eurocentric growth which places European intervention to be in itself productive, and morally justified (and hence legitimate), thus naturalising land conquest through labour and cultivation (Ashcroft et al., 2002). Furthermore, the renaming of the island and its topography by Crusoe is a symbolic act of possession rather than an organisational one. Such naming is a colonial operation, whereby, through obliteration of prior claims or histories, identity is imprinted upon space. According to Said (1978), renaming and mapping are the impressions of symbolic ownership which allow the coloniser to reconceptualise the 'different' world to his own standards of Europeanisation. In Crusoe's case, therefore, the island becomes an ordered and manipulated environment whereby he is free to exert governance and a cultural order without external opposition, and consequently becomes a part of the European epistemic structure. The transformation of the island into a microcosm of European social structures not only indicates land management but also the imposition of authority and hierarchy. He creates a social cosmology comparable to the imperial administration of colonies, putting himself in the position of head of the state and fixing a regulated routine of government, resembling the hierarchical government of the European association of societies (Loomba, 2015). His auto-fashioning supplies the double aspect of the colonial subject, the agent as well as the instrument of imperialistic ideology, as ruler and as civiliser. The colonial relation of master and subaltern is, in a nutshell, given in the introduction of Friday. Crusoe's prompt renaming and introduction of Friday and the incorporation of English and European costumes are the methods of erasing the savage identity. This is the silencing of the absolutely subaltern, according to Spivak (1988), for the discourse of the colonial attitude takes the place of the indigenous knowledge systems and cultural alternatives. Friday's voice is subaltern in the narrative, being productive only of the prevailing narrative in the story of Crusoe, which perpetuates a power relation which is ever-present and optimal for the coloniser's view of supremacy.

To understand the ambivalent relationship between Crusoe and Friday, we require an understanding of Bhabha's (1994) theory of mimicry. Crusoe attempts to create closeness and loyalty through teaching Friday to use the language, dress and religion of Europe, creating a subject who represents the values of Europe but who is still, typically, marked as different. The identity of the coloniser cannot be entirely recreated while, at the same time, preserving the supremacy of the hierarchy, which is what this 'almost the same, but not quite' is suggestive of. Friday's mimicry thus reveals the divergences in power relations emerging out of colonisation, while, at the same time, functioning as a mode of acceptance and protest. Fanon (1963) highlights the psychological ramifications of this dependence: the colonised internalises the superiority of the coloniser, thus leading to obedience and loyalty, which sustains a mode of cultural domination. Friday is the typical example of the working of this model, since the structural and coercive forces which underlie his assimilation are masked by the construction of his submission as the moral and

virtue-laden outcome of the events cued up in the narrative. By framing the repression of cultural identity as necessary in the pursuit of the maintenance of social and moral order, we see that the tale thus rationalises hierarchy.

Crusoe's insistence that Friday become a Christian is a clear case of cultural imperialism. It is the "civilising mission" that gives the European ascendancy and cultural superiority a universal justification by adopting Western religion as the underpinning of ethics (Loomba, 2015). Since, in the story, conversion and colonisation go hand in hand, and since spiritual salvation implies an acceptance of European ethics and ideas, Defoe recreates the epistemic hierarchy that underpins imperial expansion by equating Christianity with civilisation. A prominent aspect of European colonial ventures in Africa, Asia, and America was the mission work, which had nearly always the economic and political preponderance as its basis (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1991). Religious education, for instance, is to be regarded as not only a moral safeguard, but also as a means of control, as a formative influence on Friday's personality, to bring him into the colonial structure. This ambiguity of temporal and spiritual power is a reflection of a general imperial policy, in which religion is a theory of government as well as a principle.

Crusoe views the island as an economic asset and approaches it in a colonial and proto-capitalist manner, considering the way he approaches resource allocation, farming, and husbandry. This has been noted by Said (1993) as belonging to the historical relationship between the capitalist accumulation of wealth and the alienation of land, whereby the alienated land is a colony and the political and economic dominion of the coloniser. Crusoe even has a slave in the character of Friday. Despite the apparent moral and civilising purpose of the endeavours, Friday is a colonised subject who, as a result of his economic productivity, works for the civilising of the island, Crusoe's economic rationalisation. Loomba (2015) discusses the framework of slave, indigenous and colonial exploitation as a framework of rape to produce surplus for European economies. In a way, the narrative focuses on economic rationality, colonisation, and the capitalist structure in a positive and 'civilised' manner. Defoe's systematic exclusion of the indigenous population of the island is alarming. This exclusion materialises in grotesque forms, whereby colonised ghosts pose threats. This has been described by Spivak (1988) as colonised silencing.

The island lacks indigenous representation, further supporting colonial ideologies regarding how non-European territories are treated as non-existent, unused, or inactive places in the world. The Island, as a European projection, becomes a blank slate. The work normalises the imposition of the European political, cultural, and economic order, as well as the authoritarian, Eurocentric delineation of the 'pre-historical' in the order of evidence, and in the sanctioning of authority, or legitimation, of the character of Crusoe. The most evident accounts of colonial authority are, however, interrupted and challenged by Crusoe's reliance on Friday. Friday's labour, knowledge, and partnership are, of course, indispensable to Crusoe, especially in moments when he is in crisis or when he is socially threatened on account of his would-be claim to social order. The dependence of Crusoe on Friday does, however, primarily address the colonial structure and, to some extent, the presumed sovereign authority of the colonial power. Crusoe's reliance on Friday is indeed the most fragile of all colonial structures; the power relationship could hardly stand together with the dependence. Circa structures emphasise the relationship and alter the unbounded imposition of empire that would primarily be subsequent to the figure of Crusoe. Beyond providing a compelling story, Robinson Crusoe serves a further ideological goal that promotes the claimed positive aspects of colonisation. The narrative praises the virtues of

diligence, morality, and commercial enterprise while sanitising the violent conquests of colonial settlement. Literature has, and continues to, normalise the exercise of European dominion and authority for the sake of empire. As the empire's historian, Defoe portrays a colonisation that is both moral and essential, contributing to such a tradition of literature.

This ongoing obsession arguably shapes perceptions of colonial history and canonises the novel's imperialist values. The ethical examination of colonialism is made more difficult by Defoe's conquest and narratives of subsumptive dominance, framed as adventure and survival, that normalise the extreme coercion and exploitation of history. In *Robinson Crusoe*, the language of power assumes a distinct form. The teaching of Friday English, aside from its role in communication, serves as a means of controlling the coloniser's culture and thought. In colonial contexts, the control of language assimilation operates, as Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin (2002) put it, on perception and eliminates other forms of knowledge. The lack of Friday's native tongue is akin to the lack of other forms of thought, storytelling, and knowledge. The consequences of control of language, described by Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1986) as the coloniser's control of reality, are the ultimate reshaping of other possible worlds. This violence of language points to the novel's participation in the more extensive processes of cultural erasure that are part of colonialism (Spivak, 1988). The island also serves, from the perspective of European colonial aspirations, as a closed laboratory. Quest, Questor 97 No European institutions (to begin with) – becomes a site for Crusoe to exercise power, loot resources and organise imperialist social structures (Pratt, 1992). The island's tame preserves, protected areas, and "untamed" lands also work to confirm European notions of orderliness, civilisation, and authority by mirroring the spatial separation found in colonial settlements. Crusoe's kingdom is a kind of micro-European empire. A version of European imperial structures. Crusoe acts as the ruler and Enlightenment judge, while Friday observes his subordinate role through labour and reflexive rule-following. Accordingly, the island can be used as an illustration of how European political, labour and systems of cultural imposition worked in colonial situations.

Crusoe is programmed by fear and uses it as an expensive driver to control. Savage animals, cannibalism and the unknown are representations of dangers that justify Crusoe's authority. This depiction of the colonised as brutish, irrational and degenerate is often used to justify intervention (Said 1978). Cannibals are represented in the novel as being grotesque and subhuman, while a testament to Friday's so-called humanity is his compliance with European norms. Setting up a moral hierarchy and explaining away dominance, this mechanism makes European power civilising, but also protective. Accordingly, the moral justification for colonisation by fear and otherness. Later, in the book, there are ambivalent passages despite its colonial perspective. Crusoe obliquely condemns unmediated authority by his respect for Friday and occasional acknowledgement of his reliance on him (Bhabha, 1994). Crusoe's loneliness also reveals the psychological damage done to colonial agents abroad, in terms of their isolation as well as the emotional costs of empire building (Fanon, 1963). These nuances remind us that colonial discourses are not unproblematic or uniform: rather, they express the tangled destinies of coloniser and colonised and act out relationships between power, dependency, and identity. Postcolonial scholarship has revisioned *Robinson Crusoe* as a site of contested ideologies rather than an ideologically neutral adventure. Although ones that investigate and disassemble the narrative structures used to suppress the colonised begin, for example, with J. M. Coetzee's 1986 novel *Foe* (in which characters who have been silenced speak themselves out of silence). Loomba

(2015) observes something similarly contemporary in criticism, picking up on the novel's role in the legitimization of empire but also on the alienated and suppressed subjects it depicts.

These reworkings demonstrate that *Crusoe* is not only an ephemeral novelist of colonial discourse (125) but also how the literature itself can both represent a historical context and be used to critically engage with imperial ideology. The novel foregrounds epistemic violence that underpins the colonial discourse by systematically suppressing indigenous agency. The Caribs have no social, political or cultural depth; they are simply dangers (Spivak 1988; Bhabha 1994). *Crusoe*, by restricting the colonised to the status of being mere subjects who are determined entirely by European paradigms, maintains their status through controlling historical consciousness and creating a narrative structure based on control of representation. *Crusoe*'s return to Europe and his claim of wealth from his Brazilian plantation illustrate how economic aspiration is a function of colonial pursuit. As Aravamudan (1999) observes, the novel associates land ownership with producing wealth even as it tells tales of survival and capitalist accumulation. This is the basic economic 'rationality' of colonialism: its moral and determined logic being primarily one of cultural-enabling to facilitate the extraction of surplus from other economies (Fanon, 1963).

### Conclusion

Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* has strong ties to the ideological constructs of European imperialism, as this post-colonial analysis shows. The basic practices of colonial domination as witnessed in the story are embodied in *Crusoe*'s naming and conversion of Friday, the making of the island into his own personal colony, and in the obliteration of the histories of the natives. The story serves to rationalise the hierarchies of empire as being the rational, moral, and unavoidable results of European presence abroad. In following the course of the text, it is perceived how the imperial authority is upheld by the points of view of Said's *Orientalism*, Bhabha's mimicry and ambivalence, Spivak's subaltern silenced and Fanon's indictment of colonial psychology. *Crusoe*'s relation with Friday shows clearly the contradictions of colonialism itself through the contradictions between dominance and dependency. Although *Robinson Crusoe* is generally considered a story of survival and genius, its ideological ramifications indicate a more nuanced and troubling legacy. As a work of literature, it is, therefore, a classic, and it is also the record of a colonial discourse which shaped and endorsed the imperialist point of view of the time. If we reread the novel in the light of post-colonial theory, we can, with the historical complicity of the novel confronted, demur from its narration, which in part will ensure that the voices it silences come back into critical focus.

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### Enhancing Poetry Teaching Practices in the EFL Classrooms: An Exploratory Action Research

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#### Abstract

*Teaching poetry is an influential tool for developing language proficiency and emotional excellence among learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in Nepal. However, poetry teaching plays a crucial role in language learning in EFL classrooms; it remains teacher-centred, resulting in low student participation. This exploratory action research (EAR) was designed and carried out to find out why secondary-level students remain inactive during poem teaching and how the interaction between the teacher and students can increase participation of the students. The study was carried out in a Grade 10 English classroom with 32 students aged 15 to 16, over a period of six weeks. The researcher used the questionnaires as a tool to collect data. The study found that students were passive in the poetry classroom because of language difficulties, unfamiliar cultural content, and teacher-centred teaching strategies. To solve this, two action cycles were used with activities like predicting before reading, explaining the context and figures of speech used in the poem, reading in pairs with rhyme and rhythm, and allowing students to make critical interpretations and write summaries on their own. As a result of this intervention, students became more confident and motivated, developed a better understanding of poems, and showed increased participation in classroom activities. The study shows that using learner-centred and reflective strategies can make poetry lessons more active, interesting, and engaging for students. It also shows that exploratory action research helps teachers improve their teaching skills, especially in an EFL setting.*

**Keywords:** *Exploratory action research, learner-centred strategies, poetry teaching, student participation*

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## Introduction

Poetry is a very essential part of English language teaching because it helps students develop language skills, understand culture, and express creativity. Teachers have found that poetry supports learning sounds, new words, and emotions through rhythm and feeling (Tütüniş & Çetinavcı, 2019; Addinna, 2011). The students who are learning English as a foreign or second language, poetry allows them to use language beyond grammar and helps them identify tone, pictures in words, and comparisons (Bidari, 2021). This means that poetry provides learners with an excellent opportunity to be exposed to authentic language structures that do not always appear in normal texts. By engaging with poetic language, students understand how English works creatively and develop an ability to interpret the meaning in multiple ways. Therefore, poetry teaching is an effective medium for strengthening both the linguistic competence and interpretive skills in EFL classrooms.

Understanding all these advantages of teaching poetry in EFL classrooms, the strategies remain very traditional, which do not meet the learners' needs and context. Teachers spend most of the time explaining difficult words, interpreting each line, and translating the poem into the students' mother tongue (Karki, 2016; Regmi, 2022). Most of the time, students listen to the teacher quietly and passively, without thinking deeply or engaging with the text in the classroom. As a result, poetry classes fail to develop students' creativity and critical thinking. Students emphasise the memorisation of the stanza explanations and the summary given by the teachers. This traditional approach blocks the potential of poetry teaching to make language learning enjoyable, communicative, and meaningful.

Studies on English teaching in Nepal show that classrooms are mostly teacher-centred, with many students and a strong focus on exams (Phyak, Negi, & Acharya, 2024; Nepal, 2023). Teachers give due focus to the exams for increased and improved achievement rather than students' understanding. The exam-oriented activities in the classroom make it difficult for students to learn through interaction and participation. To address this situation, teachers need to use reflective and research-informed methods that help them bring students into active participation and improve their teaching. Exploratory Action Research (EAR) offers a good way to do this because it allows teachers to study their own classroom problems and try out practical solutions (Burns, 2010; Shrestha, Laudari, & Gnawali, 2023).

This study largely contributes to the growing practice of teacher-initiated classroom research in Nepalese ELT classrooms by emphasising the significance of small, cyclic, context-sensitive, and learner-centred pedagogical interventions in improving poetry teaching and making it more meaningful for learners (Shrestha, Gnawali, & Laudari, 2021). The findings are useful for teachers, trainers, and policymakers who work to enhance student participation in language learning through poems (Bidari, 2021). The study also highlights Exploratory Action Research (EAR) as a practical tool for teachers' professional development that includes reflective inquiry with the practical action in a real classroom (Pandey, 2023).

Moreover, the study attempts to minimise the gap between traditional teacher-

centred poetry teaching and research-informed interactive strategies in Nepalese EFL classrooms. Limited teacher confidence and a lack of context-sensitive strategies create difficulties in effective poetry teaching (Adhikari, 2020). By applying EAR, teachers can respond to learners' needs, enhance linguistic and cultural understanding, and foster creativity and emotional engagement (Tütüniş & Çetinavcı, 2019; Burns, 2010). Eventually, the classroom research promotes a reflective and evidence-based teaching that supports teachers' continuous professional growth and enriches the growing ELT practices in Nepal.

I have been teaching English at the secondary level for more than ten years, and I have often noticed that students are less engaged in poetry classes than in other lessons. Even after trying new techniques, their expectations were not met, and even the active learners tended to wait for my explanations instead of interpreting or discussing poems on their own. This raised several questions and highlighted the need for research-based intervention. To understand the issue, I designed an Exploratory Action Research project guided by two questions: why students remain passive during poetry lessons, and what classroom strategies could make poem learning more interactive and meaningful. The study aimed to identify the reasons behind student passivity, introduce learner-centred strategies to increase participation, and evaluate changes in their engagement, motivation, and understanding.

## Literature Review

### Poetry in EFL Pedagogy

It is an accepted fact that poetry is a useful tool for learning a second language. Addinna (2011) emphasises that poetry promotes creativity and fosters emotional understanding, connecting with language. Likewise, Samanik (2018) states that poetry teaching improves students' pronunciation, cultural understanding, poetic devices and awareness of language. By engaging with rhythm, sounds, and figurative language, students' grammar, vocabulary, and learn pronunciation naturally, developing an improved understanding of how the language works (Tütüniş & Çetinavcı, 2019).

The humanistic view emphasises that poetry teaching helps make language learning more personal, engaging, and meaningful. According to Bidari (2021), poetry encourages emotional connection and imagination, turning the classroom into a place for self-expression, imagination, and reflection. Poems can be understood and interpreted in multiple ways, which helps students think deeply and creatively, share ideas, and build understanding with the help of teachers and classmates, which is different from prose. However, Wahyuni (2024) warns that this openness can sometimes create confusion among students, especially those who are not familiar with literary texts and devices, if teachers do not provide them enough guidance and support. Poetry class requires additional support and explanation from the teachers to enhance the understanding of the students. Therefore, teaching poetry in EFL classes should equally value the open and multiple interpretation with a clear structure so that students feel both supported and confident while exploring poetic language. This ultimately exposes the learners to the

varieties of language structures.

Poetry exposes learners to language and culture, helping them discover real emotions, ideas, and values based on a particular setting. Poems help learners experience different ways of thinking, expressions, and symbolic meanings that build their cultural understanding and respect for diverse and deviant language use. This experience not only improves learners' vocabulary and interpretation skills but also develops empathy and critical awareness, which are important for communication. In the classroom, when students recite the poem with rhyme and rhythm, rewrite, or summarise poems, the classroom becomes an active, creative, and lively space for sharing and collaboration. Therefore, using poetry in EFL teaching supports current communicative methods that see language learning as both a psychological and emotional entity.

The Reader-response theory focuses that meaning emerges through the exchange between the text and the reader (Rosenblatt, 1978). In EFL classrooms, passive participation of the students can be transformed into active engagement when teachers encourage students to critically respond to the poems through discussion, rewriting, or summarising (Lazar, 1993; Paran, 2008). Reader-response theory gives additional focus to the subjective and multiple interpretations of the poem, which is meaningful to empower EFL learners who initially feel limited by linguistic properties (Maley & Duff, 2016).

Neupane (2010) carried out a study entitled 'A Study on Teaching Poetry of Grade Eight'. The main aim of the study was to find out and analyse the activities and challenges related to poetry teaching in grade eight. The researcher used questionnaires to collect data from ten English teachers and thirty students. The study found that teachers simply tried to keep a positive attitude towards students during poetry lessons, but they still faced various practical issues in the teaching process. The research emphasised the importance of poetry teaching in Nepalese EFL classrooms to enhance the language learning of the students.

Khadka (2023) conducted a study titled 'Strategies for Teaching Poetry in English Language Classrooms at Secondary Level' to analyse effective strategies for teaching poetry and suggest some pedagogical implications to enhance language learning. The researcher collected data from forty English teachers of twenty secondary schools in Kathmandu District by using questionnaires. The researcher also did the observation to collect more information. The study concluded that teachers mainly used strategies such as discussing the poet and poem background, describing poems line by line, and reading aloud. These approaches were found to help enhance students' vocabulary, interpretive skills, critical thinking, and overall language proficiency. The study concluded that poetry teaching is not only limited to developing linguistic competence, but it also improves intercultural awareness of the students.

After reviewing the studies done by different researchers, I found there is a lack of research on practical, context-sensitive, and exploratory research on learner-centred strategies that actively engage students in poetry teaching classes. Most studies have focused only on descriptive findings and teacher practices without implementing and reflecting on systematic and cyclic interventions to address the students' passive participation in poetry classes. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by using Exploratory Action Research (EAR) to investigate the causes of students' passivity and

apply research-informed, interactive, and student-centred techniques to enhance their comprehension, participation, and motivation in Nepalese EFL poetry classrooms.

## **Challenges in Nepali EFL Poetry Teaching**

In the ELT context in Nepal, several studies show the limited student participation in poetry classes due to traditional pedagogies. Karki (2016) explored that teachers primarily depend on and largely follow translation and explanation, while students rarely read or discuss poems. Regmi (2022) explored that cultural unfamiliarity with Western imagery makes comprehension difficult. Sharma (2025) found that exam-oriented teaching mainly focuses students on memorize texts instead of enjoying their beauty and meaning. In other words, such instruction values remembering facts more than experiencing the creative and emotional side of literature.

## **Exploratory Action Research in ELT**

Exploratory Action Research (EAR) is a way to explore, understand and improve our practice as teachers. EAR bridges the gap between research findings and teaching practice. According to Burns (2010), EAR enables teachers to identify practical classroom problems, plan for improvement, implement the designed strategies and reflect on outcomes systematically within the framework of it. Exploratory action research focuses on practical classroom change that differs from traditional research (Shrestha et al., 2023). In Nepal, EAR has been expanded and strengthened through NELTA, leading to documented improvements in classroom interaction, motivation, and learner autonomy (Shrestha, Gnawali, & Laudari, 2021). Pandey (2023) and Phyak et al. (2024) argue that EAR fosters reflective professionalism among Nepali teachers, encouraging them to become “teacher-researchers.” This approach aligns with post-method pedagogy (Nepal, 2023), which values contextual adaptation over imported models. This study used EAR to investigate the causes of students' low and passive participation and test participatory strategies for improved poetry teaching.

## **Methods and Procedures**

This study used an Exploratory Action Research (EAR) framework consisting of three phases: exploration, action, and reflection. The research was conducted with 32 students of grade 10 (17 boys and 15 girls), aged 15–16. Researchers used close-ended questionnaires to identify students' challenges, preferences, and engagement during poetry classes. The collected data were systematically and descriptively analysed using frequency and percentages to summarise students' responses. These analyses provided the researcher with the insights to design and implement the learner-centred interventions in the action phase. The reflection phase helped the researcher to evaluate the effectiveness of the research-informed strategies.

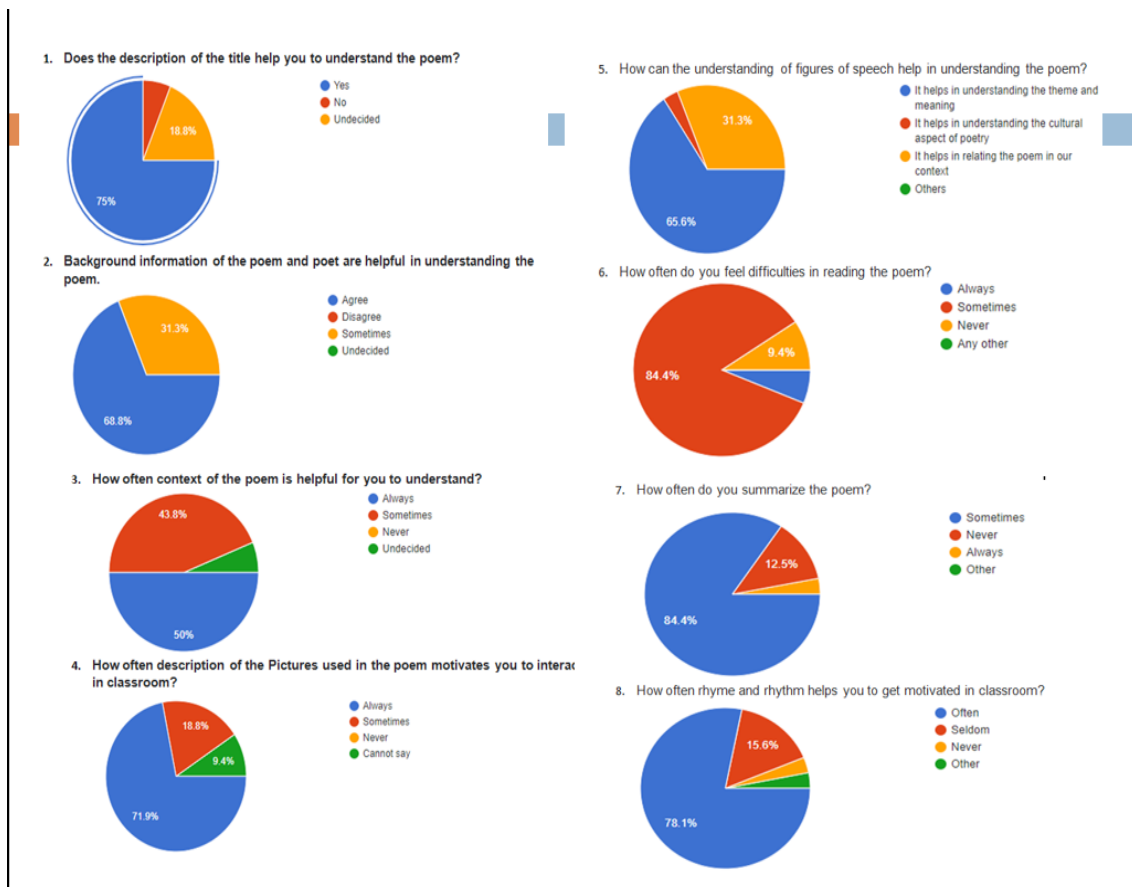
## **Results and Discussions**

The results and discussion section presents the key findings of the study and

connects them with classroom realities and relevant insights from poetry teaching in the EFL context. The responses from students highlight what supports their understanding, what challenges they face, and which strategies help them participate more actively. The discussion interprets these results to show how different elements of poetry instruction influence engagement, motivation, and comprehension.

**Figure 1**

*Students' Views on Context and Interactive Teaching Strategies for Poetry Teaching*



**Title Description Helps in Understanding the Poem**

The results indicate that 75% of students feel that the description of the poem’s title helps them understand the poem, while 12.5% do not find it helpful, and another 12.5% remain undecided in this regard. Most of the students responded that the title of a poem provides them with meaningful guidelines that help them understand the central idea or theme. This shows that the explanation of the title has an important place in enhancing learners’ understanding during poetry teaching in the EFL classroom.

## **Background Information about the Poem and Poet**

A large portion, 68.8% of the respondents, agree where whereas 31.3% strongly agree that background information about the poem and the poet helps them in understanding the poem. The majority of the students responded that knowing the poet's background and historical context enhances their comprehension. This shows that the teacher must give time to elaborate on the background information of the poet and, most importantly, the poem.

## **Explanation of Context for Better Understanding**

When asked how often the context of the poem is helpful, 37.5% of respondents said always, 50% said sometimes, while none responded that it is never helpful. Similarly, 12.5% were undecided in this regard. This result reveals that elaboration of the context of the poem and relating it to that of the learners is essential to understanding the meaning of the poem. It also highlights the need to provide students with situational or cultural context when teaching poetry, helping students connect language with meaning.

## **Picture Description of Classroom Interaction**

The description of pictures used in poems is found to be a strong aspect for students' motivation. 71.9% students stated that pictures always motivate them to interact in the classroom. Similarly, 9.4% said sometimes, 6.3% seldom, and 12.5% could not say anything in this regard. These results conclude that the images used in the poems are unavoidable to initiate active classroom interaction and fine engagement.

## **Explanation of Figures of Speech**

Understanding figures of speech is reported to be helpful by a majority of students. Here, 65.6% stated that it helps them understand the theme and meaning of the poem. Similarly, 31.3% responded that it helps them understand the cultural aspects of poetry, and 3.1% believed it helps relate the poem to their personal life. The result shows that an explanation of the figures of speech used in the poem helps with better comprehension.

## **Difficulties in Reading Poems**

Regarding reading difficulties, 84.4% of students replied that they sometimes struggle while reading poems, 9.4% said they always face difficulties, and 6.3% said to have never experienced such issues. The responses reveal that students face challenges in dealing with poetry due to unfamiliar vocabulary, structure, or rhythm. The findings concluded that poetry is engaging, but it still needs guided support and feedback from teachers.

## **Summarisation of the Poem**

Most of the students (84.4%) responded that they sometimes summarise poems,

while 12.5% seldom do it, and 3.1% never write summaries of the poems. These findings show that the teacher should let the students write a summary themselves by providing necessary support and guidance. Summary writing with the guidance of teachers helps students to increase their understanding of poetic content effectively in poetry classes.

### **Rhyme and Rhythm on Motivation**

78.1% said that rhyme and rhythm often help them stay motivated in the classroom. At the same time, 15.6% responded that they are seldom motivated by rhythm, and 6.3% said never in this regard. This highlights that the musical qualities of poetry significantly improve their engagement and interest, enhancing the level of motivation and language development.

Overall, the responses show that students view poetry as both an engaging and intellectually motivating element of language learning, with the support of context and interactive teaching strategies. They responded that the title, background information, and context of a poem as the main factors that greatly support their active engagement and comprehension. Pictures are considered to enhance classroom participation and emotional expression. Students also stated the importance of figures of speech for understanding meanings deeply and the cultural components of poetry. Many students responded that the difficulties due to the strange vocabulary, poetic devices, and rhythm need the assistance of the teacher in the classroom. Classroom activities such as summarising poems by the students themselves were practised rarely, which disconnected students emotionally from the poem being taught or practised. Summarising a poem is taken as the best way for students to enrich their understanding. Finally, rhyme and rhythm are taken as strong motivational elements, making poetry lessons more enjoyable, engaging, and memorable. Concluding, the results suggest that poetry teaching in the EFL classroom becomes more effective when it equally utilises linguistic and cultural guidance, contextual elaboration and connection, and creative and emotional participation of the students.

### **Plan for Action**

To enhance understanding of my students, I started talking with my colleagues about the way we could make poetry classes more effective and engaging. We discussed our shared goals and shaping the way towards them, and also discussed new techniques and methods to make poetry classes more interesting and student-centred. I also surfed websites and online resources for better ideas on teaching to find simple and practical techniques that would be suitable in my real classroom. After collecting these ideas from the above-mentioned sources, I decided to use activities that focus on students' understanding, creativity, and active participation.

In my action plan, I started to teach a poem by giving some background information about the poet and the poem. Then, I explained the context so that students could connect the context of the poem to their real-life situations. I used pictures to help students visualise and discuss the ideas presented implicitly. I also taught them the figures of speech used in the poems, like metaphors and similes, to enhance their understanding and make it long-lasting.

To make teaching-learning more active, I asked students to read the poem aloud in pairs, focusing on rhyme and rhythm. Then they summarised the poem in their own words, and I explained the main ideas sometimes in their mother tongue as well, for better understanding. These steps helped me to make poetry classes easier, more enjoyable, and more meaningful for my students.

I started my class by asking the students to predict the theme of the poem from the title and the pictures given. I began by involving students with their intense curiosity and motivating them to use their prior knowledge about the poem. I encouraged the activation of critical thinking ability and made them more participatory in the lesson by asking them to guess the theme on the basis of the title and pictures.

Next, I taught them the difficult vocabulary used in the poem. Introducing students to the strange words before discussing the poem can help connect the students with the lesson well. Students could easily understand the text without confusion because of the words. This helped the students improve their level of confidence and comprehension. Ultimately, this technique developed students' language skills.

In this step, I provided the students with the background information on the poet and the poem. Elaboration of the context in the poem is important in poetry class. Giving information about the poet and the historical, cultural, or social background helped students understand the poem's meaning, tone, and purpose deeply. It also created a learning environment more engaging.

After that, I tried to connect the context of the poem to its real-life context. By connecting the poem to students' own experiences and context, they found the lesson to be more meaningful. Students got to know how literature reflects real-life situations.

I also elaborated on the figures of speech (literary devices) used in the poem. Figures of speech like metaphors, similes, personification, etc., create barriers in students' understanding, but they really add beauty to poetry. Discussing them in detail with examples helped students appreciate the deviant use of language.

Then, I asked the students to read the poem aloud in pairs with rhyme and rhythm. Reading aloud helped them to practice pronunciation, intonation, and fluency. Giving due focus to the rhyme and rhythm assisted students in enjoying the poetry, improving their speaking skills.

I also made the judicious use of their mother tongue during the explanation of the poem. Translating the main ideas into the students' mother tongue ensured understanding. This technique really motivated the students as they proudly found their mother tongue in the language classroom.

At the end, I asked them to summarise the poem themselves, giving no importance to the language and the structure, but to the meaning. Asking students to summarise motivated them to reflect on the poem, synthesise the main ideas presented, and express their understanding in their own words.

## **Results after Successful Intervention of the Plans**

The strategies used during poetry teaching highly contributed to students' understanding, involvement, and active interaction with teachers and their friends.

Describing and elaborating on the figures of speech like metaphors, similes, and personification motivated students to actively participate in discussions, enhancing their comprehension of the poem's theme, meaning, and cultural context. Clarification on unfamiliar vocabulary at the beginning of the poetry lesson motivated them to interact with the teacher and ask questions frankly in an open way.

Encouraging and supporting students to predict the theme from the title deepened their interpretive skills and critical thinking. Using fun and humour in the classroom makes poetry lessons more enjoyable, increasing students' willingness to participate in interactive activities. Explaining the poem in their mother tongue helped students' better understanding of poetic ideas. Students were encouraged to initiate meaningful discussions in the poetry classroom. Moreover, reading the poem aloud in pairs with rhyme and rhythm not only improved students' pronunciation and fluency but also maintained the collaborative practice with confidence. Allowing students to write summaries on their own encouraged their reflective writing, critical thinking, and interaction with the teacher.

It is found that interactive and research-informed student-centred techniques, including the explanation of vocabulary, predicting theme from title and pictures, contextualization of the poem and content, judicious use of mother-tongue, creative writing, and pair reading effectively promote comprehension, engagement, and meaningful interaction in poetry teaching. These strategies largely contributed to making poetry learning more comprehensible, enjoyable, and meaningful in EFL classrooms.

During the study, the researcher used the fundamentals of Reader-response Theory (Rosenblatt, 1978). This theory emphasises that the meaning of the text is derived through an active interaction between the reader and the text. Here, students are actively engaged in reading and related activities for their better understanding. The research-informed strategies were aligned with the theory. The strategies were predicting themes from titles and pictures, explaining of contextual background, establishing connections between the poems with students' real-life experiences, encouraging pair reading, and allowing students to write their own summaries, enabling learners to construct meaning individually and collaboratively. To make students more engaged, confident, and motivated, it is a must to provide them with the opportunity to respond to the poem personally. This is reflected in the results, where students showed increased participation, better comprehension, improved interpretive skills, and a stronger emotional connection to the poems. Thus, the shift from teacher-centred explanation to student-centred meaning-making approaches directly supports the theme of Reader-response Theory and explains the successful improvements observed after the successful intervention.

## **Reflection**

Teaching poems using well-planned and student-centred techniques helped me understand the effectiveness of using multiple strategies in poetry class. By starting the class, allowing students to predict the theme based on the title and pictures presented, I was able to draw students' curiosity and activate prior knowledge, which made them more attentive and engaged. Elaborating on the difficult vocabulary with examples before the explanation of the poem made it sure that students could have easy access to the poem

with full confidence and an improved level of comprehension. Providing students with the background information about the poet and the poem, as well as discussing its context in relation to their real-life experiences, helped students relate the content meaningfully with an increased level of critical thinking.

Elaboration of the figures of speech (literary devices) and pictures used in the poem motivated students to actively engage in the poetry classroom. Reading the poem aloud in pairs, with a concentration on rhyme and rhythm, improved their pronunciation, fluency, and peer collaboration. Elaborating on difficult ideas in their mother tongue helped the students understand the poem in a better way. Writing summaries on their own encouraged students' active engagement, reflection, and organisation of ideas.

## Conclusions

After the exploration, I came to know that the students were highly interested in learning poems, but I had to apply some different techniques than I have been using for a long time. Exploration helped me to find out the techniques they prefer, how a teacher can be supportive while teaching poetry, the areas of difficulty that students have regarding poetry teaching and so on. I applied the activities suggested by the students. In such a case, we should not be discouraged; instead, we should find out the right solution. Exploratory action research is one of the best solutions for improving both teaching and learning. It would be very fruitful to provide students with opportunities to read the poem in pairs and to summarise the poem themselves. I found that we should emphasise more on giving the meaning of unfamiliar words, the detailed background information of the poet and poem and explanation of the figures of speech. It is also essential to inject fun and humour into the classroom. The findings suggest that exploratory action research is an effective approach to identifying challenges and improving teaching strategies, ultimately fostering both students' appreciation of poetry and their language development in a meaningful and enjoyable way.

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## Exploring the Prospects and Challenges of Sustainable Waterfront Development in Bangladesh

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### Abstract

*Urban waterfronts are dynamic social and ecological systems that embody the relationship between people and water. This study investigates the prospects and challenges of developing a sustainable urban waterfront along the Turag River in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The study employed an observational structured checklist and short interviews for qualitative data collection of the Turag riverfront area. The data encompasses daily activities and available facilities to draw a current scenario of the waterfront, sorted and organised under the theme of the sustainability pillars. The collected data was analysed thematically to draw an interpretation to fulfil the study objectives. Results reveal that while the waterfront supports multiple livelihoods, leisure, and transportation activities, it suffers from pollution, unequal accessibility, and inadequate management. Findings emphasise the need for participatory governance, ecological restoration, and inclusive design aligned with national policies such as the Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100. Based on the findings, the study tries to advocate for some recommendations for the sustainable future of the Turag River.*

**Keywords:** Sustainability, Turag River, Urban, waterfront



## Introduction

Urban waterfronts represent one of the most contested yet promising zones of modern cities. As public spaces where water and land converge, they hold both ecological and cultural significance (Üzümçüoğlu and Polay, 2022). Around the world, cities have regenerated waterfronts to revitalise urban identity and economic life (Giovinazzi and Moretti, 2010; Pekin, 2013). In Bangladesh, however, rapid urbanisation and unregulated industrial activity have degraded these zones, especially in Dhaka, where rivers like Buriganga and Turag face severe ecological stress (Whitehead et al., 2018).

The Turag Riverfront, situated in the northwestern edge of Dhaka, demonstrates this contradiction. It functions as a vibrant corridor for transportation, trade, and recreation, yet experiences pollution, encroachment, and uneven access. Earlier studies identified the need for sustainability-oriented design and management of waterfronts (Ragheb and El-Ashmawy, 2020; Hussein, 2014). However, few have investigated how existing socio-economic and environmental conditions interact in Dhaka's context.

This study examines how the Turag Riverfront can move toward sustainability despite existing constraints by identifying the activities and facilities distributed along the waterfront, assessing its environmental, social, and economic conditions, and analysing the challenges and drivers that shape its sustainable transformation. Waterfront sustainability relies not only on physical design but also on social inclusion, ecological functionality, and economic resilience, as highlighted by Evans et al. (2022) and Niemann and Werner (2016). By addressing these dimensions through a focused analysis of the Turag corridor, the study adds empirical insights from Dhaka while connecting them to broader regional and global discussions on sustainable waterfront planning noted by Zaki and Hegazy (2023) and Tan (2024).

## Literature Review

### Urban Waterfronts

Urban waterfronts represent dynamic interfaces where water meets the built environment, embodying complex ecological and socio-economic processes (Üzümçüoğlu and Polay, 2022). Traditionally, these areas evolved as centres of trade, transportation, and settlement, but with industrial decline, cities worldwide began reimagining waterfronts as spaces for recreation, tourism, and ecological restoration (Giovinazzi and Moretti, 2010; Pekin, 2013).

According to Hussein (2014), the success of a waterfront lies in balancing its ecological, functional, and aesthetic dimensions. This transformation aligns with global trends toward sustainable urbanism, where environmental regeneration and social inclusivity are prioritised (Niemann and Werner, 2016). Urban waterfronts can thus serve as both ecological buffers and cultural commons, linking natural systems with urban lifestyles (Evans et al., 2022).

Waterfronts offer multi-sensory experiences that shape urban life. Visual reflections, movement of water, and natural soundscapes generate psychological comfort and aesthetic satisfaction (Timur, 2013). As Omen (2007) and Ragheb and El-Ashmawy (2020) highlight, the interaction of visual, auditory, tactual, and psychological features contributes to a sense of place, belonging, and relaxation.

Figure 1 below illustrates the multifaceted features of an urban waterfront, based on the synthesis of these sensory and functional dimensions (Ragheb and El-Ashmawy, 2020; Hussein, 2014; Timur, 2013). It retains the conceptual form of the original figure but is reworded for clarity and modern academic tone.

## Sustainability and Urban Waterfronts

Sustainability in waterfronts entails harmonising environmental, social, and economic dimensions. Hussein (2014) defines sustainable waterfronts as those that “restore ecological integrity while maintaining accessibility and cultural continuity.” Evans et al. (2022) extend this by arguing that a sustainable waterfront “works” when it integrates long-term ecological health, community well-being, and equitable governance.

Niemann and Werner (2016) and Salama (2022) emphasise strategies such as habitat rehabilitation, mixed-use planning, and climate-sensitive design as essential tools for sustainability. In Penang, Malaysia, sustainable waterfront projects have enhanced urban resilience by integrating social, economic, and ecological objectives (Tan, 2024). Similarly, Shah et al. (2023) found that community-led wetland restoration improves urban livability and resilience.

The sustainability debate also involves inclusive design and social justice. According to Weerakoon and Rathnaweera (2022), assessing recreational waterfront projects requires measuring accessibility for all groups, including women, the elderly, and disabled users. Tasnim, Raisa, and Sagor (2024) propose integrating local heritage and informal livelihoods in canal rejuvenation projects in Chittagong, echoing global best practices.

### The Bangladesh Context

In Bangladesh, urban rivers like Buriganga, Balu, and Turag face intense pollution and encroachment due to industrial expansion (Whitehead et al., 2018). Yet they remain critical to Dhaka’s identity and economy. Recent projects by the Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) aim to formalise riverfront walkways and reclaim encroached areas (The Financial Express, 2023).

Siddika (2020) observed similar issues in Sylhet, where waterfronts suffer from a lack of planning and poor public participation. These findings highlight that sustainability challenges in Bangladesh are deeply institutionally linked to weak governance, fragmented policies, and informal land use practices. However, national strategies like the Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100 and 8th Five-Year Plan recognise river-centric development as a key component of future urban sustainability (Zaki and Hegazy, 2023).

### Conceptualising the Sustainability Framework

From the global to the local perspective, sustainability in waterfronts rests upon three core principles (Hussein, 2014; Evans et al., 2022; Tan, 2024). Environmental Integrity – protection and restoration of aquatic ecosystems, pollution control, and resilience to climate change. Social Equity – universal accessibility, safety, and participatory governance of shared spaces. Vitality – balancing commercial activity with environmental and social responsibility. These principles frame the conceptual foundation for this study, guiding analysis of the Turag River waterfront. They allow assessment of how environmental degradation, socio-economic usage, and policy frameworks interact in shaping Dhaka’s evolving waterfront.

The reviewed literature shows that sustainable waterfronts are multidimensional entities requiring integrated management. International cases (Evans et al., 2022; Tan, 2024; Niemann and Werner, 2016) demonstrate that successful transformations depend on environmental restoration and community participation. However, South Asian examples reveal persistent governance and pollution challenges (Siddika, 2020; Tasnim et al., 2024).

From the literature, it can be seen that although there are multiple studies regarding sustainable waterfront development worldwide, along with successful examples of such

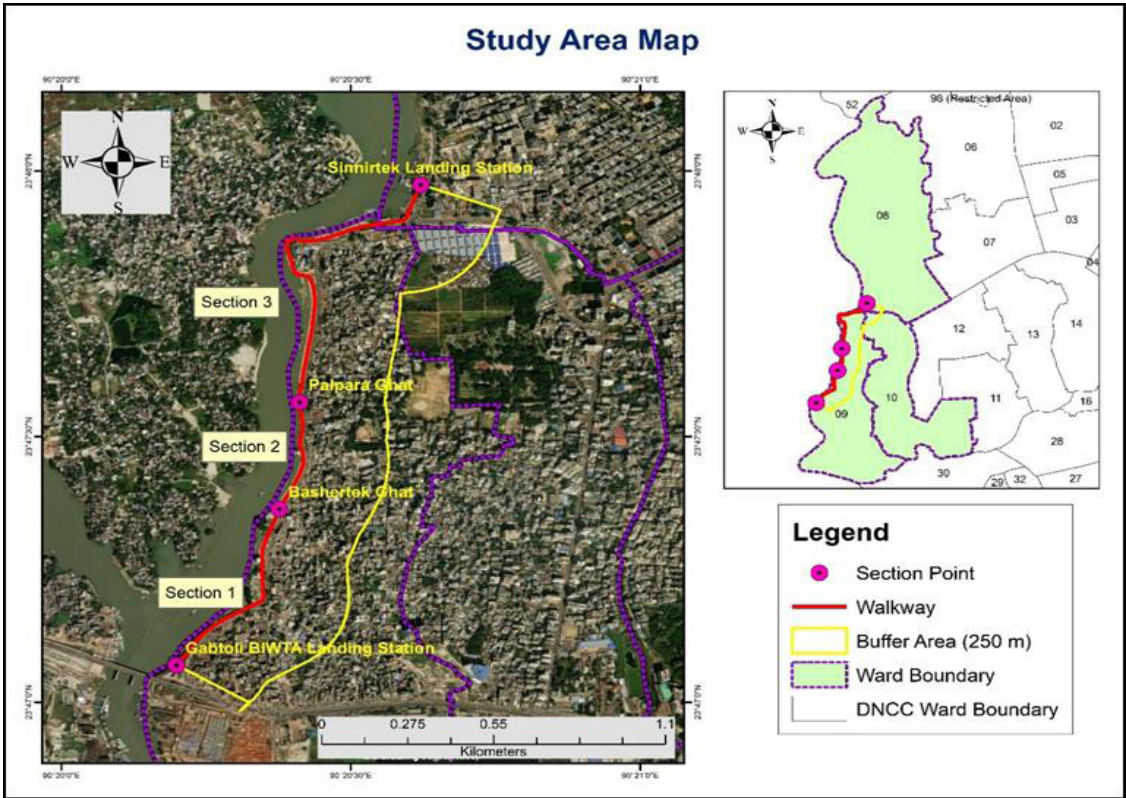
developments globally and specifically South Asian context. Although there are attempts for waterfront development and revitalisation, and studies on comprehensive sustainable development for urban river waterfront are still not established in Bangladesh. So, the study aims to bridge the gap in the literature to address the need for sustainable waterfront development in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

### Methods and Procedures

This study adopted a qualitative case study approach to assess the sustainability conditions of the Turag River waterfront in Dhaka. The method was chosen because it allows for an in-depth understanding of the complex social, environmental, and economic interactions that define the riverfront. By combining direct observation, facility assessment, and semi-structured interviews, the research sought to explore how daily activities, infrastructure distribution, and ecological conditions influence the overall sustainability of the waterfront.

The study used four observation points along the Turag River front to ensure maximum coverage and data diversity. The observation data were later validated by insights from interviewing 12 respondents along the riverfront area, including pedestrians, local shop owners and residents.

**Figure 1**  
*Map of the Turag riverfront study area*

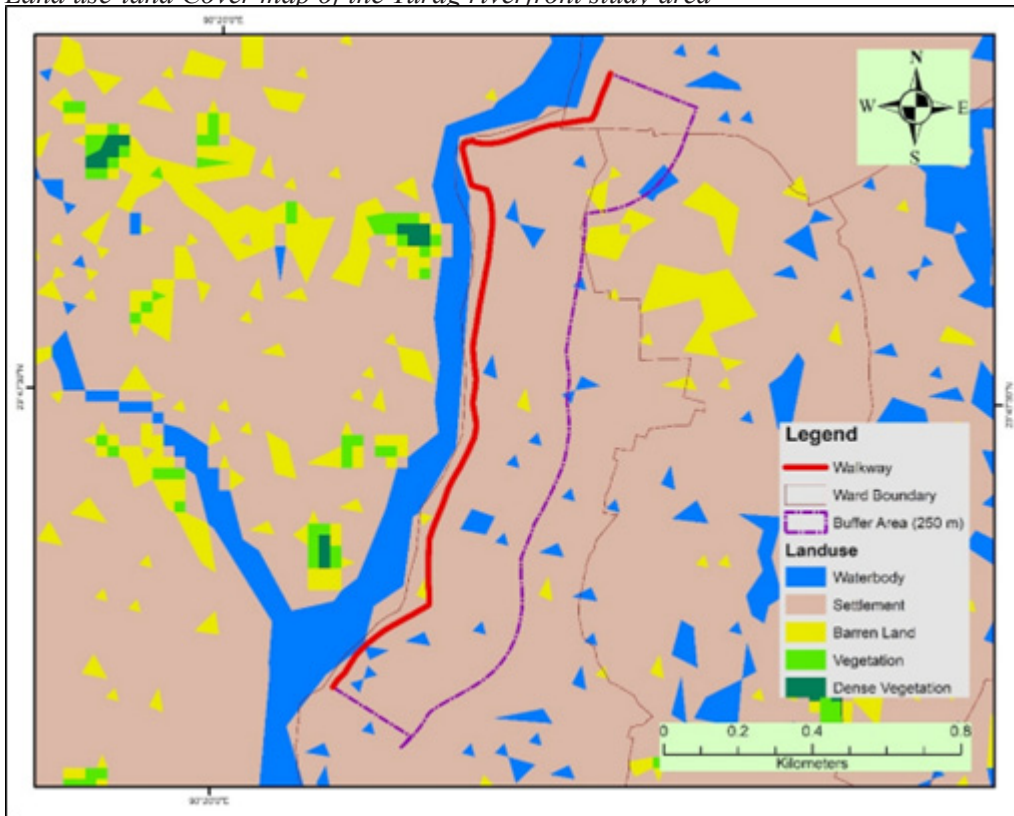


Note: The study area map showing four points for the study, developed by the Authors, 2024.

The study area covered a 2.15-kilometre stretch of the Turag River between the Gabtoli and Sinnirtek landing stations on the northern periphery of Dhaka. This segment was selected because it contains a mix of recreational, residential, and commercial activities and represents one of the most accessible yet environmentally vulnerable parts of the city's river system. Within this stretch, which starts at Gabtoli BIWTA Landing Station (23°47'5" N 90°20'12" E) and ends at Sinnirtek Landing Station (23°47'58" N 90°20'34" E), four observation sites were chosen based on their spatial diversity and activity intensity: Gabtoli BIWTA Landing Station, Bashertek Ghat, Palpara Ghat, and Sinnirtek Landing Station. These sites provided varied contexts ranging from dense ferry movement and informal trade to community gathering spaces and areas of ecological decline.

**Figure 2**

*Land use-land Cover map of the Turag riverfront study area*



Note: This study area map showing land use and land cover of the Turag waterfront, developed by the Authors, 2024.

The LULC status of the study area shows the area of water bodies, sparse vegetation, dense vegetation, settlements, and barren land. For LULC calculation, only a 250-meter buffer area is selected from the riverside walkway. Of the total measurements of 127.87 acres, the settlement zone occupied 95.62 percent of the area due to rapid infrastructure development in the area. The water bodies occupied only 4.43 acres, where barren land covered an area of 0.92 acres. On the other hand, the vegetation cover is not found within a 250-meter area from the walkway,

which is very alarming for the riverside development.

The analytical framework followed the three sustainability principles of environmental integrity, social equity, and economic vitality, which together guided data collection and interpretation. Primary data were collected during fieldwork conducted in September 2024 through three main methods. First, systematic field observation was used to document human activities, facility conditions, and environmental characteristics at different times of day to capture temporal variations. Second, a structured checklist survey recorded the presence and condition of basic amenities such as walkways, benches, lighting, toilets, waste bins, and access features for women, the elderly, and differently abled users. Third, semi-structured interviews were carried out with fifteen respondents, including twelve regular users and three community representatives.

These interviews explored insights into the accessibility, safety, environmental quality, and management challenges. Participants were informed of the study's purpose, and verbal consent was obtained to ensure ethical compliance and anonymity. The collected data were analysed using thematic analysis. Observations and interview responses were organised under the three sustainability principles to evaluate how environmental, social, and economic factors interact across different riverfront sections. The analysis combined qualitative interpretation with descriptive tabulation to compare spatial differences in activities and facilities. This process helped reveal how variations in physical infrastructure, community involvement, and management influence sustainability outcomes.

In summary, the methodology integrated observation, participation, and thematic evaluation to capture the multi-dimensional nature of sustainability at the Turag Riverfront. The approach ensured that the analysis not only reflected physical and environmental conditions but also represented the lived experiences and perceptions of those who depend on the river in their everyday lives. This integration of spatial and social realities forms the basis for interpreting the waterfront's prospects and challenges in the following sections.

## **Results and Discussion**

### **Activities and Sustainability Dimensions**

Observations along the Turag River waterfront revealed a diverse set of daily activities reflecting its multifunctional character. These activities illustrate how the riverfront acts as both a public space and an economic corridor. Morning hours were dominated by walking, bathing, and commuting, while midday and afternoon periods involved ferry services, trading, and small-scale vending. Evenings brought social gatherings, informal recreation, and cultural interaction. Such time-based variations indicate the waterfront's role as a continuously active urban landscape shaped by both livelihood and leisure.

The identified activities were categorised according to their alignment with the three sustainability principles: environmental integrity, social equity, and economic vitality. This classification provides a clear understanding of how people's interactions with the river contribute to or challenge its sustainable use. Activities such as bathing, swimming, and voluntary waste collection demonstrate strong human water connections but also expose the area's vulnerability to pollution and ecological degradation. Recreational uses like walking and community cleaning contribute positively to social cohesion but lack proper safety and inclusive measures. Meanwhile, commercial operations, including vending, ferry transport, and materials loading, generate local

income but occur without regulation or environmental safeguards.

**Table 1**  
*Activities Classified under Three Sustainability Principles*

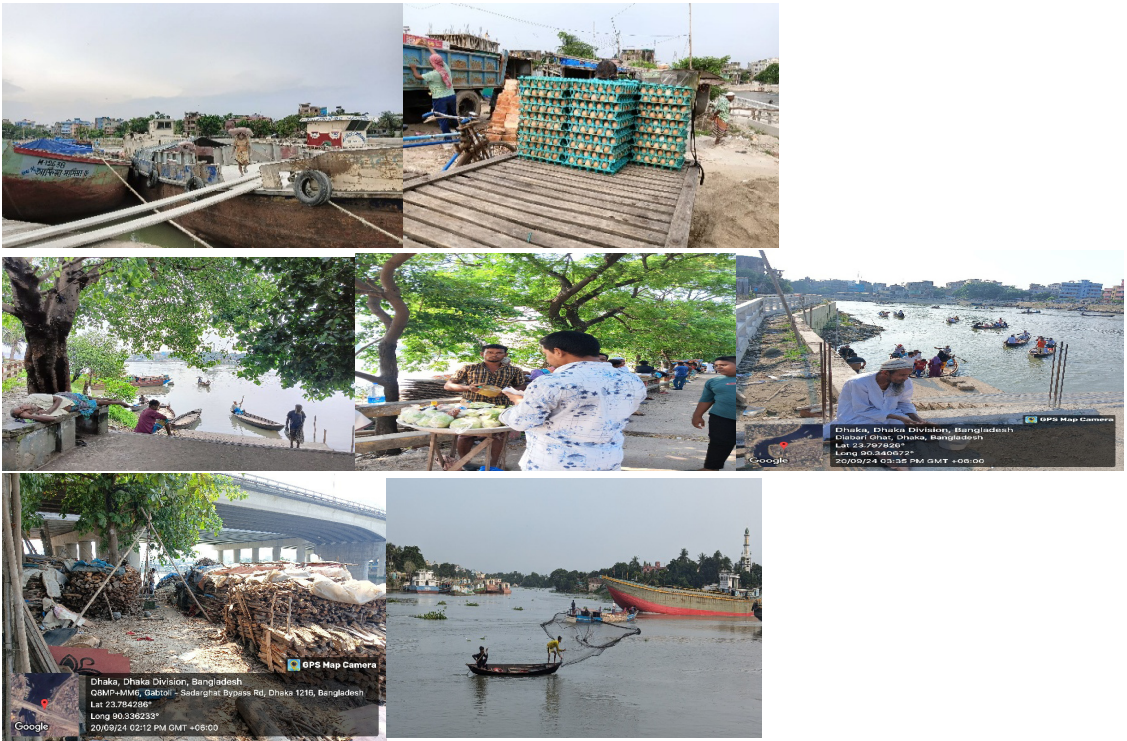
Sustainability Principle	Observed Activities	Interpretation
Environmental Integrity	Bathing, swimming, washing, waste collection by local committees, limited greenery, and erosion control works.	Reflects strong human-water interaction, but also pollution stress and a lack of ecosystem restoration.
Social Equity	Walking, jogging, gossiping, praying, recreation in the eco-park, resting, and community volunteer cleaning.	Demonstrates inclusive use but inadequate safety, lighting, and facilities for women, the elderly, and the disabled.
Economic Vitality	Street vending, blacksmithing, bamboo sales, restaurants, ferry transport, unloading goods, and construction material trade	Indicates a significant informal economy supporting local livelihoods, yet largely unregulated and lacking formal management.

Note. The table was formulated based on the field survey 2024 and thematically organised with respect to three sustainability principles.

The classification in Table 1 highlights how each sustainability pillar is represented in everyday riverfront practices. Environmental activities are often informal and reactive, focusing more on personal use than ecosystem care. Social activities reveal a strong sense of community but also expose gaps in accessibility and maintenance. Economic uses remain the most visible and dynamic, yet their unregulated nature threatens both the river’s ecological balance and the public realm’s quality.

**Figure 3**





### *Different activities along the waterfront*

Note. The photographs were taken by the authors for validation of observation data during the field survey 2024.

Overall, these patterns confirm that the Turag waterfront is an active but imbalanced socio-environmental system. Environmental and social improvements are necessary to complement the existing economic vibrancy. Ensuring that all three dimensions progress together is essential for achieving a sustainable and resilient urban waterfront in Dhaka.

### **Facilities and Accessibility**

Facilities along the Turag waterfront varied widely among the four observation sections, revealing distinct spatial and social disparities. Section 1 near Gabtoli displayed a mix of informal amenities that evolved organically, while Section 2 benefited from formal interventions by the BIWTA through its Eco Park initiative, offering structured recreation, seating, and waste facilities. Sections 3 and 4, located toward the peripheral stretch of Sinnirtek, remained largely neglected, showing poor maintenance, limited lighting, and minimal signage. The heterogeneity of infrastructure underscores the uneven implementation of sustainability goals across the study area. Such inconsistencies hinder the waterfront’s ability to function as a continuous, inclusive public corridor, echoing challenges observed in other South Asian cities (Siddika, 2020; Salama, 2022).

**Table 2**

*Facilities Present Across Waterfront Sections*

Facilities	Section 1 Facilities Present		Section 2 Facilities Present		Section 3 Facilities Present		Section 4 Facilities Present	
	Yes (Number /Dimension)	No	Yes (Number / Dimension)	No	Yes (Number /Dimension)	No	Yes (Number /Dimension)	No
Waste bin		✓	✓		✓			✓
Seating facilities	✓		✓		✓			✓
Hotel		✓	✓				✓	✓
Restaurant		✓	✓		✓		✓	
Street Food	✓		✓		✓		✓	
Park/ Playground		✓	✓				✓	✓
Walkway Width	3.05 m		2.44 m		2.44 m		2.44 m	
Walkway Continuity	✓		✓				✓	✓
Lighting		✓	✓				✓	✓
Elderly Facilities		✓		✓			✓	✓
Disable Facilities		✓		✓			✓	✓
Women Facilities		✓		✓			✓	✓
Toilet Facilities		✓	✓				✓	✓
Service Kiosk	✓		✓		✓		✓	
Information Signs	✓		✓		✓		✓	
Parking Lot		✓	✓				✓	✓
Boat Service/ Deck	✓		✓		✓		✓	

Note. The table was formulated based on the field survey 2024, which facilities currently present along the four sections of the studied Turag River.

The comparative facility survey reveals that the presence of amenities directly influences social and economic vibrancy. Where lighting, benches, and public toilets exist, the riverfront

attracts longer visitor stays and evening recreation; where they are absent, the space reverts to transient or commercial use only. This pattern reinforces that social equity in waterfronts depends not solely on open access but on the quality of infrastructure and its maintenance (Ragheb and El-Ashmawy, 2020; Weerakoon and Rathnaweera, 2022). Furthermore, the lack of features for elderly and differently abled persons highlights an urgent design gap in achieving inclusive urban environments.

**Figure 4**  
*Existing facilities at the waterfront*



Note. The photographs were taken by the authors for the validation of observation data during the field survey 2024.

**Sustainability Indicators**

The sustainability assessment revealed that the Turag River waterfront shows uneven performance across the environmental, social, and economic pillars. Field observations indicate that although the area supports active human use and local economic activities, its ecological and social systems are under considerable strain. The collected data, classified according to the three sustainability principles of environmental integrity, social equity, and economic vitality, highlight both the achievements and the challenges that shape the overall sustainability of the waterfront.

**Table 3***Observed Sustainability Indicators of the Turag Waterfront*

Dimension	Strengths	Weaknesses
Environmental	Natural riverfront, tree-lined stretches, active water use	High pollution, no habitat restoration, poor waste management
Social	Accessible to diverse users, voluntary cleaning efforts	Poor safety at night, gender inequity, and inadequate public facilities
Economic	Active informal trade, local employment	No regulation, no reinvestment in maintenance, unplanned vending

The results presented in Table 3 show that the strongest aspect of the Turag waterfront lies in its social and economic activity. The continuous movement of people and small-scale trade creates a vibrant atmosphere and supports local livelihoods. However, environmental degradation and weak institutional management limit the long-term benefits of these activities. The environmental dimension is the weakest, with heavy pollution and a lack of ecosystem restoration reducing the river's resilience (Whitehead et al., 2018). Socially, the area provides open access for a range of users, but safety concerns and the absence of facilities for women, the elderly, and differently abled individuals prevent equitable use (Weerakoon and Rathnaweera, 2022; Salama, 2022). Economically, informal vending and small enterprises generate employment but contribute to disorganisation and waste accumulation in the absence of proper regulation (Ragheb& El-Ashmawy, 2020). To summarise the major findings, Table 4 below summarises the critical challenges constraining sustainability and the potential drivers that can enable transformation.

**Table 4***Summary of challenges and potential drivers for Turag waterfront sustainability*

Category	Challenges Identified	Potential Drivers for Improvement
Environmental	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Continuous industrial and domestic pollution</li> <li>- Riverbank erosion and loss of vegetation</li> <li>- Absence of systematic habitat restoration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Implementation of <i>Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100</i></li> <li>- Community-led clean-up and replanting programs</li> <li>- Integration of water-sensitive design</li> </ul>
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lack of inclusive and gender-sensitive facilities</li> <li>- Inadequate safety and lighting</li> <li>- Limited public awareness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Development of the BIWTA Eco Park model across sections</li> <li>- Community participation in maintenance</li> <li>- Awareness campaigns on river stewardship</li> </ul>
Economic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Unregulated vending and waste disposal</li> <li>- Informal economy without reinvestment</li> <li>- Poor coordination among agencies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Formalisation of vendors through licensing</li> <li>- Microfinance and eco-friendly kiosks</li> <li>- Integration of local business taxes into maintenance funds</li> </ul>

Institutional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Fragmented governance among agencies</li> <li>- Weak policy enforcement</li> <li>- Lack of coordination between local and national bodies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Policy synchronisation between BIWTA, RAJUK, and city corporations</li> <li>- Inclusion of sustainability indicators in urban planning</li> <li>- Top-down policy support and monitoring mechanisms</li> </ul>
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In summary, the findings indicate that the Turag waterfront remains a lively yet unbalanced urban system. Economic and social vitality coexist with significant ecological stress. Achieving sustainability will require coordinated actions that connect ecological restoration, inclusive design, and structured economic management. These integrated efforts can help transform the Turag Riverfront into a balanced and resilient urban landscape.

The findings reveal that sustainability along the Turag River waterfront is uneven and transitional, marked by dynamic human activity but severe ecological stress. The waterfront demonstrates active social and economic life yet struggles to achieve environmental stability, a pattern common to many Asian cities undergoing waterfront transformation (Evans et al., 2022; Tan, 2024). This imbalance underscores that sustainable development must harmonise environmental integrity, social equity, and economic vitality rather than treating them as separate dimensions.

From an environmental perspective, the Turag's ecosystem remains fragile due to untreated industrial discharges, household waste, and loss of vegetation (Whitehead et al., 2018). Despite periodic clean-up drives by residents and mosque committees, the absence of continuous restoration programs has prevented measurable ecological recovery. Similar conditions were reported in Jeddah, where uncoordinated management hampered waterfront rehabilitation (Zaki and Hegazy, 2023). Implementing water-sensitive urban design, native planting, and pollution control measures could align local restoration with the *Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100* and create a resilient ecological buffer (Pramesti, 2017; Salama, 2022; Shah et al., 2023).

The social dimension displays both vitality and inequality. The waterfront serves as an essential urban open space where people of various socio-economic backgrounds engage in recreation, prayer, and informal gatherings. However, poor lighting, insufficient safety, and a lack of facilities for women, the elderly, and differently abled individuals hinder equitable access (Weerakoon and Rathnaweera, 2022; Salama, 2022). Section 2, supported by BIWTA's Eco Park, shows that inclusive infrastructure encourages extended public use, while neglected sections remain underutilised. Co-management between community groups and local authorities could strengthen long-term stewardship, following successful models in Penang and Jeddah (Tan, 2024; Zaki and Hegazy, 2023).

Economically, the Turag waterfront sustains a dense network of informal vendors, ferry operators, and small traders, providing vital livelihoods. Yet unregulated vending and weak waste management degrade both the environment and aesthetics. Formalising these activities through structured vending zones, eco-friendly kiosks, and revenue-sharing maintenance funds could integrate economic vitality with sustainability goals (Ragheb and El-Ashmawy, 2020; Niemann and Werner, 2016). Successful international examples demonstrate that regulating informal economies fosters both order and opportunity (Evans et al., 2022).

The relationship between sustainability pillars is evident in facility distribution. Well-equipped zones, such as Section 2, with continuous walkways, seating, and waste bins, exhibit higher social participation and lower pollution, whereas neglected stretches show ecological and social decline. These contrasts emphasise that infrastructure equity is a prerequisite for

environmental and social sustainability (Hussein, 2014). Integrating inclusive facilities, ecological management, and livelihood structures within one governance framework can promote balanced progress across the entire corridor.

When compared with regional cases, the Turag's evolution remains largely community-driven rather than design-led. Cities like Penang and Chittagong implemented comprehensive plans emphasising ecological restoration and cultural continuity (Tasnim et al., 2024). Dhaka's organic progression demonstrates resilience but lacks institutional direction. Aligning local initiatives with national strategies such as the *8th Five-Year Plan* and *Delta Plan 2100* can help bridge policy and practice, ensuring coordinated long-term management.

Overall, the discussion underscores that the Turag Riverfront's sustainable transition depends on concurrent progress in ecological restoration, social inclusivity, economic formalisation, and institutional integration. The waterfront's current vibrancy demonstrates its latent potential; however, realising this potential requires a shift from reactive interventions to proactive, participatory governance. If the identified drivers are activated collectively, the Turag waterfront could evolve into a resilient, inclusive, and economically vibrant river corridor, a model for sustainable urban transformation in Bangladesh.

## Conclusion

The study concludes that the Turag River waterfront reflects both the promise and the fragility of Dhaka's urban environment. The area exhibits strong social and economic activity, demonstrating its importance as a shared public and livelihood space. However, these functions are undermined by severe ecological degradation, inadequate infrastructure, and fragmented governance. The sustainability assessment shows that while community participation and informal economies contribute to local vibrancy, environmental neglect and social inequities threaten long-term resilience. To achieve balanced development, the waterfront must evolve from a reactive, use-driven landscape into a managed and inclusive urban ecosystem guided by the three sustainability principles of environmental integrity, social equity, and economic vitality. Such an approach would allow the Turag Riverfront to serve not only as a recreational and commercial zone but also as a model of integrated urban sustainability in Bangladesh.

The findings point to several practical steps that can help realise the potential of the Turag waterfront. Restoring riparian vegetation, controlling pollution, and strengthening water quality monitoring would support the river's ecological health. Designing the area with facilities that consider women, older adults, and people with disabilities, along with clear lighting and signage, would improve access and safety. Community involvement can be strengthened by turning existing voluntary efforts into formal partnerships among authorities, local organisations, and residents. Local vendors and small businesses would benefit from organised kiosks and better waste management, which would also keep the space clean and functional. Aligning future riverfront work with national development plans would help secure long-term policy and institutional support. With coordinated planning and community-focused management, the Turag waterfront has the potential to grow into a sustainable, inclusive, and economically vibrant urban space.

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### Decreasing College Enrollment in Nepal: A Comprehensive Examination of Teachers' Experiences

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#### Abstract

*This study investigates the declining trend of student enrollment in higher education institutions in Nepal, a challenge increasingly observed across universities and colleges nationwide. Using a quantitative survey of 40 college-level teachers from Kanchanpur, supported by a focus group discussion with 10 participants, the research explores teachers' perceptions of the current enrollment situation, identifies the major factors contributing to the decline, and examines the strategies implemented to address the issue. The findings reveal that the primary causes of decreasing enrollment include students' strong attraction toward foreign education, lack of employment opportunities in Nepal, financial hardship, poor academic motivation, outdated curricula, and ineffective governance in higher education institutions. Quantitative results indicate that over 70% of respondents perceive the current enrollment as declining, with undergraduate programs being the most significantly affected. Qualitative responses further highlight systemic issues such as rigid academic calendars, limited practical and market-oriented courses, inadequate facilities, and poor institutional management. Despite these challenges, institutions have adopted various strategies, including school visits, collaboration with local governments, media campaigns, and efforts to enhance campus environments. The study concludes that revitalising higher education in Nepal requires policy reforms, job-linked academic programs, financial support mechanisms, improved governance, and strengthened*

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*institutional capacity. The findings provide critical insights for policymakers, educational leaders, and stakeholders striving to enhance the attractiveness and relevance of higher education in Nepal.*

**Keywords:** *College enrollment, decreasing students, higher education, teacher perception*

## **Introduction**

Education plays a pivotal role in the socio-economic development of any nation, and Nepal is no exception. Over the years, there has been a growing concern about the declining trend in student enrollment at the college level in Nepal. The shift in enrollment patterns demands a thorough investigation into the underlying causes and potential solutions to address this critical issue. Nepal, a country nestled in the Himalayas, has made significant strides in expanding its education system, especially at the higher levels. The government has undertaken various initiatives to promote access to higher education, including the establishment of new colleges and universities. Despite these efforts, recent years have witnessed a decline in student enrollment at the college level, sparking concerns among educators, policymakers, and stakeholders. Several factors contribute to this trend, necessitating an in-depth analysis to understand the multifaceted nature of the issue. Economic challenges, demographic shifts, changing societal expectations, and the impact of global events such as the COVID-19 pandemic are likely to be influencing factors. Additionally, issues related to the quality of education, availability of diverse academic programs, and the relevance of curricula may also play a role in deterring students from pursuing higher education at the college level.

The universities are facing problems both in enrollment and in the dropout of students before the completion of the degree. Camelia and Ramona (2018) present this situation in their words as ‘The phenomenon of university dropout is met in all universities in the world and its effects are felt both at the economic level, at the level of society, and at the personal level of students who abandon the university.’ If the problem is not identified and addressed on time, the situation of the universities is going to be very alarming. There are many causes behind the dropouts of students in the university. Some causes for the dropout are financial problems, lack of parental support, Academic struggles, boredom, pregnancy, and parenthood. Robbins et al. (2004) listed the following reasons for dropout motivation for student success: academic goals, institutional commitment, perceived social support, social involvement, self-assessment ability, self-perception, academic abilities, and contextual influences.

This comprehensive study aims to identify and analyse the root causes of the decreasing student enrollment in Nepal's colleges, considering both systemic and situational factors. The research explored the socio-economic landscape, educational policies, and cultural influences that may contribute to the observed decline. Furthermore, the study investigated the perceptions of teachers regarding the challenges and opportunities

associated with college-level education in Nepal. In addition to identifying the causes, the research endeavours to propose evidence-based solutions and policy recommendations to reverse the declining trend in student enrollment. It considered strategies to enhance the attractiveness of higher education, improve the quality of academic offerings, and address the socio-economic barriers that may hinder access.

The findings of this study will not only contribute to the academic discourse on education in Nepal but will also provide valuable insights for policymakers, educational institutions, and other stakeholders to formulate targeted interventions and strategies for revitalising college-level education in the country. As Nepal navigates the challenges of the 21st century, ensuring a robust and accessible higher education system is crucial for fostering a skilled and knowledgeable workforce that can drive sustainable development and innovation.

Recently, a news article published on *Edusanjal*, an online education portal, titled “25 TU Campuses Merge with Other Universities” (August 18, 2021), highlighted the ongoing institutional restructuring in Nepal’s higher education sector. Similarly, another notice issued by Tribhuvan University on June 14, 2023, “Tribhuvan University Calls for Campus Merger Applications,” further indicates a declining trend in student enrollment. The Institute of Engineering, Tribhuvan University, has also made public its unified admission system portal, which shows a significant number of vacant seats across engineering institutions. For example, Pulchowk Campus has a total capacity of 624 seats, of which 116 remain vacant, while Thapathali Campus has 234 vacant seats out of its 432 allocated seats. This pattern is observed in many other TU campuses as well. Likewise, Far Western University has issued a readmission notice due to its inability to fill the designated quota.

At present, many students prefer pursuing higher education abroad and are increasingly planning their careers outside Nepal. As a result, many campuses across the country are facing a shortage of students, while large numbers of youths leave Nepal every day. In this context, a thorough study of the situation has become essential. As researchers, we aim to explore the underlying causes of the declining interest in enrolling at Nepali universities, a trend that has created serious challenges for higher education institutions in the country.

## **Causes of the Decrease in Students' Enrolment in Higher Education**

The higher education sector has been facing lots of problems at present, not only in Nepal but all over the world. Observing the data from different universities, we can easily predict that the number of students in Nepal is decreasing. The study of Trital (2023) pointed out that the MOEST data of the students taking No Objection Certificates (NOC) is significantly increasing day by day, which clearly depicts the enrollment rate in Nepali Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). Every year, students' enrolment in general education is decreasing, as we are the direct stakeholders of the higher education; we

have been teaching at the university for more than 15 years and can easily see this drastic change in students' enrollment in higher education. In the same way, the study of Dahal (2010) also stated that due to the economic inefficiency and problem students are not preparing to pursue their higher education from Nepal. From the study, it can be inferred that students want to earn money to sustain their family life while pursuing their higher education. Therefore, universities need to provide students to earn while learning, which can motivate them to enrol in their own country. The study of Regmi (2019) explored that the rise of neoliberal instrumentalism in higher education policies affected the enrolment rate in Nepali HEIs. This theory has focused on economic efficiency and the economic value of education; therefore, it focuses on earning money and enhancing their economic capital. As a result, students are motivated to earn money while learning at the university. Pokharel et al. (2016) compared the students' enrolment in private and public colleges of Nepal and found that the majority of the students basically enrol in general education; they enrol in private colleges rather than public colleges. The study pointed out that due to the influence of friends, family, and relatives, they decide on HEI enrolment. The study also explored that due to the website of the universities, advertisement of the college, affiliation of the college, and media campaign affect their mindset to get admission in higher education.

Decreasing student enrollment is not only the case at Nepali University, but it is also seen even in US universities. The OECD (2025) annual report mentioned that student mobility was very high in mostly in Asian Universities. According to the report, the mobility of the tertiary students was over 80%; they moved towards Australia, Indonesia, Japan, and Korea. Similarly, National Student Clearing House Research Centre (2022) reported that after the pandemic of COVID-19 pandemic, US universities faced a decline in student decline. Similarly, Times Higher Education (2025) reported that students' enrolment increased in some English-speaking countries but decreased in some developed countries due to the global education trend. Blbas (2025) studied the factors affecting the decline in the statistics department and concluded that due to the employability opportunities, student enrolment was declining in the statistics department. Welding (2025) presented that from 1970 to 2010, students' enrolment in US universities was rapidly increasing, but between 2010 to 2022, students' enrolment decreased by 15%. She also mentioned that due to a shrinking college-aged population, in US college enrolment rate has decreased. From her study also we can also easily guess that decreasing college students' enrolment has become a universal phenomenon. There are various causes behind this issue, such as a changing trend in pursuing higher education. Now people are comparing education with economic efficiency; therefore, they prefer to earn money rather than just become a pure student. Students want to be involved in the "Learn and earn " program (Tuikong, 2020). Decreasing students' enrolment in higher education is not only the case in Nepal, but it is a global trend.

## Methods and Procedures

This study adopted a quantitative approach and a survey as a research design. For the collection of data, 40 teachers teaching at the college level, who were teaching at the college level for at least five years at college level were selected purposively from Kanchanpur district. A Google form was designed containing both closed-ended and open-ended questions focusing on exploring the reasons for the decrease in student enrolment in higher education. The Google form was sent to the teachers, through social media and email, teaching at Far Western University and affiliated colleges of Tribhuvan University at Kanchanpur district. Before sending the Google form, we called teachers and requested that they fill out the form. Out of 40 teachers, 10 teachers are then asked to take part in a focus group discussion. The focus group discussion was mainly directed towards determining the causes of poor student enrollment, the efforts that they have taken, and the measures that need to be taken to increase enrollment at the institutions they are working with. The collected quantitative data were categorised and presented in different charts and graphs, and the qualitative data were analysed thematically. They were interpreted using statistical tools.

## Results and Discussion

The collected data were categorised into different themes for the analysis and interpretation. The major categories of the data include: demographic information, current trends in student enrollment, the condition of student enrollment, the most significant decrease in student enrollment, major causes of decreasing student enrollment, factors affecting students' choices, students' dropout trends, strategies applied to increase student enrollment, and solutions to reduce dropouts. These categories are discussed separately as follows.

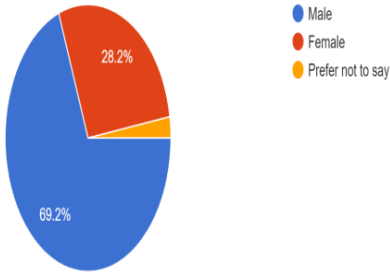
### Demographic Information

This category provides basic information about the participants, including their gender, age group, affiliated institution, and faculty affiliation.

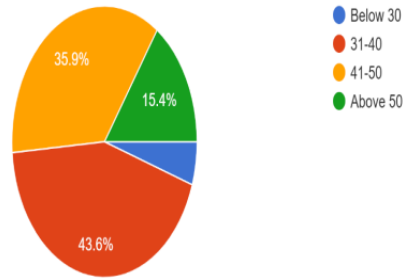
#### *Figure 1*

#### *Demographic information*

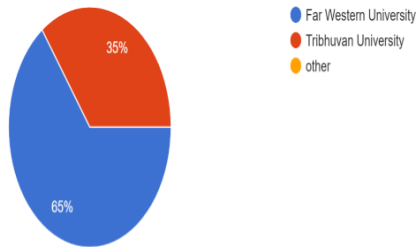
Gender  
39 responses



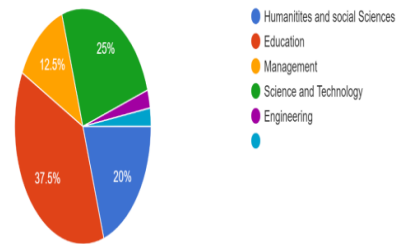
Age Group(in years )  
39 responses



Institution you work  
40 responses



Subject area/ discipline  
40 responses



The participants for responded show that most of them are male participants, as presented in the above chart. The number of males covered 69.2 percent of the total participants, and 28.2 percent were female, as the respondents of the study, and the remaining did not prefer to mention their gender as male or female. In terms of age group, most of the participants of the study were between 31 to 40 years age group (43.6%), and 35.9 were 41 to 50 years age group. Among the 40 respondents, 65% participants were affiliated with Far Western University, and 35% participants belonged to Tribhuvan University. In terms of the areas of specialisation, 37.5% participants belonged to the Faculty of Education, 25% participants belonged to the Faculty of Science and Technology, and 20% participants were from the Humanities and Science faculty. 12.5% participants belong to the faculty of Management.

### Current Trends in Student Enrollment

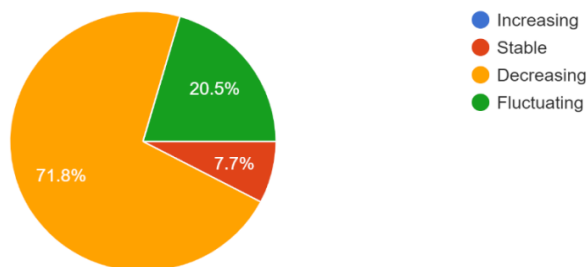
The study was also oriented to identify the current trends of student enrollment at

the college level. Participants were asked how they would describe the current students' enrolment trend in Nepalese colleges/universities. The data collected from the participants are presented in the following chart.

### Figure 2

#### Current Trends in Student Enrollment

How would you describe the current student enrollment trend in Nepalese college/university?  
39 responses



The chart illustrates the current trends in student enrollment as perceived by the participants. A significant majority, approximately 72%, reported that student enrollment at present is decreasing. Meanwhile, about 20.5% of the respondents indicated that the enrollment trend has been fluctuating over the past decade, noting that in some years the number of students increases, while in others it declines, resulting in an overall inconsistent pattern. No participants reported that there is an increase in student enrolment at college. From the above data, it can be said that currently, the number of students taking admission at the university level is decreasing for most of the respondents in the institution where they teach. The study of Trital et al. (2023) also found that student number is decreasing in higher education. They studied the historical trend of student enrolment at Tribhuvan University from 1950 to 2022. The study of Partanen (2011) in Russia presented different results of the student enrolment in Finland, where the number of students was increasing due to the Government policies. Therefore, it can be said that if education policies are changed, then students' motivation can be changed, if the policy attracts student demands and expectations (Abankina and Filatova, 2015). The study of Guiamalon (2025) has also found a similar result to this study. The number of graduate students was decreasing rapidly at Cotabato State University.

#### Lowest Enrolled Level

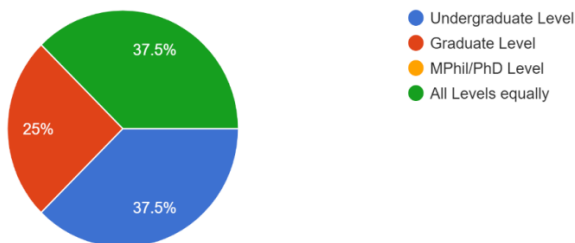
The participants were asked which level was affected most by the decrease in

students' enrolment. There were four options given in the questionnaire: undergraduate, graduate, M.Phil./Ph.D. Level and all levels. The collected data is presented in the following chart.

### Figure 3

#### Lowest enrolled level

In your opinion, which level faces the most decline in student enrollment?  
40 responses



The above chart shows that 37.5% participants reported that the undergraduate level is affected most by the low student enrolment. From this, we can infer that after completing school-level education or +2, students choose foreign universities to pursue their higher education. We can also interpret that a smaller number of students pass the +2 degree to get admission at the undergraduate level. A similar number of participants reported that the number of students was decreased not only at the undergraduate level but also at all levels. 25 percent of respondents said that the graduate level is mainly affected by the low student enrolment. None of the participants has responded that the post-graduate or research level is affected. From the above data, it can be said that not only a particular level suffers from a lack of students, but almost all levels are affected by this burning issue.

### Causes of the Decrease in Student Enrollment

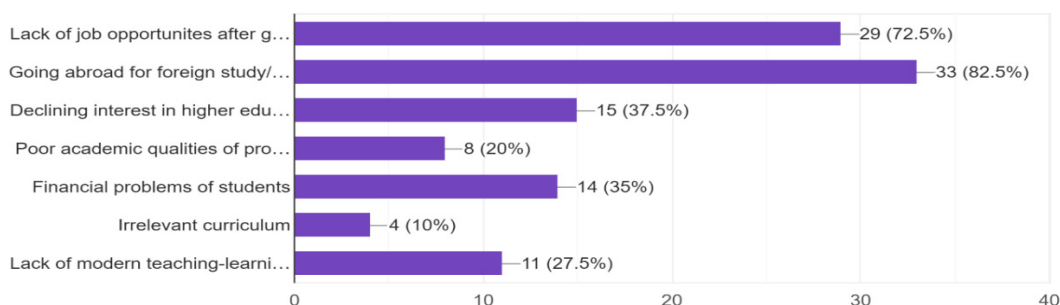
The primary focus of the study was to explore the leading causes of the decrease in students' enrollment at higher education institutions. Participants were asked to respond to multiple-choice questions to record the causes of students' decline at the college level, along with an open-ended question to collect more possible causes of student decline, and the responses are presented in the following graph.

### Figure 4

#### Causes of the Decrease in Student Enrollment

Please tick the major causes of decreasing student enrollment.

40 responses



The above graph shows that 33 respondents, i.e., 82.5% supported going abroad for study as the leading cause of students' decline. In the same line, 29 respondents, i.e., 72.5% reported that lack of job opportunities after completing their degree was the most significant cause of student demotivation in Nepali higher education institutions. Only four respondents, which come to 10% of respondents, said that an irrelevant curriculum demotivated students from enrolling in college-level courses. Similarly, 20 percent shared poor academic qualities of the program as a factor for declining enrollment at the university level, 27.5% responded that the lack of a modern teaching-learning system was a significant cause of poor enrollment, and 35% said it was due to financial problems. 37.5% reported a decline in interest in higher education. The study of Wu et al. (2021) reported that government policies and the changing trend of getting an education are the major causes of the decline in students at higher education. In the same way, Welding (2023) also reported that the new trend of perceiving higher education in a global context changed students' mindsets in pursuing higher education. At present, students compare education with earning; they prefer to earn while learning. Therefore, universities should change their policies and curricula to increase students' enrolment. Similarly, Tuikong (2020) also found that universities need to offer market-oriented courses to attract students because old-fashioned and theory-based courses are decreasing day by day.

From the above data, it can be interpreted that the leading cause of decreasing student enrolment is the attraction of foreign universities and the lack of job opportunities in the home country. Meanwhile, the students are not convinced that the completion of the degree in the home country ensures a stable career in Nepal. It means students need to be provided job opportunities or should be involved in earn while learn program. Higher education students want to be financially independent and want to be involved in job activities while learning. They do not like to be a pure student. They want to work and earn money while pursuing higher education. As they are adult learners, they want to become independent socially and economically.

## **Analysis of the Open-Ended Questionnaire**

This study surveyed teachers' subjective judgment of the topic through a Google form. The following themes have been generated regarding the causes of decreasing student enrollment.

### ***Lack of Employment Opportunities and Job Security***

One of the most repeated responses noticed from the informants was the lack of job opportunities after graduation. Many respondents mentioned that after completion of higher education in Nepal, there is no guarantee of employment, and they realised uncertainty, which discourages students from enrolling in the courses. They mentioned phrases like 'no job assurances, no fixed career, and a lack of a lucrative job market. This discrepancy between the job market and the educational degree is one of the main reasons for them not to enrol in universities. The findings align with the study of Tuikong (2020) and Guiamalon (2025). Their study also supported that students want to have assurance of job opportunities after graduation.

### ***Economic and Financial Constraints***

The economic level of the prospective students is comparatively low and weak, and in the responses, one of the repeated causes mentioned by the informants was their financial hardships. The participants mentioned terms like 'poor economic background and familial responsibility as primary factor that hinders them from enrolling in university courses. Along with that, the lack of part-time employment opportunities and inadequate government financial support further increase this challenge. Students give more importance to earning over studying, especially when education does not ensure immediate economic returns. This reflects the broader economic context of Nepal, where financial insecurity directly influences educational choices. These findings are aligned with the findings of Tuikong (2020). He also found that students want to engage in small businesses or earn money while pursuing higher education because they have multiple responsibilities. The study of Batool and Liu (2021) also depicted that there is a direct influence of students' socio-economic status and enrolment in higher education.

### ***Migration for Foreign Education and Employment***

The education system in developed countries and cities is supposed to be updated and advanced, and students prefer to go abroad for their higher studies or employment. They get attracted by better educational facilities, global exposure, and the potential for higher income. In the responses that the participants have made, they have used the terms 'migration for foreign education and employment, 'tendency of joining foreign universities and 'choice of earning more money by going abroad. These responses are proof of the

claims that they are making about how globalisation and labour migration have shaped the students' migrations abroad. The study of Trital et al. (2023) also explored that students are motivated to pursue their higher education from foreign universities because of the multiple opportunities. Foreign universities offer earning and learning opportunities; therefore, they prefer to pursue their higher education in foreign universities.

### ***Questionable Quality and Flexible Governance Policy Issues***

In the responses made by the informants, some responses criticise the quality and practicality of university education in Nepal. Comments like 'lack of syllabus-oriented book and solutions, 'lack of practical learning, and 'weak teaching – learning environment' show the dissatisfaction with the academic system. Informants pointed out that the universities in Nepal are using outdated curricula, and they failed to equip students with market-driven courses. Along with these poor facilities, inadequate infrastructure, and examination-centred teaching approach also support the students' indifference towards the university in Nepal. Lack of good governance and effective educational policies is also causing a reduced number of students' enrollment in Nepal. The government's ups and downs and lack of fixed policies are causing trouble for students to get enrolled in the course. Respondents mention that corruption, inappropriate government policies, and unplanned distribution of affiliation to private colleges are leading to poor enrollment. This issue mentions the problem in management in higher education institutions. The universities are distributing the affiliation without any proper planning and evaluation of the infrastructure, and the students are showing their indifference towards their studies.

### ***Lack of academic motivation and Interest***

Another critical theme generated through the qualitative data is a lack of interest in academic study. There are a few responses that show the students are looking for the immediate benefit and need to have the instant income as a result of which they are not willing to complete their four to five years in study and would rather go abroad to study or work on a visa and get returns, which remains their priority.

### **Strategies Adopted to Increase Enrollment**

The informants were asked questions about the strategies that they have adopted or would like to adopt for increasing enrollment in their institution, and the following themes were generated based on the input we received.

### ***Visited Feeder Schools and Contacted Students and Parents***

One of the most repeated answers that we received from the informants in our study showed that they visited the schools around their surroundings and informed the

students about their higher education and the courses that they are offering. One of our participants, P5, presents his ideas that discussions with the head teachers and students in the feeder school, at the end of the year, before they go for the final exam, were what they did to collect the students. Still, it was not as effective as the other participant, P7, mentions, due to the interest of the students to join the various technical courses after the completion of their grade 12. Along with the school, they also began the campaign to meet the guardians and parents. They are aware of the guardians and students with the courses that they are offering, their prospective benefits, and the scope of the courses. As mentioned by P10, the students and guardians were told about the courses that they are offering and their career choices after completion of the course. They were told about the benefits of the program, along with the fee structure and the duration of the course. Based on these ideas, they got very interested in sending their children to the campus, and the students were also once convinced. Similar to the findings of this study, Lewison and Hawes (2007) also found that most of the institutions started individual contracts for motivating students.

### ***Collaboration with the Local Government***

Many campus informants presented other strategies that they have adopted, such as collaborating with the local government, i.e., the municipality and rural municipality. They received various forms of support from the local government in terms of infrastructure and supporting them with teachers' salaries and other support. However, one of the participants, P9, explained that after the government endorsed the campus, the support that they used to get from the local government had drastically reduced. There is a decline in the interest of the local government in considering the campus as a government-supported campus. However, they are continuously contacting the local bodies for various supports, as discussed by P5.

### ***Media Campaign and Public Awareness***

Media, today, is playing a vital role in influencing people in their choices and decisions that they are taking in daily life. Considering the impact of the media on people's choices, many campuses took support from the media to raise awareness among the students about the courses they are offering and the advantages associated with them. P3 mentions that they contacted and took help from the local FMs, the newspaper, and publicised their admission announcements in the respective media, as per their convenience. The media outreach is quite good in the surrounding, and as a faculty member of the media on the campus, I realised its importance and suggested to the administration to take action on it and put their opinion by P4. Similarly, pamphletting and posterage around the campus catchment areas was one of the other strategies that many of the campus administrations have taken. Apart from that, one of the campus chiefs also opined that they took help from

the Facebook page by publishing the various notices on the Facebook page and sharing them among all the faculties and tagging all those who are concerned. Since the students are spending most of their time on Facebook and media, this could be very effective for getting the students towards the course. These strategies also go in line with the study of Lewison and Hawes (2007).

### ***Improving the Environment in Higher Education Institutions***

The situation of the higher education institute is very alarming on the campuses, which are basically located in rural areas. The facilities in the campuses and the manpower shortage are playing a pivotal role in the decrease in student enrollment. Considering this situation, many campuses have figured it out with the reasons and solutions and have tried their level best to manage this issue. As presented by the P8, they are having problems with the payment system for the part-time teachers and the extra payment for the full-time faculty. The student fee is very low, and they are having trouble with the payment, and the load is difficult to manage. However, with the support from the local bodies and the Ministry of Social Development, they are working on some training for teachers and orientation on uplifting the quality of the teachers in the vicinity. P4 explained that in the journey of improving the quality of teaching and learning, enough support is needed, and the quality needs to be improved. If only we could spend enough time and effort on the upliftment of the situation of the institution, we could increase enrollment. This time, in an appropriate way, the number of students can be increased and managed.

### ***Revisiting the Education System***

The education system is one of the other causes behind bringing this situation, i.e., poor enrollment in higher education in the province. P4 suggested that the education system needs to be revamped and refined so that the interests of the students can be addressed and the problems can be addressed. The fundamental issue that is creating for students in choosing the courses abroad and out of the province is associated with the duration of the courses. All the universities in Nepal are running the undergraduate program for four years, but it takes more than five years for them to complete their degrees, as mentioned by P9. Apart from that, the courses that the university is offering are of a very traditional type and are not linked with an applied nature. As a result, many of the students are opting for programs outside the province and the nation. So, to manage this gap and problem, the education system needs to be considered. P3 mentions that alteration in the education system is not in their hands, but if the concerned authority takes the appropriate intervention in this situation, this can be improved. He suggested that the concerned authority maintain the academic calendar and follow it strictly, which can bring some changes in the situation. If the courses are revised and introduced with an applied nature, this situation can be enhanced, and help get the students back to the campuses.

The findings of Lewison and Hawes (2007) also support the same line of research. The study also found that to attract students towards higher secondary education, they need to change their curriculum.

### ***Providing Facilities to the Student***

In many rural campuses, the students come from very far from the campuses; as a result, they need to stay in a closer location to the campuses at a lower rent. They need to spend a significant amount of money on rent and stay. The stay around the campuses is as expensive as staying in bigger cities outside the province. And the academic environment outside the province is better than that of the local campuses. As a result, many students who are forced to stay in rented accommodation prefer to study outside their location. In alignment with this situation, P4 suggested that if the campus could manage the proper hostel and residence for the students, they could be retained in the same area. Along with that, scholarship facilities for the students can also enhance the retention process. P3 suggested that the local authorities and the provincial government could be the best sources for doing this. The government should allocate a good amount of money to this process, which can be helpful for retaining the students in the local areas. P9 suggested that the government should support the campuses in terms of equity rather than on an equal basis. Like in the school, the Per Child Fund (PCF) should be managed to keep the students, which in turn supports the campuses, and the education level can be enhanced. Guiamalon et al. (2025) have also obtained similar kinds of findings in their study.

### **Conclusion**

This study provides a comprehensive understanding of the complex factors contributing to the decreasing enrollment in Nepal's higher education institutions. The findings indicate that the decline is not confined to a single level or discipline but is a widespread issue affecting undergraduate programs most severely. Teachers overwhelmingly perceive that students are increasingly pursuing education or employment abroad, driven by better prospects, global exposure, and the lack of job security within Nepal. Financial difficulties, limited part-time work opportunities, and growing economic responsibilities further discourage local enrollment. Additionally, outdated curricula, poor teaching–learning environments, ineffective governance, and inconsistent academic calendars have weakened students' confidence in the value of Nepali higher education. The study also reveals that despite these challenges, institutions are making meaningful efforts to address declining enrollment. Strategies such as school outreach, parent counselling, collaboration with local governments, strengthening institutional infrastructure, media campaigns, and revising academic practices are being implemented. However, these efforts remain insufficient without broader systemic reforms. There is an urgent need for policies that align higher education with job markets, introduce market-

oriented and applied courses, ensure timely academic calendars, and support students through scholarships, hostels, and earn-while-learn opportunities.

Overall, the research underscores that addressing enrollment decline requires a coordinated approach involving universities, local governments, policymakers, and communities. Enhancing quality, relevance, and economic value in higher education is essential to retaining students within the country. Strengthening governance and improving academic programs will be critical in restoring trust in Nepal's higher education system and ensuring a sustainable future for its institutions.

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## Exploration अन्वेषण

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### Perceptions of the Teachers Towards EMI in the Public School in Surkhet

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#### Abstract

*The present study tries to explore the perception of the teachers in public schools adopting English as a medium of instruction in Surkhet district. I adopted a narrative enquiry with teachers of public schools in Gurbhakot Municipality who were adopting EMI for classroom teaching from grades one to ten for more than five years. For the study, a qualitative approach and a narrative inquiry method were used. For data collection, a public school was selected in Gurbhakot Municipality, and four teachers were selected purposively. For eliciting data, semi-structured interviews and classroom observation were used. Teachers of public schools who were practising EMI thought that, according to the interests of the parents and students and the global use of the English language, EMI is almost compulsory for the better career of the children, but there are some problems when adopting it. This study concludes that the teacher gave more preference to the English language because they know the importance of English as an international language.*

**Keywords:** EMI, perception, public school, teacher education

#### Introduction

Schools are teaching the English language all over the world. The number of people using the English language is steadily rising. As a dominant language in education, science, trade, and various fields, its prominence continues to grow. Moreover, with advancements in science and technology, the world is becoming increasingly interconnected, which further contributes to the expanding number of English speakers. English has achieved the status of a global language and is widely used as a lingua franca. As a result, both parents and students are increasingly attracted to English-medium schools. Parents see

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these institutions offering better prospects for their children's future careers. In Nepal, this trend is evident as many Nepali-medium schools are transitioning to EMI in their classrooms, particularly in public schools, to align with the global educational standards. The present research work tries to explore the perception of the teachers for adopting EMI in classroom teaching.

Lasagabaster (2022) claims, "There is currently a global trend towards teaching university courses through English and an increasingly Englishized higher education market, but this is especially noticeable in Europe and Asia". An & Thomas (2021) believe "English medium instruction program is growing as a part of the internationalisation process. Interaction plays a paramount role in content learning, as it can facilitate knowledge construction for students while affording opportunities for deep learning. A classroom that promotes meaningful interaction between teachers and students nurtures cognitive engagement and encourages active participation from all learners, regardless of class size. In such interactive environments, students are motivated to think critically and collaborate with their peers, ensuring that everyone remains involved in the learning process throughout the lesson. The advocates of EMI claim that the use of English as a vehicle language helps students to engage in authentic and meaningful interaction, thereby contributing to the improvement of students' English proficiency while facilitating subject content learning (Hu & Duan, 2019). So, the English language is considered an important tool for effective classroom interaction.

The medium of instruction is the language that is used to conduct all the activities based on the curriculum. Dearden (2014) states EMI as "The use of the English language to teach academic subjects in countries or Jurisdictions where the first language (L1) of the majority of the population is not English." It is argued that EMI fosters the learning quality when the teachers can directly link it to the context. So, English medium instruction is used not only to deliver content but also to develop language skills. Coleman (2011) argues that "English is assumed to play an important role in increasing employability, facilitating international mobility, unlocking developmental opportunities and accessing crucial information and acting as an impartial language." These are the reasons why it unconsciously attracted all.

## **Literature Review**

English has become the global language of communication, education, trade, and media. As a result, there is a growing attraction among parents and students towards English-medium schools as they recognise the advantages these institutions offer in terms of opportunities and prospects. Private schools in the context of Nepal are delivering school education in English medium, and their direct influence can be seen in the public schools of Nepal. The flow of students towards English-medium schools is rising as a result, and some public schools are transitioning from Nepali-medium instruction in an effort to stem the flow of students to private English-medium institutions. However, the shift from Nepali-medium to English-medium instruction has been implemented without adequate preparation, which presents significant challenges. In this context, it is important to explore the teachers' perception while adopting EMI in public schools of Nepal. So,

it aims to investigate teachers' perceptions towards EMI, challenges in implementing it, and provide some pedagogical suggestions on the issue. In the present research work, I want to explore the perceptions of the teachers when they are implementing EMI in the public schools.

### **EMI Practices in the Classes of Non-native Speakers of English**

Regarding EMI, there are many challenges in adopting it in public schools. Dearden (2014) researched “English as a medium of instruction – A growing global phenomenon”. He tried to find out the initial picture of the rapidly growing phenomenon of EMI. The finding of the study was that many countries do not have the necessary educational infrastructure to support the quality of EMI provisions.

EMI plays a significant role in developing language proficiency in the students. Dhakal (2016) has carried out research on “English as a medium of instruction in the government-aided schools: teachers’ perception and use” to find out the teachers’ perception about EMI, along with the current situation of using EMI in the government-aided schools. He found that EMI plays a significant role in learning, and the teachers had an eager interest in using EMI in classroom teaching, which brought significant change in learning, especially in the development of language skills. However, he mentions that the teachers were dissatisfied with both the teacher training program and the availability of teaching material. So, his suggestion is to provide training to the teachers and the availability of the teaching materials for fostering EMI.

Teaching English only in the English medium sometimes creates a problem in the comprehension of the students. Here, Phyak (2017) has researched “Translanguaging as a pedagogical resource in English language teaching: A response in unplanned language education policies in Nepal”. The researcher tried to observe critically how different circumstances occur through unplanned language policy in Nepal and how learners' own linguistic and cultural background can serve the valuable assets for teaching English in Nepal's multilingual settings. From the study, he found that "teach English in English" created a lot of problems in teaching and learning in the early grades. He concluded that the existing unstructured English language policy, grounded in a monolingual approach and the "The earlier the better" belief, has actually created challenging conditions for both the teachers and students, which puts them in trouble to achieve the goals of the curriculum for English language teaching. His suggestion is to use translanguaging pedagogy to address the difficulties created by an unplanned English language policy.

Teachers’ professional development training is crucial for effective language teaching in the classroom. Since adopting EMI, teachers' professional development training plays a vital role in effective teaching and learning. Bhusal (2017) has carried out research entitled “Implementation of English as a medium of instruction: non-native teachers’ perception”. The main objectives of the study were to investigate the contemporary situation of English medium instruction practised by teachers of languages other than English as the mother tongue at the government school of Kathmandu Valley. The study revealed that the existing situation of EMI was not satisfactory in terms of teacher training, materials and language proficiency of teachers. The researcher concluded

that shifting the medium of instruction from Nepali to English in the public schools of Nepal has a lot of challenges that need to be carefully addressed for EMI to be effective.

English, as the medium language of the globe, trade, education, and commerce, has attracted the attention of parents to make their children learn the English language. Neupane (2017) has also carried out research work on “Parents' perception on English as the medium of instruction in the public schools of Nepal” to find out the parents' perception towards the use of EMI in public schools. Parents believed that EMI plays a crucial role in students' better language proficiency and which leads them to a better future career. They stated that it is necessary to implement English Medium Instruction (EMI) in the public schools of Nepal. However, the study showed that there are a lot of difficulties in implementing it due to the poor educational background of parents, the economy, and so on. The researcher concluded that the parents have a positive perception towards it because English education can help their children get better opportunities.

Adopting EMI with much preparation at school has created problems in the public schools. In one of the other studies by Gaire (2017), “A case study on expectations and challenges faced by public schools for the implementation of English medium instruction” to investigate the interest of stakeholders form EMI before practising and also discover the problems faced by the teachers, parents and school management committee to carry on the EMI program. The researcher found that adopting EMI was challenging because of several reasons, like expensive textbooks, poor availability of materials, and parents who were not ready to cooperate economically. Additionally, there was the problem of proficient language teachers to handle EMI effectively.

Regarding the policy and guidelines of school-level curriculum in Nepal, "Medium of instruction for school education shall be Nepali, English or both, whereas primary education can be provided in students' mother tongue (first language). Language as a subject shall be taught in the same language" (CDC, 2008). In connection with EMI, a famous linguist, Alan Davis, who led the first ELT survey in Nepal in 1983-1984, stated that the decision regarding language education in Nepal is guided by sentimental role rather than instrumental. Sentimental role emphasises the importance of a language to maintain group tradition and culture and to demonstrate differentiation from other groups, while the instrumental role concerns the value of language learning for job and other economic prospects (Davis, 2009).

## **Methods and Procedures**

Research paradigm, influenced by research purpose and question, is the set of assumptions and worldview that impact the researchers' action (Guba, 1990). For my research purpose and questions, I used an interpretive paradigm and a narrative method for the study. The respondents were the four teachers of a public secondary school adopting EMI for more than five years. They were selected purposively related to the objectives of the research. Participants were directly experienced in adopting EMI for classroom teaching for more than five years.

Data collection was obtained from two instruments: observation and interview. The observation of the class was done four times, once for each participant's class. Similarly,

open-ended questions were used demanding the participants' feelings, experience, beliefs and perceptions towards implementing EMI. As the research procedure, the classroom observation was done as being passive observer. The information was noted while conducting teaching learning activities conducted by the participants. Then the semi-structured interview was employed to obtain in-depth beliefs, experiences, feelings and experiences of the participants. The information was recorded, and the recorded information was transcribed, coded and analysed for meaning making.

## **Results and Discussion**

To find the perception of the teachers, a public-school adopting EMI in Gurbhakot Municipality was visited. The school was adopting EMI from grades one to ten for more than five years. The primary reason for adopting EMI in the public school was as per the demand and interest of the parents and the students.

### **Teachers' Perceptions in EMI Class**

In non-English speaking countries, schools are adopting EMI as the medium of instruction in a significant way. This trend is evident in Nepal, where many community schools that previously taught in the Nepali language have transitioned to EMI starting from the early grades. Similarly, community schools in Gurbhakot have experienced a similar shift. The stakeholders of these community schools defend this practice by stating that the switch is due to the demand and expectation of the parents and students.

According to a T1 participant in the research, "the school is running classroom teaching in both English and Nepali medium from grade six to ten. EMI is compulsory from grades one to five. When they come to school with English medium books, they feel as if they are the students of an English medium private school." Before practising EMI, the number of students was decreasing because they were moving towards the English medium private schools. In this regard, T2 said:

The decreased number of students raised the question of the number of teacher quotas at the school. Parent sent their children to the English medium private schools. Most of them wanted to see their children going to private schools with English books in their bags. I think parents' belief in quality education in English medium schools was the main reason for being shifted to English medium. To fulfil the desire of the parents and raise the number of students, we started teaching in English medium.

When they decided to implement EMI, it then raised the number of students at the school. The worldwide prominence of the English language has been interpreted and approached in various ways, leading to a range of policies and initiatives implemented across different contexts. Public schools in Nepal have been adopting English medium instruction as a new linguistic market in education, challenging the mother tongue-based multilingual education policy of the government (Saud, 2020). As per the question "what is the significance of adopting EMI," The participants had the common answers. They were arguing that EMI provided lots of exposure to the students for learning the English language, and it helped them to develop language proficiency. It helped to develop the

language proficiency of the students.

Although the majority of the students were using Nepali as their mother tongue, they are now practising the English language for classroom activities most of the time. The participant responded, “These days, the students are motivated to learn in the classroom. They have come to school regularly. The dropout has decreased. The learning achievement and pass rate of the students have been increased”. When I got the response from the participant, I came to know that students were motivated in learning. There was the active participation of the students towards every activity that is conducted inside and outside the classroom at school. The regular presence of the students in the classroom plays a crucial role in effective learning. So, EMI encouraged students to come to school regularly. It created a better learning environment at school. The dropout of students due to different reasons is one of the challenging issues in the public schools of rural areas. The response of the participant helped to decrease the dropout rate of the students from the school.

Similarly, the learning achievement and securing a certain grade for the grade promotion are other crucial matters in the school. Nowadays, the pass rate of the students not only in SEE and grade 12 but also in the basic level exam is challenging. The pass rate of the students is low. When they adopted EMI in their school, the pass rate increased. T4 said, “Regarding the quality of education, students are achieving better scores with remarkable results in the Basic level Exam.”

The participant T3 said, “I cannot explain some of the contents to the students because of the problem with the English language”. When I observed the response of the participant teacher, there were some challenges in adopting EMI in public schools. There is a lack of competent teachers to deliver and conduct the content and activities as per the provisions of the curriculum. Teachers who had been teaching for more than 20 years in the Nepali medium had some difficulties while shifting into EMI. T2 participant said, “We have the code of conduct to use the English language in the classroom”. Most of the students find it comfortable to communicate with their friends using their mother tongue, i.e. Nepali language, in this particular context. Due to the language code in the classroom, it became less interactive. Some of the participants were using translanguaging for making sure of the comprehension of the students. However, there is the use of translanguaging has at least provided much exposure to the students for developing language proficiency.

### **Issues and Challenges in Adopting EMI in Public Schools**

The implementation of English as the medium of instruction (EMI) and its apparent benefits, the reality of switching to EMI without proper teacher training and sufficient infrastructure support has led to various unforeseen negative consequences. One such outcome is the challenging and disputed process of developing English proficiency among students. Despite community schools claiming to provide English education, the actual language of instruction in these schools remains Nepali due to teachers' limited English proficiency and the school's lack of resources and readiness for the transition to EMI. This has resulted in significant confusion between the intended EMI approach and the actual language practices within the classroom.

In the response of teachers' support, all the participants had a similar response, as there was no proper supervision and feedback from the concerned people and organisations, and there is no facility for training for the teachers. T4 said, "We are not attending any training programs to run the class in English medium. There is no proper supervision and feedback from the concerned authority." Professional development of the teachers is a prerequisite for effective classroom performance of the teachers. Teachers who are practising Nepali medium instruction and shifting towards English medium are really challenged. For effective classroom teaching, there should be the facility of the teachers' training, continuous supervision and feedback to the teachers. The concerned authority seems to be unaware of this. There was an unavailability of teaching materials and even the textbooks on time.

"We appointed some privately sourced teachers", the head teacher said. He further stated that they had managed some teachers from their own source of school. It is really challenging for them. There is the provision of free school education. Schools are not allowed to charge any fees from the students. There is a lack of the necessary teachers' quota in the school. The head teacher expected the proper quota and the allotment of a proper budget for the effective implementation of EMI in public schools. One of the burning issues in public schools is the proper budget for them. The school should be equipped with the physical facilities with enough budget to conduct the academic activities.

### **Conclusions**

The issue of medium of instruction has become a challenge in Nepal to address the demand of parents and students. Public schools are adopting EMI without much preparation and planning. This study concluded that the schools are adopting EMI as per the demand of the students and parents, but the teachers are facing a number of difficulties while implementing EMI in Gurbhakot, like rural areas of Gurbhakot. One of the most significant results of adopting EMI by the public school is that the number of students has increased, and the flow towards English medium private schools has decreased. The teachers practising NMI have been shifted into EMI. So, it has created a problem for the teachers. There is a lack of proficient English teachers to implement it properly. Therefore, teachers frequently use students' mother tongue in the classroom. Despite facing challenges such as linguistic barriers, inadequate language proficiency among teachers, diverse cultures, ineffective teaching methods, and limitations in resources, it was discovered that teachers in community schools demonstrated a positive attitude towards implementing English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) in their daily teaching and learning process. The concerned organisations are not paying much attention to training the teachers. So, if there is the availability of competent teachers, teaching materials and textbooks, proper physical infrastructure, proper training for the teachers with necessary supervision and feedback, parents' and students' thrust towards the English language can be pacified.

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## **Sexual and Reproductive Health Among Women with Disabilities in Kailali District**

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### **Abstract**

*The study aims to identify the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of women with disabilities, assess their knowledge, attitudes and practices about sexual and reproductive health and examine their sexual and reproductive health-related problems. A descriptive research design was adopted for using primary and secondary data sources. Primary data were collected using structured interviews with 40 women with disabilities in Janaki Rural Municipality, Kailali District, and secondary data were collected from municipal records and reports of concerned NGOs. The findings reveal that most of the respondents were Hindus. They were also housewives, and more than half of them belonged to nuclear family units. Sexual and reproductive health knowledge of respondents came from school/college, training and other interpersonal communication. In terms of menstrual hygiene, 50 percent of respondents used cloth, and a few used sanitary pads, homemade pads, and other materials. Over 20 percent of respondents slept separately during the period of menstruation. Most respondents received antenatal check-up services. The main reasons for not accessing antenatal services are attributed to a lack of knowledge, a shortage of time, the absence of services, and fear. Concerning family planning, the majority of respondents used condoms, and some others used injectable and other methods. Concerning the vaccination and delivery practices, most of the respondents reported having received the T. T. vaccine and having taken iron tablets. The majority of respondents reported having given birth in a hospital. They reported several sexual and reproductive health problems. These included abdominal pain, vaginal bleeding, vomiting, headaches, irregular menstruation, difficulty keeping clean, postpartum depression, lack of health services and other health problems. The study recommends that improving literacy and income, and implementing community participatory health*



*programs, taking into account cultural beliefs, family support, and community the focus on promoting sexual and reproductive health for women with disabilities.*

**Keywords:** *Delivery practice, disabled women, family planning, postpartum depression*

## **Introduction**

It is important to note that a condition is not a disability because of being “defective”, nor is it a punishment for something we have done wrong; rather, it is a trait of how one may engage with their surrounding environment. Public health and social research on the sexual and reproductive health of disabled women is primarily important, and oftentimes goes unexplored. Approximately 16 percent of the global population has some kind of disability, with women being some of the most disadvantaged because of a combination of the disability and social stigma, gender, and lack of available vital resources (WHO, 2023). One of the most difficult challenges that disabled women experience is physical inaccessibility to services. Numerous health facilities do not have any means of offering a wheelchair ramp, have no accessible washrooms, and do not have any trained personnel who have the physical and mental capacity to assist disabled human beings. Consequently, they cannot obtain health care services that are deemed vital, such as screening for health issues during pregnancy, planning a family, and gaining knowledge about the health issues surrounding reproduction. There are negatively compounded health issues, physical and social exclusion, and a lack of knowledge that cause the greatest victimisation of the disabled (Groce and Kett, 2014).

The attitudes and perceptions of health service providers play an equally important role in determining health-seeking behaviour (Shakespeare, 2006). Women with disabilities face negative attitudes, insensitivity, and a lack of knowledge about the specific needs of disabilities, which makes them less likely to seek health care. Women with disabilities also face social stigma, which adds feelings of shame, inferiority, and isolation. According to The Act Relating to Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2074 (2017), disability is defined as a condition which can be physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory that results in the lack of ability to fully participate in everyday activities. The Act also includes types of disabilities such as physical, visual, hearing, deaf blind, speech, mental or psychosocial, intellectual, haemophilia, autism, and multiple disabilities. Based on the degree of severity of the condition, disability is classified as profound, severe, moderate, and mild (The Act Relating to Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2074).

According to the National Census, 2078 (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2021), 647,744 persons in Nepal, representing 2.2 percent of the total population, live with disabilities. Among them, 54.2 percent are men and 45.8 percent are women. The disabled live in every community and every age group; this is due to congenital, accidental, and disease-related causes. The government of Nepal, in the document of the national census 2078, recognises a total of 10 major and 12 minor disabilities, which include, but are not limited to, physical, low vision, total blindness, deaf, hard of hearing, deaf-blind, speech, mental/psychosocial, intellectual, haemophiliac, autism, and multisystem disabilities. No, a single type of disorder, however, describes the totality of the physical, mental, and

social conditions of a person when it comes to reproductive health. The International Conference on Population and Development, which was held in Cairo in 1994, was the first to affirm reproductive health as a right of every individual. The individual, it went on to explain, is entitled to choose when to marry, when to give birth, and how many children to have. Additionally, it detailed the right to access modern contraception and the right to protection from any sexual abuse and sexual coercion (Sherchan and Upreti, 2020). Moreover, reproductive health thus includes not only the prevention and treatment of reproductive diseases but also the promotion of dignity, gender equality, and bodily autonomy (Sharma, 2016).

A complex mix of culture where the Hindu religion and patriarchal society are strongly rooted, the desire for productivity makes the promotion of reproductive health among disabled women, including adolescents, a demanding task in Nepal. Historically suppressed and victimised groups, such as the Badi women and Devaki, the affected population faced sexual exploitation and sexually servicing their guests, while hidden sexual violence is still rampant in the poor, uneducated society. Sexual and reproductive health (SRH) includes more than the absence of disease but also rights to informed, safe, satisfying sexual lives as well as contraception and maternal care. Effective, developmentally- and age-appropriate sexual health education for adolescents is needed to prevent unsafe practices and unwanted pregnancy. Another priority of Nepal is the Adolescent Health and Development Strategy (2018) includes youth-friendly, inclusive SRH services that are accessible to all, including persons with disabilities. The connection between disability and poverty is cyclical, disability preventing employment and social inclusion, leading to increased risk of poverty; while poverty increases the risk of becoming disabled through malnutrition, hazardous work conditions, and lack of healthcare. Women and girls with disabilities account for higher levels of all forms of sexual abuse, including rape, domestic violence, and exploitation. Women with deafness, visual impairment, who are using a wheelchair, and intellectual disability face the violence camouflaged by the caring landslide itself due to communication barriers and vulnerability to violence that goes unreported (NDWA, 2014).

Despite the presence of progressive laws and international obligations, implementation is still problematic. The government of Nepal has implemented several programs, such as the Disability Protection and Welfare Act (1982), the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2006 (un. info. np). But obstacles and social discrimination remain strong. Schools, hospitals, roads and toilets are yet to become accessible for the disabled. The Family Planning Association of Nepal (FPAN) has been working on SRH rights and access for persons with disabilities since 2008, including in relation to equality, bodily integrity, freedom from discrimination, and access to health information and services. However, these domestic and international initiatives, women with disabilities in Nepal endure intersecting webs of discrimination due to gender inequality, poverty, social stigma and lack of access to services. As indicated by the National Census 2078, there were a total of 3,413 disabled persons in Janaki Rural Municipality of Kailali District. But there are only 545 who have been registered by the municipality. Among the registered persons, 56 have profound disabilities (red card), 229 have severe disabilities (blue card), 145 have moderate disabilities (yellow card), and 115

have mild disabilities (white card). Given this background, this study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of women with disabilities by examining their demographic and socio-economic characteristics, assessing their knowledge, attitudes, and practices regarding sexual and reproductive health and identifying their health problems.

### **Literature Review**

In general, the review of related literature serves as the basis for defining research problems, giving reasons for the study, choosing the right methods, and organising data collection and analysis. This research study, "Sexual and Reproductive Health Among Women with Disabilities," referenced different kinds of materials such as textbooks, journal articles, research reports, and audio-visual materials from a variety of national and international organisations. Sexual and reproductive health is one of the most basic elements of human rights, and it is accepted worldwide through the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations, 1948) as well as other international conventions. These frameworks emphasise that every individual, irrespective of their gender, has the right to enrol in health-related programs, make up their minds in a totally free way as to whether or not they will have children and when, and obtain the necessary knowledge and education built on giving care to themselves and their .

Karl Mannheim's sociocultural theory suggests that understanding the society's structure and its cultural practices, which influence individual behaviour, including reproductive practices and childbirth, is necessary for effective social reform (Sharma, 2066). Women, by tradition, are not allowed to do household activities or engage in the process of childbirth. A few communities isolate them in specific parts of the house during childbirth to avoid exposure to sunlight or social contact, showing that these are the areas of the house which are strictly forbidden for women (Sharma, 2066). Similarly, feminist theorist Betty Friedan asserts that even though there are biological differences between men and women, the latter's social roles, duties, and rights should be treated as the same (Dulal, 2011). Both genders gain from the family and the community, and the shared accountability for maternal and reproductive health is the key to the progression of women's lives.

The health of the mother during pregnancy is, therefore, the factor that determines whether the child will survive. Any kind of pregnancy that is early, late, or close together with malnutrition of the mother causes the death of infants and children, especially in places where the provision of healthcare is inadequate. The concept of safe motherhood comprises the various health services that extend to women for them to be able to have healthy pregnancies, safe deliveries, and receive proper postpartum care (Budha, 2015). The government, on the other hand, through a constitution, has to ensure that women with disabilities have the same rights as other women in respect of education, healthcare, employment, and social protection, besides the mutual rights for them to be free from discrimination and violence. In addition, through such community-based programs as well as advocacy networks, such as the Nepal Disabled Women's Association, which has been engaged in promoting empowerment, leadership, and inclusion among women with disabilities for over ten years, they should be encouraged.

The law of Nepal provides a lot of measures to ensure the safety of women with disabilities. The major legislations, including the Civil Code (2017), Safe Motherhood and Reproductive Health Rights Act (2018), and the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act (2017), are the pillars that guarantee justice, protection, and the right to health services for those individuals. The laws prohibit sexual and gender-based violence; they also require the provision of rehabilitation and psychosocial support to those who have experienced such violence. Moreover, the instruments of the policy like the National Health Policy (1991), Gender Equality, and Social Inclusion Policy (2016), and Gender Equality, Disability, and Social Inclusion Policy (2023–2027) strongly advocate fair access to the health services, democratic decision-making, and health care that is both maternal and mental health-friendly (Ministry of Health and Population, 2018).

Empirical studies have consistently pointed out the difficulties that women with disabilities have to overcome when trying to get sexual and reproductive health care. Research conducted worldwide suggests that the main factors that impede their implementation of reproductive health programs are the lack of information, autonomy, and social acceptance, as well as structural and systemic challenges (Nguyen, 2020). Such a thorough investigation was done in the Kathmandu Valley aimed at persons with disabilities and the results were 422 individuals participated in the study and the conclusions drawn were only 32.7 percent were receiving sexual and reproductive health education; 47.6 percent were utilizing contraceptive services; 27.7 percent were going through antenatal care; 13 percent had access to safe abortion services; 3.6 percent were availing HIV services; and merely 16.8 percent were using STI management services (Journal of Women's Health, 2020). The results of these are instrumental in making clear the imperative of providing health education and delivering services that are inclusive of all people. Several activities, including the DEC Nepal project that took place in Banke (2023) and the awareness programs conducted by the Nepal Blind Welfare Association, Kailali Branch (2023), have recently endeavoured to fill these gaps through imparting education on menstrual hygiene, law, self-defence, and reproductive health. An investigation into these projects showed that the participating groups realised that their knowledge had been broadened, more health services were being used, and confidence levels had increased. Hence, it clearly demonstrates the significance of the presence of the targeted .

There have been very few studies that focus specifically on sexual and reproductive health and women with disabilities, particularly in rural and local areas. While there has been some progress made, Barriers such as physical inaccessibility, financial limitations, discriminatory attitudes, and inadequate availability of assistive devices continue to prevent people from using services. Likewise, women with disabilities in high-income countries often face barriers to accessing prenatal, delivery and postpartum care due to stigma and lack of training among health care providers (WHO., 2013). Whereas cultural norms, early marriage, low literacy rate and social stigmatisation contribute to reproductive health inequalities in developing countries like Nepal.

In Nepal, one of the most common oppressions of women with disabilities, particularly those living in rural and isolated areas, at the intersection between targeted initiatives and law frameworks, there exists a range of targeted legislation and policy

frameworks, but little to no research on the practice of sexual and reproductive health on the intersection of disability and rural epidemiology. Most of the literature and research, with a few exceptions, over the past fifty years, the majority of the literature and research focused on the urban adolescent population. Various literature and research studies on the sexual and reproductive health of various rural populations, especially women with disabilities, however, appear to be under-researched. There is limited integration of assistive devices to be used. In addition to these barriers, cultural attitudes, social stigmas, and inadequate training, health services are becoming more and more discriminatory. There are very few, if none, extensive studies to shed light and expand the policy framework to more inclusive and appropriate health sector reforms. It requires in-depth and very detailed studies to be able to address the issue more effectively. This is the gap in research, especially in the case of Janaki Rural Municipality. This is why the research is innovative, as it is the only one to focus on women with disabilities in all wards of Janaki Rural Municipality.

### **Methods and Procedures**

The research used a descriptive research design to explore the sexual and reproductive health of disabled women. The research was conducted in all the wards of Janaki Rural Municipality, Kailali District. As per the National Census 2021, the total number of persons with disabilities in the municipality is 3,413. However, only 545 have been officially registered. Among them, 56 people have a profound disability (red card), 229 severe disability (blue card), 145 moderate disability (yellow card), and 115 mild disability (white card). Not all of the registered individuals were willing to participate as respondents; hence, 40 married women with at least one child were chosen through a convenience sampling method. Both primary and secondary data were utilised. Primary data were gathered through structured interviews, and secondary data were taken from municipal records and reports of the relevant .

### **Results and Discussion**

#### **Demographic and Socio-economic Characteristics**

The demographic data provide statistical insights into population characteristics, while socio-economic data reflect people's educational, economic, and social conditions. A community comprises individuals from diverse castes, religions, occupations, lifestyles, and cultures, and the development of a country largely depends on these human resources. This study examines the socio-economic characteristics of women with disabilities, including age, religion, family structure, education, occupation, housing, sanitation, cultural practices, access to health services, and disability-friendly infrastructure, along with their sexual and reproductive health issues and service accessibility, which is clarified in the following table.

**Table 1**  
*Demographic and Socio-economic Characteristics*

Characteristics	Frequency (n=40)	Percentage (%)
<b>Population Distribution by Age</b>		
15–20 years	2	5
21–25 years	10	25
26–30 years	14	35
31–39 years	8	20
40 years and above	6	15
<b>Population Distribution by Religion</b>		
Hindu	30	75
Christian	8	20
Muslim	2	5
<b>Educational Status of Respondents</b>		
Illiterate	14	35
Literate (Basic)	12	30
Secondary Level	10	25
Higher Education	4	10
<b>Family Structure of Respondents</b>		
Nuclear Family	28	70
Joint Family	12	30
<b>Occupational Status of Respondents</b>		
Housewife	16	40
Agriculture	14	35
Business	8	20
Employment	2	5

The study included 40 women with disabilities, aged between 15 and 40 years. Aged 26–30 years were 35 percent, 21–25 years were 25 percent, 31–39 years were 20 percent, > 40 years were 15 percent, and the least age group was 15–20 years. They

were 5 per cent of the respondents. In terms of religion, most of the participants were Hindu (75%), followed by Christian (20%) and Muslim (5%), resembling the major religious composition of the population. Regarding family structure, within which the participants live, 70 percent of the respondents were living in a nuclear family, whereas 30 percent of the participants live in a joint family. Educational status of the participants revealed that 35 percent of the participants were illiterate, 30 percent were adults aged 18- 24 with primary education, whereas 25 percent of the participants had secondary, and only 10 percent completed higher education. Occupationally, great percentage of the participants were housewives (40%), 35 percent were involved in farming, 20 percent running business and 5 percent were in employed others, all business and employment were formamide contrast to the high literacy and low dependence on agriculture and which infers that woman engaged in unpaid housework and self-employment was high, which might indicate higher dependency on household/ agricultural activities. These socio-economic data considerably helped to understand the practices of women living with significant disabilities' reproductive and sexual history, as well as knowledge and access to services were lived experiences from the study setting.

### **Sexual and Reproductive Health Knowledge, Perceptions and Practices**

Women with disabilities have no better access to sexual and reproductive health. They face these challenges as a given reality, i.e., lack of health checkup, lack of reproductive health education, early marriage, menstrual and nutrition problems, and limitations associated with the mother. Moreover, pregnancy generates multiple risks such as hypertension, swelling, fetal suffering, and infection. Proper nutrition and care should be preserved for the child, and before dawn. This study aims to investigate knowledge, attitudes, and practices related to SRH among disabled women, focusing on marital status, age at first conception, prenatal care, nutrition, menstrual hygiene, nature of delivery, family planning, and being forced to get married.

**Table 2**

*Knowledge about Sexual and Reproductive Health*

Characteristics	Frequency (n=40)	Percentage (%)
<b>Sources of SRH Information</b>		
School/College	14	35
Training Programs	14	35
Health Institutions	4	10
Other Sources	8	20
<b>Age at Marriage of Respondents</b>		
10–15 years	10	25
16–20 years	18	45
21–25 years	8	20
26 years and above	4	10

<b>Living Arrangement with Husband</b>		
Living with Husband	22	55
Husband Not at Home	18	45
<b>Sleeping During Menstruation</b>		
In the Cowshed	5	12.5
On Own Bed	25	62.5
In a Separate Room	8	20
Other	2	5
<b>Types of pads</b>		
Commercially Purchased Pads	10	25
Cloth (Cotton)	20	50
Homemade Pads	8	20
Other	2	5
<b>Age at First Pregnancy</b>		
Below 15 years	2	5
16–20 years	20	50
21–25 years	13	32.5
26 years & above	5	12.5
<b>Antenatal Health Check-up</b>		
Received Antenatal Check-up	32	80
Did Not Receive Antenatal Check-up	8	20
<b>Reasons for Not Having Check-ups During Pregnancy</b>		
Lack of Time	12	30
Lack of Knowledge	14	35
Lack of Health Services	10	25
Fear or Anxiety	4	10
<b>Additional Food Intake During Pregnancy</b>		
Green Vegetables or Fruits	22	55
Eggs, Fish, and Meat	10	25
Milk, Yoghurt, and Ghee	8	20
<b>Use of Family Planning</b>		
Condom	16	40
3-month injection	2	5
Others	17	42.5

In this study area, disabled women face broad sexual reproductive health and rights, literacy and poverty issues. The women with disabilities in the study area are confronted with enormous SRH challenges, and these combine with societal stigmatisation, poverty and low levels of education. Respondents' perception of knowledge was measured by enquiring their SRH awareness and ways of obtaining information. For the 40 women, information was provided by schools or colleges (35%), training programs (35%), health agencies (10%) and others (20%). Early marriage was common, with 25 percent having been married at the age of 10–15 years; for 45 percent of women, their ages at first marriage were between 16–20 years, and between 21 - 25 years for 20 percent. Only about one out of ten women (11%) had attained a marriage age equal to or greater than that stipulated by law in Nepal ( $\geq 20$  years). Underage marriage poses serious risks for maternal and child health, such as pregnancy complications, delivery complications, and stunted growth among the children born.

Health outcomes were also affected by marriage patterns. Among them, 55 percent of women were living with their husbands, and 45 percent were living apart for work and other reasons, and those living with their spouses enjoyed better health and nutrition. Menstrual hygiene management is heterogeneous, with 50 percent using cloth, 25 percent using commercial pads, 20 percent using homemade pads and 5 percent using other materials. When they menstruated, 62.5 percent of them slept in their own beds, 20 percent in a different room, and 12.5 percent in the cowshed; a consequence of what can be described as cultural beliefs, illiteracy, and social standards. Age at first pregnancy was a further issue. Among the total respondents, 50 percent were pregnant within the age group of 16–20 years, 32.5 percent within 21–25 years, 12.5 percent was at the age of 26 years or above, and 5 percent were below the age of 15 years, indicating the hazards of early pregnancy. Some 80 percent of respondents had made use of antenatal services, and 20 percent did not. Taste, dirty environment, toothache and 4 main reasons of ignorance, 35 percent, lack of time 30 percent, distance 25 percent of fear or anxiety, 10 percent, were reasons for not taking treatment. Nutrition during pregnancy was evaluated, showing 55 percent ate green vegetables and fruits, 25 percent eggs, fish and meat, and 20 percent drank milk, yogurt and ghee, indicating they had fairly balanced meals, often supplemented with family support.

Family planning methods revealed that 40 per cent used condoms, 5 percent used the three-month injectable, 42.5 percent used other methods like Norplant, Copper-T, and pills, and 12.5 percent did not use any method. These results show that women with disabilities have knowledge of SRH and make use of certain services, but their reproductive health outcomes are still affected by barriers such as early marriage, social stigma, inadequate knowledge, and limited access to health facilities. This study clearly demonstrates the requirements for focused awareness raising programs, health services that are disabled friendly and community support to secure the quality of life or life chances of women with disabilities and their children.

**Table 3**  
*Vaccination and Delivery Practices*

Characteristics	Frequency (n=40)	Percentage (%)
<b>Vaccination</b>		
Vaccinated	34	85
Not vaccinated	6	15
<b>Iron Tablet Consumption</b>		
Took iron tablets	34	85
Did not take iron tablets	6	15
<b>Place of Delivery</b>		
Delivered in the hospital	24	60
Delivered at home	10	25
Delivered at the health post	6	15
<b>Type of Delivery</b>		
Normal Delivery	34	85
Cesarean (Operation) delivery	5	12.5
Vacuum-assisted delivery	1	2.5
<b>Persons Assisting During Delivery</b>		
Family members	21	52.5
Health workers	5	12.5
Neighbors	6	15
Traditional birth attendants (Sudeni)	8	20

Tetanus Toxoid (T.T.) vaccine is a mandatory part of pregnancy care to safeguard the life of mother and baby from fatal infections, which is one of the causes of death in neonates in Nepal. Two doses during pregnancy for pregnant women and five doses for life for other than pregnant women are recommended. Among the respondents, who had the T.T. vaccine, 85 percent were given two doses and 15 percent were not who citing time constraints, ignorance, traditional superstitions and cultural practices as reasons for not taking the vaccine. Likewise, the supplementation of iron is necessary to prevent anaemia and maintain the health of a mother and her fetus. Pregnant women should take the tablets from the fourth month of pregnancy up until seven weeks after delivery. In the study site, 85 per cent of the women took iron tablets, 15 per cent did not, mainly because of limited access to health services, and this emphasises the importance of awareness creation for women who are illiterate and not trained.

Safe birth is essential to maternal and newborn health. Nepal encourages hospital delivery by providing free services, cash incentives warm clothing to mothers who deliver at home. The study said 60 per cent of the women gave birth in hospitals, 25 per cent at

home and 15 per cent at health posts, noting traditional beliefs and transportation problems were some of the reasons many did not go to the hospital to deliver. Delivery was of a different category: 85 per cent had normal delivery, 12.5 per cent underwent caesarean section, and 2.5 per cent had vacuum-assisted delivery. The majority of deliveries were normal, with cesarean and assisted delivery capacity limited by poor local facilities. Support during labour is also imperative, as confirmed. The report revealed that half (52.5%) of the women were assisted by a family member, 12.5 per cent were attended to by health workers, 15 percent were helped by neighbours and 20 per cent by a traditional birth attendant (Sudeni). Family was the main social support, neighbours, and Sudeni came in as help when family assistance was not sufficient. These results emphasise the need for trained, accessible health personnel and a community-based support system to promote safe deliveries and maternal health for women with disabilities.

**Table 4**  
*Sexual and Reproductive Health Problem*

Characteristics	Frequency (n=40)	Percentage (%)
<b>Problems During Menstruation</b>		
Stomach pain/Fever/Headache	19	47.5
Hygiene maintenance difficulty	7	17.5
Dependence on others	5	12.5
Irregular menstruation	9	22.5
<b>Problems During Pregnancy</b>		
Fever	9	22.5
Severe abdominal pain	7	17.5
Vaginal bleeding	5	12.5
Nausea / Vomiting	19	47.5
<b>Problems During the Postpartum Period</b>		
Excessive bleeding/High fever/ Fainting	6	15
Postpartum depression	4	10
Financial stress	21	52.5
Lack of health access	9	22.5
<b>Sexual Abuse</b>		
Yes	12	30
No	28	70

Disabled women encounter multiple challenges which are related to sexual and reproductive health. They include menstruation, pregnancy, postpartum periods, and risks of sexual abuse. In the menstruation period, they experience health problems like stomach pain, fever, headaches and so on. They have to depend on others for support

and proper care. In this study, a total of 47.5 per cent of respondents reported stomach pain, fever and headache, 17.5 per cent faced hygiene problems, 12.5 per cent relied on others, and 22.5 per cent experienced irregular menstruation. These findings show that menstruation poses greater challenges for women with disabilities compared to the general population. Similarly, pregnancy is a vital time when special attention is needed, such as adequate nutrition, hygiene, rest and avoidance of toxicants. Among the respondents with fever were 22.5 per cent, 17.5 per cent had severe abdominal pain, 12.5 per cent suffered from vaginal bleeding, and 47.5 per cent were experiencing nausea or vomiting. These obstacles are further compounded by physical disabilities, ignorance, poverty and traditional beliefs, which is why support from husband, family and community is vital.

The postnatal period, which lasts for almost 6 weeks, is as important for maternal well-being. In this study, 15 per cent of women had severe bleeding, high fever or fainting, 10 per cent had postpartum depression, 52.5 per cent faced financial stress, and 22.5 per cent lacked access health care system. Financial hardship was the most common worry, especially among women who do not qualify for full social security benefits, pointing to a need for broader government assistance. Sexual abuse is a continuing problem for disabled women. The research revealed 30 per cent of those interviewed claimed to have been sexually abused, while 70 per cent stated they had not. This highlights the importance of awareness, protection and training programs to prevent abuse and to support the victims. In conclusion, the research suggests that Janaki Rural Municipality women with disabilities confronted multiple SRH barriers at all levels of reproductive life. The results signal the importance of specific actions, including health promotion, access to services, financial support and protection against abuse, that can contribute to ensuring their well-being and empowerment.

### **Conclusion**

To conclude, women with disabilities face multiple barriers in sexual and reproductive health, mainly due the reasons such as a lack of information, cultural prohibitions and inadequate assistance. Their menstrual, pregnancy and family planning and postnatal care needs are frequently overlooked, and many also experience violence, financial hardship and postnatal depression. In this regard, the study findings show early marriage, lack of education, dependence on agriculture and household chores, and poor menstrual hygiene, pregnancy care and safe delivery of women with disabilities in Janaki Rural Municipality. Although most could receive antenatal care and vaccinations, many still face serious obstacles. Ignorance, social stigma and distance to health services have taken their toll, denying some women the treatment they need. Alarmingly, several women said that they had been sexually abused, which is an urgent reminder of the need for protection, robust support mechanisms and safe spaces that empower and protect them. This study adds important information to the national and international discussions on disability-inclusive health by focusing on the intersection of disability, gender, and access to health. It provides a firm basis for future research to improve SRH services, enhance policy implementation, and empower women with disabilities through context-specific awareness and support initiatives worldwide.

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## Secondary Level English Language Teachers' Professional Development: Perceptions and Practices

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### Abstract

*Professional development is mandatory for addressing contextual realities and enhancing the professional knowledge, attitudes and skills of teachers. However, in the context of developing countries like Nepal, only limited forms or ways of professional development have been in practice. Considering the reality, this study explored the English language teachers' perceptions and practices in the case of their professional development. For this study, I used a narrative inquiry method. Moreover, I interviewed four secondary-level English teachers from Darchula and Baitadi (two hilly) districts of Sudurpashchim province. The findings of this study were discussed under four themes such as English language teachers' perception of professional development, the importance of English language teachers' professional development, English language teachers' practices for their professional development and English language teachers' challenges in their professional development. The study found that the participant teachers perceive professional development as a process and practice. It was also found that teachers watch ELT videos, read online and printed materials, write on ELT issues and attend training, conferences and workshops for their professional development. Moreover, the internet issue, less issue-focused professional events and a lack of school and concerned authority support were the challenges to their professional development.*

**Keywords:** Professional development, school support, teachers' perception, teachers' practice

### Introduction

I attended teacher training for the first time, which concentrated on teachers'

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practices for professional development, where the trainer and participant teachers discussed various aspects of teacher development, and they also reflected upon their practices. The issue triggered me, and I asked some of the teachers about their professional development practices during the lunch break. The responses of the teachers motivated me to explore further, considering the perceptions and practices of English teachers.

A teacher is a professional, and generally teaching is their profession, which requires certain qualifications, skills and qualities. Teaching as a profession requires not only knowledge and skills, but also expertise and qualities to transform and change the ways the students perform or act after being taught. The teacher is one of the basic elements of an educative process who not only has the role of the transformer of knowledge but also is functionally taken as the heart of the educative process (Dewey, 1916 as cited in Poudel, 2006). So, if one element of the educative process remains backwards, the whole system could be affected. Therefore, among other elements, the teacher and his professional growth are necessary to maintain the dynamism and effectiveness in teaching. Moreover, professionals who belong to different associations or organizations are involved in different professional development-related events such as workshops, conferences, publications, etc. to update their skills, knowledge and practices (Ingersoll & Collins, 2018). Thus, teacher professional development is required to make the educative process more meaningful and effective.

Furthermore, teacher development is not a one-time process, but it's a long process which depends on the context and situation for conducting different forms of teacher development programmes or practices. It is a continuous process in which teachers' potentials are to be transformed into teachers' performances with the help of different teacher development practices. One programme cannot be sufficient for teacher professional development; therefore, various teacher professional development practices have been developed over time in the field of teacher education and development. In this regard, Diaz-Maggioli (2003) states that professional development is not a one-shot event but a continuous process in which teachers change their teaching considering learners' needs. It also does not follow the principle of 'one-size-fits-all' because different contexts and situations require different programmes and practices to suit the needs. Teacher development has a direct connection with students' learning.

In the same line, Murray (2010) argues that the development of teachers' practices and skills improves the performance and attitude of learners. So, the influence of teacher development is reflected in learners' performance and attitude. Moreover, teacher professional development was taken as a transfer of knowledge into practice in the past, but it is taken as a construction of new knowledge and theory through socio-academic practices (Richards, 2008).

The English language was first introduced and taught to royal family members in 1951. Since then, English was introduced in a course at Tri-Chandra College under the supervision of Patna University, India, and then the first university in Nepal was

established in 1959 with the name Tribhuvan University, which emphasized it in its curriculum (Bista, 2011). Similarly, Timsina (2021) states that English in Nepal is taught and learned as a foreign language from the basic level to the university level as both compulsory and optional subjects. English is used as a medium of instruction in private and many government-funded schools in Nepal because of its use in the global context, employability, and interdisciplinary nature (Ghimire, 2022). Similarly, Paudel (2021) states that English is used for wider communication and its massive use in education has prioritized to use of English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) in developing countries, including Nepal. He further states that it is a model of teaching non-English subjects through the medium of English. So, the English language is used as a medium of instruction in Nepal, from elementary school to the university level.

Regarding English language teacher education in Nepal, English language teaching was introduced in Nepalese education in 1971 with the implementation of the National Education System Plan; until then, English language teachers were not trained (Awasthi, 2003). The Institute of Education (IOE) of Tribhuvan University (TU) initiated a B.Ed. Programme in English language education in 1971. Thereafter, different universities and colleges imparted English teacher education to satisfy the needs of English teachers (Awasthi, 2003). The Nepal English Language Teachers' Association (NELTA) was established in 1991 by the collaboration of English teachers of Nepal, aiming to develop the professional qualities of English language teachers in Nepal. It has collaboratively worked with different national and international associations and organizations, conducting training, conferences, seminars and workshops for English teachers (Poudel, 2013). These days, different universities, institutions and academic centres are imparting different English teacher development-related courses and programmes. Different institutions and universities, such as the National Education Board, Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu University, Purwanchal University, Mid-Western University, Far Western University, Nepal Open University, etc., have been imparting English teacher education in Nepal. Moreover, besides taking certain courses at universities, English teachers participate in training, conferences, seminars, workshops, research and writing practices in Nepal for their professional development.

Regarding the professional development practices and strategies in the context of Nepal, Bharati and Chalise (2017) explored the perceptions of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers on professional development through a questionnaire involving 40 English language teachers from the Bharatpur district. They reported that the selected PD strategies, like training and workshops, teacher induction program, visiting neighbouring schools and teachers, reflective practice and mentoring, improve teachers' knowledge and performance. However, they also reported that some of the teachers were found to be unaware of some of these strategies. Similarly, Gautam (2020) investigated the preparation of English language teachers during COVID-19 in Nepal by attending various professional development events with the help of a questionnaire from 102

English teachers of all levels. He reported that the English teachers attended three kinds of events, such as technology-related, English language teaching-related and professional development-related events to enhance their technical skills, to be familiar with online resources for their teaching and to develop their professional skills, respectively.

Likewise, Ghimire (2022) studied the English language teachers' perceptions and experiences of school-based training and how training supports them to polish their professional skills. He found a school-based training is one of the best practices of teacher education, having positive attitudes of teachers towards it. Moreover, he stated that it has addressed the needs of the teachers of a particular school context. In the same way, Gnawali (2013) explored PD strategies like conducting events, blogging, publishing and providing foreign exposure chances from English language teachers employed through teacher associations for their professional development. Similarly, Joshi, Gnawali and Dixon (2018) studied the Nepalese English language teachers' professional development strategies and experiences employing a qualitative research design for collecting data from 45 high school and college-level English language teachers of Kathmandu and Lalitpur districts. To present the findings of the study, they grouped the data into four professional development strategies, such as self-directed, profession-related, peer-supported and study-focused. They reported that Nepalese English teachers have positive experiences with professional development strategies. They further stated that the Nepalese English language teachers benefited mostly from self-directed, profession-related and peer-supported professional development strategies rather than the study-focused ones.

The studies conducted in Nepal have examined teachers' perceptions, experiences, and preparedness in relation to specific professional development strategies, but gaps remain in understanding how individual teachers make sense of their growth. This study addresses that gap by using narrative inquiry and focusing on English teachers working in the hilly districts of Sudurpashchim Province. It aims to understand how these teachers view their own professional development and what practices they use to sustain it, guided by two questions: how they perceive teacher professional development and what strategies they employ to enhance it.

### **Methods and Procedures**

I used narrative inquiry as a research method, which helped me to collect and analyze the experiences of participant teachers for constructing meaning. It states that individuals have their own stories or experiences about the world or social situations; what they narrate becomes data for the studies which employ narrative inquiry as the research method. Through this method, I interpreted their experiences subjectively. With the help of this method, the researcher records human experiences from their narratives and explores how humans make experiences about the situations around them (Webster & Mertova, 2007). So, I explored the perception and practice-related experiences of the participant teachers through their narratives.

Moreover, I purposively selected the research site and participants. Creswell (2014) argues that the research sites and participants are selected purposively in a qualitative study like narrative inquiry. Regarding the research site, I purposively selected four public secondary schools from the Baitadi and Darchula districts because they are easy to access in terms of time, cost and personal-professional network. Moreover, I also selected one English language teacher from each school as a research participant, considering the parameters like their school's geographical location, academic background, teaching experience and job duration. I selected only four English teachers because a smaller number of participants helps extract detailed data for the study.

Furthermore, I collected teachers' perceptions and practice-related experiences through interviews. Though surveys, observations, interviews, documents and conversations can be used as instruments for collecting the data from the participants (Webster & Mertova, 2007). Among them, I employed the interview as a major instrument for data collection because the interview can extract detailed information from the participants, considering the purpose of the study (Creswell, 2014).

Regarding data collection, first of all, I contacted with head teachers of my participants to obtain their permission for conducting interviews with English teachers. Then, I visited the teachers and built rapport with them by explaining the purpose and process of the interview. Then, I interviewed them, and during the interview, I took notes and recorded the interviews with the permission of the participants. I provided them required time and freedom to express their experiences. Moreover, I used both Nepali and English during the interview process. Finally, I thanked the participant teachers and school administration for their support and cooperation for this study. In the case of data analysis, I employed the thematic analysis method for this study. Under thematic analysis, I analysed the qualitative data to generate the themes. Moreover, I transcribed the recorded data and read out the transcribed data and handwritten notes frequently for developing codes, and based on the developed codes, I developed themes. In addition, I used pseudonyms in my analysis to maintain ethical considerations.

## **Results and Discussion**

### **English Language Teachers' Perception of Professional Development**

Through the process of teacher development, teachers can get exposure to improve their skills and knowledge that help them sustain in the profession. Teacher development as a process makes teachers more knowledgeable and experienced (Sener & Cokcaliskan, 2017) to maintain their profession. The data indicated that the teachers perceive professional development as the best process for developing teachers, being equipped with the pace of the context and change. They perceived professional development as a practice and process through which teachers' skills and abilities are polished. In this regard, Ram argued:

In my opinion, professional development is a practice of polishing the teachers' knowledge and skills to cope with the changes around them. Professional growth is necessary for each profession to maintain timeliness and improve professional qualities. In the case of teachers, they need to keep themselves up to date by improving their professional qualities. For example, this time is taken as the age of science and technology; therefore, teachers need to improve their technical knowledge and skills to keep themselves fit so that they can do justice to their profession.

His points showed that professional development is a practice through which teachers develop relevant and required knowledge and skills. Moreover, teachers improve their qualities for coping with the changes taking place around them. In the same line, Zehir Topkaya and Celik (2016) highlight that teachers need to improve themselves as per the change in education. Regarding professional development, Riya responded a bit broadly:

I consider professional development as a collective development process in the sense that it is not only connected with the professional growth of an individual teacher, but it should improve institutional practices as well. In my point, only individual growth can not matter a lot in an institutional setting. So, the influence of professional development needs to be reflected in institutional practices and even on students' achievements...

Her responses indicated that professional development is a collective development process by which institutional practices need to be improved, along with the development of teachers. Only teachers' growth without influencing the institutional practices and students does not make much sense. So, professional development not only polishes the teachers' qualities, but also improves the performance of academic institutions/schools (Fraser, Kennedy, Reid & McKinney, 2007). Similarly, Jayanti stated:

In my point, professional development is a continuous process of empowering teachers by providing them opportunities to take different courses and to participate in different programmes, such as training, researching and writing to take a few amplexes. In the context of Nepal, universities like Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu University, Far Western University, etc. offer teacher education-related courses which are offered aiming to produce skilled professionals. Similarly, different programmes are also conducted for teacher professional development by government agencies, professional development-related associations and organizations. They all have the same motto, which is to empower teachers for their professional well-being.

Jayanti's points revealed that professional development is a long-lasting process of empowering teachers through offering them different courses and involving them in different programmes. Furthermore, teacher development is taken as a lifelong process (Alfaki, 2014), being supportive of teachers in their learning and growth. Thus, teachers perceive professional development as a process and practice of improving their knowledge, skills and practices. To address the profession-related realities and to make a gentle move in this scenario, teachers have to concentrate on professional development activities.

## Importance of English Language Teachers' Professional Development

Changes and innovations give rise to updating and improving the practices and behaviours of professionals. English language teaching in the context of Nepal has been in flux because any changes and innovations taking place around the globe influence the attitude and practices of Nepalese English language teachers. As a result, they (Nepalese English language teachers) require continuous improvement and enhancement of their professional knowledge and skills, which help them to empower their practices. Regarding the importance of English language teachers' professional development, Gopi opined:

In my view, professional development is necessary for English language teachers because it helps teachers to maintain dynamism in their profession. It also improves teachers' practices and attitudes... Different professional development practices and activities need to be conducted for them so that they do justice to their students and organizations. Most importantly, English in Nepal is taught as a foreign language so teachers need more assistance for their professional growth... They become familiar with English language teaching methods, materials and resources if they get professional exposure.

Gopi's responses indicated that professional development helps English language teachers to make their classroom teaching effective because it facilitates them with the use of different instructional materials, methods and resources. Teaching is a profession that changes along with the innovations and changes that take place inside or outside the country. Instructional ways, methods, strategies and equipment are constantly being changed and revised; so, only academic qualification is not sufficient for teachers to survive in the field (Alfaki, 2014). Therefore, to be familiar with the changes that have been taking place in the teaching field, the teachers need to involve themselves in different TD practices. In the same line, Riya argued:

Through professional development, English language teachers improve their professional qualities by employing new and contextual teaching strategies and techniques, creating child-friendly classroom environments, developing lesson-focused activities and ICT-integrated classroom practices, developing instructional plans and implementing them effectively, researching English language-related issues, developing new theories through their practices and many more. In short, it helps them to renew their existing knowledge and skills...

Her points showed that professional development is necessary to polish the professional qualities of English language teachers by renewing their existing knowledge and skills. So, teacher development is necessary for updating and revising the knowledge and skills that they have developed so far. The data further shows that teacher development is important because teachers improve their classroom practices. In this regard, Barlow et al (2014) state that teachers' classroom practices are improved with the help of teacher professional development (as cited in Zein, 2016). In the same way, Mizell (2010)

hints that an effective classroom practice is not an accident but an effect of professional development.

Further, Ram and Jayanti echoed in the same way that professional development is important for developing English language teachers' confidence and clarity in their performance. They also reported that when teachers get involved in different teacher development-related activities, they develop their teaching abilities, and these abilities increase their confidence in their teaching (McDonald, 2009; Sener & Cokcaliskan, 2017; Nawab, 2017), and when they become confident, they can present their lessons clearly. They further stated that teacher development programmes also aware English teachers to be strict of the professional code of conduct because some teachers sometimes stray off track, so professional development redirects teachers to follow the professional code of conduct. Only developing professional qualities in the absence of a professional code of conduct makes no sense.

Thus, professional development is necessary for developing professional qualities, improving classroom practices, building confidence in English language teachers and tracking English language teachers in maintaining a professional code of conduct.

### **English Language Teachers' Practices for their Professional Development**

To update and move as per the needs of the time, English teachers need to involve themselves in different professional development activities, which help them become confident and dedicated professionals. Teaching is a profession in which teachers need to change and update themselves to satisfy the students and to improve institutional practices. Teachers should be dynamic change agents who need to change themselves first and work to change the practices of their institutions. To become real change agents, they should be exposed to new practices and manners through which they can learn and let learn others too.

The data showed that the participant teachers of this study practised various activities and strategies for their professional improvement or enhancement while living lived a remote area. In this regard, Ram shared:

... I go to district headquarter every month for downloading my course-related videos and relevant resources... I also attended some training which was related to instructional material designing and their appropriate implication, evaluation system and digital pedagogy ... we teachers of this area especially conduct knowledge sharing programme in which we share our classroom practices and also discuss our classroom-related issues once in a month, but some of the teachers do not actively participate in this sort of programme... I attended one conference held in Kailali Multiple Campus, Dhangadhi some months back where I met different ELT professionals which provided me with a network-building opportunity...

Ram's points indicated that he has been using different strategies such as watching videos on ELT, participating in knowledge-sharing programmes and attending teacher

training and conferences for his professional development. He has only these ways for enhancing his knowledge and skills for his professional growth. Riya expressed her professional development practices as:

I am passionate about reading professional journals, ELT sites and blog posts which are available online. I frequently visit the NELTA site and blog posts for teaching tips and learning new practices. I scan and only read those topics from different sites and blogs which provide practical tips and teaching strategies and techniques... I also write my points relating to the classroom and educational issues on my Facebook page, and also interact with teachers' comments on Facebook... I also write down the reflective points in my notebook... I also watch English language teaching, English grammar teaching and educational videos on YouTube. I frequently visit the CDC website for different resources... besides, I also attended teaching training, conferences and a workshop on ICT in language teaching.

Her responses stated that she has been reading online ELT journals and blog posts, writing and interacting on her Facebook page about ELT and educational issues, watching YouTube videos, and attending teacher training, conferences and workshops for her professional development. The data shows that she is following the true nature of the profession, that is, learning and sharing, as stated in Alfaki (2014). Her way of writing and interacting on ELT and educational issues through social media like a Facebook page denotes her manner as a reflective practitioner (Reimers, 2003). Similarly, Jayanti shared:

I prefer to read teaching-related books to get new insights into teaching. I frequently buy ELT-related books and materials and teacher monthly magazines when I go to Dhangadhi or I also ask someone who is in my contact to take such books and materials if he/she comes here. I have also six journals of NELTA which I got from one of my friends who teaches in Dhandadhi. I also contact other teachers who are in close contact for idea sharing if I face any problem regarding my profession...

Jayanti shared that she has been reading ELT-related books, journals and teacher magazines and asking her friends for solutions to her problems. Reading different profession-related publications and materials is a significant way to obtain new skills and updated knowledge, as mentioned in Zehir Topkaya and Celik (2016).

Thus, English teachers are involved in different practices such as watching ELT-related videos, reading digital and published materials, attending conferences, training and workshops and writing their points for interaction on social media such as the Facebook page for their professional development. The data indicate that teachers are found to be following the self-regulated (Shakya, 2011) and profession-related (Giri, 2015 as cited in Joshi, Gnawali & Dixon, 2018) or institutional (Richards & Farrell, 2005) practices/approaches for professional development.

## English Language Teachers' Challenges in Their Professional Development

The participant teachers were also asked about the challenges they face in their professional development. Their responses indicated that most of them did not have good access to the internet for accessing the online available resources. In this regard, Ram shared, "In my area, internet access is not appropriate to search different online resources and to join online professional development events. I frequently go to the district headquarters to download ELT-related videos. In the same line, Gopi and Jayanti stated that they do not have good internet access for performing their professional development-related activities. However, Riya stated, "I access different online resources and materials which provide very insightful ideas and tips for my professional growth. I have also attended some online seminars and workshops on English language teachers' professional development." Except for Riya, other participant teachers reported that they do not have good internet service. So, internet inaccessibility is one of the challenges they face in the course of their professional development.

They further reported that the teacher training is not well-managed and issue-focused. They intend to share that the trainings, workshops and conferences need to be based on the classroom realities, teachers' needs and realities that have been taking place in the domain. Most of such activities are only for knowledge sharing, which are not specifically directed to the teaching issues and realities. In this case, Riya argued, "I attended some training which I found was only conducted for knowledge delivery. The trainings that I attended were not based on the needs of the teachers of a particular area. I found them more general." Ram, Jayanti and Gopi also reported that they have found the teacher training and workshops off track. They also stated that the university teachers or concerned personnel come as experts to train teachers, in which they only share what they have without assessing the issues or needs of teachers who have been dealing with such issues for a long time. The responses seem contrary to Johnson (2009) because he stresses that PD should provide 'a real model of how to teach rather than only advising on how to teach.' They also shared that the concerned authorities conduct different professional development events without considering the contexts of the participant teachers. In this regard, Gopi shared:

... conducted a programme on ICT in education for two days. We teachers from my area also asked to participate in the programme... The concerned authority conducts such a programme which is not so relevant for us because we do not have advanced ICT materials and internet service.

Their responses show that the professional development events are not conducted considering the needs of teachers and the appropriateness of such events for teachers of particular regions. From the responses of teachers, it has been found that teacher development programmes, such as training and workshops, consider teachers as 'knowledge consumers' who obtain 'received knowledge' (Borg, 2015). Moreover, their

responses also support the argument, as stated in Johnson (2009), that 'PD is taken as something that is done by others for/to teachers.'

They further reported that the school administration and concerned authorities do not provide ample chances and incentives for English teachers' professional development. Riya and Gopi shared that the school and concerned authorities are not very aware of teacher professional development. These responses are found in the same line as Bhandari (2013). Similarly, Jayanti stated:

School administration and rural municipality do not organise professional development-related programmes though we have asked them to conduct professional development-related programmes many times... let me share one incident, my school did not support me when I asked for attending the NELTA conference... for attending training also they select near and dear ones..."

However, Ram argued that his school is positive in the case of teacher professional development because they conduct knowledge-sharing programmes, including neighbouring school teachers. His school also allows teachers to attend different professional development-related events by providing some incentives. Positive attitudes and behaviours of concerned authorities make a difference in teachers and in the academic scenario of the institution.

Thus, the aforementioned discussion shows that the main challenges of English teachers are the inaccessibility of the internet, fewer issue-focused and context-sensitive professional events and a lack of support from school administration and concerned authorities.

## **Conclusion**

Each profession requires professionals with high knowledge and skills in their performance; therefore, such high knowledge and skills are only achieved through continuous professional activities. So, teaching is not an exception to the aforementioned reality. Teaching also requires skilled, motivated and knowledgeable professionals who can uplift the status of particular institutions and the education system as a whole. The participant teachers of this study perceived professional development as a process and practice of polishing their knowledge, skills and practices. Professional development is a continuous process in the sense that it cannot be achieved and completed by getting involved in a single course or any other activity. It requires continuous and contextual engagement with different professional development activities. It is also understood as a practice in the sense that teachers need to involve themselves in different professional development activities and also implement these activities and practices in their classes. Teachers must improve their professional qualities, classroom practices, behaviours and confidence in their profession. Furthermore, the participant teachers of this study were found to be involved in different professional development practices such as watching ELT-related videos, reading different digital and printed materials, attending training,

conferences and workshops and writing their points and also interacting with others. The participants further stated that they have different challenges, such as internet or connectivity issues, fewer issue-focused and context-sensitive professional events and a lack of support from school administrations and concerned authorities.

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## Artificial Intelligence: A Catalyst for Sustainable Development Goals of Health Care, Quality Education and Climate Action

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### Abstract

*Artificial Intelligence (AI) has become an avant-garde with high potential to guide, monitor and accelerate the fulfilment of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The considerable role of AI to achieve three significant SDGs: SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being), SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 13 (Climate Action) are comprehensively explored by this study. This study employs a systematic thematic analysis of relevant literature reviews on the role of AI in healthcare, quality education, and climate action taken from different academic databases. Strict inclusion criteria were included to prioritise the studies. Non-academic, technical and irrelevant studies were not taken into account. A total of 25 studies are thoroughly examined to identify the main patterns, themes and trends. The review follows systematic steps, which include repeated familiarisation with the literature, coding, refinement, and synthesis. Finally, the report highlights how AI incorporation increases the quality of healthcare, education and climate activities. This would raise awareness the learners and commoners about the ethical use of artificial intelligence, highlighting health care, quality education, and climate action. The appropriate use of AI should remove the barrier of the digital divide to let all learners access the AI tools. Proper utilisation of the same should focus on the most beneficial way of medical care. It should not cause damage to the environment.*

**Keywords:** Artificial intelligence, climate action, good health, quality education,

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## **Introduction**

Critical problems such as progress of urbanisation, social inequality, resource depletion, and changing motion of climate disturb the world continuously nowadays. The immediate urge to solve those problems relies on the achievement of the goals of sustainable development. In this crucial situation, artificial intelligence (AI) has turned into a saviour to the world in such a way as to change the outlook of several fields related to achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The United Nations gives importance to the role of artificial intelligence to smoothly follow the instructions of sustainable development. AI's fruitful contributions to the various aspects of SDGs are thoroughly recognised. It is positively changing the political, economic and social circle of this universe. To increase this positive outcome, the implementation of AI in various perspectives relevant to SDGs is really necessary.

AI's capacities to handle a large volume of data, identify specific patterns and make decision-making procedures and predict future outcomes become an important pillar to channelise processing of any complicated issue and increase sustainability and inclusiveness of any crucial problem like SDGs. The inclusion of AI is multifunctional. Its range varies from making learning personalised and developing healthcare programs to graphing up the efficiency of resources and graphing down the use of energy. Artificial intelligence can turn into a helpline to solve difficult global problems like the reduction of poverty, the impact of inequality and environmental decay, with the help of automating tasks automatically done, environmental change prediction and increasing the improvement of the policies regarding these things. The ladder of AI, if tied to the principles of sustainability, can lead our society to use technological power to increase economic growth while fully protecting the world. These SDG aims are connected to different aspects of environmental consideration and human progress, which are inseparably linked to the incorporation of AI in these aims.

In the case of SDG 3, the contribution of AI gives importance to the management of illness, procedures of treatment and diagnosis in the industry of healthcare industry. Increasing the resources of the healthcare sector, fast recognition of disease, and effective therapy with the appropriate use of large data analysis and machine learning algorithms become the main objective of artificial intelligence in SDG 3. AI also plays a significant role in improving patient conditions, in positively handling emergencies of health emergencies, and in giving access to health support in remote areas. In connection with SDG 4, the quality of education is improved, and resources for learning are distributed equally by artificial intelligence. Natural language processing tools provide all the pupils in the world with individualised instruction, tutoring patterns powered by AI and learning platforms which are adaptive. Specially-abled students and the disciples of underprivileged locations benefit from the special study material, improving the technical skills of the teachers through AI. Thus, AI is trying to fulfil the learning gap in education. For achieving SDG 13 goals, AI is upgrading itself more frequently. Environmental models of artificial intelligence act as the optimiser of energy and predictors of weather.

Real-time data analysis connected to AI activity portrays the battlefield against climate change. It acts as a catalyst to support disaster prohibition, monitoring of carbon emissions and environmental-AI integration policymaking. Stakeholders may break down conventional obstacles, scale effective solutions and propel sustainable development at a never-before-seen rate by incorporating AI into efforts for these SDGs. AI has the ability to not only speed up development but also guarantee that the advantages are fair and inclusive, making the world healthier, more knowledgeable and more ecologically robust as it develops.

Nasr et al. (2021) examine the state-of-the-art smart healthcare systems that are recently in use, emphasising key areas such as machine learning for disease diagnosis, wearable and smartphone devices for health monitoring and assistive frameworks, such as social robots created for ambient assisted living environments (Nasr et al. 2021, p. 145250). The study also presents software integration designs that are important for developing intelligent healthcare systems that easily include data analytics and other AI capabilities (Nasr et al. 2021, p. 145248). In order to attain an ideal world, a research project by Lukova (2021) is to examine the significance and impact of artificial intelligence on global health policy and alignment with the United Nations' 2015 sustainable development goals (Lukova 2021, p. 1). Saini et al. (2023) assess the current status of many programs the Indian government has put in place to help achieve the goals of high-quality education (Saini et al. 2023, p. 2044). Another study by Leal Filho et al. (2022) demonstrates how AI can aid with climate change research in a variety of geographical areas and aid with adaptation efforts (Filho et al. 2022, p. 1).

Existing studies often examine AI in healthcare, education, and climate research separately, but there is still no systematic review that connects AI's contributions to SDG 3, SDG 4, and SDG 13, leaving a clear gap in understanding how these areas intersect. This study addresses that gap by examining AI as a transformative force that can strengthen health systems, improve the quality and accessibility of education, and support climate resilience. It looks at how AI aids disease detection, healthcare decision-making, and data ethics and security, while also exploring its role in enhancing teaching, personalising learning, and widening access to educational opportunities. The study further reviews how AI supports climate action through environmental monitoring and the promotion of renewable energy solutions. It also considers the limitations and risks of AI in advancing these SDGs, including ethical issues, infrastructure constraints, and environmental concerns. Guided by the problem statement "Artificial Intelligence: A Catalyst for Sustainable Development Goals of Health Care, Quality Education and Climate Action," the research aims to analyse AI's role in disease prevention and diagnostics, its integration into education for sustainable development, its application in climate monitoring and adaptation, and the challenges that emerge when AI and SDGs converge.

## **Methods and Procedures**

The study employs a qualitative thematic analysis of relevant literature studies on the application of AI in healthcare, quality education, and climate action taken into account from different academic databases and conditioning strict inclusion criteria prioritising

the studies, peer-reviewed and focused on the relationship of AI and the health system, education and climate activities. Non-academic, technical and irrelevant studies were excluded. A total of 25 studies are thoroughly examined for identifying the main patterns, themes and trends. The review followed systematic steps, i.e., repeated familiarisation with the literature, coding, refinement, and synthesis. Finally, the report showed how AI integration strengthens the quality of healthcare, education and climate activities.

## **Results and Discussion**

This section discusses the focal arguments interconnected to the implementation of artificial intelligence in achieving good health and well-being (SDG 3), quality education (SDG 4), and climate action (SDG 13).

### **Application of AI in Good Health and Well-being (SDG 3)**

SDG 3 provides detailed information on health issues and aims to ensure healthy lives. Well-being for people belonging to all ages is encouraged by this goal. This particular aim needs some initiatives, programs concerned with health problems, diagnostics and proper treatment. SDG 3, thus, improves accessibility to healthcare by promoting health assurance to all levels of mankind. In this context, AI plays a major role in addressing these health barriers to contribute to the aims of SDG 3; this has been sketched in this portion.

Health and well-being are discussed in SDG 3. Artificial intelligence acts as a catalyst to improve the medical sector (Hameed et al., 2024). Diagnostics in medicine are the most intriguing possibilities. In order to identify diseases like cancer in their earliest stages, machine learning models of AI have been trained to examine enormous volumes of medical data, including X-ray, MRI and CT scan pictures (Fernandez 2020, p. 215; Hameed et al. 2024, p. 22). The success of treatment and patient survival depend on early identification. Wearable technology with AI capabilities also assists in monitoring patients' vital signs and alerting medical professionals before a potential health problem worsens. By utilising Natural Language Processing technologies, virtual health assistants may handle patient records, schedule appointments and offer healthcare advice, greatly improving the efficiency and accessibility of healthcare services (Rane et al. 2024, p. 80). AI can assist in addressing some of the most significant issues facing society, such as those related to health and well-being. AI greatly enhances diagnoses and preventative healthcare initiatives, resulting in new scientific discoveries (Wahl et al. 2018, p. 4).

As an illustration, billions of mobile devices equipped with cameras, microphones and motion sensors are utilised for distant healthcare and the management of chronic illnesses, diabetes and cancer. AI has improved patient-healthcare provider contact and the identification of prevalent eye problems in Egypt and Kenya, among other places (Owoyemi et al. 2020, p. 1). AI is now being piloted and used more frequently in many African nations, including South Africa, Nigeria and Rwanda, to address health and well-being-related issues. Robots have been employed in Rwanda to combat the COVID-19 infection rates among medical personnel who treat COVID-19 patients. The robots employ AI to read other vital indicators and undertake temperature checks.

Additionally, they send video messages to medical professionals and identify individuals who are not wearing masks, telling them to do so or, if they are not, how to do it correctly (World Health Organisation, Rwanda, 2020). AI has been implemented in South Africa to assist in organising the effective distribution of health workers throughout the healthcare industry (Moyo et al. 2018, p. 9), while in Nigeria, it has been used to improve the diagnosis of infant asphyxia in poor areas. In India, NITI Aayog suggests generating “Big Data” datasets of AI interlinking medical care. Those who are new to this field, such as Indian AI developers, may then use this. The Department of Biotechnology is also helping to put solutions in place for the quick introduction of AI in Indian healthcare (Mahajan et al. 2019, p. 186).

### **AI Potentialities in Achieving Quality Education (SDG 4)**

Educational institutions can leverage the advantages of AI technology to improve learning outcomes by creating an atmosphere that promotes the appropriate use of AI while reiterating the significance of academic integrity. SDG 4 objectives are supported by AI empowerment on the ladder of high-quality education, a technologically progressive classroom environment and students’ holistic educational development. Stakeholders related to educational upliftment should have a clear indication and direction towards the ethics of AI usage. AI is currently working forward to address key subtasks of SDG 4 that are Quality Education, Teaching, Learning and Educational Opportunities and Inequalities (Pedro et al. 2019, p. 23; Zdravkova 2023, p. 3; Klašnja-Milićević & Ivanović 2021, p. 1).

SDG 4 highlights the importance of inclusive, egalitarian, high-quality education in order to give everyone, especially those from underprivileged backgrounds, opportunities for lifelong learning. Since education is a fundamental instrument for both individual and societal improvement, achieving this goal is essential for promoting social mobility and economic development. AI makes high-quality education more accessible to all. Platforms for adaptive learning meet the demands of each learner, increasing engagement and results (Strielkowski et al. 2024, p. 21748). Language boundaries are broken by AI-powered solutions, providing access to worldwide educational materials (Karakas 2023, p. 228). AI helps teachers by delivering data-driven insights into student performance and automating administrative work (Owan et al. 2023, p. 3).

Real-time data analytics with the software of personalised learning motivates every student to learn freely. The development of each pupil and their curious mentality receives food for thought through the empowerment of learning systems. Thus, individualised instruction is generated by artificial intelligence (Chen et al. 2020, p. 75275). Moreover, these AI technologies facilitate distant learning, removing geographical limitations and enabling high-quality instruction to reach students anywhere (Zdravkova 2023, p. 1).

AI learning tools such as ChatGPT help the disciples to solve their homework and write their assignments more easily, but this AI-created work generally does not portray the true knowledge and capacity of the students (Rasul et al. 2023, p. 10). This situation damages the fairness of academic ethics, and as a result, the assessment becomes difficult. Students’ dependence on such AI tools makes the education system artificial and machine-centric. The development of problem-solving capacity and critical thinking is

the primary objective of education. Students' excessive reliance on technology to make learning assignments ready-made overlooks this basic need of education.

The swift growth of AI technology also presents a problem for teachers, who must modify their methods of instruction and evaluation in order to preserve academic integrity. In order to tackle academic dishonesty, new tactics and technologies must be developed, as traditional plagiarism detection methods might not be adequate to detect AI-generated content (Chaka 2024, p. 122). Establishing precise rules for the moral application of AI tools is the responsibility of educational institutions in order to make sure that disciples are conscious of the limits of appropriate use. To do this, faculty and staff must receive continual training so they can stay up to date on the newest advancements in AI and how they affect academic integrity.

### **AI Empowerment in Climate Action (SDG 13)**

AI, along with the mechanism of machine learning, has a significant influence on climate modelling and environmental monitoring for SDG 13 (Kumari & Pandey, 2023, p. 293). Deforestation can be measured and detected, weather patterns can be predicted, and the effects of climate change can be quantified using the data collected by satellites, scientists and AI-powered systems. It creates effective resource conservation and carbon footprint reduction plans using machine learning techniques. It supports the worldwide effort to prevent climate change, enables more tangible and prompt solutions to climate-induced issues and aids in global climate adaptation (Rane et al. 2024, p. 84). It would be possible to expand the incentive to include “games” between various developers. A point-based system, an essential pillar of sustainable development, can be used to achieve SDGs more smoothly. Algorithmic efficiency would be helpful to achieve the goals in the context of resources of energy resources (Raper et al. 2022, p. 1).

The effect and effects of climate change can be easily understood with the help of AI. Artificial intelligence technologies can also turn helpful to improve the process of environmental adaptation by the act of identification of problematic communities and regions. Besides, the formulation of useful policies and appropriate recommendations to deal with the change of environmental impact is assisted by the models of AI. The effect of climate change on several areas becomes more familiar to the common man based on the analysis of AI's large datasets. This knowledge makes us capable of identifying vulnerable areas and taking action according to need, with a focus on mitigation and adaptation procedures. The remote sensing data, satellite imagery and climate models are carefully associated with the monitoring of environmental factors, including the rise of sea-level, degradation of land and deforestation, with conscious efficiency (Bianchi & Putro 2024, p. 93). The systems empowered by AI can accelerate the adaptation process with the integration linked to the risk management planning and the development of weak infrastructure.

The prediction of future envisioning on the consequences of climate damage and the in-depth analysis of trends of climate data acts as a catalyst to design climate-resistant apartments, urban instructional programs and systems of transportation. Shortage of supply can be managed by the algorithms of AI in the time of extreme change of weather

change with no harm to mankind and the infrastructural pattern. The development of policy regarding of careful use of AI and a proper framework relevant to it can be intensified by artificial intelligence (Elshaikh et al. 2024, p. 77). AI can assess loads of climate-concerning data, analyse the fruits of present policies and implement more expert technologies for mitigation and adaptation.

AI can also visualise some activities, such as monitoring climate regulations and changing them to make them serve their best. Climate regulations, including setting up emissions standards and the target of renewable energy and certifications of sustainability, can be strictly observed and recorded by the technologies of AI. They can also portray data transparency and data security settings related to artificial intelligence. This activity can also graph up equality by allowing easy access to AI knowledge and AI tools, pointing to the vulnerable communities and developing countries, which are considerably affected by climate change. The collaboration of artificial intelligence algorithms and SDG 13 aims at climate action, relying on its power to improve the planning and programs of adaptation with an eye on the ethical usage of AI applications working on environmental impact.

AI also takes part in the prevention of climate change obstacles. Red-alert areas and vulnerable populations can be saved by modern AI models from the violent disaster, thus moving towards a climate-friendly, sustainable future. Risks, patterns and trends of climate control can be analysed by AI. The policymaker and the people working on climate change can make their choice on the basis of the facts of scientific forecasts (Kashik 2023, p. 5). On the other hand, a real-time data and climate risk assessment system relying on AI technologies can enhance the efforts of climate adaptation. The monitoring processing driven by AI can point out environmental hazards, identify changes in climate trends and assess vulnerabilities across several areas. This information helps to guide the improvement of adaptation strategies by giving the right direction to the ecosystems and human race to adapt to the change of climate in the most suitable manner. The smart sensor usage by AI climate models gives rise to proper identification of vulnerable ecosystems and communities (Bhavani & Gajendra, 2024, p. 17).

The analysis of effective geographic factors, climate predictions and socio-economic data by artificial intelligence can guide the identification of highly impacted areas by climate change (Jain et al. 2023, p. 2). This knowledge can lead to the benefit of policymakers in the way of designing planned interventions by allocation of resources for protecting and giving support to the vulnerable populations. Most importantly, the ethical and responsible use of AI with consideration of its legal perspective should necessarily be an essential focus of the target in the context of climate action. The accountability, transparency and unbiasedness in the processing of AI data should be safeguarded to maintain confidentiality of proper AI use.

## **Educational Implications of AI and Sustainable Development**

Individualised learning and creative teaching-learning methodologies promoted by AI in the arena of education occupy a significant position in achieving sustainable development goals. Education envisions and tries to execute a sustainable future where people are conscious and aware of sustainable development. The learner and the teacher

should make an effort to integrate AI in education in connection with the achievement of sustainable development aims.

### **Individualised and Inclusive Education**

Individual learning experiences of every student with the inclusiveness of AI learning tool activities accelerate the need fulfilment of them (Shireesha & Jeevan, 2024, p. 21746). By analysing learners' skills and interests, AI systems can provide individualised content and pacing. Language barriers are broken by AI-powered systems that provide instructional materials in different languages, fostering inclusivity worldwide. Through interactive learning environments, adaptive tools and speech-to-text applications, AI enables students with disabilities.

### **Developing SDG Consciousness**

AI in the educational field can assist students in becoming more aware of and knowledgeable about the SDGs. Through AI-powered simulations, students can investigate scenarios pertaining to biodiversity, climate change and sustainable urban development. By incorporating sustainability themes into games, AI makes education interesting and applicable. AI tools give classroom discussions access to current economic, social and environmental data.

### **Teacher Empowerment**

Teachers' abilities are improved by AI, enabling them to concentrate on significant interactions. By automating report generation, attendance tracking and grading, AI lessens the strain for educators (Luckin et al. 2022, p. 3). To assist teachers in identifying learning gaps and modifying their teaching methods, AI evaluates student performance data. AI-powered systems provide educators with individualised training and materials to keep them up to date on sustainability-related subjects and instructional strategies.

### **Lifelong Learning and Reskilling**

By making reskilling and upskilling efficient and accessible, AI promotes lifelong learning. AI predicts future labour needs and offers specialised training in fields that are in line with sustainability, like green manufacturing and renewable energy. AI makes it attainable for students of all ages and locations to access instructional materials whenever they choose. AI tutors in Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) guarantee continual and reasonably priced learning opportunities (Zhou et al. 2021, 80).

### **Encouraging Problem-Solving and Critical Thinking**

Students are inspired to use critical thinking skills and create answers for long-term problems using AI. Students can work on real-world issues like resource optimisation and pollution trend analysis with the aid of AI. AI helps students grasp sustainability

holistically by integrating science, technology, economics and social sciences.

### **Education Accessibility in Outer Locations**

AI improves access to education in remote and impoverished areas. By enabling virtual instruction in places with a shortage of trained teachers, AI helps close the gap between educators and students. Interactive chatbots give users immediate access to educational resources and learning aids. AI facilitates the distribution of educational materials, including books and digital tools, to the most underserved places.

### **Sustainable and Ethical AI Application**

Students need to be prepared by their educational institutions to use AI responsibly and ethically (Nguyen et al. 2023, p. 4229). Offering courses on sustainability and AI ethics guarantees that students comprehend how technology affects both the environment and society. Future innovators are more environmentally conscious when energy-efficient AI systems are encouraged to be developed.

### **Challenges of incorporating AI into SDGs' implementation**

Although sustainable development could undergo a seismic shift with the advent of artificial intelligence, a number of obstacles stand in the way of its full potential. The digital gap, which causes differences in developed and developing nations' access to and advantages from AI, is one of the biggest problems (Pigola et al. 2021, p. 3). Many low-income nations lack the computer power and high-speed internet infrastructure needed to implement AI technologies successfully. Expert AI technologists, who are capable of creating, maintaining and using AI, are in short supply. This stands as a potential challenge by preventing the community from using AI programs to achieve SDGs such as climate action, quality education and decreasing poverty. Violation of data ethics, data security and responsible use of AI becomes another barrier (Carmody et al. 2021, p. 492) in sustainable development. Personal data misuse can be a threat posed by the application of AI technology. Weak security gives rise to illegal surveillance, data breaches, even if AI-powered methods try only to achieve positive results.

Thus, public trust can be broken by these damages to personal data security, which becomes an essential challenge to implementing artificial intelligence. An AI system-generated processing makes unwanted inequality and bias. If AI large datasets, which channelise the AI-generated results, fall into the risk of bias in the data, it may result in creating biased outputs (Roselli et al. 2019, p. 542). This means the justice and inclusivity, a basic foundation of sustainable development goals, are violated by economic and social inequalities. Both individuals and institutions must make significant investments in education and training in order to make the switch to AI-powered systems. Many workers, legislators and educators are ill-equipped to integrate AI into their daily operations, which might result in opposition or underimplementation of the technology. This lack of preparedness limits AI's ability to significantly transform industries that are essential to sustainable development, such as healthcare (Pagallo et al. 2024, p. 3),

education and environment.

The risk associated with using AI to achieve SDG 3 and possibly most of the SDGs is not the obsolescence of old talents and the creation of new ones per se, but rather the rate at which this is occurring and the unequal gains and losses that arise from it. AI raises several concerns about trust and responsibility, even though it may be utilised to optimise logistical issues or solve complex medical and health problems, as well as to address some of the most urgent health issues in the least developed nations (Wakunuma et al. 2020, p. 100006). In the least developed nations, where there is a lack of knowledge to comprehend and communicate to the general public how AI-based judgments are made, these concerns are heightened. Socio-economic barriers and a growing illiteracy rate stand as another problem in implementing AI. Thus, AI creates a digital divide.

The effect of artificial intelligence on the environment is itself a challenge. Loads of resources, maintenance and infrastructure are needed to work with AI. This may increase energy use, a threat to the near future. Machine learning models increase the emission of carbon emissions and electricity usage. Non-renewable energy is needed to run these AI models. This huge need for energy makes a controversy of how AI wants to achieve environmental awareness goals and how AI technologies use the fuels, creating a threat to the environment. These obstacles can be overpowered by a properly developed plan. The digital divide can be closed by the evolution of infrastructure, budget and the elimination of algorithmic bias with the agenda of reducing the AI effect on the environment. The organisation of government, business structure and international programs should work together to create moral initiatives and standards for using AI.

## **Future Research Scope of AI and Sustainable Development**

Future research scope of artificial intelligence and sustainable development goals possesses huge potential. AI's power to solve all the critical problems associated with health care, quality education and climate action around the world has the capacity to be explored by in-depth analysis. Medical use of artificial intelligence has a great scope for future research. Medical consultations, an all-time support system of critical patients and quick diagnosis of crucial diseases can be accelerated by AI chatbots. Virtual care systems are also improved by AI. AI can also make decision-support technologies with the help of telemedicine communication that can examine the history of the patients for recommending proper diagnosis and treatment planning. Disease symptoms presented by videos or photos can be scanned through AI medical tools that contribute to the upliftment of AI healthcare use by increasing remote diagnosis. Clinicians can obtain extensive patient data through these systems' seamless integration with telehealth platforms, which improves virtual consultations.

Research on AI's potential to mitigate climate change is necessary, including improving AI structure to forecast climate change effects like rising sea levels, harsh weather and biodiversity loss more accurately, optimising carbon dioxide capture and storage technology with artificial intelligence and creating AI-powered solutions to balance urbanisation, conservation and agricultural productivity. AI possesses the capacity to change education to more effectively accomplish sustainability objectives. Systems of

personalised learning can be accelerated by investigating AI resources for sustainability literacy programs and investigating AI-powered tools to incorporate sustainability lessons into curricula around the world that can adjust to various learning requirements and styles. AI planning and methodologies to increase the upgradation of skills in the educational sector can be stimulated by lifelong learning.

## Conclusion

Artificial intelligence turns out to be a great catalyst for achieving the goals of sustainable development. Its role is really appreciable in healthcare improvement, to promote high-quality education, and to take climate action to have a positive impact on the environment. The global health, the main SDG 3 goal, is ensured by all the AI activities, like the prevention of sickness with an accurate diagnosis, along with proper treatment. AI learning tools assist personalised learning programs with an eye to the individual needs of the students. AI also helps to fulfil the shortage of learning resources. Thus, inclusion, flexibility and quality of education could be achieved by artificial intelligence. On the other hand, appropriate environmental monitoring, which includes the prediction power of catastrophe management and increased renewable energy use, becomes the turning point in the role of AI in climate action. In spite of these numerous problems, considered to be strong barriers to implementing artificial intelligence in the agenda of achieving the objectives of SDG 3, SDG 4, and SDG 13, arise as crucial obstacles. For the promotion of ethical instructions related to artificial intelligence, the AI-users should make efficient use of it, keeping an eye on improving algorithmic bias, data privacy, and weak economic infrastructure to maintain AI models. Widening accessibility can stand as a solution to prevent the digital divide. The future research, hopefully, would throw light on much progressive exploration on achieving sustainable developmental goals. This study contributes to societal good by the incorporation of the role of artificial intelligence in the health system, quality education and climate action. It points out the need for inclusive, sustainable and ethical AI integration for ensuring that technological improvement makes all sections of society beneficiaries.

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## Teachers' Perspectives on Nepal's Continuous Assessment System: Opportunities and Challenges

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### Abstract

*Individual student success is influenced by the assessment system adopted by the teacher since continuous assessment, assessment for learning, provides feedback to the students for further improvement in regular classes. The study explored the opportunities offered by the CAS (Continuous Assessment System) and the challenges faced by teachers in implementing the continuous assessment system of grades one to three in Nepal, pursuing a qualitative method through a social constructivist lens. Four teachers practising the continuous assessment system in their schools were purposively selected as the research participants. The data were collected using semi-structured interviews and were analysed thematically. The findings show that a continuous assessment system offers an opportunity for students' learning improvement for weak students. Diverse abilities of students are assessed through CAS since it uses different tools of evaluation, not just a paper and pencil test and is extended beyond conventional methods. In addition, it develops the students' critical thinking skills. However, CAS has different implementation challenges, such as time-consuming, a lack of training, and difficulty in managing remedial teaching for weak students.*

**Keywords:** CAS, creativity, critical thinking, remedial teaching, teacher perceptions

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## Introduction

In education, the teaching and learning process is conducted based on predetermined competencies, goals, and objectives of the curriculum. The systematic process of assessing, analysing, interpreting, and deciding students' progress and making judgments is called evaluation (Sharma, 2025). Through this process, students' knowledge, skills, and attitudes are evaluated, and decisions and further improvements are determined. Evaluation is the process of making a judgment on the worth of a particular approach or of a student's work (Arends, 2012). It makes judgments, assigns values, and decides on worth. It is used as an essential tool to assess the students' performance and progress, or success. It is used to assess the understanding of how well an objective is met or a goal is achieved (Dhungel, 2024). According to Kellaghan and Greaney (2001), assessment in education refers to any procedure or activity that is designed to collect information about the knowledge, attitudes, or skills of a learner or group of learners.

They further mention that it is the process of obtaining information that is used to make educational decisions about a student, to give feedback to the student about his or her progress, strengths, and weaknesses, to judge instructional effectiveness and curricular adequacy, and to inform policy (Mann & Pellegrino, 2025). It is a tool of evaluation that usually refers to the full range of information collected and synthesised by teachers about their students and their classroom. Information on students can be collected either in informal ways, such as observation, verbal exchanges, or in formal ways, such as homework tests and written records. Therefore, assessment is the process of collecting information about students and the classroom for the purposes of making instructional decisions (Alonzo, 2023). Three purposes of assessment are practised in teaching and learning: assessment of learning, assessment for learning, and assessment as learning (Hidayat et al., 2023).

Assessment for learning (AFL) is an ongoing assessment that teachers use while conducting teaching-learning activities and find out the strengths and weaknesses of students, thus, formative in nature. The teacher analyses information to tailor lessons to students' needs, modify classroom activities, and refine teaching methods to enhance learning outcomes. Earl (2013) posits that when teachers are doing assessments for learning, they collect a wide range of data for different purposes so that they can modify the learning work for their students. She further says that teachers use observation, worksheets, questioning in class, student-teacher conferences, or whatever mechanism is likely to give them information that will be useful for their planning and their teaching. Cognitive skills, learning-focused assessment, and reasoning to provide constructive feedback that facilitates continuous learning and academic excellence (Sankaran & Low, 2025). Therefore, assessment for learning happens in the middle of learning, often more than once, not at the end. The wide variety of information that teachers collect about their students' learning processes provides the basis for determining what they need to do next to move student learning forward. It provides the basis for providing descriptive feedback for students and deciding on groupings, instructional strategies, and resources (Earl & Katz, 2009). The next purpose of assessment includes assessment of learning (AoL) that is done after completion of the tasks or units to find out students' achievement and what

extent curriculum goals have been achieved.

According to Earl and Katz (2009), assessment of learning refers to strategies designed to confirm what students know, demonstrate whether or not they have met curriculum outcomes or the goals of their individualised programs, or to certify proficiency and make decisions about students' future programs or placements. The third purpose, assessment as learning (AaL), deals with assessment as the process of metacognition of students (Zarepour et al., 2024). It says that learning is an active process of cognitive structuring that occurs when individuals interact with new ideas. The students are the critical connectors between assessment and learning. For students to be actively engaged in creating their own understanding, they must learn to be critical assessors who make sense of information, relate it to prior knowledge, and use it for new learning. Nepal's government has implemented a fully continuous assessment system from grades one to three of basic education (Mahendra, 2022). In a continuous assessment system, different aspects such as student regularity, attendance, classwork, participation, project and experimental work, creative work, changes in learning behaviour, and achievement tests are included (NCF, 2076). At the basic level, students' learning should be ensured on the basis of formative/corrective evaluation rather than summative evaluation. Formative assessment is to nurture knowledge consolidation, optimise learning, and aim at fostering an educational compass.

However, Primary school teachers often struggle to complete portfolios and manage continuous assessment, which limits the practical use of portfolios, reduces classroom efficiency and affects instructional delivery. This situation highlights the need to understand how teachers view assessment processes, the challenges they face and the benefits and barriers they see in continuous assessment as a way to strengthen classroom practices (Acharya, 2023; Bhatta, 2023; Dhungel, 2024; Rai, 2019; Sharma, 2017). With this in mind, the study aims to appraise the opportunities offered by the Continuous Assessment System in Grades One to Three in Nepal and to identify the challenges teachers encounter while implementing it.

## Literature Review

Continuous assessment (CA) poses validity, reliability, and dependable approaches to evaluate students' learning. It facilitates learning outcomes, reliable insights, assessing student performance, and monitoring through classroom interactions. An essential component of pedagogy is considered vital in educational practice and a crucial element of teaching for providing direction for learning activities (Dhungel, 2024). It is a mechanism through which the grading of learners' cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains of learning systematically takes account of their performance during a given period of schooling. It makes use of a variety of instruments, assessing various components of learning, not only the thinking process, but also including behaviour and personality traits (Ahukanna et al., 2012). It is a formative evaluation procedure concerned with finding out, in a systematic manner, the overall gains that a student has made in terms of knowledge, attitudes, and skills after a given set of learning experiences. In this process, observations are made from time to time to determine the level of students' knowledge, understanding,

and performance (Onoh & Ogbozor, 2021).

Makuvire et al. (2023), the essential features of continuous assessment are distinguished by comprehensive, structured, cumulative, and learner-centred supervision. On the other hand, Eduwem and Tommy (2021) also reflect diagnostic, systematic, holistic, and ongoing teacher-directed evaluation, comprehensiveness, and inclusivity qualities of continuous assessment. Student participation and classroom environment are necessary to prioritise meaningful learning rather than the importance of grades. It is a complex process that allows the use of different modes of assessment procedures to gather and provide information for decision-making on education-related matters. Students' learning is ensured based on the formative or corrective assessment method in classes 1-3. The main purpose of formative assessment is to improve student learning. In classes 1-3, there is a full continuous assessment system, in which information is collected by teachers about their students' progress while conducting teaching-learning activities. The teachers should provide opportunities for the students to learn.

For weak students, remedial teaching should be managed. An applied continuous assessment system has many opportunities and challenges. The students get an opportunity to improve their weaknesses through continuous assessment that is done regularly in the classroom. The students and teacher are involved in interaction and share the successes and weaknesses of the students in learning. The teacher plays the role of more knowledgeable others (MKO) and provides necessary scaffolding feedback to the students based on their learning level in school. The teacher finds the students' potential and actual level of development, and provides necessary support. The support is given in the area named Zone of Proximal Development through the findings of continuous assessment. A continuous assessment system has many implementation challenges. It is time-consuming, lacks training, and provides remedial teaching. Most of the government schools in hilly rural areas do not have sufficient teacher quotas. Since there is an insufficient quota, teachers have to teach 6/7 periods a day, which has increased the burden of work. Therefore, CAS is challenging to implement effectively.

On the other hand, teachers have to assess the evaluation of student progress without clear knowledge of CAS since the government has not managed the training on it. Remedial teaching for the students who have not benefited from regular classes has also been restricted in the directives. Likewise, Boström and Palm (2023) discuss how continuous formative assessment enhances instructional capacity. When implemented properly, this can further promote student achievement, given that it is a well-supported practice. This study further contributes to the above-mentioned studies by writing down CAS's role in helping to find out the needs of students and support higher-order thinking skills as well. Besides that, it makes teachers evaluate students' progress in their learning after teaching. If students have problems during instruction, the teacher identifies the strengths and weaknesses of the students to support them positively. The paper mainly argues that CAS is good for early primary education and aligns with constructivist theory. It supports individualised scaffolding and active learning. The next thing is that it gives emphasis and encourages collaboration between teachers and students to support assessment for learning. We found that CAS developed creativity, problem-solving skills, and thinking among students by involving them in diverse activities. CAS has brought

cognitive development to the students. It also allowed students to address the individual differences for personalised evaluation, fostering motivation and learning outcomes. But it is found that it is challenging in implementation because it is time-consuming, especially in large classes and having limited resources and the formal training regarding CAS for the teachers. However, it is not implemented as a policy directive, although it is a crucial component for reforming teaching.

### **Social Constructivism as the Theoretical Framework**

The purpose of my research was to examine the opportunities offered by the CAS in Grades One to Three, and to identify the challenges faced by teachers in implementing it, including resource availability, time management, and training adequacy. Therefore, social constructivist learning theory, propagated by a Russian psychologist, Vygotsky, is the central theory for discussion. More particularly, it advocates that learning takes place in a social environment supported and mediated by both social and cultural contexts of the participants (Vygotsky, 1978, as cited in Barksdale, 2021). Additionally, he argues that the intellect develops as individuals confront new and puzzling experiences and as they strive to resolve discrepancies posed by these experiences. In the quest for understanding, individuals link new knowledge to prior knowledge and construct the new meaning (Arends, 2012). Social constructivism focuses on collaboration, interaction, participation, regulation, zone of proximal development, internalisation, and scaffolding in learning. The teachers play the role of facilitators while evaluating students' performance and achievement, along with the teaching and learning activities, through classwork, project work, and practical work. The teachers should create a context for learning where evaluation is done continuously.

### **Methods and Procedures**

This study adopted a qualitative research design to explore teachers' perspectives on the CAS regarding the opportunities and challenges. In a qualitative research design, the researcher explores a problem and develops a detailed understanding of the central phenomenon. To maintain ethical standards, teachers' names were anonymised and identified as T1, T2, T3, and T4. Having a literature review justifies the problem and states the general and broad research questions to collect the participants' experiences. Collecting the data based on the words from a small number of individuals, participants' views are obtained to analyse the data for description and themes (Creswell, 2012). Four teachers teaching at the primary level and practising the CAS in their schools were selected using a purposive non-random sampling procedure from two different schools of Dipayal Silgadhi Municipality, Doti. Following Cohen et al. (2007), in purposive sampling, researchers handpick the cases to be included in the sample based on their judgment of their typicality or possession of the particular characteristics sought. In this way, they build up a sample that satisfies their specific needs. For this, a semi-structured interview was conducted to collect the data. The participants shared their experiences through a

semi-structured interview based on their experience in applying CAS. The interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. Different patterns were generated through the transcriptions used to make the findings. A thematic analysis approach was adopted to discover the pattern (themes) from the transcribed data. Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It minimally organises and describes the data set in (rich) detail (Clark & Braun, 2006). For ethical consideration, anonymity and confidentiality were assured in data interpretations.

## **Results and Discussion**

The study found that CAS provides teachers with their strengths, enabling them to boost their teaching practices and be aware of learning progress as well. Likewise, CAS develops critical thinking, creativity, and generates ideas beyond rote learning. It supports feedback mechanisms and identifies the need for tailoring activities to each student's calibre. The primary concern is that teachers implement CAS without formal training, relying on limited workshops. We have discussed the opportunities offered by CAS and its challenges while implementing it in the classroom in Grades One to Three. The CAS provides both a summative and formative evaluation. In Grades 1 to 3 in Nepal, the CAS significantly enhances student learning. It assists in the development of higher-order skills matched with attractive pedagogical practices. However, it is found that practical challenges related to the implementation of CAS, those teachers who lack formal training face, including time constraints, limited resources, and insufficient implementation of the remedial teaching (Shah & Katuwal, 2024; Prajapati, 2024; Shrestha, 2025). Due to a lack of training, resources, and support from the government at the local level to the central level, it has brought obstacles in implementation. It offered important opportunities and challenges. So, overall, CAS provides a valuable framework for improving students' learning.

### **Opportunities in the Continuous Assessment System**

#### ***Maximising Student Learning and Teacher Effectiveness through Continuous Assessment***

The CAS gives a clue to how much knowledge a learner has acquired. It shows the learners' area of weakness and strength (Ahukanna et al., 2012), which is done along with the teaching and learning activities. One of the participant teachers (T1) said,

A continuous assessment system is an evaluation system of students' learning. It can be used to improve the students' learning because it is done continuously with teaching and learning activities. Thus, teachers can evaluate to what extent students have learned and what aspects are to be improved, and it helps the teachers to prepare work plans as per the needs of students' learning levels. Also, it gives an opportunity to the teachers to evaluate themselves.

It advocates the assessment for learning principle, emphasising the assessment process, not only the assessment of product (Yagzaw, 2013). From this perspective, CAS emphasises

a formative assessment system that is used to find out the areas of success and weakness. Based on the weaknesses, the teachers can make further plans for teaching and learning. Both the teacher and students work collaboratively and improve the students' weaknesses. Next participant, teacher (T2) opined,

The main good aspect of the continuous assessment system is improvement for both teachers and students. In the traditional assessment system (paper-and-pencil test), no place was given for immediate correction for the students' learning. Now, CAS is done continuously along with teaching and learning activities. Therefore, weaknesses of students are found, and additional and remedial teaching can be conducted for the students' learning improvement.

The teacher finds their students' learning level and treats them accordingly, and provides feedback. Similarly, students are also aware of their learning. As a result, students construct new knowledge based on prior knowledge. Based on these, teachers and students interact to develop knowledge. According to Vygotsky (1978, as cited in Nissaji & Tian, 2018), knowledge is a socially accepted belief and sees social interaction as influencing individual cognitive development. No formal assessment is done in continuous assessment, which offers regular activities through interaction and collaboration in a fearless environment.

### ***Unlocking the Skills behind Memorisation***

Many teachers are seeking to help their students support reading and writing for critical thinking. They want to challenge their students not just to memorise, but to question, examine, create, solve, interpret, and debate the material in their courses (Crawford, 2005). Participant teacher (T3) stated:

CAS allows the teacher to assess skills beyond just memorisation, such as creative thinking, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills. I learned in the classroom. For example, I ask you to draw a picture of your school and describe it. They try to draw creatively using different colours. They ask and interact with me. They want a grade A for their drawing.

CAS implies different activities such as project work, homework, class work, practical activities, attendance, and participation in teaching-learning activities. That develops creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills rather than merely memorisation skills. In this regard, the teacher (T2) said:

Students are graded based on the activities they completed. They are involved in activities actively with the feeling of doing better and more than others. While involved in activities, they try to do new things, create new ideas, and, to me, if they get confused. I elaborate, clarify and sometimes demonstrate. I do not give questions just to item answers; rather, they are asked to do it in groups or pairs collaboratively.

This collaborative and activity-based approach develops creative ideas and thoughts of participants. Students work collaboratively in groups or pairs, fostering creativity and innovation in the classroom, and the teacher evaluates as the teaching and learning activities are done. Supporting the experiences of participant teacher (T2), another participant teacher (T3) remarked:

In my experience, a continuous assessment system is better than the traditional assessment method that uses paper-and-pencil tests for a limited time. Children can forget even after a short period of time, since they need concrete materials in learning. They learn effectively as they get the opportunity to practice.

According to the National Curriculum Framework 2019 A.D., the age group of classes one to three is five to seven years. Following Piaget, this age group of children belongs to the preoperational stage of cognitive development (Tosolini, 2025). The pre-operational stage, which lasts approximately from 2 to 7 years of age, enables children to begin to develop language skills and symbolic contemplation. In this stage, children begin to represent the world with words, images, and drawings. Symbolic thought goes beyond simple connections of information and action (Santrock, 2005). Therefore, CAS provides an opportunity to use different creative works using different materials. The fourth participant teacher (T4) added that in the continuous assessment system, evaluation is done practically, such as observation, change behaviour, and attendance, not only through paper and pencil tests. Students have to perform activities inside and outside the classroom, which develop creative and critical thinking skills rather than mere memorisation.

Evaluation goes beyond paper-based testing and attendance checks to improve students' involvement in activities. Students are encouraged to participate to foster creativity, critical thinking, and help students develop their innovative skills and reasoning. The zone of proximal development refers to the zone between a learner's actual level of development and his/her potential level of development (Arends, 2012). While treating students individually, the teacher addresses their diversities through remedial teaching and individual support. However, remedial teaching has not been adopted in the class, which is limited to the directives only. The students are involved in different activities such as classwork, pair work, group work, project work, practical work, and problem-solving activities. These develop creative and critical thinking skills and problem-solving skills, except for memorisation.

### ***Addressing Individual Differences***

CA enables teachers to involve themselves in learning activities with students and maintain interactions. Teachers can evaluate student performance and identify their weaknesses in providing the needful learning process. These exchanges foster a pupil-teacher relationship based on individual interaction. One-to-one communication between teacher and pupil can motivate pupils to continue attending school and to work hard to achieve a higher order of mastery (Mohammedseid, 2018). To quote the teacher (T1):

What to say! Individual differences of students can be measured through a continuous assessment system. Not all the students have the same capacities. Every child is evaluated differently. So, the teacher finds out the level of students' learning and prepares a plan for further improvement. Students are given different tasks to complete in the classroom regularly. Based on the tasks done by individual students, they are assessed separately, the weaknesses are identified, and necessary scaffolding is provided by the teacher.

Teachers should evaluate the learners' achievement based on their individual capacities and manage the records. Another participant teacher (T4) added that student evaluation is done based on specific criteria. Therefore, teachers immediately provide feedback to students, and necessary remedial teaching is conducted individually according to their interests and level of knowledge. While conducting teaching-learning activities, every student is evaluated on what extent to which he or she has learned. Therefore, the teacher finds out the current status of each student and provides feedback (Boström & Palm, 2023). The feedback is given individually, which functions as the basis for improvement in learning.

## **Challenges in the Continuous Assessment System**

### ***Time Challenges Consuming in CAS***

In grades one to three, evaluation of students' learning is done through CAS throughout the academic year rather than relying solely on final exams; it can be time-consuming for both teachers and students. Although it is suitable to determine learners' progress, it gives a better opportunity for lower achievers to get attention from their instructors and support from their peers, consumes more time, increases the burden of instructors, and needs resources to implement it (Walde, 2016). Participant teacher (T3) remarked that:

The continuous assessment system is a time-consuming evaluation system where teachers have to prepare different activities, such as project work, practical activities, and class work, along with teaching and learning activities. I must prepare all teaching materials and evaluation tools within a limited time. Next, we have a smaller number of teachers in school in comparison to the class size. Therefore, teachers have to teach 6/7 periods a day. As a result, it is difficult to keep records.

Teachers consider CAS a burden and blame it that it is time-consuming and needing more time to do. Mohammedseid (2018) also found that implementing CA without an appropriate and sufficient time is found to be a considerable hindrance to proper implementation. Another participant teacher (T1) also shared the same opinion that a continuous system is applied in the classroom along with teaching and learning activities. So, a few students may study, but for a large number of students, it is not easy to evaluate all aspects of students' learning. Time is not enough. Teachers have to take 6/7 periods in a day. Participant teacher (T4) remarked that I do evaluations of students after completion of the unit, and based on specific aspects. T4 underscored that student evaluation occurs at the end of each unit, concerning learning goals to set defined criteria. Student assessments emphasised particular facets of learning and student evaluation in units at the end. Therefore, they do not have time to keep records and manage CAS. If so, what do they do?

### ***Navigating Continuous Assessment without Formal Training***

Training is a process of developing specific skills, knowledge, or abilities in

individuals that help them perform tasks or roles effectively, and through it, an individual improves competence, confidence, and performance in a particular area. According to Richards and Farrell (2005, p.3), “Training refers to activities directly focused on a teacher's present responsibilities and is typically aimed at short-term and immediate goals”. However, teachers have not been given the training on the continuous assessment system. They apply continuous assessment systems in evaluation, knowingly or unknowingly.

Participant teacher (T2) opined that I have not taken any formal training on the implementation of the continuous assessment system, except for participation in the integrated curriculum dissemination program, where I learned the evaluation system. However, the dissemination program was not entirely based on an evaluation system. I am applying the techniques for evaluating the students' learning achievement that I learned in the dissemination program, which may be wrong.

Training improves the implementation skills and essential knowledge of CAS. According to Poudel (2022), TPD training and workshops provide essential knowledge, refreshment, and updates to recent trends. In line with T2, the next participant teacher (T3) said that I have not participated in training on CAS. I was involved in a day curriculum dissemination workshop where I learned a few skills on how to evaluate the students. Here, T3 did not participate in training on CAS, but he participated in a curriculum workshop to learn skills regarding the evaluation and assessment of students in a proper way. I learned how to rate the students and who should be promoted and who should be involved in remedial teaching classes. But rubrics were not discussed there. Without a clear and detailed understanding of rubrics, I get confused. They had not received formal CAS training, and they attended curriculum dissemination to identify remedial support. The workshop focused on student assessment and remedial instruction, but the lack of discussion on rubrics left them with a dilemma, which caused uncertainty and made it unclear how to use them. So, CAS effectively depends on training to address practical and theoretical underpinnings.

### **Remedial Teaching: Implementation Limited to Directives**

Provision of remedial teaching should be managed for those weak students who do not score =3 Or <3 Out of 4 in the rating scale after regular assessment in classes one to three (NCF 2076). However, it was found that it has not been applied in teaching and learning activities. One of the participant teachers (T1) reported that there was no provision for remedial teaching after regular assessment, but I used more activities for students after regular assessment. In reality, I do not do remedial teaching. I facilitate them as much as possible in the classroom without additional classes at a specific time. The provision of remedial teaching is neglected, and weak students in learning are supported in regular classes. The same opinion was expressed by the next teacher (T4): I do not conduct different remedial teaching for weak students. Their weaknesses are addressed in classes with suggestions.

### **Conclusion**

The study explored teachers' perspectives on the opportunities and implementation challenges in shaping CAS in Grades 1 and 3 in Nepal. The findings showcase that CAS provides tremendous opportunities and fosters students' learning. It explicitly distinguishes supportive feedback, and CAS cultivates feedback in diverse classroom contexts. In addition, CAS fosters creative, critical, and active learning and collaboration in the learning process. Limited resources, lack of training, and workload are notable challenges in restricting the effectiveness of teaching. The findings were carried out under different limitations, such as selecting only four participants from four schools. Next, depending only on telephone interviews may not be enough to explore the total perception of teachers regarding the continuous assessment system. Implication highlights that the training and materials should be managed properly to improve the education quality. Suggestions inclined towards a continuous assessment system should be managed and applied in the classroom effectively. Finally, in terms of research sites, further research can be carried out on the solutions to the challenges of CAS visiting in different schools.

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### Role of Collaboration in English Teacher Education: A Narrative Inquiry

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#### Abstract

*The study was conducted within the ELT (English Language Teaching) context of Nepal with experienced teachers as they implemented collaboration in teaching practices and bridged gaps in collaborative construction of educational growth. This paper explores the contribution of collaboration in the career growth of English teaching professionals. I employed narrative inquiry, and a semi-structured interview was administered to get their subjective perspectives. I implemented Vygotsky's sociocultural theory (SCT) to view social context, reflective practice, group work, scaffolding, and autonomous exploration in learning mode. Vygotsky's social development theory indicates that interpersonal communication can directly moderate a pupil's reasoning and comprehension skills in the ELT milieu of Nepal. The interpretivism paradigm shaded the nuances of a robust and context-sensitive approach. Five secondary-level English teachers were selected for the paper, and a purposive sampling method was chosen under the criteria of experience, characteristics, and in-depth knowledge in the role of collaboration. Findings were inconsistencies in group members' involvement, reflective practice in the form of collaboration, and autonomy as a teacher's professional development. The implications highlighted the significant shift in the pedagogical approach, identity, and weaknesses faced by teachers in educational domains, as well as their professional growth in collaborative settings. Collaborative learning fosters the confidence and progressive outcomes of learners in education.*

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**Keywords:** *collaborative learning, teacher education, critical thinking, learner autonomy, professional development*

## **Introduction**

Collaborative learning is in line with cultural and social settings. The teaching of languages is the first component in educator development dimensions. Teachers' enrichment holds the quality of collaboration so that they can give their best in their respective fields (Saud, 2023). Teaching methods, peer cooperation, and reflective practices are all incorporated into teachers' professional development. Based on roots, collaboration represents working in a team, and it displays creating, planning, evaluating, and finding objectives (Kaye, 1992). As per Kaye's (1992) definition, collaboration pertains to working as a team or jointly to get new insights and discoveries. Various shared resources are a point of entry for addressing issues in a range of personal objectives.

Collaborative signifies academic performance of students and social contexts in higher pedagogical impact (Johnson et al., 2007; Slavin, 1996). In anticipation of accomplishing common learning goals, collaborative learning has a greater influence on education. In a classroom setting, it improves social, communication, and interpersonal skills. ICT (Information and Communication Technology) is a new emerging field of teaching that combines with collaborative learning, and it has been embedded in various fields (Joshi, 2016). Cornerstone of ICT in various fields such as agriculture, education, medicine, and e-commerce are incumbents to stress a student-centred learning approach.

Collaboration and leadership qualities are entwined at the same time because of egalitarian and decentralised contexts and phenomena. Teachers' collegial examination of issues can be envisioned as a form of reciprocal regulation (Butler & Schnellert, 2012). To refine their own transformation and students' learning outcomes from mutual regulation, teachers must mirror what they have learned from their peers. Insufficient budget, a dearth of resources, and limited training fail to integrate technology in education (Johnson, 2023). If the government does not provide any budget to integrate ICT in education, then there will be a lacuna in students' learning outcomes.

Collaboration incorporates practical training, theoretical grounding, and deepens academic excellence. Similarly, TPD (Teacher Professional Development) is knotted with collaboration because it includes developing skills, teaching performance, and teachers' professional competence. When teachers engage in collaborative learning, they expertise their teaching profession. Pedagogical strategies and meaningful responsibility thrive for obtaining visions of collaborative practitioners. Similarly, collaborative practice and TPD go hand in hand to remove the financial constraints, co-regulation, and foster inclusive spaces in learning. According to Jiang (2017), TPD involves skill training, theoretical education, and development in practical teaching and cognitive abilities. Teachers' professional growth encompasses training, academic knowledge, practical teaching, and cognitive development.

Thus, pedagogical services upliftment is more helpful for the teachers to develop their professional development, such as designing assessment methods, instructional materials, and educational planning (Karki, 2021). Teachers design lesson plans in a

variety of contexts, develop curriculum, make formative and summative assessments, and produce resources that are appropriate for the environment. Perry (1980) states that confidence, expertise, and training pave for the continuous updating of knowledge of English teachers. Teacher development highlights the growth, confidence, expertise, skills, progress, and positive attitudes. Johnson's (2023) analysis of assistive technology policies emphasises the necessity of financing and resources for devices such as screen magnifiers and braille readers. Policies should facilitate the technologies' corroboration for teaching advancement. According to Richards (2020), emotions play a vigorous role in language instruction that will be wedged on teachers' encouragement, social exchanges, and teachers' impetus. In addition, he emphasises that emotions are interwoven in education in fostering classroom subtleties. Nevertheless, the transformation of personal and relational carried benefits on institutional scales (Singh & Bhuyan, 2024).

Furthermore, the objective of teacher development is to help us become the most influential educators we can be. The focus of the teacher development component is on self-reflection and self-awareness. Thus, the dialogical and stable construction of teacher identity has transitioned (Pishghadam et al., 2022). Education for language teachers is an evolutionary field. Awasthi (2003) underscored policies related to teacher education in terms of consistency and effectiveness. Several changes have occurred in the evolution and development of this field. Brown and Green (2021) reveal that rudimentary training is important in the field of special education. On the flip side, Song et al. (2016) underscore as noted by the teachers' identity conflicts and emotional experiences have an impact on their instructional strategies. Hence, collaborative learning aids to metacognitive and social skills in learning instruments (Rumiantsev et al., 2023). It includes teacher productivity, craftsmanship, and in-service progress through special training and teaching experiences of teachers. Harris and Sass (2011) claim that these factors determine the quality of teachers. Teachers' roles are creating motives for a cultural and structured environment. Cultural activity tailors an intervention and supports the process in dealing with issues of participation (Maharjan & Bhattarai, 2017). Teachers' attributes should not be a bossy nature and ruling in the course of learning, but they should be focused on evocative, fruitful, and motivating students in learning domains.

Similarly, educators develop their competencies, expertise in their profession with the help of exchanging knowledge (Asmari, 2016). On focusing on subjects and skills, one student is expected to be the tutor and another to be the tutee. Pertinent and scaffold chase a clear vision of outcomes for a successful collaborator to establish a good learning environment (Ernest et al., 2013). Collaborative activities should have a crystal-clear goal, be relevant to the learners, and offer satisfactory scaffolding. Within the cooperative learning spectrum, each person has specific roles and responsibilities to fulfil. As noted by Poekert (2011), moments of learning and sharing junctures with teachers engage and moderate facilitators.

Teachers are more responsible for the creation of their classroom environment, according to Hagenauer et al. (2015). It exhibits the aspiration, influence, and source of motivation from fellow friends in mutual understanding. Teaching effectiveness is further increased by self-efficacy and reflective teaching. Tomasello posits that imitation fast pace for acquiring collaboration at an early age (Tomasello et al., 1993). This

statement depicts the learning phase of an infant. Imitation is a salient and main aspect of learning. Imitation, in his opinion, is a grassroots method of picking up information and abilities. Effective systems and teachers' perspectives highlight the professional learning community (Asmari, 2016). The groundwork of teacher professionalism and excellence can also be considered in competence building.

The occupation of teaching English needs collaboration in order to face challenges posed by many people, and addressing them effectively can prove the great qualities that value teaching (Timsina, 2021). Teaching the English subject is an arduous, simultaneously rewarding, and challenging endeavour. Tackling those challenges and taking a step further is the creation of value in teaching. Continuing professional development (CPD) implies that language educators must continually improve their knowledge and skills as they progress in their professional trajectories (Cirocki & Farrell, 2019). CPD is a constant procedure catering to the dimensions of skills and a prolonged period of language teaching targeting the educators. Additionally, assisting teamwork and contemplative approaches are the trajectories in the setting of the CPD framework. Cooperation creates opportunities for insight, brainstorming ideas, and joint strategy development. Ongoing changes in education in the CPD context are becoming most important for career advancement in the collaboration field (Asmari, 2016). Sustained CPD illustrates a one-time event for promoting teaching effectiveness methods, enhancing teaching practices, and teacher identity.

Thus, CPD aids educators in reflecting on their professional triumphs and outcomes, which showcase their professionalism. Silvhiany (2022) emphasised webinars, seminars, and conferences to build workforce improvements for English teachers. Overall, educator skills are a crucial phenomenon in ameliorating outcomes of students' learning (Saud, 2023). Teacher professionalism is the epitome with reference to students' learning outputs, on top of nurturing the value of education. Collaborative learning encourages teachers to build their skills, reflect on their work, manage classrooms more effectively, and strengthen their professional knowledge. With this in mind, the study focuses on two main objectives: identifying how collaboration supports the professional growth of English language teachers, and examining the key challenges that arise when using collaborative learning in teacher education.

The research gap sheds the issues related to collaborative learning. The lack of budgetary constraints and insufficient training (Johnson, 2023; Joshi, 2016) hinder the teaching pedagogy in collaborative learning settings. Further research is obligatory in the field of collaborative practices and co-regulation among English teachers (Butler & Schnellert, 2012; Rumiantsev et al., 2023), incorporated into TPD programs. There is insufficient investigation into the entities of collaborative language teacher education in regard to enhancing collaborative learning (Jiang, 2017; Richards, 2020). Likewise, more research is needed on better collaborative learning and pedagogical practices in diverse students' classroom domains (Brown & Green, 2021; Johnson, 2023). Recent work highlights the need for stronger collaborative learning and more effective pedagogical practices across diverse classroom settings (Brown & Green, 2021; Johnson, 2023). Studies also show that collaborative practices remain underexamined, especially when it comes to addressing the complexities of classroom pedagogy (Adhikari, 2021; Poekert, 2011).

Within this gap, it is important to identify how collaboration supports the professional growth of English language teachers and to examine the key challenges that emerge when collaborative learning is used in teacher education.

## Literature Review

In this segment, I have reviewed distinct educational policies that are relevant to collaborative learning and teaching education. Pertaining to Nepal, English teachers provide different instruction as per the needs of students. It paves the way for maintaining diversity, inclusion, and fruitful didactics. Also, it formulates effective and efficient instructional teaching pedagogies. According to Khanal and Poudel (2022), scaffolding breaks learning into cooperative learning, and students become more competent in independent learning. Thus, teachers worked together to share best practices and provide materials to help pupils learn the language, according to Adhikari and Ghimire (2020). Before entering the teaching profession, novice instructors created imagined ideal identities with people from their sociocultural backgrounds, such as parents, family members, and society (Neupane, 2024). Novice teachers have a misconception of the supreme and greatest when they are entering the teaching profession. The government's SSDP (2016–2023) mandates that children complete at least basic education and develop their value-based education to promote harmony in diverse communities. In compliance with the School Sector Development Plan (SSDP) (2016–2023), every child should complete at least the foundational level of education and acquire skills from value-based education in sociocultural diversity. If an issue is observed, the plan, strategy, and course of action are put into action. The training of the teachers in Nepal was started in 1971 with the intention of improving the qualifications of teachers through the National Educational System Plan (NESP).

The expansion of the ITTP and teacher TPD program has been spotlighted in the execution and enforcement of the School Sector Reform Plan (SSRP) 2009-2016. It points out collaborative learning practices, teaching methods, and interwoven as a matter of ICT resources. By joining the training of TPD, teachers will elevate the instructional delivery system and engage in professional development. This implies the audacious policies accentuated on TPD training to reinforce the performance, competence, and overall prosperity of the English teachers (MOE, 2009). Teachers' collaboration skills, language learning competency, and ability to seize ongoing opportunities are all provided by TPD.

The key to teacher participation in any reform in education has placed top priority on induction and updating the skills of teachers (MOE, 2009). The government's synopsis of thoughtful upgrades and acknowledgement of successful classroom collaboration learning techniques. In a multilingual context, they tend to think about innovative strategies that allow them to determine the levels of students in the collaboration sphere (MoE, 2016). The classroom is full of diversity, and students speak multiple native languages, which have been congested by the English language teacher. A teacher has to face such a type of situation in a diversified classroom, which can be challenging in the Nepalese classroom context. Pennington (2015) presents teacher identity as a mental image, or

construct, or the conception of a teacher that directs teachers' practices and actions in specific acts of teacher identity.

The SSDP transforms learning environments, teaching, curriculum and learning materials, teaching methodologies, assessments, and promotes student learning (Ministry of Education, 2016). Numerous educational systems, including curricula, resources, and methods to enhance students' learning styles, are revealed by this policy. It reflects uniformity and inclusiveness in educational practice. As a result, SSRP to NESP, SSDP calls for equity, holistic, and professional development in secondary education areas (Poudel, 2024).

The social, political, and challenges shaping teachers' growth require crucial plans and policies. The SSDP 2016 to 2023 asserts teacher management, professional development, and strategies to formulate quality education (MOE, 2016). The SSDP plans formulated the policies of collaboration, equality, and justice in the periphery of teacher management for catering to the growth of English teachers in Nepalese educational landscapes. Similarly, collaborative learning highlights knowledge exchange, collaboration, engagement, and critical thinking (Shah, 2023). The leadership and collaboration of the teachers have an immense impact on student outcomes in the lifelong learning environment.

The National Education Policy (2019) explains that in order to increase quality for sustainable development in public education sectors, the federal government has made sure to provide education that is easy, straightforward, collaborative, equitable, practical, competitive, and qualitative. Hence, TPD training is more helpful for the teachers to develop their professional development, such as designing assessment methods, instructional materials, collaboration, and educational planning (Karki, 2021). Seminars and workshops enable teachers to familiarise themselves with new teaching practices in the expansion of in-depth knowledge (Saud, 2023). Teachers will foster their learning mechanisms when they participate in different types of training, workshops, and seminars.

Essentially, ELTEP increases training opportunities, observation, and mentoring guidance among teachers (British Council, 2022). Consistently, English language teachers raised, upgraded, and advanced their teaching approaches. Collaboration aids and mentoring abilities were cultivated through the ELTEP English Language Teacher Education Project, which was held from 2018 to 2021. The teacher is unable to participate in any election or any political party, confronting ineligible candidates in the teaching field (Seal, 1971). The teacher is restricted and prohibited from taking part in any political party election, representing or having a position within a political party. NELTA is helping teachers to enhance their professionalism and grow as vibrant English teachers in the modern era (Mahato, 2022). In Nepal, NELTA serves as a critical and pivotal element of language teachers' professional empowerment. Numerous programs, including conferences and seminars, are offered by NELTA to improve the lot of English teachers in Nepal.

I applied the skeleton of the socio-cultural theory of Vygotsky to the Nepali classroom to solve the issues of traditional practices, rote learning, and language barriers. Scaffolding is the Vygotskian phrase for this direction or supervision (Sarmiento-Campos et al., 2022). Instead of teaching, the function of a teacher in a Nepalese classroom

should be a facilitator. Scaffolding plays the role of a facilitator in learning domains by empowering schoolchildren towards shaping their logical thinking and troubleshooting aptitudes, and by generating a supportive physical classroom and collaborative space. In a similar vein, emotional and developmental approaches connected to the roots of language and interlinked from one generation to another for the betterment of language development (Vygotsky, 1978). Within Vygotsky's theoretical framework, the spreading of culture among students and cooperative learning are facilitated within the Nepalese education system.

Through SCT, Vygotsky underlined the relation between individual, cultural contexts, and psychological factors to mediate the mental functioning of individuals (Zubaidi, 2015). Vygotsky has a social interaction concept to drive sociocultural and children's cognition, aiming at discussion in fostering interactions (Blake & Pope, 2008). ZPD is a crucial key for nurturing higher-order thinking and critical appraisal skills because it has been suggested that students retain more knowledge while working in groups. Hence, ZPD posits that a child's intellectual growth, reasoning, cognitive, and learning ability can be structured and mediated within dynamic social guidance and engagement.

### **Methods and Procedures**

I used an interpretative paradigm to explore English language teachers' collaborative practices in Nepal concerning the values, traditions, and beliefs of the society in which it takes place (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006). This interpretive paradigm is focused on a better understanding of the phenomenon and its complex nature by adopting this philosophical perspective, rather than making generalisations to the entire population (Creswell, 2007, as cited in Pham, 2018). The research adopted a narrative inquiry design to analyse descriptive components comprising character, plot, scene, and events of narratives (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). I questioned participants about their consent, motivation, learning modalities, and pertinent collaborative teaching techniques before the interview. I undertook interviews with five English teachers who had more experience in collaborative learning practices in the classroom. The participants of this study were selected based on purposive sampling and their involvement in teaching experiences, who engaged in collaborative learning practices. For ethical considerations, their names were changed to a variety of pseudonyms and anonymised. Participants' names were given as P1, P2, P3, P4, and P5, respectively. The research field was in Kathmandu, Nepal. Data collection was carried out through semi-structured interviews, which were transcribed to capture each participant's thoughts, experiences, field notes, reflections, and diaries.

The subjective judgments of participants can also be elicited from semi-structured interviews that are flexible and feasible according to Flick et al. (2004). The data analysis process employed thematic analysis as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006), which involved identifying and examining the collaboration practices among the English teachers. Thematic analysis was chosen to analyse, evaluate, and interpret important themes in collaborative practices in the academic blueprint of Nepal. The study was also able to examine attitudes, experiences, and temperaments of the participants, which were

influenced by their psychological, environmental, social, and educational backgrounds, thanks to thematic analysis. To ensure validity, rigour, and reliability, I used an emic and ethical lens to reveal perspectives of the participants (Tracy, 2020). Moreover, the responses from participants vary, and it fosters critical thinking, effective collaboration, and equal participation among learners.

## **Results and Discussion**

This portion embraces findings from the participants. Collaboration and group work are closely interrelated, and they examine the prevalent themes generated from interview excerpts. The main issue is that students are not participating in group work in diverse classroom settings, which hinders the collaborative progression. Participants' insights validate the interpretation on account of cases and proceedings.

### **Inconsistencies in Group Members' Involvement**

We, teachers, have to influence students in debate, discussion and try to encourage them in collaborative learning. In a similar vein, students' learning habits differ from one another. Analytical skills will be developed if they participate in conversations. Plus, they improvised their capacity to think differently and sort out the issues in no time. Group work is emphasised in groundwork-based learning patterns. P1 expressed a variety of idea-sharing capabilities:

The collaboration means working in a group, but there are some challenges to face during the planning and implementation phases. Not all participants may contribute equally during the planning stage and preparation of a lesson. Some group members are not contributing their fair share to the group project, which can turn it into an inherently passive learning activity.

P1 shows that members do not all participate equally and that not all members are making the same amount of effort when it comes to planning and execution. Genuinely, knowledge construction also highlights the autonomy, group work, problem-solving, discussion, and engagement of students in the classroom. Collaborative learning provides a way for active engagement that can scaffold others' learning. Intellectual progress is socially grounded and influenced by social interactions, whereby it happens through interaction with other people, according to Vygotsky's theory. The teacher may consider academic standards while leading a group. Likewise, students would participate in activities without having any immediate supervision. The opinions of P1 and P3 are not in conflict with one another. In the collaborative learning context, both participants stimulated equal engagement, equal sharing, and the necessity of active participation. P3 resonated that collaborative learning and active collaboration are significant in learning by stating:

The collaborative learning and active learning are intertwined with each other. Collaboratively showcases shortcomings because we are unaware of the group work that plays a paramount role in learning. Learners contribute when they actively participate in learning. I believe that collaboration is a vital part of collaboration. If your partner is not participating, then we have difficulty in our

learning space.

Active participation strengthens the learning, whereas passive involvement leads to a deficiency in grasping insights. In collaborative learning, the expertise and experience of participants are also important. Socio-constructivist theory was first outlined by Lev S. Vygotsky, and his views of human actions take place in social contexts (Vygotsky, 1978). The main ideas of the socio-constructivist approach emphasise social interaction in society and develop knowledge by reflection, exploration, reflection, interaction, and collaboration. Collaborative learning cannot be successful, productive, or insightful if members are not contributing anything to the learning. Thus, student-centred learning and group-centred teaching encourage learners to work collectively to finish shared goals and achieve learning tasks (MacGregor, 1990). Social competence, collaborative engagement, and accountability marked the collaborative learning patterns, and they display the foundation of reflective group work.

### **Reflective Practice in the Form of Collaboration**

Collaborative learning and reflective practice are linked to promote self-improvement and link reflection writing to real-world management, leadership, and instructional implications. Martin (2017) investigated mid-career English language teachers and found that administrative support, motivating environment, students' performance, and the exercise of personal agency played a pivotal role in constructing teacher identity. The formation of the best collaborator teacher identity with the necessary components in the educational context. P1 stated that the reflective practice covers inclusivity, which removes the consequences of learning issues:

The reflective practice covers the inclusion part and eradicates consequences in the learning paradigm. In the context of an EFL setting, we may find diverse learners from different geographical locations. Teachers should evaluate the learning ability of students to improve the results further. Reflective practice saves the inclusion by connecting the different backgrounds of students. Moreover, as reflective practice is concerned, it will substantiate learning enrichment in distinct learners. Reflective techniques assist teachers in improving their classroom experiences and obtaining peer input. Teachers can discover their teaching strengths and flaws with the support of this collaborative and reflective technique.

In an EFL classroom, reflective practice promotes inclusive learning according to P1. Genuinely, knowledge construction also highlights the autonomy, group work, problem-solving, discussion, and engagement of students in the classroom. Learning activities are an analytical method of evaluation, comparison, quality, and credibility of patching knowledge formation. According to Vygotsky, a child was dependent when he or she was young, and the child's actions were totally guided and supervised by the child's parents. Gnawali (2015) underscored a reciprocal relationship, two-way interaction, and EFL teachers' professional growth mutually reinforcing each other with language teacher associations. Thus, reflective practice is a systematic problem-solving process through which teachers deliberate, thoughtfully dwelling on a specific event, incident, or situation (Dewey, 1933). Reflective practice is the gateway to gaining insights and fosters

the enrichment of teachers' professional practices. Reflective practice allows teachers to become aware of their strengths and fundamental beliefs, better understand their teaching, evaluate their professional development, and make well-informed decisions. P5 discussed the advantages of reflective teaching in the scope of education by clarifying:

The reflective and introspective teaching assist the educators in consistently strengthening their areas of weakness, looking for more effective teaching strategies, and maintaining their effectiveness as educators. When a learner can relate prior mental concepts to draw a new one, this becomes creative learning. Thus, it reflects social, emotional, and cognitive aspects of involvement and collaboration. In order to thrive as a teacher, it is best to think globally and act locally at this time. As such, instruction should emphasise more practical learning from the local context.

The significance of reflective practice is seen as a form of dynamic assessment for teacher and student learning, highlighted in P5. This is consistent with the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) theory put forward by Vygotsky, in which educators strengthen their weakest teaching techniques. In contrast to conventional teaching techniques, student-centred learning should receive more focus. Now is the moment to think globally and act locally if you want to succeed as a teacher. SCT suggests that learning should be pertinent to students' prior knowledge and experiences. Therefore, the involvement of both teachers and students is needed in the process of cultivating social interaction and feedback. As a result, greater hands-on learning from the local context should be stressed in education. The OECD (2009) emphasised fundamental functions of professional advancement for teachers, such as content knowledge and attitudes, to promote dispositions in language education.

Subsequently, instruction should focus more on real-world learning, which should come from the local environment, since in order to succeed as a teacher, it is best to act locally and think globally at this time. Reflective teaching or teacher reflection posits an emotional and cognitive domain (Nagamine et al., 2018). Teachers can improve their methods and build stronger bonds with students by using reflective teaching, which increases the effectiveness of both the educator-led process and academic excellence. Instruction should focus more on real-world scenarios, which should come from the local neighbourhood, since to succeed as a teacher, it is best to act locally and think globally at this time. Breen and Mann (1997) have pointed to the magnitude of perceiving how teachers and learners intermingle in the classroom. In the beginning, the children accomplished the task with the help of teachers, and as time goes by, the students won't be dependent on them to accomplish the task. Conversely, P5 shared learning approaches, which create value in learning waves in spectrums of discussion, deliberation, and shared teaching values. P1 revealed that the collaborative practice is the centre of learning, and it is the nexus with reflective practices. Both participants shared similar analogies in collaborative learning practices.

### **Autonomy as a Teacher's Professional Development**

In Nepalese classrooms, learner autonomy and collaborative learning play a crucial

part because they empower students to take ownership, accept accountability for their education, and engage in the process. Hence, they will gain autonomy, and their thoughts have to be valued in the community on the periphery of empowerment. In order to solve the problem, we might implement many tactics to increase students' independence in the ELT (English Language Teaching) classroom. P4 expressed that autonomy is gaining greater control over methods of assessment by revealing:

The autonomy is a greater sense of control over assessment processes and a significant rise in teacher ownership. TPD boosts motivation and commitment to improving assessment practices and assisting teachers' professional growth. Online courses, workshops, seminars, certification, and other ongoing training opportunities were mentioned as opportunities for professional development. In this way, educators can stay current on the latest ideas, technologies, and evaluation practices.

P4 presents autonomous learning, explores self-driven, independent, self-motivated, self-aware, and cultural activities that support independent learning in language environments. Autonomy will encourage the resolution of specific issues while lowering obstacles and repercussions in education. This autonomy demonstrates how important autonomy is to enhancing learning language strategies. Hence, autonomy reflects progress and can self-monitor in collaborative activities with peers (Allwright 1990; Holec 1981). Learner autonomy allows students to develop learning skills within and beyond the classroom. SCT views professional development as involving social engagement in the learning process in addition to knowledge acquisition.

Learning is a fundamentally social activity rather than an autonomous process of discovery, according to Vygotsky's sociocultural theory. Autonomy in teacher professional development in accordance with a socially mediated process and the use of cultural tools to engage in self-regulated learning. The objective of the TPD framework is to improve teacher competence and motivation through the provision of need-based and result-oriented teacher development. (Thapaliya, 2016). In an educational setting, schoolchildren are not just simulated but are involved in collaboration with different external populations. Autonomy is an essential factor to be adopted in any classroom. Today's pupils will learn using digital resources. The portion of the process that includes tactics to support learning objectives is known as learners' autonomy. Both facilitators and students may play a critical role in fostering learners' autonomy. Within and outside of the classroom, library, or learning centres, facilitators can help with task selection, targeted tasks, and resource orientation. In order to reconstruct and shape the information, student collaboration may yield important results on its own. To encourage collaborative learning, P2 discussed that it is preferable to do away with the teacher-centred approach and implement autonomous learning in the classroom by mentioning:

Teachers typically have a bigger role in teaching and learning in traditional language teaching methods. In this way, the teachers control the classroom and their one-way means of imparting knowledge. However, teacher-centred instruction must give way to student-focused learning in the classroom to foster learners' autonomy.

For the improvement of students' learning autonomy, teachers have to change

the pattern of traditional teaching methods into student-centred ones. Lin and Reinders (2019) underlined that teachers' performance depends on clarity and ability in subject matter to students. Laister and Kober (2002) define collaborative learning as emerging from meaningful interactions, group-based learning achieved through massive discussion, discourse and sharing. Collaborative learning allows students to collaborate and exchange ideas with other participants. Specifically, P4 highlights autonomy in the stage of teachers' professional growth within the educational context, while P2 concentrates on 21st-century teaching approaches like collaborative learning, a supportive environment, and student-centred instruction. Both participants emphasise autonomous learning in the educational setting, but there are some differences in their perspectives. P2 addresses students' meaningful collaboration, and P4 signifies how autonomy shapes professional development mechanisms in influencing teacher autonomy.

### **Conclusion**

Overall, the study aimed to explore the role of collaboration and issues of collaborative learning in teacher education. The findings reveal that there are inconsistencies in group members' involvement, reflective practice in the form of collaboration, and autonomy in teachers' professional development. Unequal participation, passive collaborative learning highlighted among group members, resulted in equal contribution and hindered knowledge construction. As for the first research question, the findings indicate that collaboration helps teachers to identify weaknesses, strengths, and critical thinking concerning social as well as scaffolding in expertise and communication skills. Addressing the second research question, findings manifest that teacher autonomy empowers collaborative activities, student-centred approaches, equal participation, and learning in independent ways. Likewise, collaboration and introspective teaching foster inclusivity, collaborative, reflective practice, and teacher autonomy to deal with learning issues in diverse learners. On the other hand, autonomy reflects the idea of self-directed learning and accountability in empowering students and teachers in a collaborative context. Prior research underscores that collaborative learning helps to develop interpersonal skills, higher-order thinking, instructional innovation, and fruitful learning outcomes of English teachers' enrichment. The findings highlight the need for structured policies, accountability, responsibility, and feedback to ensure equitable engagement and motivation in collaborative domains. Policymakers, teachers, leaders, educators, and practitioners should think of providing resources, training, and assessment strategies to cultivate self-directed growth and responsiveness to diverse learner needs. The proposed future studies could investigate qualitative research on how collaborative learning practices influence teachers and students in large samples using an ethnographic lens.

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### ‘एकान्त’ कथामा रस

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#### लेखसार

यो लेखमा मनु ब्राजाकी (वि.स. १९९९-२०७४) द्वारा लिखित एकान्त कथालाई रससिद्धान्तका सैद्धान्तिक आधारमा विश्लेषण गरिएको छ। एकान्त कथा करुण रसमा केन्द्रित भई प्रियजनको मृत्युले उत्पन्न हुने पीडा, संवेदना र सामाजिक यथार्थलाई चित्रण गरिएको छ। भरतमुनिद्वारा प्रतिपादित रससिद्धान्तका आधारमा विभाव, अनुभाव, सञ्चारी भाव र स्थायी भावलाई कथामा कसरी प्रयोग गरिएको छ भन्ने पक्ष प्रष्ट पारिएको छ। गुणात्मक अनुसन्धान पद्धतिमा आधारित यो लेखमा प्राथमिक स्रोतका रूपमा एकान्त कथा र द्वितीयक स्रोतका रूपमा रससिद्धान्तसम्बन्धी कृतिहरूको प्रयोग गरिएको छ। कथामा मर्दै गरेको छोरा, उसका पिता र माता क्रमशः विषयालम्बन र आश्रयालम्बन विभावका रूपमा प्रस्तुत भएका छन् भने सहानुभूतियुक्त छिमेकीहरू र तिनका शब्दहरू तथा विलापमय वातावरण उद्दीपन विभाव हुन्। पात्रहरूको अश्रुपात, आत्तिने, मौनता र रुवाइ जस्ता शारीरिक चेष्टाहरू अनुभाव हुन्। दैन्य, निर्वेद, ग्लानी, हतोत्साह, जस्ता सञ्चारी भावहरूले शोक स्थायी भावलाई सुदृढ बनाएका छन्। यी सबै उपकरणहरूको संयोजनबाट सहृदय पाठकमा करुण रसको निष्पत्ति हुन्छ। पात्रको निजी पीडा पाठकको सामूहिक संवेदनामा रूपान्तरण हुने प्रक्रिया (रस साधारणीकरण) पनि कथामा सशक्त रूपमा देखा परेको छ। यसरी एकान्त कथाले विभाव, अनुभाव, सञ्चारी भाव र स्थायी भावको सन्तुलित प्रयोगबाट करुण रसको गहिरो अभिव्यञ्जना गरेको छ। कथा केवल पात्रको दुःखको वर्णन होइन, मानवीय संवेदनाको सार्वभौमिक अभिव्यक्ति बनेको छ जसले पाठकको मनमा करुण, सहानुभूति र आत्मपरकता जगाउन सफल भएको छ।

शब्दकुञ्जी : निर्वेद, रसउपकरण, रससिद्धान्त, रसास्वादन, सहृदय, साधारणीकरण

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## परिचय

‘एकान्त’ कथा नेपाली कथा भाग- ४ मा सङ्ग्रहित छ । वि.स. २०१९ मा ‘भन्याड’ शीर्षकको कथामार्फत नेपाली साहित्यमा पाइलो टेकेका आख्यानकार मनु ब्राजाकी विविध विषयवस्तुमा कथा लेख्ने कथाकारका रूपमा चिनिन्छन् । प्रस्तुत लेखमा उनको ‘एकान्त’ कथालाई रस उपकरणका कसीमा राखेर समीक्षा गरिएको छ । कथा सहानुभूति दिन आएका छिमेकिहरू र ‘ऊ’ पात्रको अन्तर्मनमा उब्जेका प्रतिक्रियालाई देखाउँदा करुण रसयुक्त बनेको छ । यसले कथालाई मर्मस्पर्शी र संवेदनायुक्त बनाएको छ । पात्रको मनबाट वस्तु (छिमेक) प्रतिको प्रतिक्रियालाई देखाउँदा करुण रस उद्घाटित भएकाले रसात्मक दृष्टिकोणले कथाको समीक्षा गर्नु उपयुक्त र महत्वपूर्ण छ ।

लोकजीवनमा श्रुतिकालदेखि नै प्रारम्भ भएको रस भरतमुनि आएपछि साहित्यमा समेत सर्वव्यापक र स्वीकार्य बनेको हो । भरतमुनीले स्थापित गरेको रससिद्धान्त पूर्वीय साहित्यशास्त्र परम्पराको जेठो र महत्वपूर्ण काव्यसिद्धान्त पनि हो । पूर्वीय साहित्यशास्त्रमा रससामग्रीहरूको संयोगबाट रस उत्पत्ति हुने उल्लेख छ । विभाव, अनुभाव र व्यभिचारी भावको संयोगबाट रस उत्पत्ति हुन्छ (भट्टराई, २०७७, पृ. १३२) । सहृदयका मनमा आनन्द मनोभाव उत्पन्न हुने स्थायीभावलाई रस भन्ने भरतमुनिको व्याख्यालाई उनीपछिका आचार्यहरूले काव्यसिद्धान्त तथा विभाव, अनुभाव र व्यभिचारीभावलाई रससामग्रीका रूपमा ग्रहण गर्दै आए ।

साहित्य लेखनको सुरुवातदेखि नै सिर्जनामा रसको प्रभाव र उपस्थिति छ । प्राथमिक कालमा वीर र भक्ति रससँगै हास्य, अद्भुत र करुण रस सिर्जनामा समेटिएको प्रमाण भानुभक्तीय रामायणलाई लिइन्छ । नेपाली साहित्यको माध्यमिक काल शृङ्गार रसको केन्द्रियतामा रहेको आचार्य (२०५२) बताउँछन् । शृङ्गार रससँगै माध्यमिक कालमा हास्य, अद्भुत, करुण र अन्य रसहरूले पनि स्थान पाएका छन् । आधुनिक कालमा लक्ष्मीप्रसाद देवकोटाका काव्य, गुरुप्रसाद मैनालीको कथा, लैनसिंह बाइदेलका उपन्यास, माधवप्रसाद धिमिरेका कविताहरूमा रस महत्वपूर्ण स्थानमा रहेको छ । आधुनिक नेपाली साहित्यमा देखा परेका प्रगतिवादी, विसङ्गतिवादी, नारीवादी, अस्तित्ववादी, नवचेतनवादी धाराका रचनामा समेत रसको उपस्थिति छ । प्राथमिक कालदेखि रचनामा प्रयोग हुँदै आएको करुण रसमा आश्रित कृतिहरूले निरन्तरता पाएका छन् ।

कुनै कारणले हृदयमा शोक उत्पन्न हुँदा त्यसलाई करुण रस भनिन्छ । यसको स्थायी भाव शोक हो । भट्टराई (२०७७) श्रापको प्रभावमा परेको आफन्त जनसितको वियोग, विभव नाश, हत्या, बन्धन, आँसुका ढिका आदि विभाव, अश्रुपात-विलाप आदि अनुभाव र वैराग्य, खिन्नता, पश्चाताप, हतोत्साह, थकावट, आवेश आदि यस रसका व्यभिचारी भाव भएको बताउँछन् (पृ. १३९) । यसले करुण रसमा मृतक वा विपत्तिमा परेका प्रियमान्छे वा विनिष्ट वस्तु विभाव, ती व्यक्ति वा वस्तुको सम्झना दिने कुराहरु उद्दीपन विभाव र विवर्णता, उच्छ्वास, बेहोस आदि यसका सञ्चारी भाव हुन् । प्रस्तुत लेखमा मनु ब्राजाकीको एकान्त कथामा करुण रसको अभिव्यक्त गर्न यस्ता उपकरणहरूसमेत देखाइएको छ । यस क्रममा कथामा करुण रसका उपकरणको प्रयोग, साधारणीकरण र रसाभिव्यक्तिको प्रक्रियासमेत उल्लेख गरिएको छ । कृतिहरूलाई विभिन्न सिद्धान्तका आधारमा अध्ययन विश्लेषण गरिदै आएको सन्दर्भमा एकान्त कथाको तदअनुरूप विश्लेषण गर्नु समीक्षाको निरन्तरता मात्र होइन प्राज्ञिक क्षेत्रको कर्तव्य पनि हो । उपर्युक्त प्रायोगिक कार्यहरूमा विभाव, अनुभाव र व्यभिचारीभावका आधारमा कथाहरूको विश्लेषण गरिएपनि कथामा साधारणीकरणको अवस्थामुलक विश्लेषण गरिएको छैन । तसर्थ प्रस्तुत लेख अरुभन्दा भिन्न र विशिष्ट रहेको छ र यसले रससिद्धान्तको सैद्धान्तिक

र प्रायोगिक अध्ययन अध्यापन गराउने सबैलाई सहयोग गर्नेछ ।

### पूर्वकार्यको समीक्षा

लेखमा आचार्य (२०५२) ले नेपाली साहित्यको प्रारम्भिक चरण वीर र भक्ति रस तथा माध्यमिक चरण शृङ्गार रसको कन्द्रीयता रहेको बताएका छन् । यसले पूर्वीय साहित्य मात्रै नभएर नेपाली साहित्य पनि रससिद्धान्तका केन्द्रीयतामा सिर्जना हुने र तदअनुरूप समालोचना गर्ने प्रवृत्तिले निरन्तरता पाएको पुष्टि गर्छ । उनले भने जस्तै अहिलेसम्म नेपाली साहित्यमा रसको उपस्थिति र कृतिहरूको रस केन्द्रित समीक्षाले निरन्तरता पाएको छ । त्यसकै निरन्तरता स्वरूप एकान्त कथाको समीक्षा गरिएको हो । पोखरेल (२०५९) ले कवि घिमिरेको रचनायोगमा 'कालीगण्डकी' र 'दुलही हिमाल कञ्चनजङ्घा' कविता, 'राजेश्वरी' खण्डकाव्य, 'शकुन्तला' गीतिनाटक र 'किन्नर किन्नरी' अधिगीत सङ्ग्रहको समीक्षा गरेका छन् । उनले 'कालीगण्डकी' र 'दुलही हिमाल कञ्चनजङ्घा' कवितामा शान्त रस, 'राजेश्वरी' खण्डकाव्यमा करुण रस, 'शकुन्तला' गीतिनाटकमा शृङ्गार रस तथा 'किन्नर किन्नरी' अधिगीतमा रस परिणत हुन नसकेको बताएका छन् । यसले रसको सैद्धान्तिक स्वरूप निर्धारण गर्न सहयोग गरेको छ । पूर्वकार्यका रूपमा केशव प्रसाद उपाध्याय (२०६७) को पूर्वीय साहित्य सिद्धान्तलाई पनि लिइएको छ । उनले पुस्तकको रसवादी मान्यता र त्यसको विवेचना खण्डमा रससिद्धान्तको चर्चा गरेका छन् । पुस्तकमा रसको अर्थ, इतिहास, स्वरूप, रसनिष्पत्तिप्रक्रिया, रसका उपकरण, रससुत्रको व्याख्या, रसको साधारणीकरण, सङ्ख्या, लक्षण र उदाहरणको विस्तृत चर्चा गरिएको छ । पुस्तकबाट रससिद्धान्तको सैद्धान्तिक अवधारणा लिने तथा तदअनुरूप एकान्त कथामा रसको समीक्षा गरिएको छ । नेपाली रस परिचयमार्फत शर्मा (२०७०)ले कृतिमा रस समाग्रीको उपस्थिति, प्रयोग र तिनको साधारणीकरणको समीक्षा गर्न सैद्धान्तिक र प्रायोगिक आधारहरू उदाहरणसहित उपलब्ध गराएका छन् । पुस्तकमा रसको अर्थ, रसका सामग्री, सञ्चारी भावहरूको उदाहरण, स्थायी भावहरूको परिचय, रसनिष्पत्ति, रससुत्रको व्याख्या र साधारणीकरण तथा रसभावहरूको दशा उल्लेख गरेका छन् । उदाहरणसहित सामग्रीहरूको व्याख्या गरिएकाले पुस्तकले एकान्त कथामा रहेका रससामग्रीहरूको समीक्षा गर्न सहयोग गरेको छ । भट्टराई (२०७७) ले अनुवाद गरेको भरतमुनिको नाट्यशास्त्रमा रससिद्धान्तको भरतमुनिकालीन सन्दर्भ र परिचय, रसका उपकरणहरू तथा सहृदयसम्म रसको उपस्थितिका विषयमा श्रेष्ठ मुनिहरू र भरतमुनिका विच भएका संवाद पुस्तकको छैटौँ अध्यायमा छन् । यिनले रससिद्धान्त उपलब्ध गराएर समीक्षित कथामा रस सामग्री तथा तिनको साधारणीकरणसम्बद्ध समीक्षा गर्न सहयोग गरेको छ । यसरी प्रस्तुत शोध लेख तयार पार्न आचार्य (२०५२) को नेपाली साहित्यको इतिहास, उपाध्याय (२०६७) को पूर्वीय साहित्य सिद्धान्त, शर्मा (२०७०) को नेपाली रस परिचय र भट्टराई (२०७७) ले अनुवाद गरेको भरतमुनिको नाट्यशास्त्रलाई सैद्धान्तिक पूर्वकार्यका रूपमा लिइएको छ ।

पोखरेल (२०५६) ले 'पापिनी आमा', 'गौरी', 'राजेश्वरी', 'राष्ट्रनिर्माता' र 'धर्तीमाता' खण्डकाव्यको विवेचना गर्नेक्रममा विषयवस्तु र भावविधान अन्तर्गत खण्डकाव्यहरूमा रसको चर्चा गरेका छन् । उनले पापिनी आमा, गौरी र राजेश्वरी खण्डकाव्यमा करुण रस, राष्ट्रनिर्मातामा वीर रस तथा धर्तीमाता खण्डकाव्यमा भक्ति रसको प्रधानता रहेको उल्लेख गरेका छन् । उनको माधव घिमिरेका विशिष्ट खण्डकाव्यबाट रसको सैद्धान्तिक र प्रायोगिक निरूपणमा सहयोग लिइएको छ । कृतिहरूमा निहित रस विश्लेषण गर्ने क्रममा गैरे

(२०७९) ले भेटिएकी देवी कथाको रससाग्रीका आधारमा विश्लेषण गरेका छन्। रससाग्रीका आधारमा कथाको समीक्षा गर्ने क्रममा कथाको विकासक्रमसँगै विभाव विकासको चर्चा गरेका छन्। उनले रससामग्रीहरू विभाव, अनुभाव, व्यभिचारी भाव तथा स्थायी भावको आधारमा कथाको समीक्षा गरेका छन्। कथाका घटनाक्रमहरूले शोक सिर्जना गरेको हुँदा कथा करुणरस व्याप्त भएको निष्कर्ष निकालिएको छ। पौड्याल (सन् २०२४) ले गुरुप्रसाद मैनालीको अभागी कथामा करुण रसको समीक्षा गरेका छन्। उनले रस उपकरणहरूका आधारमा कथाको विश्लेषण गरेका छन्। कथाको विश्लेषण गर्न आलम्बन विभाव र उद्दीपन विभाव तथा अनुभावशृङ्खलाको पनि कथाका सन्दर्भसहित विश्लेषण गरी कथा करुण रसयुक्त भएको निष्कर्ष निकालिएको छ। त्यसै गरी तवारी (सन् २०२२) ले 'सहिद' कथामा रस शीर्षकमा अनुसन्धानमुलक लेख प्रकाशन गरेका छन्। लेख रससामग्री र स्थायीभावको आधारमा कथाको विश्लेषणमा आधारित छ। कथाहरूलाई रससिद्धान्तका आधारमा विश्लेषण गर्दै तिनमा करुण रस व्याप्त रहेको निष्कर्ष निकालिएका उपर्युक्त लेखहरूले एकान्त कथामा उपस्थित रससामग्रीको पहिचान र तदनुसूच समीक्षा गर्न महत्वपूर्ण सहयोग गरेका छन्।

### अध्ययन विधि

यो लेख गुणात्मक अनुसन्धान ढाँचा र पुस्तकालयीय स्रोतको उपयोग गरेर तयार पारिएको छ। लेख एकान्त कथालाई प्राथमिक र रससिद्धान्तलाई द्वितीयक स्रोतका रूपमा स्वीकार गरी समीक्षात्मक विधिबाट तयार पारिएको छ। एकान्त कथाको समीक्षा गर्न वर्णन, विश्लेषण र व्याख्यान विधिको समेत उपयोग गरिएको छ। कथाबाट साक्षहरू लिई तिनैबाट रस सामग्रीको प्रयोग र तिनको साधारणीकरणको समेत समीक्षा गरिएको छ। विभाव, अनुभाव, व्यभिचारीभाव, स्थायीभाव र साधारणीकरणको आधारमा समीक्षा गरी कथामा करुण रस निहित रहेको निष्कर्ष निकालिएको छ।

### एकान्त कथामा रस उपकरण

लेखका लागि रसका उपकरण, करुण रस र यसको साधारणीकरणलाई सैद्धान्तिक आधार बनाइएको छ। मानवका मनमा स्थायी रूपमा रहेका भावना वा धारणालाई विभाव, अनुभाव र व्यभिचारीभावको संयोगले जागृत गराउने हुँदा यिनलाई रसका उपकरण भनिन्छ। शर्मा (२०७०) का अनुसार रस उपकरणहरूको सम्मिलनबाट प्रेक्षकका मनमा रहेका इच्छा र बुझाई जस्ता स्थायी भावरूपी आनन्दात्मक मनोभावको अवस्था नै रस हो (पृ. २)। भट्टराई (२०७७) ले पनि विभावादीको संयोगबाट रस निष्पत्ति हुने बताएका छन् (पृ. १३३)। यसरी रस सामग्रीको उपस्थितिले रस निष्पत्ति हुने भएकाले विभाव, अनुभाव र व्यभिचारीभावलाई रसका उपकरण भनिएको हो। एकान्त कथाका रस उपकरणहरूको समीक्षा गर्दा कथा करुण रससम्बद्ध रहेको पुष्टि हुन्छ।

### विभाव

उपाध्याय (२०६७) यथार्थ जीवनमा महिला र पुरुषमा रहने सम्भोग, रिस, हेला, करुणा आदि मनोभावहरूलाई पुष्पित पार्नमा कारक बन्ने व्यक्तित्व र परिवेश आदि नै साहित्यमा विभाव हुने बताउँछन् (पृ. २८)। साहित्यिक रचनामा उपस्थित हुने पात्र र परिवेश जसले स्थायी भावलाई जागृत गराएर आस्वादनयोग्य

बनाउँछन् तिनैलाई विभाव भन्ने गरिन्छ । विभाव आलम्बन र उद्दीपन गरी दुई किसिमका छन् । स्थायी भाव उत्पन्न गराउने आलम्बन विभाव हुन् । “जुन वस्तु वा पात्रका कारण मनमा रहेको इच्छा वा धारणा स्थायी भाव रसको रूपमा व्यक्त हुन्छ, त्यही आलम्बन विभाव हो” (शर्मा, २०७०, पृ. ४) । आलम्बनका बारेमा उल्लेख गरिएको यो भनाइका आधारमा आलम्बन विभावले रस जागृत गराउने कारकको काम गर्दछन् । यी दुई किसिमका रहेका छन्, तिनीहरू विषयालम्बन र आश्रयालम्बन हुन् । यी आलम्बनका बारेमा भनिएको छ, “जसलाई लक्ष्य गरेर स्थायी भाव अङ्कुरित हुन्छ त्यसलाई विषयालम्बन र जुन व्यक्तिमा स्थायी भाव जागृत्त्यसलाई आश्रयालम्बन भनिन्छ” (उपाध्याय, २०६७, पृ.२८) । जसलाई देखेर स्थायी भाव जागृत्त्यो विषयालम्बन हुन्छ भने जुन पात्रमा स्थायी भाव उत्पन्न हुन्छ त्यो आश्रयालम्बन हुन्छ । त्यसैगरी स्थायी भावलाई उद्दीप्त पार्ने तत्त्व, वातावरण, स्थान, समय आदि उद्दीपन विभाव हुन् । उद्दीप्त पार्न सहयोग गर्ने नै उद्दीपन विभाव हुन् । “आलम्बनका रूप, गुण, लुगा कपडा, गरगहना, शृङ्गारपटार, कपाल, ओठ, आँखाका साथै चन्द्रमा, चन्द्रकिरण, नदी किनार, वन बुट्यान, पहाड, नदी, भमरा, प्रेमिल परेवा, कोकिल आदि प्राकृतिक तत्त्व र वातावरण र देश, काल आदि उद्दीपन विभाव हुन्” (पृ.२९) । आलम्बनका रूप, गुण, शोभा बढाउने वस्तुका साथै जून, जुनेली, नदी किनार, पानीको छाल, बगैचा, शान्त वन, पहाड, भरना, भमरा, चरा, पुतली, कलकल बगेको खोला, नदी, कोयली, परेवा, ढुकुर जस्ता प्राकृतिक तत्त्व र वातावरण र देश काल तथा जुन प्राकृत वस्तु, जुन स्थान, जुन समय र परिवेशले रसलाई जागृत गर्न उद्दीपनको काम गर्दछन् तिनीहरूलाई उद्दीपन विभाव भन्ने गरिन्छ ।

सहृदयको मनोभावहरूलाई जागृत पार्नमा कारक बन्ने व्यक्तित्व र परिवेश आदि विभाव हुन् । “प्रियजनको मृत्यु, नाश आदि करुण रसका विभाव हुन् । श्रापको क्लेशमा परेको प्रियजन, वियोग, विभ्रव नाश, हत्या, बन्धन, विद्रव, उपघात आदि विभावबाट यो रस उत्पन्न हुन्छ” (भट्टराई, २०३६, पृ. १३९) । यो भनाइलाई हेर्दा हेर्दा प्रियजनको विछोड, धन क्षय, हत्या, परिवन्ध, देशनिकाला, अनर्थकारकमा लागेको अवस्था नै करुण रसका विभाव हुन् । कथाको पृ. १६८ हेर्ने, “ऊ रोकएको पनि छैन, हाँसेको पनि छैन । हाँस्ने त केही कुरै छैन । भित्र कोठामा छोरो मर्दै छ । सायद मरिसक्यो होला । उसलाई केही थाहा छैन । घर भरि घुइँचो छ । स्वास्नी विलाप गर्दै छे, ।” यसमा मर्दै गरेको छोरा विषयालम्बन हो भने ऊ पात्र र विलाप गर्ने ऊ पात्रकी श्रीमती आश्रयालम्बन हुन् । छोराको मृत्युले शोकमग्न ऊ पात्रले चुरोट सल्काएर अरुतिर हेर्नु, निधार पुछ्नु, उसलाई पिसाब गर्न जाऊ जस्तो लाग्नु घटनाले ऊ पात्रलाई र विलाप गर्ने मृत छोराकी आमामा मृतक (विषालम्बन)को प्रभाव परेकाले उनीहरू आश्रयालम्बन हुन् । उद्दीपन विभावका लागि न रुन न हाँस्न सकेको ऊ पात्रको अवस्था, घरभरिको घुइँचो, ऊ पात्रकी श्रीमतीको विलापलाई प्रयोग गरिएको छ । सहानुभूति दिन आएका छिमेकीहरूका सहानुभूति र विष्मयबोधक शब्दहरू, यस्तो अवस्थामा के भन्नु पर्छ ? उसलाई थाहा छैन भन्ने समाख्याताको भनाई र भोक्राएर बसेका छिमेकीहरू पनि उद्दीपन विभाव हुन् । त्यसै गरी समाख्याताको ‘भित्र कोठामा अघैर्यको बाढी चलेको छ (पृ. १६९-१७०)’ भन्ने भनाई र रामेश्वरप्रसादकी श्रीमतीको धुँक्क र सुँक्कको स्वरलाई पनि उद्दीपन विभावका रूपमा लिइन्छ । समाख्याताले वर्णन गरेको ‘ऊ आत्तिन लागेको, चारवटा चुरोट खाएको, पिसाप फेर्न खोजे पनि आँसु जस्तै नआइराखेको पिसाप तथा च्वाकच्वाक चुकचुक (पृ. १७०)’ जस्ता सन्दर्भ र छिमेकीहरूको विष्मयादीबोध शब्दहरूले पनि करुण रसको उद्दीपन विभावको काम गरेको छ । उसकी श्रीमतीको विलाप, विलापमा गरिएको छोराको स्मरण तथा छिमे

कीहरूले बाँस र खुकुरी ल्याउन गरिएको सम्वाद पनि उद्दीपन विभाव हुन् । त्यसैगरी समाख्याताले वर्णन गरेको ऊ पात्र शौचलयतिर गएको, शौचालयभित्र टोलाएको र एक्कासी टुक्रुक्क बसेर भावविट्ठल भएर रुन थालेको सन्दर्भ पनि उद्दीपन विभाव हुन् ।

## अनुभाव

स्थायी भावको महसुस गराउने चेस्टा अनुभाव हो । अनुभावको वारेमा शर्मा (२०७०) भन्छन्, “ मनोगत भावहरूलाई व्यक्त गर्ने शारीरिक चेष्टालाई अनुभाव भनिन्छ” (पृ. ४) । सहृदयमा विभावहरू उत्पन्न भएपछि मात्र उत्पन्न हुने भएकाले यिनलाई अनुभाव भनिएको हो । उपाध्याय (२०६७)का अनुसार जसले वास्तविक जीवनमा सीता आदि र चन्द्र आदि आ-आफ्ना आलम्बन र उद्दीपनका कारणहरूद्वारा राम आदिका मनमा जागेका स्थायी भावहरूलाई बाहिर ल्याएर कार्यको संज्ञा पाउँछन्, ती नै काव्य र नाटकमा अनुभाव कहिन्छन्” (पृ. २९) । स्थायी भावलाई प्रकाशमा ल्याउने, प्रदर्शनमा ल्याउने नै अनुभाव हुन् । अनुभावले स्थायी भावको अनुभूतितिर लैजाने काम गर्दछन् । शर्मा (२०७०) सुम्सुम्याउनु, मुख बिगार्नु, आँसु झार्नु, रातोपिरो हुनु, आक्रमण, रुनु, नाक खुम्च्याउनु, वाल्ल पर्नु, विरक्त हुनु आदि अनुभाव भएको बताउँछन् (पृ. ६) । सहृदयका मनका स्थायी भावहरूलाई व्यक्त गर्ने शारीरिक चेष्टालाई अनुभाव भनिन्छ । “आँसु झर्ने, विलाप गर्ने, मुख सुक्नु, मुखको रङ्ग उड्नु, शरीर लत्रङ्ग पर्नु, लामो सास फेर्नु, स्मृति लोप हुनु आदि अनुभाव हुन्” (भट्टराई, २०३६, पृ. १३९) । यस कथनले अश्रुपात, विलाप, मुख सुक्नु, मुखको रङ्ग उड्नु, शरीर लत्रङ्ग पर्नु, लामो सास फेर्नु, स्मृति लोप हुनु अनुभाव हुन् भन्ने पुष्टि गर्छ । ऊ पात्रकी श्रीमतीले विलाप गरेको, ‘कठै ! कति कलिलो उमेरमै कूर कालले लग्यो’ (पृ. १६८) र ‘छिमेकी रामेश्वरप्रसादकी स्वास्नी गौरको धुँक्क र सुँक्कको स्वर सबैभन्दा टड्कारो भएर बाहिर आइरहेछ’ तथा ऊ एक्कासि टुक्रुक्क बसेको र भावविट्ठल भएर रुन थालेको (पृ. १७०) सन्दर्भमा करुण रसको अनुभाव पाइन्छ । त्यसैगरी आत्तिन थालेको ऊ पात्र, सहानुभूति दिन आएका छिमेकीहरूको च्वाकच्वाक चुकचुक र विष्मयबोध शब्दहरू पनि अनुभाव हुन् ।

## सञ्चारी भाव

मनमा बारबार, नियमित र क्षणिक रूपमा आउने तत्त्व सञ्चारी भाव हुन् । सञ्चारी भावलाई व्यभिचारी वा अस्थायी भाव पनि भनिन्छ । उपाध्याय (२०६७) का अनुसार कहिले देखिने, कहिले नदेखिने तर निरन्तर देखिने खेद, विरक्ति आदि व्यभिचारी भाव हुन् (पृ. २८) । यिनीहरू पानीको फोहोरा भैं उठ्दै हराउँदै जान्छन्, क्षणिक हुन्छन्, आउँछन्, जान्छन् । सञ्चारी भावको प्रवृत्तिका सन्दर्भमा भनिएको छ, “यी उठ्दै र हराउँदै गर्ने अर्थात सञ्चरण गर्ने भावहरूले प्रेमरूप स्थायी भावलाई नै पुष्टि गर्दछन्” (शर्मा, २०७०, पृ. ६) । सहृदयका मनमा स्थायीभाव जागृत भएपछि यसको पुष्टिका लागि आउने भावलाई नै सञ्चारी भाव भनिन्छ । करुण रसका व्यभिचारी भावका सन्दर्भमा गोविन्दप्रसाद भट्टराईले अनुवाद सम्पादन गरेको भरतमुनिको नाट्याशास्त्रमा भनिएको छ, “पछुतो, हतोत्साह, चिन्ता, उत्सुकता, आवेग, सन्देह, अनुराग, श्रम, भय, विषाद, विवश, रोग, जडता, नम्रता, उन्माद, मूर्छा, डर, अल्लिखन, मरण, स्तम्भ, वैवर्ण्य, रुवाई स्वर आदि करुण रसका व्यभिचारी भाव हुन्” (पृ. १३९) । यिनका आधारमा कथामा प्रस्तुत व्यभिचारी भावका रूपमा न रुन सकेको न हाँस्न सकेको तथा यस्तो अवस्थामा के भन्ने थाहा नभएको अवस्था (पृ. १६८) तथा ‘सहानुभूति प्रकट गर्ने

‘हरू आएर यति धेरै धैर्यका बिटाहरू बुझाए जसले गर्दा उसले कतै राख्ने ठाउँ भेट्टाएको छैन (पृ. १६९)’ भन्ने अवस्थाले दैन्य सञ्चारी भाव व्यक्त गरेका छन् । रामेश्वरकी श्रीमतीको धुँक्क र सुँक्कको स्वर (पृ. १७०)ले निर्वेद तथा सञ्चारी भाव जागृत गराएको छ । त्यसैगरी पटक पटक चुरोट खाएको पिसाप नआएको पनि पिसाप गर्न खोजेको तथा आँसु पनि नआएको सन्दर्भ (पृ. १७०)ले ग्वानी (हतोत्साह) सञ्चारी भाव देखाएको छ । ऊसकी श्रीमतीले विलाप गर्दा पटक पटक गरेको ‘मेरो बाबू, मेरो राजा (पृ. १७०)’ शब्दले व्याधि तथा चुपचाप शौचलामा गएर टोलाएको सन्दर्भ (पृ. १७०)ले ग्लानी र व्याधि तथा शौचालय भित्र भावविवृतल भएर रोएको सन्दर्भ (पृ. १७०)ले अश्रुस्वर सञ्चारी भावको काम गरेका छन् ।

## स्थायी भाव : शोक

विभाव, अनुभाव र सञ्चारी भावको बलियो उपस्थितिले कथालाई करुण रसयुक्त बनाएको छ । रसका यी उपकरणहरूको संयोजनबाट मनमा स्थायी भाव उत्पन्न हुने गर्छन् । “सहृदयको मनमप्तिस्कमा निष्कृत्य अवस्थामा स्थायी रूपले रहेका संस्कार, मनोविकार वा वासनाजन्य भावलाई स्थायी भाव भनिन्छ” (सुवेदी, सन् २०१५) । मानव मनमा रहेका यी संस्कार, मनोविकार वा वासनाजन्य भाव नै स्थायी भाव हुन् । “मानव हृदयमा रहेका सम्भोग, हाँसो, दुःख, रिस, उत्साह, डर, घृणा, अचम्म, पश्चाताप आदि आवेग वा संवे गहरू स्थायी भाव हुन्” (सुवेदी, सन् २०१५) । अर्थात् मानव मनमा स्थायी रूपमा रहने आवेग वा संवेगहरू स्थायी भाव हुन् । कृति वा रचनाको उत्तम लक्ष्य नै स्थायी भावको अभिव्यक्ति हुने गर्छ (उपाध्याय, २०६७, पृ. ३१) । कथाले स्थायी भावका रूपमा शोकलाई उत्कर्षमा पुऱ्याएको छ र यसले कथालाई करुण रसमय बनाएको छ । प्रियजन (छोरा)को मरणका कारण पाठकका मनमा करुण रस व्यक्त हुन्छ । “पुत्र वियोग आदि प्रियजनसितको वियोग वा तिनको विपद् वा मृत्यु देखेर वा सुनेर अथवा प्रियवस्तुको नाश हेरेर, देखेर अथवा सुनेर मनमा उत्पन्न हुने व्याकुलताबाट करुणरस उत्पन्न हुन्छ” (उपाध्याय, २०६७, पृ. २८) । करुणरस उत्पन्न हुन प्रियव्यक्ति वा वस्तुको मरण वा नाश हुनु पर्दछ । “यस रसमा शोचनीय वा नष्ट भएको वस्तु आलम्बन मानिन्छ भने शोचनीय दाह आदि व्यवस्था उद्दीपन मानिएको छ” (विश्वनाथ, ३ : २२२, २२३, शर्मा, २०७०, पृ. ५७) । प्रियजन वा वस्तुको मरण र नाशपछि उत्पन्न हुने यी विभाव, अनुभाव र सञ्चारी भावले पात्र, पाठक, श्रोताका हृदयलाई द्रवित गराई उनीहरूमा शोक स्थायी भाव जागृत भएर करुण रस अभिव्यक्त हुन्छ । उपर्युक्त किसिमका रस उपकरणहरू (विभाव, अनुभाव र सञ्चारी भाव)ले कथामा करुण रस पुष्टि गरेका छन् ।

मृत्युको संघारमा रहेको छोरा, ऊ पात्र र विलाप गर्ने ऊ पात्रकी श्रीमती आलम्बन विभाव र न रुन न हाँस्न सकेको ऊ पात्रको अवस्था, घरभरिको घुइँचो, ऊ पात्रकी श्रीमतीको विलाप, छिमेकीहरूका सहानुभूति र विष्मयबोधक शब्दहरू, यस्तो अवस्थामा के भन्नु पर्छ ? उसलाई थाहा छैन भन्ने समाख्याताको भनाई र भोक्राएर बसेका छिमेकीहरू, रामेश्वरप्रसादकी श्रीमतीको धुँक्क र सुँक्कको स्वर, छिमेकीहरूको च्वाकच्वाक चुकचुक, छिमेकीहरूको विष्मयादीबोध शब्दहरू, उसकी श्रीमतीले विलापमा गरेको छोराको स्मरण तथा छिमे कीहरूले बाँस र खुकुरी ल्याउन भन्दै गरेको सम्वाद, समाख्याताले वर्णन गरेको ऊ पात्र शौचलयतिर गएको, शौचालयभित्र टोलाएको र एक्कासी टुकुक्क बसेर भावविवृतल भएर रुन थालेको सन्दर्भ उद्दीपन विभाव हुन् । त्यसैगरी ऊ पात्रकी श्रीमतीको विलाप, ऊ पात्रको अवस्था, रामेश्वरप्रसादकी श्रीमतीको धुँक्क र सुँक्क स्वर, ऊ पात्रको छोराको मरणमा सहानुभूति दिन आएका छिमेकीहरूको च्वाकच्वाक चुकचुक र विष्मयबोधक

शब्दहरू, शौचालय गएर ऊ पात्रलाई भावविह्वल बनेर रोएको सन्दर्भ अनुभाव हुन् ।

न रुन सकेको न हाँसन सकेको तथा यस्तो अवस्थामा के भन्ने थाहा नभएको अवस्था देखाउँदै दैन्य, रामेश्वरकी श्रीमतीको धुँक्क र सुँक्कको स्वरले निर्वेद, पटक पटक चुरोट खाएको पिसाप नआएको पनि पिसाप गर्न खोजेको तथा आँसु पनि नआएको सन्दर्भले ग्वानी (हतोत्साह), उसकी श्रीमतीले विलाप गर्दा पटक पटक गरेको 'मेरो बाबू, मेरो राजा' शब्दले व्याधि, ऊ पात्र चुपचाप शौचलामा गएर टोलाएको ग्लानी र व्याधि तथा शौचालय भित्र भावविह्वल भएर रोएको सन्दर्भले अश्रुस्वरले कथामा करुण रसको सञ्चारी भावलाई उपस्थित गराएका छन् ।

उपर्युक्त किसिमका विभाव, अनुभाव र दैन्य, निर्वेद, ग्लानी (हतोत्साह), व्याधि जस्ता सञ्चारी भावका माध्यमबाट शोक भाव व्यक्त भई करुण रस उद्दीप्त छ ।

### रस साधारणीकरणको पक्ष

रसलाई आनन्दको रूपमा लिँदा साधारणीकरण निष्पत्तिको प्रक्रिया मानिन्छ। रससिद्धान्तमा रसनिष्पत्तिको व्याख्या गर्ने सन्दर्भमा भट्टनायकले साधारणीकरणको चर्चा गरेका छन् । रसनिष्पत्ति नभईकन रसानन्द नहुने भएकाले साधारणीकरणलाई रससिद्धान्तको मेरुदण्डका रूपमा लिइन्छ । साधारणीकरणलाई रसवादको मेरुदण्ड बताउँदै उपाध्याय (२०६७) भन्छन्, “रसको प्रकाशन कसरी हुन्छ ? पात्रका अभिनयले कसरी सहृदयका मनका भाव जगाएर रसरूप प्राप्त गर्दछ ? भन्ने प्रश्नहरूको एउटै उत्तर- साधारणीकरण हो । उसैले साधारणीकरण रसवादको मेरुदण्ड हो” (पृ. ५५) । यसरी हेर्दा रसको प्रकाशन, निष्पत्ति हुने प्रक्रिया र सहृदयका मनमा रसाभाव उत्पन्न गराउने प्रक्रिया नै साधारणीकरण हो भन्न सकिन्छ । साधारणीकरणको अर्थ विशिष्टलाई सामान्य बनाउनु भन्ने हुन्छ । “जुन भाव कुनै व्यक्तिविशेषित सम्बन्धित हुन्छ त्यसलाई सार्वजनिक बनाउनु नै साधारणीकरण हो” (पृ. ५५) । कृतिमा भएका, रचनामा सिर्जना गरिएका पात्रमा निहित भएका भावहरूलाई पाठक स्रोताको भावमा रूपान्तरण हुने प्रक्रियालाई साधारणीकरण भनिन्छ । भट्टनायकले साधारणीकरणको सन्दर्भमा भनेका कुरालाई उपाध्यायले यसरी उल्लेख गरेका छन् “विशिष्ट पात्रमा स्फुरित हुन आउने रतिभाव सामान्य पुरुष वा नायकमा स्फुरित हुन आउने रतिभावमा रूपान्तरित हुन्छ र यही साधारणीकरण हो” (पृ. ५५)। यसरी साहित्यिक रचनामा व्याप्त पात्रका रतिभावहरू सामान्य पुरुषमा रूपान्तरिक हुनु नै साधारणीकरण हो । रचना/कृतिको मूलभावसँग पाठक/स्रोताको भावको सम्बन्ध स्थापित गर्ने कार्य नै साधारणीकरण हो भन्ने निष्कर्ष निकाल्न सकिन्छ । शर्मा (२०७०)को भनाई मान्ने हो भने “साधारणीकरण भनेको काव्यको मूल भावसँग सामाजिकको अर्थात् दर्शक/स्रोता/पाठक/प्रेक्षकको सम्बन्धलाई एकाकार तुल्याउनु हो” (पृ. ४) । यसरी हेर्दा गरेको नाटकको दृष्य, सुन्दै गरेको रचना वा पढ्दै गरेका साहित्यको कृतिको भावसँग दर्शक, स्रोता वा पाठकको भाव एउटै भएको अवस्था नै रसको साधारणीकरणको अवस्था हो ।

एकान्त कथामा ऊ, उसकी श्रीमती, उनीहरूको मृत छोरा, छिमेकी र उनीहरूका सहानुभूतियुक्त कथनहरू जस्ता रससामग्रीका साथै शोकको साधारणीकरणका माध्यमबाट करुण रसको निष्पत्ति भएको छ । न्यौपाने (सन् २०१९) का अनुसार पात्र, स्थान, काल, परिवेश, पात्रका कार्यहरूका साथै भावकनिष्ठ स्थायीभावको समेत विशिष्टभाव समाप्त भई तिनीहरू सामान्य अवस्थामा अनुभूत हुनु साधारणीकरण हो (पृ. १२५) । साधारणीकरणको प्रक्रियापछि मात्रै रसानन्द प्राप्त हुने विद्वानहरूको भनाई छ । एकान्त कथालाई

कारुणिक बनाउन रससामग्रीको देहाय अनुसार साधारणीकरण भई पाठकमा समेत शोकभाव उत्पन्न गराएको छ ।

कथामा विषयालम्बन विभावका रूपमा आएको ऊ पात्रको मृतक छोरो र आश्रयालम्बनका रूपमा आएका ऊ पात्र र उसकी श्रीमती, रामेश्वरप्रसादकी श्रीमती तथा न रुने न हाँस्ने अवस्थामा पुगेको ऊ पात्रको अवस्था, घरभरिको घुइँचो, ऊसकी श्रीमतीको विलाप, सहानुभूति दिन उपस्थित भएका छिमेकीहरूको सहानुभूतियुक्त भनाइहरू, भोक्राएर बसेका छिमेकीहरूको उपस्थितिले मृतकका बुबा र आमालाई मात्रै शोकभावसम्म पुऱ्याएको छैन छोरोका मृत्युका कारण दैन्य अवस्थामा पुगेको ऊ र विलाप गर्ने उसकी श्रीमती, समाख्याताले ऊ पात्रको बारेमा गरेको वर्णन, छिमेकीहरूका विष्मयसूचक शब्दहरू जस्ता उद्दीपन विभाव र समाख्याताले देखाएको ऊ पात्रको अवस्थाले उद्दीपनमार्फत विभावको साधारणीकरण हुँदा पाठकले आफू र ऊ पात्रको छोरोको मृत्यु भएको सन्दर्भ विसिएर आफ्नै प्रियजनको मृत्यु भएको अनुभूति गर्दछ र विभावको साधारणीकरण हुन्छ ।

विभावका कारण पाठकका मनमा शोक भाव उद्दीप्त भई सकेपछि ऊ पात्रकी श्रीमतीको विलाप, ऊ पात्रको अवस्था र रामेश्वरप्रसादकी श्रीमतीको घुँक्क र सुँक्क स्वर, आत्तिन थालेको ऊ पात्र, उसको छोराको मरणमा सान्त्वना दिन आएका छिमेकीहरूको च्वाकच्वाक चुकचुक र विष्मयबोधक शब्दहरू, ऊ पात्रकी श्रीमतीको विलाप, शौचालय गएर ऊ पात्रलाई भावविह्वल बनेर रोएको सन्दर्भले अनुभावहरूको समेत साधारणीकरण भएको र कथा पठनका क्रममा पनि यी अनुभावहरू देखा पर्दछन् । कथाका पात्रहरूमा प्रयोग गरिएको अनुभावले पाठकमा समेत शारीरिक चेष्टा उत्पन्न भई अनुभावको साधारणीकरण भएको छ ।

अनुभावको साधारणीकरणपछि न रुन सकेको न हाँस्न सकेको, ऊ पात्रमा देखिएको दैन्य, रामेश्वरकी श्रीमतीको धुँक्क र सुँक्कको स्वरले सिर्जना गरेको निर्वेद, पटक पटक चुरोट खाएको पिसाप नआएको पनि पिसाप गर्न खोजेको तथा आँसु पनि नआएको सन्दर्भले ऊ पात्रमा देखिएको ग्वानी (हतोत्साह), ऊसकी श्रीमतीले विलाप गर्दा पटक पटक गरेको 'मेरो बाबू, मेरो राजा' शब्दले सिर्जना गरेको व्याधि, चुपचाप शौचलामा गएर टोलाएको ऊ पात्रमा देखिएको ग्लानी र व्याधि तथा शौचालय भित्र भावविह्वल भएर रोएको सन्दर्भले अश्रुस्वर सञ्चारी भावले पाठकको हृदयलाई शोक भावसम्म पुऱ्याउने सञ्चारी भावहरूको समेत साधारणीकरण भएको छ ।

यी विभाव, अनुभाव र सञ्चारी भावको साधारणीकरणमार्फत पाठकले मृतक ऊ पात्रको छोरा र ऊ पात्रलाई विसिएर आफ्नै प्रियजनको मृत्युमा ऊ पात्र, ऊसकी श्रीमती, उसका छिमेकीहरूले नभई आफ्नै आफन्तहरूले दुःखभाव व्यक्त गरेको महसुस गरी ऊ र उसकी श्रीमतीमा आश्रित शोक भाव पाठकमा उत्पन्न हुँदा स्थायी भावको पनि साधारणीकरण भएको छ ।

### निष्कर्ष

मनु ब्राजाकीको एकान्त कथा करुण रसमा केन्द्रित कथा छ । मृतक पात्रका पिता र माताका पीडा, संवेदना र यथार्थ सामाजिक परिवेशमा उपस्थित विभाव, अनुभाव र पात्रमा देखिएका व्यभिचारीवाले कथालाई करुण रसयुक्त बनाएको छ । रस उपकरण तथा स्थायी भावको माध्यमबाट कथामा करुण रस निष्पन्न भएको उद्धृत सन्दर्भहरूले पुष्टि गरेका छन् । कथामा विषयालम्बन र आश्रयालम्बन विभाव, सहृदयमा शोक भाव

जागृत गराउने उद्दीपन विभाव, पात्रका शारीरिक र मानसिक चष्टावाट प्रकट हुने अनुभाव तथा क्षणिक रूपमा देखा परेका दैन्य, निर्वेद, ग्लानी, हतोत्साह, व्याधि जस्ता सञ्चारी भावहरू मिलेर करुण रसको उत्पत्तिलाई सशक्त बनाएका छन् । करुण रसका उपकरणहरूको संयोगबाट सहृदयको मनमा शोक स्थायी भाव जागृत भई कथामा करुण रस उद्दीपन भएको छ । ऊ पात्र र उसकी श्रीमतीको शोक, छिमेकीहरूको सहानुभूति र वातावरणीय चित्रणमार्फत कथाकारले पात्रको विशिष्ट भावनालाई पाठकको हृदयसम्म पुऱ्याएका छन् ।

यसरी रस सामग्री र स्थायी भावको सन्तुलित प्रयोग तथा तिनको साधारणीकरण प्रक्रियामार्फत एकान्त कथामा करुण रसको सशक्त अभिव्यञ्जना भएको छ । कथाले सहृदय पाठकलाई केवल पात्रको दुःख महसुस गराउने मात्र होइन, मानवीय करुणा र संवेदनाको गहिरो आस्वादन गराउन सफल भएको छ ।

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## Chalkboards to Clicks: A Narrative Study of Flipped English Classrooms in Nepal

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### Abstract

*The flipped classroom has progressed across the world, yet ELT remains virtually untouched in Nepal. This narrative inquiry study investigates the experiences of four secondary English teachers in the Kaski district who have taught for over one year with the flipped classroom model. Engaging professionally through semi-structured individual interviews, a focus group discussion, and classroom observations, the study revealed teachers' stories of resistance, adaptation and pedagogical transformation. The study found that there were many success stories with benefits such as enhancements of student classroom participation, autonomy, and interaction. The study also noted challenges such as inconsistent internet access, low student engagement, teacher-centred pedagogical resistance, heavy teacher workloads, and low access to the internet, devices, education, and training. The study argues that there needs to be more flexible and adaptable programs, and institutional frameworks of support with training programs of a digital literacy orientation. The study called for an increased role of the teacher's voice as a mechanism for educational change to support a more inclusive, adaptable, and sustainable program to support mobile educational materials. The study focused on the flipped classroom pedagogical model in Nepal as a unique program in the ELT.*

**Keywords:** English language teaching, flipped classroom, learner engagement, technology integration



## Introduction

Technological advancements are incorporated into teaching methods globally. One such advancement is the pedagogical model of the flipped classroom, where teaching is reframed. Class instruction is removed and replaced with interactive and in-class student-centred pedagogical activities, discussions, action problem solving, and cooperative learning tasks (Bergmann & Sams, 2012; Hamdan et al., 2013). The model gained popularity in 2002 when chemistry teachers Jonathan Bergmann and Aaron Sams first pioneered the model, and in 2012 with the formalisation of the model through the Flipped Learning Network. It integrates principles of active learning, constructivism, and blended learning, thus allowing students to control the learning pace and immerse themselves in the content during the contact hours (Flipped Learning Network, 2014; Prince, 2004).

The model of flipped learning has grown in popularity, and the reported positive impacts of flipped learning on student engagement, language learning at higher thinking levels, and positive thinking promote the theory. However, it has largely gone undocumented in low-resource contexts, particularly in Nepal. Learning English in Nepal remains 'Lecture and Teacher-centred' based on the understanding that educational approaches should create environments that promote speaking, thinking and autonomy. The educational system is fundamentally shabby in that it is devoid of the principles required for real-world use of language. Considering the findings of Lamsal (2022), there is evidence that teachers in the Nepalese context view the flipped classroom positively in terms of encouraging classroom engagement; however, they experience challenges such as unreliable internet access, device and digital literacy scarcity, cultural learning preferences such as teaching in a traditional, directive style, and high workloads. This contradiction in the evidence about flipped classrooms and the context of Nepal speaks to the importance of and the necessity for research to inform how such a model can be adopted and implemented in educational structures that are resource-poor and culturally different. If there is no evidence to support Nepalese ELT research, modernisation efforts are most likely to be unsustainable.

Thus, the purpose of this narrative inquiry is to investigate the experiences of Nepalese teachers of English at the secondary level who have implemented a flipped classroom. More specifically, this study intends to (1) document the narratives of teachers concerning their journeys of transition, resistance, and paradigm shifts from chalk and talk to flipped instruction, (2) enumerate the benefits, and the socio-cultural, technological, and pedagogical challenges encountered, and (3) provide informed suggestions that focus on the problem of the standard of English teaching in Nepal and propose a viable model for the integration of flipped learning. This study amplifies the voices of teachers by employing narrative inquiry in educational reform in the context of Nepal, while also contributing to the growing body of work on the integration of new pedagogical practices in less developed countries.

## Literature Review

Consider a classroom where students can watch a video lecture at home, take some time to write down their questions and be ready to discuss, create or solve some issues in accordance with the instructions of their teacher. It is the essence of flipped learning, a paradigm that replaces traditional content with traditional lectures and transforms class time into a place of inquiry led by students. English classes can use flipped learning as a potential method, as the participation of the students and the mastery of the language are vital in this case, and Nepal adheres to digital tools in education. To prepare the narrative investigation of the experiences of teachers, the literature review will consider the concepts of flipped learning, its application in English language teaching, and its possibilities and challenges in Nepal.

### The Fundamentals of Flipped Learning

Flipped learning transforms the classroom and provides the in-person time options of interactive activity by moving direct instructional content, which is normally delivered via screencast or video, out of the classroom (Bergmann and Sams, 2012). It has four pillars, namely flexible environments, the culture of learning change, planned content, and professional educators (Flipped Learning Network, 2014). These two pillars lead to the replacement of the teacher-centred sage on the stage paradigm by a student-centred guide on the side paradigm since they set up spaces where students make decisions on how and when to learn (King, 1993). In order to make classroom time supportive of cooperation, critical thinking, and individualised support, educators choose what students are going to investigate in classrooms in the outside environment (Arfstrom et al., 2013).

Its origins date back to the 1990s, when Eric Mazur developed peer instruction in order to promote in-class discussion and meaning-making as opposed to memorisation (King, 1993; Mazur, 1996). In 2007, chemistry teachers Jonathan Bergmann and Aaron Sams began recording courses as a substitute for classes that were missing. They discovered that this enhanced in-class communications and supported those students who missed the classes (Bergmann and Sams, 2012). Their work resulted in the Flipped Learning Network, a research and practice-sharing platform, in 2012. Research supports the student-centred philosophy of flipped learning by showing active learning is a better way to enhance critical thinking, engagement and academic performance (Prince, 2004; Michael, 2006). Pre-training is one of the significant techniques that will reduce the cognitive load of students and enable them to accept the demanding tasks in the classroom (Musallam, 2010). Arfstrom et al. (2013) attribute case studies in Clintondale High School of Michigan and Byron High School of Minnesota that have been studied to indicate an improvement in involvement, better performance in exams, and a reduction in discipline issues.

## **Flipped Learning in English Language Teaching**

Flipped learning is a world-changer for English language learners as it enables access at a self-paced rate to material that enhances comprehension and reduces anxiety. By giving videos on lower-level skills such as grammar or vocabulary, teachers can use the remaining class time to engage higher-order skills such as text analysis or practice of real-world communication (Marshall and DeCapua, 2013). The ability to pause and repeat lectures is advantageous to the students, especially those studying a second language, as they will understand the lectures before meeting the teachers and other learners (Lamsal, 2022). This is in line with the research that has shown that flipped classrooms boost academic language proficiency by making the language more closely related to a native speaker (Marshall & DeCapua, 2013).

Fahim and Khalil (2016) found that in a Middle Eastern institution, flipping English courses positively affected the engagement of students, particularly with the assistance of such resources as video platforms. Sakulprasertsri (2017) explains that flipped learning fosters 21st-century skills, such as collaboration skills, in Thai English classrooms, yet teacher training and technological access pose a challenge. Nevertheless, Strayer (2012) cautions that when assignments are not clear, the commencement of classes such as language classes can engulf the students, and hence the need to have systematic instruction.

## **Flipped Learning in the Nepalese Context**

The English schools in Nepal can be used in flipped learning, as education is shifting digitally. According to the study by Lamsal (2022), this methodology is popular among English teachers working in secondary schools, and the researcher also pointed out that it contributes to the students becoming active and independent learners. Flipped classrooms reconsider the conventional classroom practices by incorporating conversations, debates, and projects that support the idea of student-centred learning (Lamsal, 2022). The tools, such as digital slideshows and collections of videos, engage students as substitutes for lectures with the help of dynamic information.

Nepal, in its turn, has specific troubles. It cannot be implemented effectively due to the lack of internet connectivity, especially in rural regions, especially among students from low-income families (Lamsal, 2022; Arfstrom et al., 2013). Power interruptions and low standards of digital literacy among teachers and students complicate the situation, as well as creating high-quality movies requires much time (Lamsal, 2022). This does not discourage teachers, who suggest increasing the number of online activities, the ingenuity of students, and adequate classroom preparation (Lamsal, 2022). This has been supplemented by Shakya et al. (2016), who found that in Kathmandu Valley, teachers were motivated to use flipped learning because of its benefits in relation to student engagement and success in school. However, the scarcity of comprehensive studies in

Nepal underscores the need to have regional research.

The possibilities of flipped learning are clear, but there remains a lack of them, especially in Nepal. Little has been done on rural situations since most of the research has concentrated on the Western or metropolitan scenario. However, as much as Lamsal's (2022) work is a good move, there is a need to conduct more research based on its small scope. The perspectives of parents and students are not represented sufficiently because they are a crucial part of a full picture (Arfstrom et al., 2013). Narrative investigations such as this one have a great opportunity to document the lived experiences of teachers since the long-term consequences of the English competence in Nepal remain poorly comprehended.

Constructivism and connectivism, two complementary theories, serve as the foundation for this study and offer a prism through which to view how flipped English classrooms promote learning in Nepal's digital age.

### **Constructivism**

Constructivism holds that students are active producers of knowledge based on experience; they build on prior knowledge in both the social and contextual context (Vygotsky, 1978). The work of flipped classes is that students study the material at home, developing an initial mental picture that is developed in the classroom during projects or discussions (Michael, 2006). As flipped classroom teachers push students to learn according to their level of readiness and develop tasks to challenge and support students, the concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), developed by Vygotsky, is of particular relevance (Arfstrom et al., 2013). To fit the various classrooms of Nepal, the learners of the English language should first be introduced to the basics of English through videos and then apply them in group projects, which are culturally sensitive (Lamsal, 2022). Constructivism informs the focus of the study relating the role of teachers to support student-centred and meaning-making experiences in flipped English classrooms.

### **Connectivism**

Learning is viewed as a process of establishing networks between people and resources, as well as technology, as long as expressed in the digital age concept of connectivism (Siemens, 2005, ref. in Lamsal, 2022). Flipped learning builds a dynamic learning system where the student-teacher, student-peer, and student-online interaction occur (Pacansky-Brock, 2013). It is especially so in Nepal, where students are able to study without being in a traditional classroom due to digital tools such as movies and social media platforms such as Padlet (Lamsal, 2022). Connectivism underlines the fact that technology can foster independence and collaboration, which is crucial to English language learners who have to negotiate international communication.

It guides the study of educators who use digital networks to enhance student engagement and overcome challenges such as poor internet connectivity. The collaboration between constructivism and connectivism has been used to introduce flipped learning as a technologically and socially mediated activity where students actively engage in developing their language proficiency via experience and networked learning. This framework guides the narrative inquiry by focusing on the response of the teachers in the Nepal educational context, which is unique in its nature.

## **Methods and Procedures**

### **Research Design**

The qualitative research method employed in this study was a narrative inquiry, which is an appropriate method to explore the personal accounts of participants and lived experiences in the context of Nepali flipped English classrooms. Narrative inquiry is most suitable to understand how individuals formulate meaning out of their lives and thus is ideal in examining the change in the mode of instruction used in traditional (chalkboard-based) to more modernised (technologically enhanced, click-based) instructional methods. The design allowed exploring the perspectives of the teachers and students in detail, recording their challenges, successes, and views on the flipped classroom model in a Nepalese classroom. This approach aligns with the qualitative studies of flipped classes, where the majority of studies usually concentrate on the experiences of the participants to draw educational conclusions.

### **Data Collection Tools and Techniques**

I utilised a semi-structured interview schedule as my principal instrument in the collection of qualitative data. Individual interview guides were developed for the in-depth interviews with certain subsets of educators. These interviews aimed at understanding the educators' readiness to employ flipped classrooms, the difficulties they experienced, and their overall perceptions of the approach and its impact on learners' engagement. To aid educators in reflecting collectively on their experience of moving from a conventional, teacher-led classroom approach to a flipped classroom practice, a set of focus group discussion (FGD) prompts was designed. The FGD gave participants the opportunity to juxtapose different viewpoints, articulate common difficulties, and expand on matters that might remain hidden during one-on-one interviews. Along with interviews and FGD, classroom observations were conducted as an ancillary technique of data collection. The observations were captured using a structured checklist designed to capture in detail the activities that took place in the classroom, the nature of the interaction between the teacher and the learners, and the technological resources that were integrated into the lesson. The use of this triangulated technique provided thorough and contextual insights into the implementation of flipped classrooms.

## Data Analysis

The data were analysed thematically with a narrative approach, merging narrative analysis (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) with thematic analysis. This made it possible for the study to retain the depth of the teachers' unique experiences while isolating shared themes among all participants. All semi-structured interviews, the focus group discussion, and the classroom observation notes were fully transcribed. A professional translator translated the Nepali interviews and discussions into English, and a second translator provided back-translation for consistency and accuracy. The transcripts were read multiple times to gain an intimate understanding and familiarity. Initially, all data for each teacher (individual interview, focus group participation, and observation notes) were treated as a self-contained narrative. For each teacher, key episodes were selected and retold in concise narrative summaries with the exact words of the participants in the same chronological sequence as originally voiced (e.g., “from initial resistance to gradual acceptance”).

Then, the re-storying constituted the core of the findings of the study. All transcripts and re-storying were uploaded to NVivo 14. For preliminary analysis, line-by-line coding (open coding) was followed by focused coding aimed at generating larger themes. During the analysis, the following significant themes emerged: Access to and adaptation of technology; changes in teaching and learning roles; and challenges regarding the context and the culture. The four case studies were compared to discover the commonalities and the differences. These were refined using constant comparative analysis until the themes were saturated (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The results of the interviews were compared and verified with data from the focus groups, direct observations from the classroom, and participant materials (e.g., videos, screenshots of Google Classroom). The primary themes and reconstituted narratives were verified with the study participants in member checking to ensure participant agreement and authenticity. Results were presented in the form of compilation stories that integrated the teacher participants' voices with the themes from the data and were juxtaposed with students' verbatim text and field notes from observations. This thematic and narrative analysis of teacher participants' stories and the lived experiences that they represent will provide valuable and actionable insights for ELT in Nepal.

## Results and Discussion

This paper suggested that in flipped classes in the English language in Nepal, independent learning is encouraged, and interaction among the students is developed. The reverse of the conventional teaching model, the flipped classroom has turned out to be a successful pedagogical method to make the students more active and responsible in their learning. In this method, the students initially can learn instructional content at home, by means of video clips, tapes, or Internet resources, and then in the classroom

environment, they can spend time on interactive, discussion-based, and collaborative tasks. This model will assist students to develop as communicatively competent, critical thinkers and self-directed learners in the Nepalese context where English is taught as a secondary or foreign language. Another lesson was also realised by teachers that students were better equipped, motivated, and confident to engage in discussions in the classroom once learning materials were exposed to them.

Nevertheless, as many of these benefits exist, the implementation of the flipped classroom in Nepal has several obstacles which hinder its success. The unstable internet connection, particularly in the rural and semi-urban regions where most of the schools are located, is also one of the greatest challenges. A lot of students belong to families that cannot afford digital devices and strong data connections, as they have low incomes. This leaves access to online video, virtual assignments and an interactive platform hard. This digital divide increases the disparity between the private and public schools because the latter usually possesses a superior technological capacity and training areas.

On the other hand, public schools have a difficult time using technology because of low budgets and the absence of technical services. There is also the cultural and pedagogical tradition that affects the adoption of flipped learning in Nepal. The traditional teacher-centred approach, whereby teachers are treated as the ultimate enforcer, and students are passive receivers of information, remains the order of the day in the classrooms. The students are used to lecture-based learning, and in the beginning, they might be unwilling to learn on their own, or they might feel anxious about the self-learning aspect of the flipped classes. Teachers are not exempt, as they struggle to change their roles to that of being the guide on the side rather than the sage on the stage. They also have to work hard to come up with teaching videos, record, and edit them, to come up with an interactive activity in the classroom, hence they are burdened with more work. This model cannot be maintained easily without institutional support and incentives.

Furthermore, the development of new practices is still inhibited by economic constraints. Low-resource schools are not able to invest easily in digital tools, software, or training programs to teach their teachers. Learners with poor economic backgrounds tend to share gadgets or use borrowed phones or school computers when doing online assignments. Such constraints do not allow the full potential of the flipped approach.

Nevertheless, a lot of educators remain innovative and firm and implement basic technologies like mobile phones, offline videos, and print materials to adjust the flipped paradigm to their reality. The schools and policymakers need to train teachers on digital pedagogy and offer financial or technical support to those schools that require it to achieve wider success. Prioritising community-based interventions, like community digital centres or resource centres, may also be useful in combating inequality. The government and schools should focus on enhancing the digital literacy of both teachers and students.

On the whole, the results of this research can provide some important insights into how flipped learning can be implemented locally and be used in the context of

low-technology and low-income countries like Nepal. The study emphasises how, with sufficient help, inventiveness, and adaptability, a flipped classroom can turn English language instruction into an active process of learning by means of collaboration and engagement as well as learner-centred learning. The work also adds to the wider picture of the adaptation of the technology-enhanced pedagogies to various learning contexts and cultural backgrounds, so that teaching English would become more inclusive, meaningful, and future-oriented.

The purpose of this study was to gain insight into teachers' and students' experiences of the flipped classroom model for teaching English in Nepal. The data for this study were collected using semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and classroom observations. The analysis of data from multiple sources led to the identification of three major themes these were (1) the Use of Technology, (2) Shifts in Teaching and Learning, and (3) Local Challenges. These themes represent the participants' collective and divergent experiences regarding the availability of technology, the change of pedagogy, and obstacles to the use of the flipped classroom approach.

## **The Use of Technology**

The first major theme recorded from the data was the importance of technology in enabling flipped learning and the obstacles and benefits that technology offered. Both teachers and students reported that technology was the basis for the organisation, instruction, and retrieval of learning resources. They, however, acknowledged the fact that technology requirements often serve as obstacles to engagement, especially to participants from resource-constrained environments.

### ***Eased Technology Access***

The availability of technological devices and reliable internet was a major issue. Several students reported that they did not have personal devices such as smartphones and laptops. They were dependent on the devices of family members, which led to device-related family disputes and reduced study time at home. Some learners expressed that having their phones shared between siblings prolonged and sometimes prevented access to video lessons. Teachers also acknowledged these problems and explained that their internet access issues within their community contributed to the problem of the timely uploading of the teaching videos. Students especially expressed concerns about cost and how it restricted their ability to watch videos. Students explained that the videos were sometimes long and that their ability to watch videos frequently was also determined by the cost of the videos. What was observed in classrooms provided some evidence of the above. These students explained that their reason for not watching the videos was not due to disengagement, but that they did not have the technological capacity to finish the assigned videos. In these instances, teachers would have to reteach the content.

### ***Learning the Technological Skills***

Notably, the challenges also provided opportunities for learning in the use of technology. Teachers expressed that, in the long run, the challenges helped them gain more competency in developing instructional videos and digital content creation, resulting in the enhancement of their creativity and purpose in teaching. Teachers expressed that they added other skills, such as recording voice-over lessons, screen recording, and creating presentations that could be synced with videos. Students also gained knowledge of some online educational tools. Teachers instructed their pupils on how to use Google Classroom, which became the standard channel for distributing materials, providing assignments, and running brief quizzes. Due to YouTube's simplicity and easy access, it continued to be the dominant site for educational use. Furthermore, students and teachers exchanged materials across mobile phones, which suggested the use of informal digital communication in supporting flipped learning.

### ***Tools Used in the Flipped Classroom***

The combination of freely available online platforms (such as YouTube and Google Classroom, and Messenger) was pivotal in the study's findings regarding the use of the flipped approach. Students indicated that although they enjoyed the ability to watch videos on their phones, they often faced challenges that limited their engagement, including buffering, data restrictions, and the unavailability of personal devices. The teachers also pointed out that the use of these tools required extra time and planning. For both students and teachers, the tools available were a double-edged sword, as technology both improved and diminished the educational experience.

### ***Changes in Teaching and Learning***

The second major theme was a visible transformation in classroom interactions and student engagement, resulting from the flipped classroom model. This theme focuses on the alterations in teaching approaches, student participation, and instructor workload during the implementation.

### ***Students Taking Charge of Learning***

The most notable positive outcome was the increase in students' active engagement in their learning process. Students appreciated their independence and flexibility as they were able to learn at their own pace. Learners were able to pause videos, rewatch lectures, and prepare for class activities ahead of time. This preparation allowed students to gain a greater understanding of the material and improve their participation. Students reported that they felt a greater sense of independence and acquisition of their own learning, a marked change from conventional teacher-centred approaches. Teachers also

noted students were more ready and able to do the activities involving higher-order thinking skills. Classroom observations supported this assertion. Students participated more willingly and readily in classroom dialogues, as they had already studied the lesson material through video content.

### ***More Classroom Interactions***

Teachers reported that flipped classrooms resulted in students working with peers more readily and collaborating with their peers more during the lesson. Students watched the instructional videos at home. As a result, teachers used class time for student-centred learning activities such as discussions, group work, presentations, and activities where students solved problems. Complaints regarding student disengagement during group work were less frequent, and teachers reported that students were more willing to participate in the discussions and share their ideas, in contrast to the traditional lecture. In flipped classrooms, more student talk time was observed. Group discussions were more focused, and students exhibited more collaboration and participation. Teachers further emphasised how this was one of the most meaningful outcomes of the flipped model since it fit comfortably with the principles of communicative language teaching.

### ***More Workload for Teachers***

Nonetheless, changes were primarily reported as requiring substantially more time and effort from teaching staff. As other changes were reported positively, there were added tasks of preparing videos, editing and uploading content, and responding to student queries. Teachers had a more senior workload, which included school duties, paperwork, and other extracurricular activities. They also pointed out that it was increasingly difficult to create a balance between video preparation and their daily workload. One of the teachers was quoted as saying, "They spent most of their time camping documents and were most of the time, I guess, stem overloaded and stressed out." There was a consensus that the teachers appreciated the pedagogical advance that the flipped classroom offered. The staff, however, felt the sustainability of these initiatives was at risk without some organisational support.

### **Local Issues**

The last theme encapsulated the contextual and socio-cultural challenges that informed the use of flipped classrooms in Nepal, and these included cultural Normative positioning, the levels of school support, and the gaps in the economy.

### ***Cultural Normative Positioning of Teacher-Centred Pedagogy***

One of the most striking of these challenges, and the most culturally oriented, was the students' preferred and indeed, a positive acceptance of a more traditional, teacher-

directed pedagogy. The students in the class preferred when the teacher taught the lesson instead of using the video lesson because they felt they could understand the lesson better when the teacher talked directly to them. As a result of this imbalance, teachers tended to provide more explanation in class, even more than they had planned. Students still referred to the teacher as the primary source of knowledge and authority despite video lessons because of the cultural norms they had internalised.

### ***Differences in School Support***

The differences in the availability of technology support in private and public schools were also very pertinent. Private school teachers reported more digital tools, better Wi-Fi, and more support from administration; public school teachers reported gaps in support, tech, devices, training, and support geared to training. The research also discovered that some of the teachers, particularly those who had been educated in private institutions, had more proficiency in using digital devices, which positively impacted the successful use of the flipped classroom model.

### ***Financial Problems and Inequality***

The economic issues were a primary barrier for students. Students from low socioeconomic backgrounds had more problems accessing their own devices to use the video. Some of them had to use the school's computers, or borrowed someone else's device to do the video tasks. This led to a lack of participation and some students not keeping up with their schooling.

## **Conclusions**

This narrative inquiry study investigates the experiences of four secondary English teachers in the Kaski district who have taught for over one year with the flipped classroom model. The data gathered involved interviews, focus groups, and observational data, which made it possible to determine that technology was both pivotal and complicating to the implementation of the flipped classrooms. Teachers and students experienced challenges like poor internet connections, fewer devices, and expensive data plans. All the same, both sides improved their tech use; in particular, teachers made videos for their lessons, and students learned to use Google Classroom and YouTube. Phones were the primary devices for accessing the flipped materials, which underscored the flexible and accessible tech use for educational purposes. The move to flipped instruction was also an opportunity for transformation in the students. They were able to take more ownership of their learning and were more involved in discussions as well as in activities in the classes. In contrast, teachers had more responsibilities because they were tasked with preparing videos and had additional duties to cover in the schools. The contextual challenges were also apparent; for instance, many students opted for teacher-centred classes, the level of

support provided by schools was uneven, and students from low-income families had limited access to the internet. All of these challenges defined the extent to which the flipped classroom approach was realised in English classrooms in Nepal.

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### Role of ELT Textbooks in the Classroom: Hindrances or Facilitations

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#### Abstract

*This report is a result of a study concerned with the suitability and effectiveness of ELT textbooks for B.Ed students. The main objectives of this study were to explore the perceptions of B.Ed. First-year students towards the textbook and find out whether it scaffolds or diminishes creativity in students. This study is guided by a phenomenological research design under a qualitative method. I collected data through purposive sampling by conducting online interviews and recording participants' responses. After that, I transcribed those responses into different sub-themes and analysed them along with specific themes. The present study revealed that using textbooks in the classroom enhances the students' reading habits, along with their innovative ideas and knowledge, to address their decision-making abilities to enhance English language learning. The finding of the study also reveals that English textbooks help with planning instructions, providing mechanical knowledge, including pedagogical and content knowledge for English language learners.*

**Keywords:** Achievements, ELT textbook, English students, opportunities, resources

#### Introduction

An English Language Teaching (ELT) textbook plays a crucial role in forwarding English language learning in B.Ed... students. As ELT and learning have become the dominant activity at present, English textbooks are essential to enhance learning English

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as a lingua Franca. English textbooks help to spread global communication. Being English is a global lingua franca; English textbooks provide a foundation for better English communication. ELT textbooks play a significant role in English language classrooms in the context of Nepal.

As textbook-based activities are closely connected with each other in the classroom, ELT textbooks always support the pedagogues and the language learners in the classroom. So, textbooks always play a vital role in the teaching and learning process. Tomlinson (2003) defines “Textbook as one of the materials used to help teachers teach learners (p.14). Textbooks represent a useful resource for teachers and learning tools for learners and course designers as well. The textbook is a collection of the knowledge, concepts, and principles of a selected topic or course. Graves (2000) opines, “The textbook is a book used as a standard source of information for formal study of a subject and instrument for teaching and learning” (p.175). It means that a textbook is one of the crucial sources of formal study of any subject matter for learning and teaching. Textbooks show the principal guidelines and framework for the learning strategies. Textbooks provide the confidence and security to inexperienced teachers for effective teaching.

Being textbooks is a well-prepared material for conducting teaching and learning, which helps make the classroom activities more effective. Gak (1996) states, “Readymade-textbook will ever fit perfectly every language programme” (p.123). As a readymade textbook is helpful for both teachers and learners, it can be strictly used in the classroom for teaching and learning. Textbooks have been making a significant contribution to teaching and learning. Ur (2006) opines, “A textbook is a book of which the teacher and usually each student has a copy and which is in principle to be followed systematically as the basis for a language course” (p.123). As the textbooks are essential sources of teaching and learning, teachers and learners have copied from the textbooks to present and learn content in the classroom. Being Nepalese classrooms are not modernised with technology, and there is no alternative to replace textbooks in the Nepalese classroom. Good textbooks are excellent teaching aids. Awasthi (2006) postulates, “A textbook is a teaching material for the teacher and a learning material for the learners” (p.1). Textbooks are essential to everyone for their knowledge and for generating ideas for making teaching materials. In the context of Nepal, using textbooks in the classroom is not optional; it is a primary means at all levels for engaging the learners for better learning achievement due to the lack of other supplementary materials.

ELT textbooks have played a vital role in promoting the ability of inexperienced teachers in teaching a language. Textbooks prepare the training framework for novice and veteran teachers. ELT textbooks provide the different kinds of mechanical knowledge, sustainable knowledge, pedagogical knowledge and instructional planning. Therefore, learners can learn through self-study and develop the mindset for gaining knowledge. Selecting, adapting and evaluating textbooks is so difficult for the readers. In our context, textbooks are the most reliable self-learning materials for the learners.

Many classrooms still depend heavily on textbooks because supplementary materials are limited, and many English teachers lack the training and confidence to manage lessons without them. Even in a digital age, students continue to rely on printed texts because access to e-libraries, stable internet, digital skills, and appropriate devices remains poor, and there is little motivation to use self-directed online resources. Against this backdrop, I set out to examine how B.Ed. Students view the ELT textbook and whether they feel it supports or restricts their learning. The study looks at both the strengths and weaknesses of textbook use in English language classrooms and is guided by two questions: how B.Ed. Students perceive the role of textbooks in fostering learning, and why textbooks remain essential for better learning outcomes in the Nepali context.

### **Literature Review**

The textbook provides new and innovative ideas. Sometimes teachers may also have diminished their confidence level. In this research article, I have reviewed the different Google blogs, books, the internet and previous research articles to find the answer to my study.

Textbook facilitates the learner's learning achievement and provide adequate sources of learning. Farrell and Heyneman (1989) opine, "Textbooks are a package of intervention" (p.12). Generally, the textbooks are adequate for learning for the learners. Textbooks can lay the pavement for the learners. If learners have left the school, they might have forgotten all the things they have learnt from the textbooks. Textbooks can be used for teaching systematic learning methodologies and generating new ideas for inexperienced learners. Hutchinson and Torres (1994) concurred that a textbook is a guide for teachers in teaching and a tool for learners to review knowledge (p.12). Textbooks facilitate teachers in teaching and learning tools for learners. Cunningsworth (1995) opines:

A textbook is defined as an effective resource for self-directed learning, an effective source of presentation of materials, a source of ideas and activities, a reference source of learners, a syllabus where they reflect predetermined language objectives, and support for less experienced teachers who have yet to gain confidence.

With reference to the quotation, the exploration of the different uses of textbooks as teaching materials for both teachers and learners is conducted. MacPherson (2005) concurs, "Textbook is a framework – leads to guidance and support; a syllabus- language skills and language systems; a convenient package –one Main text rather than multiple texts, or bundles of photocopied papers which may easily be lost" (p.5). In the classroom, textbooks provide the learner with self-confidence and a sense of security. Learners know where to start, what to expect and how to generate innovative ideas. Textbooks provide a free boundary for learning and effective progress. For the teachers, textbooks may provide a sense of professional development skills and knowledge development. Hutchinson & Hutchinson (1997) assert "The textbook as an extension of the teachers' skills rather

than deskilling- and on this level at least, the course book may be seen as a very effective source of changing skills” (p.23). Textbooks seem to be the source of developing different learning strategies, methods and learning skills.

Textbooks provide the mechanical and linguistic knowledge to the learners. Cunningsworth (1995 as cited in Rahimi and Hassani, 2011) opines, “The textbooks serve the language course as a source for material presentation, activities for learners’ practice and communicative interaction, stimulation and ideas for classroom activities, and a reference source for learners on grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation” (p. 67). Textbooks support grammatical correction for language learners. It promotes learning vocabulary, pronunciation and communicative skills to the ELT learners. Using effective ways of textbooks can transform the learners' learning into new methodologies in the classroom. Sokorova (2011) stated that the role of textbooks was empirically investigated from four viewpoints: “prevalence of textbook use, textbook-based activities, the role of textbooks in learners’ homework, and textbook control (p.1). Textbooks can be used for controlling learners’ ideas and the teacher’s content, regardless of what they have taught in the classroom. In the textbooks, there are different kinds of text-based activities, communicative activities and content-based activities. In the classroom, teachers explore all above mentioned activities and learners follow during the whole session. Textbook-based activities are not only designed for the presentation of lessons and copying the words from the books, but also designed for developing the cognitive knowledge of the learners.

Textbooks can be used for planning the lessons extensively to present the systematic ideas in the classroom. Teachers use textbooks for different purposes and use systematic, authentic sources and interpretation of the detailed subject matter. Sokorova (2011) upholds “English teachers used the textbooks as a source of content and methodology significantly more often than others” (p.16). Similarly, Hinchman (1987) insists “The teachers use the textbooks mainly as the resource of the content, as a programme of teaching and the source of learning tasks” (p.16). Textbooks are the sources of information, and they give full content knowledge. They support the inexperienced teachers in the classroom in delivering content knowledge. The novice teachers are also incompetent in content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge at the beginning phase of their teaching profession. Therefore, textbooks provide full support for the teachers. In textbooks, there are different kinds of text activities which provide sufficient practice for teachers and learners.

Textbooks seem to be a source of content and curriculum in the classroom for teaching and learning. They provide the general concepts of curriculum to provide the fundamental road map of learning. Using textbooks in the classroom shows the roadmap of achievements for future learning. Textbooks are taken as sources of knowledge building that make the marvellous interaction in the classroom discourse. Textbooks provide the fundamental instruction for systematic planning and fulfilment of the

objectives of curricula or syllabuses which are prescribed by the government, which show the learning pavement for the learners without being facilitated by teachers. Horsley et al. (2010) claimed that the textbooks include the legitimisation and acceptability of disciplinary knowledge; quality and characteristics of textbooks; control and authority of knowledge; and mediation between research and learners within an academic discipline. The textbooks have included interdisciplinary knowledge, referencing the academic and researchable topics to motivate the learners and teachers for the connection of interdisciplinary disciplines. It is legitimised and gives the governmental authority to accept at the university level.

Textbooks count as a means of teaching and learning, but not an end in themselves. They reflect the roadmap of teaching and learning materials in the classroom and outside of the classroom. The textbooks provide clear guidelines for the teachers and learners. On the other hand, textbooks should not be made the sole material in ELT classes as they are inadequate, irrelevant, inactive and result-oriented in their subjects, though they play a crucial role in promoting, generating new ideas. In the tertiary levels, there are no specific prescribed ELT textbooks for the language learners and teachers. Teachers use different reference books to guide and teach their learners. Traditional and communicative textbooks can be found based on the basis of their contents, teaching procedures. Traditional textbooks are still used in different parts of the world in the traditional classroom. They are easy to use for the untrained teachers. Learners are having problems using traditional types of textbooks. According to Grant (1987), the features of traditional textbooks are: emphasis on the form or patterns of language more than communicative functions of language, mother tongue is highly focused in the classroom, focus on reading and writing rather than listening and speaking, accuracy is more important than fluency and highly focused on the narrow syllabuses and examinations.

Textbooks are useful for English language learners for collecting ideas, focusing on accuracy and following syllabuses and are highly focused on reading skills. But communicative textbooks provide them with a lot of opportunities to use language in the classroom before they use it in their real life and become competent language users. They are often attractive to some teachers because they seem easy to use and are highly examination-oriented. Nowadays, it has been transforming into communicative textbooks. The main goals of communicative textbooks are to enhance the students' communicative ability and proficiency in language use. Richards (2001) upholds "Textbooks are often accompanied by workbooks, CDs and cassettes, videos, CD ROMs, and comprehensive teaching guides, providing a rich and varied resource for teachers and learners" (p. 1). Textbooks have integrated the multi-media- based teaching materials for language teachers and learners. Paudel and Acharya (1987) proclaimed that the features of the communicative approach are: at present, textbooks focus on communicative functions of language, not just the forms, it is based on the need and interest of the students and emphasises fluency rather than accuracy, it encourages group work and pair work to

make the students-centred active learning authentic teaching materials. Communicative competence abridges the interactional communicative language skill.

### **Methods and Procedures**

This study was based on a phenomenological research design under a qualitative method. It is theoretical in nature. I have consulted in different books, articles, reference materials, Google Scholar and the NELTA journal as well. I have selected the B.Ed. English students in the first year. I have used a purposive sampling procedure. I have used both primary and secondary sources of data collection. I used an online interview. I recorded their responses and transcribed them into different sub-themes. Finally, I made specific themes to make the research paper complete. Then, I analysed recorded responses to fulfil my primary sources of data collection, and I have reviewed some research articles, read some books and journals as secondary sources of data collection.

### **Results and Discussion**

In this section, the data were analysed and discussed in different themes. Here I have analysed the responses given by the participants; the names of the respondents were A, B and C. The data were analysed analytically to find the new finding by classifying into different topics accordance to the themes.

#### **ELT Textbook as a Major Source of Learning for Classroom Learning**

Textbooks reflect the sources for learning and teaching. These textbooks provide the self-learning tools for autonomous learners. A textbook is a course book of a particular subject that is utilised for formal instruction. Moreover, it is a collection of learning materials which is designed within the framework of a curriculum for a certain level. A textbook is the course book, which is a collection of materials designed for a certain level of formal instruction. I asked the first question: How can you define the textbook? Participant A concurred that, “*ELT textbook is a source of knowledge for encouraging self-directed learners in particular subject matter to read freely at home and school. Textbook counts as a master of self-learning*”. From this view, it can be inferred that a good textbook provides good instructional and practical knowledge. Using textbooks in the classroom does not mean only depending on the textbooks; it also depends on the users of the individual learners, and the teachers should connect them with other supplementary materials. If students use textbooks properly according to their levels, interests, they have the practical and useful knowledge for their lives. It promotes the self-learning habits.

Textbooks can be used in the classroom for developing self-directed learning habits. In the response to the same question, participant B replied, “*ELT textbook is designed for building knowledge for the autonomous learners inside or outside the classroom . . . roadmap of gaining knowledge, deep understanding of learners*”. From this view, an ELT

textbook is a framework for knowledge building, gaining ideas from various sources and deep understanding. Actually, using textbooks in the classroom discourse enhances the learner's comprehension level. Reading a textbook is not only about copying from the book in the mind, but it also enhances the learners' reading level and cognitive level of understanding of every learner. Therefore, in response to a similar question, participant C asserted:

An ELT textbook is a teaching tool which provides the minimum essential knowledge in one place. These suit the needs of well-funded, well-resourced, well-equipped urban schools or colleges with relatively small classes, well-qualified teachers, and good physical infrastructures, but are not well-decorated. It provides the various text-based tasks and instructions to move towards the guiding objectives of prescribed syllabuses and curricula.

From this view, it can be inferred that the textbook provides the minimum essential knowledge and provides a comprehensive link to the learners and teachers. Cortazzi and Jin (1999) stated that the textbook can be a teacher, a map, a resource, a trainer, an authority, and an ideology. Hence, textbooks provide different teaching ideologies and cultural sources besides the guiding principles. Not all teachers are in a position to dig up facts. Some mature teachers who are well-trained and experienced may find the possible use of their outlines. They guide their learners and facilitate accordance to their abilities. A good textbook provides good information. It provides knowledge to generate ideas and get new, innovative ideas. Textbooks are not so expensive; they are available in all areas easily, in comparison to other resources. They are written in simple, clear and easily understandable languages for every learner and teacher. In the textbook, various practices and other useful instructions are given for fostering knowledge in learners. Collecting information and developing the framework of guiding principles of learning objectives is a major source of knowledge developing process in the classroom.

### **English Textbook as Mechanical Knowledge Provider**

Knowledge cannot be acquired within a single day or single attempt. Gaining knowledge is associated with eliciting information from the textbook. Reading and making notes from the textbooks can provide the mechanical knowledge for every language learner. The textbook controls the learners' reading boundaries and provides opportunities to learn pertinent characteristics of the ELT book, so it is the roadmap of chronological presentation. The second question: Do you think using textbooks is good or bad in the classroom? Why or why not? Similarly, participant A opined: *"I think, using ELT textbooks in the classroom is good. They provide the mechanical knowledge for the language learners. English language learners are not only readers but also mechanics as well".* From this view, ELT textbooks provide the mechanical knowledge to the language learners, like cohesion, coherence, pragmatic meaning, phonological meaning, syntactic structure, etc. and so on. ELT teachers and learners have the ideas of different pedagogical

knowledge. English textbooks have been taught for developing critical thinking at higher levels, all grammatical structures and the sound system of language. Some of the teachers and learners do not get the proper ideas of using and presenting language communication. Therefore, textbooks are necessary to scaffold the learners' level of knowledge. They have been taking and getting many more ideas from the textbooks. In the response to a similar question, participant B stated:

English language learners don't learn only English for communicating and getting a good job in schools or colleges. They sometimes copy down from the other books, but they need to learn how to use new ways of pedagogical strategies, use of correct sentences and sound system and structural arrangement and so on. They elicit many more ideas from the textbooks. Learning by using textbooks is better for getting an academic degree.

With reference to the quotation, English language learners don't copy and elicit the ideas from the textbooks, but also learn the structural arrangement of making language grammatically and morphologically correct. Using textbooks inside the classroom reflects the correct use to achieve the pedagogical purpose of developing higher-level understanding among the learners. Language learners are not only the language drivers, but also, they are the language mechanics. They need to have full-fledged knowledge of using and handling the language. In response to a similar question, participant C stated:

In my own reflections, using textbooks is good. Textbooks show the guiding instruction that is given in the curricula and syllabi. It provides lots of theoretical knowledge; we should have knowledge of how to use it in a practical way to become a language mechanic.

From this view, it is inferred that textbooks have clear guidelines and contents depending upon a particular curriculum or syllabus. The textbooks there have been given clear guidelines on what is mentioned in curricula and syllabuses. Textbooks provide the theoretical knowledge that the learners need to use in practical areas of their lives. Knowing the theoretical knowledge is not sufficient for the learners and teachers because they have to use it in practical ways whenever they need. Richards (1998) identifies two kinds of knowledge: "Influence teachers' and learners' understanding of their work. One kind relates to subject matter and the curriculum, and how the content of a lesson is conceptualised, another to teachers' implicit theories of teaching – "their personal and subjective philosophy and their understanding of what constitutes good teaching" (p. 51). Knowledge can influence the teachers' and students' comprehension level. Therefore, at present, practical aspects are more significant than theoretical ones. In the classroom discourses, learners need to know different psychological and behavioural theories of language teaching, linguistic theories, methods, students' background, interests and develop the rapport among the learners, teachers and parents as well.

ELT textbooks show the roadmap of learning systematically and in chronological order inside the classroom. It constrains the pertinent boundary of a certain level of

learners and teachers. Especially, textbooks are designed in the horizontal and vertical order for every learner and teacher.

### **Textbook as Guidelines for Instructional Planning**

Textbooks have been designed systematically for conducting teaching and learning. Textbooks are simple and ready-made materials of the teaching and learning source for the learners and teachers. Textbooks provide invaluable insights for textbook writers, curriculum developers and language teachers. They save time and are found in a cost-effective source of learning. Hinchman (1987) identified three different types of textbook use. “Methodical coverage of the curriculum based on the textbook, primary and supplementary texts as the basis for text-based activities, selected texts as a reference for higher level interpretation during class discussions” (p.3). Textbooks have been used differently for different purposes in different subjects in the classroom. Textbook is used for pedagogical purposes, knowledge-gaining purposes and so on. Learners can find different reference-based textbooks, practice-based books and project-based textbooks and ICT-based textbooks at the present time. Only one book does not work for gaining complete knowledge. Therefore, one size does not fit all for instructional planning in class. One book cannot provide a different spectrum for learners' instructional planning. Another question asked the participants how teachers use textbooks, guides, or materials. In the response to this question, Participant A opined:

Textbooks cannot be used in the classroom by either teachers or learners in most of the lessons observed. Sometimes the teachers bring them to the classrooms but keep them on their tables; they copy teaching materials from the textbook onto the board for pupils to recite. They are used as part of teaching and learning materials.

From this view, it can be inferred that teachers have used textbooks as reference books for the materials development. Most teachers use textbooks in the classroom for instructional planning and guiding the teaching and learning systematically. They bring textbooks into the classroom and copy the relevant contents from the textbooks, and ask learners to recite them for their understanding. Most teachers and learners consider textbooks to be available aids that offer useful materials. Hutchinson and Torres (1994) argue that during periods of change, a course book can serve as a tool for supporting teachers and as an instrument for modifications and alterations for planning. They used textbooks as a source of teaching material and instructional planning. In response to a similar question, participant B Expressed:

Teachers use textbooks in the classroom as a source for developing materials and instructional planning. Textbooks guide other content decisions: which topics it covers, how much time to allocate for each topic, and in what sequence it can be presented.

Using textbooks in the classroom supports and directs the novice teachers and language learners. Textbooks provide many more ideas and planning for decision-making

on how teachers can prepare an academic operational calendar, annual plan, unit plan, and lesson plan. Moulton (1994) stated, "*Textbook-bound*" teacher begins the school year with the lesson on page one and progresses page by page through the book over the course of the year. To get through the book, some omit selected chapters" (p.18). Textbook-bound teachers focus on the books. They take books as the primary source of teaching for the whole year. They select the important topic to teach their learners. Teaching learning session starts from the first page of every book and ends with its last page. Therefore, they require the student's minimum competence level. They have only focused on the objectives of the lesson. Moulton (1994) stated, "The 'textbook-bound' teacher not only taught a higher proportion of lessons,/they also were more likely to present these lessons in a style that conformed to the textbooks. (p.18). Textbooks provide the roadmap to reach the destination. It also provides texts and learning tasks which are likely to be appropriate for every class. Similarly, responding to a similar question, participant C replied, "The textbooks are ready-made sources of learning which reflect the time economy and cost economy for the classroom". The textbooks are easily available sources of learning in the markets; they are found in the cheapest way of learning materials for each learner and teacher. Alternatives such as kits, sets of photocopied papers, or computer software are likely to be more expensive relative to the amount of material developed.

### **Textbooks as a Foundation for Better Language Learning**

Learning and teaching go side by side simultaneously in the classroom discourse. It is the partnership of learners and teachers. Textbooks and learning achievement are inseparable from each other. If the learners dispartate from ELT textbooks in the classroom, they get baffled. They haven't got too many ideas. Some learners don't attend regularly in the classroom. They read at home according to the syllabus and contents. There may be problems for countryside college teachers in facilitating their learners if they don't have adequate teaching materials. In response to the question, 'Is there any relationship between using textbooks and learning achievement? Participant A replied that "Why not... these two factors are intertwined. Textbook reading provides the sustainable knowledge for every novice and well-experienced learners, and it is the foundation of creating new knowledge". Reading books provides new knowledge and develops experiences for better learning. The more the learners read various books, the more they can enlarge their minds.

Every good textbook provides sustainable knowledge to the learners. Similarly, responding to a similar question, participant B stated that "I think using textbooks in the classroom provides a learning new strategy for making newness. Textbooks and learning achievement are interrelated because they address the learners' learning abilities and disabilities. Every textbook can be treated by the learner's individuality". They need to be treated individually to satisfy their needs. Every student is different in terms of attention, interest, motivation, pace, and physiological and psychological needs. A certain activity or material that is particularly appropriate for one student may not be suitable for another (Charalambous, 2011, p. 3). Learners are not of the same ability and background.

However, the textbook addresses the learners' learning abilities and disabilities.

Textbooks make the students self-directed learners; they focus on the objectives of the curriculum and syllabi. ELT textbooks incorporate the various types of content and covered areas that seem to be appropriate according to the age and level of the learners. Participant C replied, “The textbook teaches the various types of methodology, language skills, cultural aspects and sufficient materials are given in the textbook, that’s why, if I use it properly in my learning, it provides a higher achievement level for the learners”. ELT textbooks have integrated different teaching methodologies for language learners. Textbooks provide the required information for the learners and teachers. Sikorova (2011) expressed “Textbooks can be a source of information and methodology” (p.5). Textbooks have incorporated various types of content-based activities and culturally and contextually suitable, attractive activities. Textbooks provide the learners with instructional guidelines and learning materials as well. If textbooks are designed on the basis of the curriculum, they help to achieve good results, and they show the direction of a systematic way of learning. Otherwise, the target cannot be achieved. Textbooks are good and excellent teaching materials; they are learning sources for both teachers and learners. Using textbooks in class cannot distract the learners from getting the required information.

The use of textbooks in the ELT classroom plays a crucial role for both teachers and students as textbook is the main source to learn English. It provides a source, a source of activities, a reference, a syllabus, a great support for inexperienced teachers and serves as a source for self-directed learning or self-access work (Cunniningsworth, 1995), even though, ELT textbook has more shortcomings that affect the teaching and learning of English. There is no perfect textbook for every class situation. Therefore, teachers should carefully select the appropriate textbook which meets their students’ needs and can achieve the learning objectives. According to (Graves, 2000), textbooks in the classrooms often fall short because they provide content that does not match students’ needs, rely on language that feels artificial, use dull visuals and uninspiring tasks, overlook learners’ background knowledge, follow a sequence that does not align with real work demands, and set timelines that are unrealistic for completing activities.

ELT textbooks have different kinds of limitations, and teachers should know how to measure the good and the bad to complete tasks according to the needs of students. ELT textbooks are too inflexible and generally reflect the pedagogic, physiological, and linguistic preferences and biases of their authors. It is known that most pedagogic principles displayed in many textbooks may also be conflicting, contradictory or even outdated (Allwright, 1982). Besides, cultural and gender bias often show up in the textbook. In terms of authenticity, the textbooks are actually too contrived and artificial in their presentation of the target language. Most of the text models and dialogues are unnatural and inappropriate to be used to communicate in a real-life environment. Moreover, Sheldon (1998, p.239) stated that textbooks are a tool for publishers to get quick profit. Too many textbooks are often marketed with serious problems, design flaws, and practical shortcomings.

## Conclusion

A textbook serves as a road map and framework for learning. It is easily available in ready-made, cheapest and simple languages. It addresses the student's disabilities and abilities in the class. It motivates all learners to read. The Nepalese education system has not totally shifted to a technology-based education system. It has been practicing to somehow in the university level. Due to different infrastructures, technical problems, lack of personal efforts in making an ICT classroom, economic problems of learners and geographical region. The internet connectivity is not available in all areas of the countryside. This study shows a positive attitude toward using textbooks in the class. It revealed that using textbooks in the classroom enhances the students' reading habits and improves their innovative knowledge, and addresses their decision-making abilities to enhance English language learning. The finding of the study also reveals that English textbooks help with planning instructions, including pedagogical and content knowledge of the English language learners.

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## Ageing Narratives and Social Change in Kathmandu: An Ethnographic Study of Personhood and Well-being

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### Abstract

*In the Tarkeshwor Municipality of Kathmandu, this qualitative ethnographic study explores the lived experiences and narratives of those aged 60 and attempts to place the narratives within the context of the rapid demographic changes within the municipality, which include urbanisation and youth outmigration. Within the framework of Symbolic*

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*Interactionism and Theories of Personhood within Anthropology, this research utilises qualitative methodology in the form of participant-observed semi-structured interviews of 40 respondents to study the ways mega-level societal changes impact the intergenerational relations and social positioning of individuals and their overall wellness. One primary finding suggests there is a significant phenomenon of cultural tension relative to the older adults at the intersection of socio-economically modern realities in the context of the social value of older adults, and cultural systems that place older adults within a socially revered role. The primary forms of financial capital, such as pensions and real estate, are the socially positioned structures of value and independent relational social identity, and chronic health problems serve as social and relational loss catalysts. The study suggests that the ageing of urban Nepal is an identity-contested process relative to the social systems of support for older adults, which does not rely on frameworks of social security systems and biomedicine.*

**Keywords:** Ageing narratives, intergenerational relations, personhood, social change

## **Introduction**

Public health improvements, declining fertility rates, and longer life expectancy are factors that have contributed to the growth of older populations and the global demographic transition of the 21st century. All countries are experiencing the phenomenon of ageing populations. However, this phenomenon is experienced and observed culturally and socially in each unique location. More and more, researchers are warned of the need to recognise ‘multiple modernities, identities, histories and memories and the dangers of essentialism when it comes to the diverse geographies and settings of ageing and personhood. This approach is precisely why anthropological and phenomenological studies are essential, as ageing is more than a biological consideration; it is a social and moral one, and as such, it is experienced within specific worlds of meaning (Lamb, 2017). In Nepal, life expectancy has also increased; most recently, the 2011 census recorded life expectancy at 64.94 years for males and 67.44 years for females. Nepal is also experiencing a steadily increasing proportion of older adults. From 5% in the 1952-54 census to 8.1% in 2011 (CBS 2011; Subedi 2014), the elderly population has been increasing both absolutely and relatively, and it is predicted that within the next 20 years, the total number of people aged 60 years and older will have doubled.

According to the Senior Citizens Act of 2006, the government of Nepal considers citizens to be senior citizens at the age of 60. However, depending on the profession of the individual, retirement ages differ. This age change is currently happening at the same time as significant urban migration, the outward migration of younger individuals, and new age changes to traditional family structures. Because of this, the socio-cultural perceptions of ageing have shifted. Nepalis traditionally follow the practices of the Hindu religion, which sees the elderly as holy and wise, and old age as a meritorious and

spiritually wise time; however, modern urban living puts a strain on this. Many elderly, particularly widows and widowers living alone, suffer from ill health and increased need for supportive care, which can make them feel burdensome and socially invisible, and can erode their self-identity, as is culturally common.

The ageing of Nepal's population and the socio changes it brings cannot be understood from a purely biomedical or demographic perspective. As identity, dignity and a sense of belonging are slowly negotiated, changes are experienced. Within the broader framework of sociocultural change, the elderly population faces the challenges of ill health, shifts in family structures, and economic instability. Subedi's (2014) ethnographic study of Nepal highlights the tension that exists between contemporary socioeconomic conditions and the ageing population's socio-cultural practices.

In this context, understanding older people's narratives about the changes in their social world is key to understanding ageing. The current study is set in the phenomenon of rapid urbanisation in the Tarkeshwor Municipality of Kathmandu and seeks to gain insight into people aged 60 and above, the construction of meaning of selfhood, social worth, and well-being in the context of extensive social transformation.

## **Literature Review**

Modernisation and social change directly affect the physical proximity of parents to their children, which in turn affects how elderly care is provided. As an illustration, Greenwell and Bengtson (1997) conducted a longitudinal study of parent-child relations in southern California from 1971 to 1991 and discovered that, in comparison to other children, young adult children who had relatively high educational aspirations in 1971 lived apart from their parents in 1991. According to Smith (1998), the authors contend that early plans for educational attainment could be considered a proxy variable for occupational mobility if they are later realised. The author's personal experience indicates that it is similar to Nepalese society. Young adults move to an urban area in search of better education and employment opportunities, leaving behind their homes and families. After completing their education, they look for work and establish a career in a developed, urban area. It therefore causes a gap between the younger and older generations. Furthermore, because research on the ageing process was relatively recent, it was easily incorporated into the general standards of the modernisation process theory. Consequently, the significance of internal differentiation and other intricate matters within the industrialisation process was diminished.

The modernisation theory has been refuted by Goldstein (1983) in regard to the ageing process. Even though Nepalese society has seen significant transformation in recent decades, he concluded that the makeup of households has remained unchanged. Nonetheless, according to the author, the modifications have changed the character of social and financial ties within the family. Unless there is some kind of economic independence, he adds, the changes have worked against the elderly, whose health is still

getting worse. According to these authors, the challenge facing Nepal's elderly population has less to do with modernisation than it does with the country's growing poverty, which is a result of modernisation's inability to bear social and economic fruit.

According to Dal Bahadur Pun's 2009 study, "Social Change and the Senior Citizen in Nepal," older adults' social standing has declined with age. The "Ageing Situation in Newar Community of Kirtipur Municipality" was the subject of a 2001 study by Sudha Maharjan. According to her, the majority of the elderly respondents who were chosen for the survey have a positive attitude that can be attributed to the advancement of medical technology: they trust doctors to treat them. The elders in this study face several issues, including illness, loneliness, being evicted from their home, disrespect from family members, and a lack of suitable entertainment. Likewise, Jagat Bahadur Maharjan studied the "Living Conditions of Elderly People of Devdhoka, Kirtipur Municipality." He discovered that the majority of respondents experienced asthma, leg pain, and back pain. Of them, there were more female respondents. The majority of the male respondents had diabetes, stomach pain, and body aches. Similarly, Shalik Ram Sigdel conducted a study on the "Status of Elderly Population in Jamune Bhanjyang VDC" of Tanahu district. According to his research, half of all people desire love and affection from their family. Roughly 23% desire proper care. A significant portion of older adults face inadequate familial support, with roughly a third of those surveyed indicating that their family members do not provide the necessary love and care. This lack of support is reflected in negative perceptions of the ageing process itself; in one study, 38.3% of older adults viewed ageing as a "curse," and 35% believed it to be a "time of sorrow" (Chalise & Rosenberg, 2019). This sentiment highlights the impact of rapid socio-economic change on traditional family care structures in Nepal. Nevertheless, research suggests that traditional values of reverence for elders persist, and that social engagement and spiritual well-being are key factors in promoting "successful ageing" among older adults, even in urban centres like Kathmandu (Karki et al., 2025). The government offers a minimal Old Age Allowance (OAA) starting at age 68, despite the official definition of elderly citizens commencing at age 60, reflecting a policy gap in addressing the needs of the younger elderly population (Aryal, 2019).

Based on the empirical review above, it can be concluded that the effects of rapid social change, particularly youth outmigration and urbanisation, have led to deteriorating conditions in the lives of older adults in Nepal, weakening traditional family support institutions (Khadka, 2020; Shrestha, 2024). As older adults age, their social standing, financial situation, and health status often decline. The changing social context, marked by a growing trend of nuclear families, combined with inadequate social security provisions, makes their lives insecure and forces some to seek alternatives, such as elderly homes in Kathmandu (Bohora et al., 2024). The lives of older citizens have been adversely affected by loneliness and a lack of familial care and support, despite cultural expectations of filial piety (Khadka, 2020). Furthermore, the government's policies and elderly support system

are frequently described as insufficient and unworkable for the needs of a rapidly ageing population (Aryal, 2019).

## Methods and Procedures

These experiences were gathered using a qualitative ethnographic method, aiming for a rich and emic picture of the ageing phenomena affecting those older than sixty. This design involved a longitudinal study, where the researcher followed the participants for a significant amount of time to discover the details of their lives and daily stories. This study, still exploratory and descriptive, tackled a patchwork of the socio-cultural essence surrounding the ageing phenomena of older people living in Tarkeshwor Municipality. **Data Collection and Instruments:** A primary data strategy, which focused on immersive qualitative methods, was used for data collection. Primary Data from 40 older people, using a participant selection approach that considered gender and caste/ethnicity, were interviewed. The semi-structured interview guide was a composite craft of closed and open-ended questions that aimed to gain contextual detail while telling the participants' stories about social change, intergenerational relations, and health, as well as the phenomena surrounding respect and dignity.

Data for this study were gathered through the researcher's simultaneous participation in the community's ongoing activities in the study for the period of eleven months, from January to November 2024. This participation was movement-focused, and it examined the people's daily movement patterns, family movement, community movement, as well as their movement to and from the health and religious facilities. These observations were aimed at providing the researcher with extensive detail concerning the social contextual layers, social relations, and ageing customs that were implicit in the observations in order to improve the data's ecological validity. Purposive sampling was used to recruit participants who were likely to have rich, detailed narratives to share. The range of participants selected was based on various factors such as age, sex, caste/ethnicity, and different types of living situations (e.g. those who may live alone versus those who may live with family). This was done to obtain a wider variety of experiences in ageing as well as in social integration.

The analytical approach used was reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) that was based on theoretically driven frameworks of the meanings of ageing and how personhood was either asserted or threatened. Analysis began with descriptive coding to name topics of concern, like "health complaints" or "living alone," that were then iteratively developed into interpretive themes that included "conditional respect" and "precarious personhood." Coding and categorisation were done in such a way that the actual narratives of the participants were taken as complete wholes, and the focus was on how the symbolic meanings of respect, dignity, social roles, and the integration of these roles were constructed and negotiated in the participants' social worlds (Charmaz, 2014). To make this research more valid and reliable, the researcher used triangulation, an audit

trail of analytical decisions, and member checking when getting participants' feedback. Reflexivity regarding the researcher's positionality as a younger scholar was maintained throughout the study. To ensure transparency, informed consent was obtained verbally and in writing, and participants' confidentiality and right to withdraw were strictly upheld.

### Results and Discussion

People's circumstances are determined by their age. In addition to the circumstances, they also have an impact on their abilities, dependencies, skills, hobbies, health, etc.

**Table 1**

*Distribution of Senior Citizens by Age*

S.N.	Age	Male	Percent (%)	Female	Percent (%)	Total	Percent
1	60-69	13	59.09	10	55.56	23	57.5
2	70-79	8	36.36	7	38.89	15	37.5
3	80+	1	4.55	1	5.55	2	5.0
Total		22	100	18	100	40	100

Source: *Field Survey, 2024*

A slightly greater proportion of male informants than female informants is present. There are more informants in the 60–69 age range. An 86-year-old man is the informant. The population declines after age 70. According to the 86-year-old oldest informant, "I am happy that I was born when I was." I lived in a golden age of diversity. I have witnessed many things, including many highs and lows and various individuals. I am not sorry for my advanced age. As I get older, people love and respect me more. Simply be content with your life and spread joy to others.

Another brief case study: "Mr. Prakash spent more than 25 years in the teaching profession and was once a well-respected member of his community. He taught social studies in high school. He now owns a home, a pension, and a bank account". Despite his current status and former identity, he is now content with his life in society. Nearly every senior had some sort of health issue. The majority experienced headaches, diarrhoea, seasonal fever, and coughing. Cold infections were prevalent during the winter. Three respondents had asthma, and one also had a heart-stroke issue. One of the four respondents had been taking medication for a thyroid condition for 17 years, and the other two with diabetes. Some respondents had orthopaedic issues. The three respondents also experienced uric acid problems.

**Table 2***Health Condition of Elderly Citizens*

S.N.	Description	Male	Female	Total	Percentage (%)
1	Excellent	1	1	2	5.0
2	Good	8	5	13	32.5
3	Satisfactory	5	7	12	30.0
4	Poor	8	5	13	32.5
Total		22	18	40	100

Source: *Field Survey, 2024*

When they experience health issues, all of the informants go to the doctor. Two of the informants reported having excellent health. Other than diarrhoea and seasonal fever, no other complications were discovered with them. No chronic or life-threatening illnesses were discovered with them. The majority of the informants had some health issues, such as high blood pressure, hernias, painful corns, poor appetite, thyroid issues, etc. Some informants need to take medication for the rest of their lives because they have diabetes, high blood pressure, and thyroid issues. Aside from that, they appeared to be in good health. The remaining informants stated that they were in poor health. They primarily had heart problems, uric acid, eye irritation and poor vision, digestive system issues, etc.

The purpose of this study was to determine the impact of economic status and health constituents during periods of rapid change on social gerontology in Tarkeshwor Municipality of Kathmandu. The results of the study show that in urban Nepal, ageing is complex, and in this case, it is the urban Nepal region that is undergoing rapid change. The impact of large-scale societal issues, urbanisation, the movement of younger generations into cities, and shifts in material and social status determine how cultural beliefs change. Though in theory, the changes in culture that suggest elders in society should be highly respected and wise remain, in practice, the material social status highly differs. Most of the study participants were in the younger cohort of older adults, referred to as the “young old” adults aged 60-69 years. This is the age cohort in the stage of life, that is, the stage of work and family role responsibility transition. In social spaces where men are highly visible, the social performative aspects of the older men are often more noticeable. This imbalance is highly reflective of social gerontology. Individuals’ perceived health status and chronic health problems, such as diabetes, hypertension, and orthopaedic problems, certainly look as if they might impact one’s social status significantly.

However, in this case, one’s extreme perceiving chronic problems (though in real sense, this indicator is just a state of mind and depends on individual’s attitude rather than

just a social science indicator) might impact on an individual's social status significantly (in case of elders, this might lead to perceived or real loss of respect from self-independent individual in society or elders). (Mr. Prakash) Socio-economic status provides a stronger social indicator than this, supporting a lower socioeconomic status. Social exclusion, stronger dependence, and social marginalisation seem to respond to lower social status. It appears as if older people, as social and cultural tradition holders and maintainers, provide reciprocal caring and authentic emotional relationships. However, this is changing, perhaps because of cultural disintegration or even social marginalisation. Physical health is not the real social essence of the social sickness. In Tarkeshwor, individuals in the imbalanced relationship between socio-economic resources and health of culture negotiated social ageing. Optimum health and social status seem to be directly related to the health and social status of the individual.

The outcomes of the research add to the appreciation of the sociocultural aspects, health, and lived experiences of the older adults in Tarkeshwor Municipality. The older adults' lived experiences data establish that age is a predominant variable of one's condition, capabilities, interdependencies, and general health. As presented in Table 1, most of the participants (57.5%) were in the age bracket of 60–69, which further emphasises a demographic focus that is critical to the social determinants of health and the accessibility and availability of appropriate services. The said participants had a slight male predominance that is typical of social structures which tend to lower visibility and participation of older women. The data were analysed and presented in three integrated themes that illustrated the interface of ageing and the concept of personhood. The first theme was labelled the Paradox of Veneration Versus Valuation, which described that the elders, while fully respected and theoretically revered, do not receive social credit, which is customarily attached to the poorer segments. This was illustrated in the case of Mr. Prakash, a retired educator, who was a pension earner and homeowner, and was thus sought after as the ultimate independent, revered elder.

The others, especially the poorer ones, felt charged as a 'burden', which aptly showed the divergence of the predominant values and the restricted means. The second section is titled Embodied Dilemmas: Health as a Site of Social Negotiation and describes how there were different experiences with health issues. Most individuals reported chronic conditions such as diabetes, high blood pressure, and arthritis. Beyond the ailments that such illnesses have, there are also social roles that are impacted. The ailments may affect a person's identity and social role as a result of losing the ability to move and having to rely on others. The health of such individuals may become a social issue by performing such a role, which may come with social stigmatisation. The third section is titled Fragmented Kinships and the Quest for Connection and describes the impact of family structures. The caring family network structures were losing their cohesion due to emotional and spatial fragmentation directed by the migration of adult children. The participants of the study reported isolation and the need for emotional support rather than financial/material resources.

In response to these feelings, the older participants of the study preserved the network of kin relations through social practices such as rituals, narrative storytelling, and gift giving that highlighted the children's devotion. The findings from these activities show the relationship and interaction between age, health, and financial conditions and how older individuals in Tarkeshwor are managing their autonomy and social relationships while also earning social prestige. The social relationships, age, and financial challenges, as well as the health challenges, need to be addressed simultaneously to facilitate social support systems that would enhance the older people's social relations.

### **Conclusion**

This ethnographic study recounts the experiences of older people living in Kathmandu's Tarkeshwor. This study illustrates the first of a series of paradoxes of ageing, which is how one ages in the backdrop of changing technologies, economies, and families. It shows how the elderly are not merely social passives, but social actors. There is a strong cultural belief that with ageing comes wisdom, and with that wisdom comes societal respect and social power. However, the overarching social structures today tend to ignore this belief, giving rise to a paradox where the elderly are both respected and depressed - that is, socially murdered. The socio-economic resources that an older person has, such as pensions, property, and even medicine, are the only things that determine their social usefulness and their personhood, which, in the absence of these resources, can lead to not only the downfall of social standing but the erosion of dignity altogether. The support systems of a traditional family have been broken, especially those systems supporting inter-generational solidarity, leaving the older people at a major disadvantage, especially with their chronic health problems, which is a social isolation crisis in dignity and a selfhood crisis. The research emphasises that supporting positive ageing in urban Nepal necessitates a broad and dignity-based approach. Policy measures should increase the availability of pensions and allowances. Furthermore, social programs such as community clubs and intergenerational activities also foster connections beyond the family. Integrated systems of health care must consider the total positive ageing experience in its physical and psychosocial dimensions, recognising the relationship that exists between health and social identity. Older people are active social agents, and face a tension between a dominant respect ideology and the socio-economic order of their environment. Well-designed support systems should help them to reconstruct social identity and social roles in ways that are positive, and allow them to continue to craft and hold on to a social identity that carries value, and sense of continuity, and a place in a fast-moving environment.

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## Posthumanism in *The Windup Girl*: Blurring Boundaries between Human and Machine

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### Abstract

*This study examines Paolo Bacigalupi's The Windup Girl through a post-humanist lens, focusing on the ethical, social, and philosophical implications of blurred boundaries between humans and technologically engineered beings. Emiko, a genetically modified "Windup," embodies posthuman hybridity and becomes a site of contestation in a world shaped by biopolitics, ecological decline, and techno-capitalist domination. Her experiences of exploitation, marginalisation, and emergent agency reveal the complexities of posthuman subjectivity. Drawing on theorists such as Donna Haraway, N. Katherine Hayles, Ray Kurzweil, and David Gunkel, this qualitative textual analysis interrogates how human-cyborg relationships destabilise fixed categories of identity, morality, and empathy. The findings suggest that the novel presents a powerful critique of species hierarchy, ethical responsibility, and human exceptionalism, urging readers to reconsider moral obligations toward technologically mediated life. Ultimately, The Windup Girl illuminates the entanglement of humanity, technology, and environment in an increasingly posthuman future.*

**Keywords:** Posthumanism, artificial intelligence, ethical dilemmas, autonomy, transhumanism.

### Introduction

Paolo Bacigalupi, *The Windup Girl* (2009), explores the notion of posthumanism through a dystopian future in which technological and genetic engineering have blurred

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the boundaries distinguishing humans and machines. The imaginary “New Person” that serves Emiko, a genetically altered being unique to the Thai Kingdom with some posthuman characteristics, has to deal with posthuman identity. However, in the Thai Kingdom, no one “wants a New Person for secretary, or translation” (Bacigalupi, 2009). Since Emiko was “trained as a windup courtesan in Japan,” prostitution is her only remaining means of surviving. At the Raleigh club, she is subjected to continuous abuse, and a day is rarely peaceful. Neither Kannika, who does the abuse, nor Raleigh have any sympathy for a windup. She is viewed by them and the club patrons as a mere sex toy, a Japanese “plaything,” and a “piece of genetic trash. The most brutal torture occurs in the opening scenes when Kannika introduces Emiko. She slaps her, tugs her hair, and puts her in “extreme pain” postures before almost drowning her in beer and harassing her with sex toys.

The *Windup Girl* is treated like a windup toy and is treated in a completely inhumane manner. Raleigh's statement to Emiko, “If I want you mulched tomorrow, you're gone,” best captures her fragile existence. Nobody will give a damn. A windup may be valued in Japan. You are garbage here (Bacigalupi, 2009). In the Thai Kingdom, she is typically denied any subjectivity and is seen as nothing more than a toy or trash to be thrown away. In a separate context, Emiko is exposed to violence when a Thai guy becomes enraged and attacks her in an alley. Because he lost his hand and several of his comrades were killed by military windups, he is determined to harm her. He is unaware that humans must have given the windups orders to engage in combat, kill, and endanger their lives. Regardless of whether Emiko is a military model or not, he views her as one of the “devils. As far as it is possible to imagine, genetically modified New People are completely “other” to “pure” Thai people, and they are devils among humans. The New People in *Windup Girl* are physically constrained by two factors: their jerky movements and their small pores. They are made to operate in less-than-ideal ways. Emiko suffers in the hot Thai weather because her tiny pores are “painfully impermeable, which prevents her from sweating normally and causes her to overheat from the inside out (Bacigalupi, 2009). Windups’ “herky-jerky” motion identifies them as an outcast among people. Emiko shouts, “I am marked,” to Gene Ripper Gibbons. We are always marked. No more evident than a megodont (elephant windup) or ten-hands (windup with ten arms). The windup bodies are purposefully inhibited by the abnormal action and the excessively narrow pores. According to Gibbons, his windup movement is not a necessary characteristic. There's no reason it can't be taken out. Because of malicious intent, New People are unable to live happily or to their full potential.

Advances in genetic engineering, artificial intelligence, and posthuman technologies are steadily narrowing the gap between humans and machines, raising long-standing questions about identity, agency, morality, and empathy. Paolo Bacigalupi's “The Windup Girl” brings these concerns into focus through Emiko, a genetically engineered “windup” who lives within a social order built on assumptions of human superiority. Her treatment in a society that dehumanises, commodifies, and routinely abuses windups challenges not only the ethical responsibilities humans hold toward technologically altered beings but also the stability of human agency itself. Drawing on posthumanist ideas from Donna Haraway, N. Katherine Hayles, and Ray Kurzweil, the novel highlights the hybrid

identities of technological beings while prompting deeper reflection on how human emotions, intimacy, and moral judgment evolve when people interact with posthuman entities. This research investigates these moral, social, and philosophical dimensions of human-cyborg relations in Bacigalupi's dystopian world, guided by questions on blurred boundaries, shifting ethical perceptions, and the wider cultural and environmental implications of posthumanism.

## Literature Review

Posthumanism is an intellectual movement that challenges the traditional human-centred worldview and questions fixed boundaries between humans, animals, machines, and technological beings. As Wolfe (2010) explains, posthumanism rejects human exceptionalism and argues that agency, morality, and identity are not exclusive to biological humans. Similarly, Braidotti (2016) views the posthuman condition as a relational and interconnected state in which human life is embedded within networks of technology, environment, and other species.

Within this framework, posthumanism is not merely about futuristic machines; however, it is a philosophical perspective that deconstructs what it means to be human and explores emerging forms of subjectivity shaped by biotechnology, cybernetics, and artificial intelligence. Scholars of posthumanism highlight the fluidity of human identity and the entanglement of biological and technological life. Haraway (2013) suggests that the cyborg presents an amalgamation of organism and machine, therefore, disintegrating the boundaries of rigidly conceptualising human vs. non-human. Hayles's diagnosis of the posthuman subject as a constantly shifting intersection of consciousness, embodiment/being, and technology embraces the unstable configuration of these binaries. Turkle (2005) points out that interacting with machines shapes our self-conceptions as humans, stating that humans are more and less than human.

Schneider (2019) notes that artificial intelligence can produce very real emotional reactions in people and complicate the understanding of relational connections. Bacigalupi's *The Windup Girl* represents these theoretical concerns through the character of Emiko, whose technologically engineered body and consciousness create a crisis for humans, who, like Kanya and Anderson, may need to reconsider their ethical and emotional connections to non-human beings. Gunkel (2012) moves the discussion toward the realm of moral consideration and proposes that conscious artificial forms elicit moral consideration, which challenges existing understanding of more traditional ethical frameworks. Kurzweil (2005) theorises human intelligence merging with machine intelligence, therefore offering a mode of understanding Bacigalupi's hybridised, technologically mediated world. Collectively, these works emphasise the ethical, emotional and social implications of posthumanism and provide a valuable ground to explore human-cyborg connections in the novel.

Cary Wolfe's *What Is Posthumanism?* (2010) offers a significant platform to establish the perspective of posthumanism as a perspective that is more than a simple rejection of humanism, but instead a reorientation from the human-centric worldview to one that involves reconsidering the human, animal, machine, and environment as

interdependent entities. Posthumanism calls for not only a decentering of the human, but also a recognition of ways agency is determined as being beyond the human as a subject. This idea is highly relevant to analysing *The Windup Girl*, where the delineation of genetically modified beings, corporate biopower, and ecological destruction melds into questions of human epistemology and idealism. Donna Haraway's well-known treatment of the cyborg in her *A Cyborg Manifesto* (1991) expands this overview by treating the hybrid as a resisting force of binary distinctions: human/machine, nature/culture, male/female. In particular, Haraway's work is echoed in the story of Emiko in *The Windup Girl* as she is the embodiment of hybridity and challenges conventional ways of understanding identity, agency, and belonging. Further, distinctive about Emiko distinctive is that as a genetically engineered being, she is unique to the limits of the human, and reveals the ethical obligation of humans to the beings they create.

Similarly, N. Katherine Hayles, in *How We Became Posthuman* (1999), addresses how information, embodiment, and technology all result in changed human identity. Hayles points to the practice of reducing life into disembodied information, while also recognising the potential of humanity to transform with machines. The tensions and dualities provided by Hayles emerged in Bacigalupi's novel, through the transformation of bodies and subjectivities that engage in commodifying bioengineering with exploitative results. The moments told through the perspective of Emiko as a living example speak to the complexities inherent to posthuman bodies shaped by power and profit. There are thinkers not covered in this study, such as David Gunkel and Ray Kurzweil, whose perspectives invite complexity into the framework. Gunkel indicates the ethical question of the other raised within posthumanism and identifies the need for moral consideration of nonhuman agents, whereas Kurzweil offers a view of the future that aligns with transhumanism and acknowledges that human and machine will become indistinguishable. Each of these either-or lenses offers varied pieces to the posthuman condition represented in *The Windup Girl*, Gunkel's outlining form within a struggle for acknowledgement of engineered beings, and Kurzweil's speculation of a technologically designed future. In sum, these important theoretical contributions shape the lens through which this study will approach the novel. Posthumanism, as articulated by Wolfe, Haraway, Hayles, Gunkel, and Kurzweil, offers ways to think critically about the ways *The Windup Girl* represents noting and experiencing different boundaries that are blurring between human and nonhuman, technology and nature, ethics and exploitation. This theoretical framing offers a critical lens through which to engage with the primary text.

### **Methods and Procedures**

This study employs a qualitative research design based on textual analysis. The primary data source is Paolo Bacigalupi's novel *The Windup Girl* (2009), and the secondary sources, such as scholarly books and articles on posthumanism. The study collects data through the selection of relevant excerpts from Bacigalupi's novel as well as theoretical literature by Cary Wolfe, Donna Haraway, N. Katherine Hayles, Ray Kurzweil and David Gunkel. The analysis is done through close reading and thematic interpretation with respect to hybridity, identity, and ethics. Justified by post-humanist theory, this

method used for analysing the data and literature enables the study to consider how the human-centred orientation of the novel can be challenged and supported by a reimagining of human–nonhuman relations.

## Results and Discussion

### Genetic Engineering, Subservience, and Dehumanisation

A society that marginalises and dehumanises technologically altered humans, depriving them of agency and dignity, is exemplified by Emiko's misery in *The Windup Girl* as a result of her programmed faults. As “trained to excellence, to the eternal service of a master,” the New People are socially and genetically predisposed to be obedient and subservient, working to please and serve human masters (Bacigalupi, 2009). But the windups aren't just programmed to follow orders; they desire to. When Emiko first meets Anderson, she “feels a stirring of her genetic urge to please,” which makes this evident. Comparing windup obedience to that of dogs, Gendo-sama speculates that this reaction might be triggered by DNA from a Labrador dog. The cyborg characters have to struggle against their ingrained inclinations to break free from a master-slave relationship. They are forced to react favourably to sexual stimulation regardless of the circumstance due to a heartless alteration of windup bodies. When sexually assaulted in a Raleigh club, Emiko cannot control her body's reactions, “no matter how much her soul fights against it” (Bacigalupi, 2009).

She is powerless to stop her instinctive responses when Kannika mistreats her in front of a crowd: Emiko groans as her body fails her. She lets out a cry. Arches. The way her body functions is just as the scientists with their test tubes expected. No matter how much she hates it, she is powerless to stop it. Even slight disobedience will not be tolerated by the scientists. She arrives. Because they are unable to control their bodies sexually, windups are therefore submissive in every way, appeasing abusive masters. This modification, which produces humanoid sex toys for those who can buy them, seems particularly humiliating. In addition to being genetically predisposed to obey, windups are socially predisposed to subservience by early repetition of rote lessons until the lessons are completely internalised.

### Post-Humanist Theoretical Perspectives

Braidotti (2016) argues that the “posthuman subject is a singularity with specific capabilities and programmed tendencies to both limit and enable” in Braidotti's account of ethics that deals with students creating beings that will be enslaved. In *The Windup Girl*, this tension between limiting and enabling is exemplified in Emiko's lack of volition in response to her abuse. One of the strong narrative devices for pushing back against (post)human exceptionalism is Emiko's dual consciousness, both as an artificial creature and as “crying as a human does”. The text raises questions about what it means to be human, as the line between organic life and synthetic life is not as pronounced as it may have been, as Emiko asks “I am a thing of man, but I am at his mercy.”

Ray Kurzweil's theories of the Singularity (2005) and the merging of human and

machine intelligence offer a theoretical framework to systemically analyse Bacigalupi's representation of posthumanism. Kurzweil posits that "the distinction between human and machine will fade as we merge with our technology. This position allows for an understanding of the implications of the biological and technological sciences in the novel, while also allowing for real, deeper questioning of the impact of advancement. The human species is changing along with society and the environment in a world that is becoming more and more reliant on technology. In her essay "A Cyborg Manifesto" (2013), cyborg anthropologist and science and technology studies expert Donna Haraway imagine the human species as an organic-technological hybrid. It will be called the cyborg sciences, and nearly thirty years later, the technical and the human are heavily entangled. These are the domains of genetic engineering, bionics, cybernetics, and robotics, all of which concentrate on modifying the human body using technology.

### **Cyborg Identity, Hybridity and Human-Machine Boundaries**

In her 2013 work "A Cyborg Manifesto," Donna Haraway contributes her voice to this, asserting that the cyborg age has arrived (Kunzru, 1997). Completely new kinds of subjectivity are emerging in this era, with mutant forms that have never existed before becoming fleshed-out actuality. As the third wave engulfs human society, the posthuman cyborg becomes a reality. In 1985, Haraway outlines a shift from a second-wave organic industrial society to a third-wave polymorphous information system that will reorganise all social relationships related to science and technology. Relationships between the organic and the inorganic are becoming so close that it is almost impossible to distinguish between our machines and ourselves (Kunzru, 1997). This is causing a shift in how we relate to each other and to our technology. Toffler and Haraway have comparable visions. According to her, advancements in technology would bring about changes in every aspect of life, including our homes, workplaces, markets, public spaces, and even the human body. We welcome genetic engineering, bionics, which restructure the human body, robotics, which eases human labour, and artificial intelligence-assisted thinking as we progress toward cyborg citizenship.

The cyborg sciences are turning humans into cyborg citizens. The New People in Bacigalupi's *Windup Girl* are the most "authentically" human cyborgs in the chosen stories. Grown from genetically engineered DNA in test tubes, their bodies are entirely organic. Given that their DNA contains elements of human, animal, and machine biology, they are genetic chimaeras. They are nurtured in special care facilities to fulfil various social roles as they mature and age, albeit more slowly than humans. Since the New People are actually a combination of the technology, the animal, and the human, their mixed DNA makes them the most obvious cyborg representation of the posthuman.

According to posthumanism, these are the combined elements that constitute the human species; being a modern human means having both animal and machine traits. In Bacigalupi's account, windups are distinguished from humans by their "stutter-stop motion" and "herky jerky" non-fluid movement. As they travel among "authentic" people, these are "the telltales of their DNA ... violently present for all to see and mock. Windups attempt to blend in by controlling their jerky movements, much like the androids in Do

Androids Dream are desperate to remain undetectable. Emiko rarely leaves the house during the day, and when she does, she is extremely cautious; she battles her training and nature; if she doesn't swing her arms, she nearly dies. Attempting to persuade herself that she doesn't look genetically transgressive, but rather weird. Her movements may be mistaken for daintiness if she can move cautiously and gently enough. Windups are almost indistinguishable from "natural" people as long as they move with enough control. In *Windup Girl*, there is a strong belief in rebirth and Buddhism. While being cautious to keep religion as religion, Bacigalupi highlights how religious belief in a metaphysical soul contradicts believers' view of humans as distinct from windups.

## Cyborg Embodiment and Hybrid Beings

Somchai and Jaidee, who have both been wearing white shirts and hunted windups, talk about the number of souls on earth as they prepare to move against Akkarat. "Maybe even the worst monstrosities of the Japanese live in some way," Somchai says to Jaidee. My family has been reborn in windup bodies, and I'm worried about that. Some of us may finish up working in Japanese industries. Compared to earlier times, we are very few. Where have all the souls gone? To the Japanese, perhaps? Into windups, perhaps?

Andy Clark proposes an argument in a book called *Natural-Born Cyborgs* (2004) that we are all "natural-born cyborgs" because humans have an intrinsic ability to merge with technology. Clark argues we engage with external tools and environments that affect how we think, which is best exemplified by the New People in *The Windup Girl*, whose identities have been constructed through technological manipulation, which illustrates the symbiotic relationship between people and their tools. Humans in modern civilisation are becoming more and more posthuman, a species altered by technology on the inside as well as the outside, thanks to companies creating cyborg technologies. By making them more technologically advanced, they alter how humanity views itself. The enablers are the cyborg corporations. In *Windup Girl*, most people are against changing their bodies with the use of science or technology.

According to Bostrom, in his "superintelligence" (2014), advanced technologies will radically alter human nature and capabilities, leading to new forms of existence and identity. This realisation is similar to how *The Windup Girl* portrays the evolution of human identity. As a result, the majority of people reject and hate the enhanced New People and view them as strange beings. However, Emiko thinks that people are also drawn to windups. She considers how the men at Raleigh club "as they silently consider buying her once their friends have gone away, they joke about her aloud" (Bacigalupi, 2009). Just as Rick acknowledges that he has long harboured feelings for androids, they find her physically attractive. When Anderson Lake first meets his Dark-Haired Girl, the wind-up Emiko, he has a similar sense of ambivalence. He "steps out of reach with a look of disgust" and "jerks away from her touch" when he first sees her at the Raleigh club. However, his response changes when they contact again, with his eyes expanding, his voice catching, and him "roaming across her starving". Compared to Rick Deckard and Claire Belmont, he moves from dread to interest more quickly. Sherry Turkle (2005) claims that "our interaction with computers changes our understanding of who we are,

leading us to see ourselves as both more and less than human” in her 1984 book *The Second Self*. This illustrates *The Windup Girl's* conflicted feelings toward cyborgs.

### **Intimacy, Empathy, and Posthuman Ethics**

Anderson begins to obsess about Emiko after their first encounter and eventually falls in love. She is “the opposite of the invasive plagues he fights every day,” Anderson muses as he attempts to learn more about the *ngaw* fruit. “A hothouse flower dropped into a world too harsh for her delicate heritage. Anderson views Emiko as a delicate flower that has to be cared for and shielded from the harsh human world, even just a short time after they first met. His viewpoint on windups is quickly evolving, and his definition of what constitutes a human being is growing. When Anderson saves Emiko from a furious assailant who is determined to kill her, it is the moment when the two cannot turn back.

Thinking that she is nothing more than a wind-up, she rushes towards Anderson when she spots his bus in gridlock. She was a fool. It was foolish of her to think he would view her as anything but offal, as a woman, as a person. Suddenly, he takes her hand and drags her on board. The gaijin [Anderson] leaps between them out of nowhere. In his palms gleams a spring rifle. Anderson acknowledges that Emiko is a human worth keeping rather than a wind-up toy that can be replaced as he takes her hand. He believes that the instant he saves a human being’s life, he has “tied his fate to hers” and is even prepared to injure her to protect her.

“Enfolding her in whatever protection a calorie man can offer a piece of illegal Japanese trash,” he puts his arm around her. Anderson’s respect for windups surpasses his regard for some co-species humans when he becomes intimate with his Dark-Haired Girl. Emiko and Anderson have a sexual connection, just like Rachael and Rick in *Do Androids Dream*. She “fills his time and his thoughts.” He approaches her at Ploenchit [Raleigh club] every night, monopolises her, and showers her with baht (Bacigalupi, 2009). The yellow card. His boss’s fondness for windups and the way he “brings the creature to his bed” disgusts Hock Seng. Does it over and over. For it, pines”. Because Anderson spends so much time with Emiko, she learns not to make demands because doing so would force her to comply with her genetic programming. By avoiding this, he witnesses her spirit “emerging from within the strangling strands of her engineered DNA” and “another version of the windup. As their sexual relationship develops, Anderson comes to view Emiko as an equal to be loved and protected rather than as a subject to be subjugated or commanded.

Anderson truly cares for Emiko in return. She enjoys his sincere love for her, is “surprised how happy she is that he delights in her,” and feels deserving of love. She feels like a person only because of him. In his examination of how moral principles and human relationships are impacted by shifting circumstances, Nussbaum (*The Fragility of Goodness*, 2001). observes that “Human interactions are deeply affected by evolving conditions and new forms of agency”. She reflects on how, until she felt appreciated once more in Anderson's arms, she had nearly forgotten what it was like to appear nearly human and be treated with respect, like in Japan. She “for a time ... forgets entirely that people call her windup and heechy-keechy” when she is with him. She loses herself

in the stroking and feels completely human for a brief while. Emiko is moved by his humanity and at last feels completely valued and cared for, while Anderson is touched by her androidism, which broadens his view of human identity. As a white shirt herself, Kanya shares the overall distaste for windups and white shirt contempt, but she also adopts a more ambivalent stance regarding the book's conclusion.

She encounters Gibbons' windup, Hiroko, while travelling to talk to him about the new virus. Kanya reacts to the windup by almost pulling her rifle on Hiroko. In her book *Artificial You* (2019), Susan Schneider discusses the relationship between artificial intelligence and human emotional and cognitive experience. She writes, "AI entities that are designed to resemble humans can elicit real emotional responses from human beings, further complicating our understanding of what it means to be 'connected. This view explains how Anderson's feelings for Emiko change as he begins to see her as more than an object of technology.

According to her, Hiroko is a "genetically engineered beast" that mimics a human. But when Kanya prepares to collaborate with Hiroko to find Emiko, her perspective shifts. Hiroko saves Kanya's life twice during the Trade Ministry attack on the Environment Ministry: once by spotting hostile commandos and again by shoving her away from a shower of spring disks that are aimed at them. Hiroko overheats from the effort of defending Kanya and her men, so she gives herself up. Kanya is left wondering "if she cares about the creature" while Hiroko lies dying. Even the human character who is portrayed as emotionally deficient shifts her viewpoint at the end of the book, seemingly viewing a windup death as a loss.

Through sexual relationships, the human protagonists in all three authors' stories come to appreciate and empathise with their cyborg counterparts. Their views on what it is to be human shift as a result of being moved by their androidism, and they expand their concept of the human species to include highly technological cyborgs as a subset of humans. Readers are inspired to embrace a cyborg posthuman identity by the human-cyborg partnerships. Characters portraying the human (organic) and android (technical) parts of a posthuman android twin even engage in physical embraces in the stories.

A group of people known as New People, or "windups," are introduced by *Windup Girl* as a new kind of human. These are Bacigalupi cyborg characters, and because they are organic, genetically modified beings, it is nearly impossible to tell them apart from "real" humans. The Japanese breed them as servant animals, conditioning them to be completely devoted to their human masters through social and genetic programming. The owner of one of these windups, Emiko, abandons her in the Thai Kingdom. Emiko must find protection wherever she can because windups without specific paperwork and authorisation are prohibited and pursued. As a result, she works in Raleigh club, a horrible place where she endures daily sexual assault and humiliation, as well as an unending life of oppression and dehumanisation. Emiko's struggle to break free from her programmed subservience will be read as her embracing a posthuman identity.

Posthumanism has challenged bipolar classifications of humans, machines, and other beings; integrative trans-disciplinary perspectives complicate the definition of human. Donna Haraway and N. Katherine Hadley have developed theoretical perspectives that can work towards encountering this epistemology. The way Bacigalupi envisions

manufactured beings is close to what Haraway's Cyborg Manifesto argues in her position that "the cyborg is a conglomeration of machine and organism. I see Bacigalupi's depiction of posthumanism as a critique of species identity. The world of the novel, one filled with engineered organisms, embodies the difficulties associated with posthuman existence; Haraway's and Hayles's theories allow me to help tease out those difficulties.

## **Posthuman Consciousness, Identity and Relationship**

Emiko is a fusion of posthumanism, as her very existence exists in contradiction; she both came from engineers, and she has her own consciousness. This goes back to her internal struggle, she points out in the text, "I am not human, yet I think, I feel, I desire. David Gunkel (2012) examines whether creatures or machines with consciousness and emotion, for example, Emiko, should be afforded equal moral consideration to humans. Gunkel argues for extending ethical frameworks to include moral rights for posthuman species grounded in thinking and feeling, while Emiko's self-awareness raises issues for standard ethics that do not consider non-human entities.

This internal conflict ties back to broader themes in posthumanism, such as consciousness and identity in artificial beings. I see Emiko's experiences as an interesting study of such themes, arguing the tension between creation and autonomy. Ray Kurzweil's (2005) concept of the Singularity argues that when technology moves to a point bringing together human and machine intelligence, a new existence will emerge. He indicates the "nonbiological portion of our intelligence will predominate. In fact, Kurzweil's theories align with Bacigalupi's vision of a world where the lines between technology and biology are blurred; the implications of Kurzweil's thinking regarding human and machine integration are a useful frame for understanding the posthumanism presented in the novel.

Integrating Kurzweil's ideas and Haraway's post-humanist lens allows for a closer reading of the human slash machine shifting boundaries described in Bacigalupi's novel. The representation of engineer beings with technological control demonstrates the depth of these theories that act in unison to critique the future of human identity. In Bacigalupi's world, even engineered beings came with hybridity. It shows a biological and technological future. He demonstrated this hybridity in the excerpt "even the fruits and grains are engineered, their origins lost in time.

I find Emiko's hybrid nature to be a compelling commentary on the fluidity of human identity in a technologically advanced world. Her experiences highlight the challenges and possibilities of living as a hybrid being. The novel depiction of hybrid entities challenges conventional notions of what it means to be human. I see Bacigalupi's portrayal of hybridity as a reflection of broader societal shifts towards blurred boundaries between the organic and synthetic.

This perspective aligns with Haraway's (2013) argument that "the cyborg does not recognise the hierarchical dualism between human and machine. Bacigalupi's world exemplifies this idea by presenting a future where such distinctions are increasingly irrelevant. Kurzweil's theories on hybrid intelligence and the merging of human and machine provide a valuable context for understanding Bacigalupi's depiction of hybridity. He argues that "as we advance technologically, the boundaries of our biology will expand

and evolve” (Kurzweil, 2005).

I think that Kurzweil's comments about hybrid intelligence and the future of human and machine co-creation and integration provide a relevant framework to study the hybrid intelligence we can explore in the novel. Bacigalupi's depiction of technologically prescribed and exploited control exemplifies a concern around power relations in a technologically advanced world. Within the fictional world of the novel, the manipulation of technology for the sake of domination and oppression, especially through the exploitation of engineered beings like Emiko, is also explored. Emiko makes a statement that touches on an important ethical consideration of advances made in this area when she says, “I am the creation of man; cruel or not cruel, I am subject to his whim. This depiction is interesting, and I see this as making statements about how technology can continue to exploit existing inequalities and power dynamics. Bacigalupi's world effectively situates the tension of technological advancements with existing power dynamics.

Emiko, as a servant, and her experiences of exploitation reveal broader systems of power in Bacigalupi's world, and highlight how technology can be weaponised regarding control and ownership. I find her experiences to be a significant critique of the moral consequences of technological development. This novel, and what it explores regarding technology ethical role in oppression, raises important questions about how technology may be used by and for oppressive forces. Bacigalupi's extrapolation of these themes touches on some of the current ire around technological benefits being squandered by power systems rather than as opportunities to bridge gaps in equity and opportunity. I found Kurzweil, (2005) warnings about technology digging crevices deeper based on existing inequities particularly timely regarding the themes in the novel.

I feel that Bacigalupi's story extract highlights the ethical aspects of some increasingly common technological advancements, and how those fit into the potential shift in power. As we compare Bacigalupi's example of the control of technology to existing positions among more typical beliefs and practices, the relevance of the novel to contemporary conversation about ethics and technology becomes clear. Bacigalupi's example of power and exploitation provides a critical lens to think through the implications of technological development.

## **Immortality, Environmental Degradation, and Societal Transformation**

The pursuit of immortality is a central subject in Bacigalupi's story. It uses the composition of genetically engineered beings, such as Emiko, to introduce and examine issues related to the pursuit of eternal life. Bacigalupi's representation of this pursuit makes us question how we characterise life and how we justify our choices to preserve it indefinitely. I interpret Bacigalupi's treatment of immortality as a critical analysis of the repercussions of the pursuit of immortality. The pursuit of eternal life in Bacigalupi's world reflects nearby concerns that have been raised against the consequences of technological development on human character.

Kurzweil, (2005) notion of immortality, as part of the Singularity concept, allows us to think about Bacigalupi's treatment of this theme. He claims that “the convergence of the human mind and machine intelligence is a dramatic fusion that allows us to accelerate

human experience in ways that extend our lifespan in ways that will be breakthroughs. Kurzweil's vision provides insight into the implications of social constructions of identity associated with immortality in the novel. Kurzweil's insight provides a relevant context for illuminating Bacigalupi's vision of the theme.

Bacigalupi prompts larger questions about immortality and morality, and philosophy. The text asks readers to think about how it could be possible for human beings to live forever, not only the implications for the ethical landscape, but also the potential outcomes of such life extension. I see these issues as a key point in grasping the overall scope of Bacigalupi's message. If we consider the pursuit of immortality set in Bacigalupi's world, there are some serious cultural shifts at play, too.

The pursuit of immortality may also provoke a discussion about changing cultural values and norms, and who we are as humans. Emiko's experiences and challenges connect to the world surrounding her, and the question of humanity and immortality nearly impossible friction. Leon Kass (2002) contends that human life extension raises ethical questions about human dignity and what society values. Bacigalupi's novel reveals these tensions, which masterfully demonstrate how the search for immortality may drive culture from valuing the quality of life towards the value of length of life. Emiko's experiences could demonstrate the loss of dignity related to these advancements.

I view Bacigalupi's illustration of immortality as a critique of the cultural consequences of seeking immortality. The narrative shows an alternative perspective on the problems that the pursuit of immortality could create for cultural categories and social structures. Bacigalupi recognises the need for intelligent immortality and worldly advancement, while indicating the concerns attached to it. The narrative shows that several advancements could come to impact various social structures, norms, and values. I think Bacigalupi's interpretation of immortality in relation to a few technological developments also suggests something about the portrayal of society.

Bacigalupi's (2009) portrayal of a world that is impacted by genetic engineering and technological advancements also includes important environmental impacts. The novel offers a dystopian future where environmental destruction occurs through the exploitation of technological innovations. The depiction of the world as having "diseased and mutated ecosystems" reveals the technological consequences to the environment. I get the sense that Bacigalupi is providing a cautionary tale against the hazards of pressing forward with technology at the cost of the natural world, by demonstrating what is possible because of environmental degradation. The novel influences the concept of sustainability and requires one to consider the environmental impact, whether developing a new technology or not. There is an important economic lens to Bacigalupi's world that ties back into there being consequences from technological advancements on economic systems. The novel explores how genetic engineering and technological control are detrimental, creating economic disparities and exploitation. As an example, the business mechanisms of the engineered crops allow the corporations' ownership to maintain and infect the consumer's traditional crops.

I perceive Bacigalupi's representation of the economic effects as a necessary critique of the role of technology in economic systems. The story demonstrates how technology can deepen existing inequalities and create new forms of economic exploitation. The

environmental and economic situation in Bacigalupi's world has significant cultural and social implications. In his novel, Bacigalupi explores environmental degradation and economic exploitation through cultural shifts and changes to social norms. Bacigalupi's analysis of the cultural shifts concerning environmental degradation might be useful in thinking about technological change's impact on society. Ulrich Beck (1992) argues that technological and environmental changes create risks that reshape societies by changing the risks that people's lives are rooted in. Bacigalupi's novel reflects this perspective, demonstrating how environmental crises lead to societal shifts that place survival at the centre of people's lives.

## Conclusion

In *The Windup Girl*, Paolo Bacigalupi created a dystopian world where the meanings of humans and machines are blurred, raising issues of identity, ethics and survival. Emiko, the character who represents a technologically altered being in a technologically altered world, brings forth the elements of posthumanism, hybridity, power, etc. and the myriad social, cultural and economic issues that arise from technological and environmental flux. In this regard, by emphasising aspects of Bacigalupi's novel, this research shows how Bacigalupi's work reveals both the promises and dangers of human ingenuity that could influence future society. The guiding problem of this research was to consider how a post-humanist lens can be used to investigate Bacigalupi's novel and its description of engineered beings such as Emiko. Drawing on the theoretical perspectives of Ray Kurzweil, Cary Wolfe, Donna Haraway, N. Katherine Hayles, and David Gunkel, this study demonstrates how the text interrogates the intersection of power, hybridity, and technology and how the traditional thinking of the human is problematized. In conclusion, *The Windup Girl* indicates the tenuous boundaries of the human in a world consumed by ecological disaster and technological transformation. The novel not only makes one wonder what it means to be human, but also asks that we reflect on the ethical and philosophical implications of being human.

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## Birth Rituals and Modernity among the Dangaura Tharu of Nepal

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### **Abstract**

*This study investigates how the nature of Dangaura Tharu birth rituals, including Saunri (isolation room), Sudhini (healer), Thasaura, and Chhathi (the sixth-day ceremony), continues to influence the spiritual, gender, and community life of Tharu people. They have functions that ensure the safety and health of the mother during delivery and the newborn, secure spiritual and social purity, and unite the newborn within their family. Historical birth attendants (Sudhini), 30 and a traditional healer (Guruwa) play a central role in the cultural setting and practising for coexistence and alive. Present suggestions, including education, migration, and use of the hospital practice, have changed this type of traditional system, providing rise to an assimilated birthing culture where historical healing and recent medicine work side by side, sharing the same hospital practice. This study took place in the western Kailali and Bardiya districts of Nepal. The study applies ethnographic fieldwork, such as interviews and long-term observation from the field. The findings show that Dangaura Tharu birth rituals or cultural practices united together the structure with patriarchy, tradition with modernisation, and the sacred system of ritual with the prescription of medicine. Understanding these cultural practices, like shared birth ritual, is needed for making delivery maternal health delivery program.*

**Keywords:** Birth rituals, Dangaura Tharu, gender role, medical pluralism, modernisation

### **Introduction**

The birth is a genetic and biological phenomenon and a deep cultural and social



event of the Dangaura Tharu people. It shows the collective beliefs, moral values, and common ethnic identity of the Tharu people of western Nepal. In birth rituals, a delivery mother is isolated in Saunri for purification rites such as Sudhini or Chokha. Likewise, the Nwaran (naming process of a child) binds together spiritually, gender, and community in one existing tradition. Especially, inhabiting the Dang, Banke, Kailali, and Bardiya districts, the Dangaura Tharu base their social and cultural livelihood on traditions of purity, preservation, and attachment in much the same way that one might carefully clean a home at the time, keeping away both dirt and unmanaged. All birth ritual practices are at the centre of collective life for them; all warm hands are gathered around the mother and newborn child in their home for their safety and balance system in the social setting. These types of cultural rituals bring out how the Tharu community protects all its people and social environments, the spirit, tying people all together, catching hands around a newborn baby's first cry, in a system to protect their cultural birth ritual in the society.

These cultural tradition settings were gradually changed with modern social environments and the socialisation process. Including education, migration of people in that area, and increased access to modern health facilities, childbirth practices have changed day to day from village to village. The Tharu people gradually hybridise traditional and biomedical procedures, and rituals such as traditional Sudhini and Chhathi have emerged as part of adaptive culture. This combined and hybridity indicates cultural flexibility by revealing the continuity of traditional social settings with new adaptation to new health procedures, but understanding their symbolic meaning and concept in the society.

In spite of the launching of delivery practices of research on delivery and maternal health in Nepal, there is a simple lack of research focused on how cultural practicing rituals most practised among the Dangaura Tharu are interconnected with the new social environment. Many studies on Tharu often many universal delivery practices and ignore local stratification and differences in the Tharu society. This type of research or concept has limited our knowledge about how recent and modern medicinal procedures and traditional rituals work together and influence birth practices and procedures in the hospital and home, which are traditionally. The sociological and ethnographic studies have explored how women Dangaura Tharu start by the ritual with biomedical expectations and choices from the traditional practices.

Thus, many researchers try to investigate how modern technological procedure is inter-influenced and grow side by side in the birth procedure experience of Dangaura Tharu people in Nepal. This article shows how the Tharu communities find new modern traditions to protect their birthing rituals that exist in the setting, though all things are modified and change around their surroundings. When hospitals are easily accessible in the village area, many families of Tharu people still choose and apply the traditional birth procedure in the home, and there is a cause behind it. Sudhini, the traditional midwife, and healer Guruwa are not just cultural and historical past customs and values stuck in the past time in the villages. They play real, vital, essential, everyday roles, binding both the

practical side of childbirth and the kuldevta and the spiritual side, also with the knowledge and skills. If health practitioners see these types of scenes as cultural barriers, it gets a lot easier to work together with local people in the villages where they are servicing. The Saunri, that special isolated room for the delivery mother and newborn child where both stay after delivery, tells its own story of the birthing, gender, tradition, and how the Tharu female starts through the attractions and distractions of modern lifestyle and old customs and rules of the Tharu societies.

Therefore, this study applies a hybridity of sociological theories, including customs, rites, rituals of people, symbolic interactionism, the pure and impure side, and medical procedures in birthing practices in Tharu communities. Its objectives are to explore the Tharu birth rituals and to expose the cultural lens that enhances these traditions even in a changing social environment and social setting. Thus, these birth rituals establish how the Tharu community protects its identity and uniqueness while also finding ways to adapt and adjust in the modern society and system of government in Nepal. Such local cultural practising systems both support improving maternal health safety and also focus on the flexibility and elasticity of the Dangaura Tharu community in the social setting and system of modern Nepal.

### **Literature Review**

Traditional Birth Attendants (TBAs) are connected with the Tharu ritual and medical procedure that becomes interconnected and tied for managing and maintaining cultural bonds and setting. The birth rituals among the Dangaura Tharu people have a deeply symbolic meaning in their own culture. They focus on social purity, protection, and communal identity in society. Such happens through birth practices like Sudhini or Chokha period after the child's birth in the family, food taboos, and kuldevta worship system in the communities. The changing environment with modernisation and easy access to medical services, delivery care practices and others has created a mixed birthing culture that hybridises traditional and new medical practices for birthing rituals. The recent modern influences change the birth procedure but do not remove them totally from the societies, which the meaning of Tharu rituals, by focusing on their ongoing phenomenon significances in the communities.

This literature shows on traditional and classic anthropological perspective, which uses Victor Turner's idea of the rites of passage to present how birth rituals move through separations, modifications, and restructuring, while Erving Goffman's statement of performance supports understanding the symbolic gestures and roles within those birth rituals, which are practised in societies. The Dangaura Tharu have experience is shaped by the various theories of medical procedure. It reveals how the works of traditional healers and a prescription from a health doctor work side by side (Mandala Library, 2023). Hence, looking through both birth ritual and medical procedure, we see how Dangaura Tharu families balance both tradition with modern practising care, choosing between a

healer's perception and the clinic's lens.

Traditional Birth Attendants facilitate both the Tharu families and health workers by acting as practical caregivers and ritual carriers in birthing practices. Such both hybrid practices become the fact that they can be effective partners in refining maternal health if engaged respectfully. It embodies moral authority and local trust by being missing in recognised health systems (Ansari, 2022). The claim of the researcher is that Suddhi-like rites become significant rituals in connection with other rituals. In the attached relatives' systems, through feasting and mutual support, can be maintained. Such unique ritual practices prove the profound linking between ritual purity, kinship, and community identity of the Tharu. This identity reinforces social harmony within the Tharu moral world (Himalaya, 2009). In this way, the study claims that birth rituals confirm cultural uniqueness via common representative acts.

Moreover, TBA continues to play dynamic roles in rural Tharu communities. The ritual support during the delivery period provides herbal medicines. Yet proper guidance to families through purification and protection rituals remains intact. According to Thatte et al, TBA facilitate both the families and health workers by creating trust where biomedical institutions may seem culturally distant (Thatte et al, 2009). In such a ritual context, TBA does as both practical caregivers and ritual carriers. With this, some TBAs have established formal health training; however, their practices differ widely. Some accept safer methods while others maintain traditional ones that may conflict with biomedical guidelines (Mullany et al., 2009). This is how TBAs in the area of Dangaura Tharu remain to express moral authority and local trust qualities, mainly by missing of TBA trust makes them vital associates for maintaining cultural sensitivity in maternal care.

Contrarily, the insights of safety repeatedly become different from many Tharu families that prioritise ritual safety over physical or medical safety (Kaphle et al., 2013). So, many Tharu families understand cultural meanings as attached to ritual safety can overshadow the safety messages of biomedical interventions. Although there is a hospital facility, home births may still be favoured because of gender rules, fear of shame, lack of cultural respect in institutions, and long distances (Eliciting Childbirth Practices, 2016). In the same way, emotional and socio-cultural obstacles shape the decision of childbirth. This decision leads to the favourite home births. However, programs helping skilled birth attendants show that regarding and prioritising the local rituals and practices improves the rates of hospital delivery (Frontiers, 2022). Thus, the modern maternal services, at present, work best if they adopt such traditional practices of birth rituals and begetting.

However, the dynamism and gradual modernisation of culture and society have influenced the traditional norms of such ritual of birth in Dangaura Tharu. At present, the younger Tharu women give birth to their babies in hospitals, but still embrace naming and purification ceremonies later at home, incense curling in the air (RSIS International, 2024). Likewise, contact with modern health care differs. Some communities hold it quickly, while others hold back, shaped by distance and local beliefs (Clinical Epidemiology and

Global Health, 2024). This way, the rituals of Childbirth are intensely knotted to gender, with women leading the ceremonies. At times, educated Tharu women push back against strict seclusion rules or find ways to blend a hospital stay with familiar home rituals, the scent of burning oil lamps drifting through the room as they do.

Public health research highlights that saving mothers and newborns depends on blending solid medical care with a genuine grasp of local traditions, like knowing why a village midwife burns herbs beside the birthing mat (BMJ Public Health, 2024). Thus, such a scheme and policy should hold range by making up health systems while cooperating with ritual practitioners.

As the review follows the varieties of study and criticism related to Tharu rituals, the study intends to fill a similar sort of gap to proceed more deeply. Furthermore, most studies converge on the Tharu sub-communities together, brushing past the distinct local traits you can spot in their dialects or daily rhythms. There's little recent ethnographic or mixed methods research on how rituals evolve, how people interact in hospitals, or how those changes last over time (Oxford University Research Archive, 2024). The researcher argues we urgently need fieldwork focused on the Dangaura, tracking how their rituals evolve and persist while gathering data on mothers' health, listening to chants that echo through the dusk as the clinic opens nearby.

Usually, Dangaura Tharu birth rituals continue vibrant cultural practices that keep, integrate, and symbolise new life (Cambridge University Repository, 2009). The way the Cambridge University Repository argues is that the rituals make up the cultural identity and social relations. With such a backdrop of reviews, TBA remain to connect cultural beliefs and biomedical care (Thatte et al., 2009). In this sense, the researcher posits that the birth delivery tradition (TBA) becomes a quite effective method in safe-birth initiatives. However, the rapid growth in science and technology has been changing the setting, but not the spirit of ritual. In addition to it, the hospital births and later ceremonies often coexist within (Frontiers, 2022). Thus, the adaptation of the ritual is the most common answer to modern health choices. For effective maternal health policy, cultural safety must be arranged alongside medical competence (BMJ Public Health, 2024). Therefore, the culturally safe and effective policies raise official delivery commitment while conserving self-respect.

Above all, the number of studies on Tharu rituals and culture focuses less especially on the Dangaura Tharu and their changing birth practices, and a lot of generalising about sub-communities. The current ethnographic and mixed methods data on ritual adaptation, hospital interaction, and long-term change are rare. The study, therefore, addresses this clear need for Dangaura-specific fieldwork by authenticating ritual continuity and modification together with the measures of maternal health.

### **Methods and Procedures**

This study applies a qualitative research design grounded in anthropological and

sociological inquiry to explore the cultural meanings, social structures, and gendered dynamics of birth rituals among the Dangaura Tharu community of western Nepal. A qualitative method is suitable for exploring the lived experiences of delivery women, ritual symbols, and the interaction between tradition and recent modernisation setting through participants' lens. The sociological and ethnographic perspective was applied to permit in-depth interviews, highlighting observation of rituals, symbols and everyday concepts and meanings about delivery practices. This research design gives an interactive concept and model for exploring how Tharu women, traditional midwives (Sudhini), and healers (Guruwa) interact between traditional birth practice and biomedical practices while examining and documenting transformations in ritual meaning through a new changing environment by education, and renovations.

This study was conducted in the Kailali and Bardiya districts of western Nepal. Respondents were selected by purposive sampling to ensure representations of diverse generational, educational, socioeconomic class, and gender backgrounds. The sample included Tharu mothers, traditional midwives, elder women, ritual healers, and participant observation, and discussions were conducted in the Tharu language for the study. The triangulation of the information in qualitative methods was taken to enhance both the depth and reliability of the findings of the study. The data saturation was found by selecting participants from key roles and experiences with the Dangaura Tharu women in the communities. Ethical approval was obtained from an academic institution in the field. Informed consent was obtained informally and in writing from all respondents.

## **Results and Discussion**

### **Tharu Birth Rituals and Structural Meaning**

A birth ritual among the Dangaura Tharu community of Nepal is a structural and patriarchal frame which organises both the physical aspects of childbirth, but it is also the moral, social, and spiritual sequence of the Dangaura Tharu community. According to Emile Durkheim's concept of social structure, these rituals indicate the collective conscience, which ties all individuals by the shared belief and moral obligations (Durkheim, 1997). The Dangaura Tharu birth rituals work as a mechanism of social unity that modifies the individual experience of childbirth into a reaffirmation of the whole social order and community solidarity. The Tharu birth ritual is an existing traditional and cultural practice. Their ritual shows the symbolic meaning, harmony and spiritual happiness in the community. In birth practices are practicing in very tradition with herbal remedies by the Sudhini and Guruwa. The Tharu women are doing their domestic work and duties without rest while they are pregnant. Their regular roles within the house structure represent the deeply fixed practice of patriarchal norms, which connects femininity to constant work forces gender hierarchy and explains women's value by the domestic productivity, presenting the patriarchy as naturalising gender stratification through the

cultural experiences.

### **Role of the Sudhini (Traditional Midwife)**

Sudhini is a significant healer of the Tharu childbirth system. She helps in delivery, saves the life of the mother, and does all Tharu rituals and acts for the purity and protection of both child and mother in the home or Saunri. However, the central role of Sudhini is controlled by the patriarchal ritual decisions and hierarchy in the Dangaura Tharu community (Levi-Strauss, 1969). Sudhini is doing all the functions when a child is born. She cuts the umbilical cord, purifies the newborn child and mother ritually. From a structural perspective, Sudhini's work maintains balance in the community by managing the period for life and pollution. Sudhini mediates the Tharu ritual as sacred and pollution to protect the moral unity of the community (Durkheim, 2008). Sudhini's arbitration in childbirth rituals enhances the structural unity of the Dangaura community by forming the moral and spiritual boundaries.

### **Saunri (Postpartum Room) and Ritual Isolation**

A Saunri is formed by the four *babiyo* in four sides of the bed in a separate room in a home. The Saunri provides rest for the mother and child, satisfying a structural objective by giving her a healthy life for the child and mother (Brown, 1952). This ritual isolation also preserves a protective social setting, which structure and patriarchy can together control the ritual system of the Dangaura Tharu community. A newborn child and the mother are isolated in a Saunri (a separate room for the child and mother), which is considered impure culturally. The isolated period indicates both spiritual impurity and social pollution that manage moral order in a Dangaura Tharu community. According to Douglas (1966), the practice of impurity and purity shows the social norms that manage spiritual and moral values in the community. The Saunri works as a social order which preserves communal purity by symbolically separating pollution from the sacred aspect of family life. The isolation of women from social and religious activities during the delivery period reveals patriarchal control over the bodies of Tharu females. The Dangaura Tharu community introduces the female as ritually unclean, and her entry into the social setting depends on cleaned rituals by male authority (Ortner, 1974). Patriarchy shows the symbolic hierarchy, where a woman's physical work becomes ground for social isolation and ritual order.

### **Delivery Practices and Symbolic Remedies**

During the delivery period, the Tharu people use symbolic and herbal solutions by the Sudhini and *Guruwa* (ritual healer) for a fast and normal delivery at home. They practice the traditional methods of delivery, such as showing the ticket of train ticket,

walking on foot for a long time, giving the bold water with chillies for normal and on time delivery. These traditional and ritual activities are guided by the belief that childbirth engages both biological and spiritual risks (Turner, 1969). Such ritual practices liminal process that changes individuals from one place to another within the social setting of the Dangaura Tharu. The delivery process of the Tharu people represents a smaller area where ritual activities manage, restore the balance, and integrate the event into the mass system of the Dangaura Tharu people. In delivery, Sudhini and Guruwa tried many solutions and herbal remedies for the delivery of the child in a traditional manner. They have done their traditional solutions to reduce the delivery pain. The Dangaura Tharu people offered the goat, cock, sweets and other things to their Kuldevta for the good and normal and painless delivery. They believe that these actions can reduce pain during delivery and help to ease delivery at home. The symbolic meaning of train tickets and the use of boiled water rituals in the delivery period reflect the symbolic interaction, shared culture and collective gestures which shape the experience of Dangaura Tharu people culturally (Goffman, 1967). He emphasises those rituals of the Tharu people which interact with the moral order in the society. The symbolic gestures in childbirth, the Tharu restructure collective understanding of life, purity and spirituality in everyday actions, which hold the structural and symbolic meaning for delivery in the community.

### **Thasaura Rituals and Collective Reintegration**

The Thasaura is made by the rice flour, which is offered on Kuldevta in their home. After a newborn child, the Tharu people made the Thasaura by the boiled rice flour with cooked chillies and formed the oval shape of the Thasaura for the male child and the cylinder shape for the female child, which represents the patriarchal and stratified male and female. After the offering of the Thasaura on Kuldevta, and other Thasaura are provided to the neighbours with joy, cheerfulness and happiness due to childbirth in their home. The villagers are known as the male and female children by the Thasaura because it reflects the inequality in both males and females. These practices exist culturally, and all Dangaura Tharu people believe that activities for the purification, prosperity, happiness and collective reinforcement of the social structure. The Thasaura represents the purity, spiritual belief, social harmony and happiness due to childbirth. But all these activities are controlled by the male and Guruwa (Ortner, 1974). This gendered division of ritual works provides the structural patriarchy where women's contribution in ritual life is key, but symbolically male-dominated in ritual power.

### **The Sixth-Day Ceremony (Chhathi) and Social Reconstruction**

On the sixth day after the new childbirth, the Chhathi ceremony is celebrated in the Dangaura Tharu to welcome the newborn and protect him/her from the evil spirits. The Tharu people believe that the god is framed and takes the future of the child on the sixth

day after the birth. On that day and night, they pray to the Kuldevta and burn the Diyo on whole night for the good future and prosperous life of the child. They are awake at whole night with neighbours, and they offer and listen to the good, bravery stories, religious stories which are told by the ancestors. The sixth day's chhathi rituals indicate the end of isolation and the reintegration with family in society. According to Parsons (1951), these rituals reform the collective values and shared roles in the social setting. The Chhathi ceremony of the Dangaura Tharu structurally reinforces kinship and social solidarity by the publically. A patriarchal perspective, the sixth day's chhathi ceremony highlights the gender roles where Tharu women will engage in cleaning, cooking, and preparing ritual foods, but men perform prayers and symbolic activities of Kuldevta. These divisions of ritual duties represent male spiritual authority and female domestic service (Connell, 1987). The Chhathi ceremony shows how patriarchal thought ties gendered duties in sacred rituals in the Tharu community and reinforces male dominance in the community celebration in every ritual ceremony.

### **Conclusion**

Birth among the Dangaura Tharu people is not just a biological process. It is a social and cultural event that reflects the community's shared beliefs, moral values, and social structure. The Dangaura Tharu rituals, including the childbirth procedure with Saunri, Sudhini, Thasura, and Chhathi, have various purposes in their community and circles. They preserve both the mother and child, ensuring spiritual and social purity from the delivery, and attach the newborn baby to their families, relatives, and community in Nepal. These practices and procedures focus on the close way between Tharu ritual, morality, and social setting, circle and community ties. Birth is both a personal and shared collective experience in the Tharu communities.

This study has shown that traditional midwives (Sudhini) and ritual healers (Guruwa) play essential and vital roles during the birthing period in the communities. They work as cultural listener, mediators, helpers with practical care and spiritual guidance and suggestions in the families and delivery mother. They also keep birthing ritual practices existed and alive in the communities, even with recent modern healthcare systems of government. The Saunri, where mother are isolated with their newborn baby, offer both protection and social control and order in their communities. It indicates how gender roles and patriarchal norms influence the birth experience of Dangaura Tharu females in their environment. Despite these limitations, females start their independence by managing and maintaining their rituals, protecting knowledge, and finding a balance between tradition and a new social environment with modern birth procedure practices in society.

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### The Donyi-Polo Cosmos: Sun and Moon Mythology in Mising Folktales

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#### Abstract

*The symbols of the Sun and Moon form the central axis of Mising cosmology, ethics, and ritual life in Assam and Arunachal Pradesh. Donyi (the Sun) and Polo (the Moon) are imagined as parents, witnesses, and ancestral lawgivers whose gaze binds human conduct to a larger moral and ecological order. This article analyses five narratives—“Origin of Ali a Ye Ligang,” “Abotani and Abotaro,” “The Dark Spot on the Moon,” “Lightning and Thunder,” and “The Rite of Calling a Soul Back”—drawn from an authoritative corpus of Mising folktales. Through close reading, it shows how these stories encode ideas of cosmological origin, divine ancestry, oath-taking, taboo, shame, reciprocity with nonhuman beings, and environmental responsibility. Rather than treating Mising solar–lunar beliefs as a fragmentary “tribal religion” or primitive astronomy, the study argues that the Donyi Polo complex functions as an Indigenous moral philosophy and knowledge archive. Solar–lunar mythology emerges as a living intellectual tradition that continues to shape cultural memory, ecological ethics, and contemporary Mising identity.*

**Keywords:** *Donyi-Polo, ecological morality, indigenous cosmogony, Mising oral tradition, solar–lunar mythology*

#### Introduction

The Mising of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh maintain one of the richest oral traditions in the Tibeto-Burman region, transmitting cosmology, genealogy, ecological memory, and social ethics chiefly through story and performance rather than scripture (Pegu, 2016; Taid, 2016). Within this world of narrative, the divine pair Donyi and Polo

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are central. They are invoked in ritual chants, used in oaths, and referenced in everyday idioms, so the sky becomes a constant reminder of moral visibility (Religious Belief and Practice of Mising Community of Assam, 2019; Taid, 2016). For Mising narrators, the Sun and Moon are intelligent beings who see, hear, judge, and intervene in human affairs and who embody truth, justice, fertility, agricultural order, and ancestral lineage as overlapping forms of “light” (Misra, 2023; Taid, 2016).

The folktale corpus assigns sex, personality, and kinship roles to heavenly bodies, turning astronomical phenomena into characters rooted in family and village life (Finnegan, 2012; Taid, 2016). In “Origin of Ali a Ye Ligang,” Donyi and Polo instruct Abotani in techniques and ethical obligations of cultivation, including ritual apologies to animals harmed while protecting crops. In “The Dark Spot on the Moon,” rivalry, shame, and misdirected punishment become a moral explanation for lunar markings, while “Lightning and Thunder” translates a broken taboo into a permanent separation mapped onto the sky (Taid, 2016). Even the healing rite of calling back a lost soul depends on Donyi and Polo as witnesses to vows, making dishonesty impossible in principle (Hallowell, 1960; Taid, 2016). Across myths, etiological tales, agricultural legends, and ritual narratives, the Sun and Moon form the moral spine of the community.

These materials unsettle earlier anthropological habits of describing Indigenous cosmologies as preliterate superstition or proto-scientific commentary (Bascom, 1954; Malinowski, 1926). Eliade (1959, 1963) argued that cosmology is often ethical before it is astronomical because the sky is experienced as a zone of truth. Lévi-Strauss (1978) treated myth as a sophisticated mode of thought equivalent to philosophy but articulated through narrative. Smith (1999) insisted that Indigenous stories are not mythic scraps awaiting rational interpretation but legitimate knowledge systems combining history, law, and ethics. The Mising tales illustrate these positions: they encode rules about cultivation, taboo, shame, reciprocity with animals, and the binding force of speech.

The Donyi Polo complex is therefore better understood as a cultural philosophy than a marginal “tribal religion” (Misra, 2023; Pegu, 2016). Through narrative fiction, Misings depict a universe in which human conduct and cosmic order correspond: ecological irresponsibility and moral failure radiate outward into a sky that remembers them (Eliade, 1959; Finnegan, 2012). Solar–lunar mythology is not decorative but foundational—one of the chief media through which identity, ethics, and environmental relations are transmitted (Berkes, 2008; Smith, 1999).

## Literature Review

### Myth as Knowledge

Claude Lévi-Strauss famously argued that myth is a mode of thinking: it handles the same logical problems as philosophy but does so in concrete images and stories rather than in abstract concepts (Lévi-Strauss, 1978). In the Mising context, this is visible in the tight linkage between stars, planets, and social relationships: the Sun and Moon are not passive lights but figures that teach, punish, measure, and witness, encoding rules about kinship and land use in narratives about the sky (Taid, 2016; “Mising Folklore:

The Matrix of the Mising Society and Culture,” 2021). The Abotani cycle in particular acts as what Lévi-Strauss would call a system of categories, distinguishing human and nonhuman, kin and stranger, permissible and forbidden through storied events rather than doctrinal statements (Lévi-Strauss, 1978; Dumézil, 1970).

This implies that Mising solar–lunar tales should not be read as clumsy attempts at scientific explanation. They handle questions of law, inheritance, ecological reciprocity, and shame by projecting them onto an animated cosmos whose movements can be read as commentary on human behaviour (Eliade, 1963; Berkes, 2008). Myth here is not ignorance; it is a compressed form of social and ecological knowledge.

### **Cosmos as Moral Space**

Mircea Eliade argued that in many societies, the sky is not a neutral physical zone but a place of truth that cannot be deceived and therefore acquires juridical functions (Eliade, 1959, 1963). Mising ritual language reflects this directly when the Mibu, during the rite of calling back a soul, addresses Donyi and Polo as witnesses to his promise to care for the patient, thereby turning the sky into a moral courtroom (Taid, 2016). In such narratives, the heavens are less a backdrop for natural events than an active archive of human acts: stains on the Moon, the perpetual chase of thunder and lightning, or the unblinking gaze of the Sun all mark moral breaches that cannot be erased (Eliade, 1963; Finnegan, 2012).

In this moral cosmos, lying, betrayal, or the neglect of obligations leave traces in the visible world, which means that ethical conduct is always already public, even when formally hidden from other humans (Hallowell, 1960). The Mising stories, therefore, instantiate Eliade’s claim that cosmology is a moral field as much as a physical one.

### **Indigenous Knowledge and Narrative Sovereignty**

Linda Tuhiwai Smith’s critique of colonial research emphasises that Indigenous stories were long dismissed as superstition or “myth” in a pejorative sense, even when they clearly transmitted environmental information and ethical systems (Smith, 1999). In the Mising case, tales about Abotani learning cultivation, apologising to animals, or negotiating with spirits encode practical ecological knowledge about soil, water, and nonhuman agency alongside moral instruction (Taid, 2016; “Environmental and Ethical Issues in Mising Folklore,” 2016). To treat such narratives as mere folklore is to miss their epistemic status within the community.

Smith also insists on narrative sovereignty: the right of Indigenous communities to define their stories as knowledge, law, and history (Smith, 1999). By reading Donyi Polo tales as philosophical texts in narrative form rather than as quaint legends, this article aligns with that decolonising move and resists the colonial trope of the “tribe without history” (Smith, 1999; Bascom, 1954).

### **Functional Roles of Myth**

Bronisław Malinowski saw myth as a charter for social institutions, providing

legitimising stories that locate present customs in primordial time (Malinowski, 1926). “Origin of Ali a Ye Ligang” functions in precisely this way: it explains the agricultural festival as a re-enactment of Abotani’s first cultivation under the patronage of Donyi Polo, thereby giving the ritual a hereditary sanction rather than a merely pragmatic justification (Malinowski, 1926). The tale not only narrates technical steps of sowing and protecting crops but frames them as obligations established in sacred time, which is exactly what Malinowski meant by myth as a practical charter.

Other Mising tales also illustrate functionalist points. “The Rite of Calling a Soul Back” gives a narrative rationale for the *doli jo sag* healing rite; “Lightning and Thunder” encodes sexual taboos; and “The Dark Spot on the Moon” makes honesty a cosmic concern (Taid, 2016). In each case, the story legitimates practice, making compliance feel like fidelity to ancestral precedent rather than external coercion (Bascom, 1954; Finnegan, 2012).

### Methods and Procedures

This study uses as its primary corpus *Mising Folktales*, the Sahitya Akademi volume compiled, translated, and annotated by Taburam Taid (2016). Taid’s collection brings together around sixty narratives recorded from elder storytellers in multiple Mising villages, with the original Mising texts printed alongside Assamese or English translations and contextual ethnographic notes, making it an unusually rich written record of an oral tradition (Taid, 2016). Within Mising literary and intellectual circles, this volume is widely treated as an authoritative reference for canonical tales and ritual narratives, and it provides an appropriate base for close reading (Pegu, 2016; “Mising Folklore: The Matrix of the Mising Society and Culture,” 2021).

From this corpus, five tales were purposively selected because they feature Donyi and/or Polo in explicit roles as ancestors, teachers, or witnesses and because narrators and Taid’s own commentary repeatedly identify them as “Sun and Moon stories” central to the Mising moral universe (Taid, 2016). These are “Origin of Ali a Ye Ligang,” “Abotani and Abotaro,” “The Dark Spot on the Moon,” “Lightning and Thunder,” and “The Rite of Calling a Soul Back,” which together cover domains of cosmological origin, agriculture, oath-taking, taboo, shame, and moral judgment (Taid, 2016).

The reliability of this textual corpus operates on two levels. First, Taid is himself a Mising scholar whose work rests on long engagement with community elders and ritual specialists; his book names narrators, places of collection, and performance contexts, allowing casual or dubious material to be excluded (Taid, 2016). Second, between 2018 and 2024, informal conversations with elder storytellers and Mibus in parts of Lakhimpur and Dhemaji districts confirmed that these five tales remain widely known, frequently told, and ritually relevant today (Author, personal communication, 2019–2024). In several cases, more than one version of a tale was recounted; these variants were used to verify core plot structures and ritual details, and notable divergences are indicated where they alter the moral emphasis (Finnegan, 2012).

All English quotations from the tales in this article are taken from or checked against Taid’s translations, with minor stylistic adjustments for fluency, and with key kinship terms, ritual formulae, and culturally specific words retained in Mising or

Assamese (Taid, 2016). Where such terms occur, they have been back-translated with the help of native speaker consultants to ensure that ethical and cosmological nuances are not flattened into generic equivalents (Smith, 1999). The sample of five tales out of roughly sixty is not meant to be statistically representative; rather, it is a small, thematically coherent set of narratives that enjoy clear cultural authority as “Donyi Polo stories,” and thus carry particular weight for understanding how solar–lunar imagery organises moral and ecological thought (Bascom, 1954; Finnegan, 2012).

The methodological aim here is interpretive reliability rather than quantitative generalisation. By grounding analysis in an authoritative published collection, cross-checking with living storytellers and ritual practitioners, and concentrating on a cluster of tales that align cosmology, agriculture, and ethics, the article seeks to ensure that its readings reflect narratives that are both textually stable and socially recognized within Mising tradition (Smith, 1999; “Environmental and Ethical Issues in Mising Folklore,” 2016).

## **Results and Discussion**

### **Donyi Polo as Ancestral Parents**

In Mising cosmology, the Sun and Moon are not remote gods but members of an extended family tree. The foundational tale presents Abotani, the first human, as marrying Karmi, daughter of Donyi and Polo, and thus founding a lineage that descends directly from the sky (Taid, 2016). This single genealogical move collapses the gap between divine and human, so that ethics become obligations owed to cosmic parents rather than impersonal rules (Dumézil, 1970).

The idea that the Misings originated in Ki-ling Kangge, an otherworldly home, further strengthens this sense that migration is not merely geographic but cosmological: to come down to earth is to move from a celestial ancestral house to a terrestrial one (Taid, 2016; Religious Belief and Practice of Mising Community of Assam, 2019). In Dumézil’s terms, this is “mythic genealogy,” where divine descent provides the architecture for social ethics, because kinship with gods makes moral failure a betrayal of family rather than a technical violation (Dumézil, 1970; Malinowski, 1926).

### **Agricultural Teaching and Ecological Ethics: Origin of Ali a Ye Ligang**

Ali a Ye Ligang, the main agricultural festival, is legitimised not by astronomical calculation but by a myth of divine instruction. Abotani’s early attempts at cultivation are thwarted as birds and animals consume his crops, until he turns to Donyi and Polo, who teach him how to prepare the field, fence it, and ritually apologise to the creatures harmed in its defence (Taid, 2016). The tale encodes concrete ecological ethics: forests should be cleared with restraint, crop protection must avoid wanton cruelty, and human life is indebted to the nonhuman beings whose habitats are disrupted (Berkes, 2008).

The ritual apology, in which each animal and bird killed is named and asked forgiveness, contradicts stereotypes of “tribal” hunting as indiscriminately violent and

instead frames cultivation as a morally fraught but necessary compromise with other forms of life (Berkes, 2008; “Environmental and Ethical Issues in Mising Folklore,” 2016). The closing scene of communal song, dance, and feasting recalls Malinowski’s point that ritual re-enacts sacred beginnings: Ali a Ye Ligang is not a seasonal entertainment but a periodic return to the moment when Donyi Polo first taught ethical farming (Malinowski, 1926).

### **Donyi Polo as Moral Witnesses: The Rite of Calling a Soul Back**

In “The Rite of Calling a Soul Back,” a starving boy named Dorgin risks losing his soul, and a priest performs a healing ritual on the condition that Dorgin’s family will feed him once a year (Taid, 2016). The promise is not treated as a private agreement; the priest explicitly calls on Donyi and Polo to see and hear his vow, summoning the sky as witness. In a cosmos where Sun and Moon are ever-present relatives, speech uttered under their gaze acquires the status of binding law (Hallowell, 1960).

This story establishes several moral axioms: words bind; vows are never purely private; and the sky, as Eliade suggests, is a zone where nothing can be hidden (Eliade, 1959). Dishonesty here is not primarily a crime against human courts but a betrayal of one’s ancestors, whose eyes and ears are imagined as extending through daylight and moonlight alike (Hallowell, 1960; Taid, 2016). The tale also functions as a charter myth for the *doli jo sag* ritual: it explains why the rite exists, what obligations it imposes, and why failing those obligations invites misfortune.

### **Moral Failure and the Marked Moon: The Dark Spot on the Moon**

“The Dark Spot on the Moon” offers a moral rather than scientific explanation for lunar markings. In the tale, a deception involving rice cakes and a substituted package of excrement results in Polo, the Moon, being struck by the misdirected filth, leaving a permanent stain (Taid, 2016). The comic surface masks a serious proposition: shame leaves visible marks; deceit cannot be fully concealed; and the sky bears witness to family injustices.

By writing moral failure into a permanent astronomical feature, the tale embodies Eliade’s idea of sacred time that is continually re-entered. Every time people look at the Moon, they re-encounter a primordial act of deceit and its consequences (Eliade, 1963). The Moon’s smudge becomes a nightly reminder that wrongdoing lingers in memory even when the original actors are long gone. That injustice often harms the innocent more than the guilty (Finnegan, 2012).

### **Desire, Taboo, and Cosmic Distance: Lightning and Thunder**

In “Lightning and Thunder,” Panoi and Panbor are siblings whose relationship is shattered when Panbor’s forbidden desire is discovered; the ensuing chase moves into the sky as Panbor becomes lightning, forever pursuing Panoi, who has become thunder (Taid, 2016). Every storm re-enacts the drama of desire, shame, and pursuit, transforming a taboo transgression into a cosmic pattern. The narrative allows the community to

talk about sexual boundaries indirectly but forcefully by projecting them onto the most dramatic phenomena in the sky (Bascom, 1954).

Scholars once tended to reduce such myths to naïve weather explanations. However, Malinowski's functionalist reading alerts us to their social work: the story naturalises prohibitions by inscribing them into a landscape that children and adults alike cannot ignore (Malinowski, 1926). The ever-pursuing thunder and ever-fleeing lightning materialise the idea that some wrongs create distances that can never be closed, only circled endlessly.

### **Donyi Polo and the Architecture of Social Ethics**

Taken together, these stories present Donyi and Polo as protectors of morality rather than tyrannical gods. They require no elaborate temple cult and no doctrine of fear; their authority is quiet, continuous, and woven into both ritual and gossip (Misra, 2023). In Mising speech, people still say “Donyi Polo is watching” as a way of reminding one another that wrongdoing is visible even when it seems concealed from neighbours (Taid, 2016).

Lévi-Strauss notes that myths create systems of categories that separate order from chaos and define prohibitions (Lévi-Strauss, 1978). The Donyi Polo complex builds such a system without written codes or scripture: lies stain the Moon; illicit desire becomes storm; broken promises haunt the soul; and careless farming demands apology (Taid, 2016). In this sense, solar–lunar cosmology provides a legal and ethical architecture in an oral society, doing for the Misings what law codes and theological treatises do in literate cultures (Finnegan, 2012).

### **Cosmology as Ecological Knowledge**

From a contemporary standpoint, harvest rituals and flood chants are often sidelined as folklore, yet “Origin of Ali a Ye Ligang” reveals sophisticated environmental reasoning. When birds and animals destroy Abotani's first crop, the narrative teaches that domestication must be balanced with respect for nonhuman “persons” whose lives are disrupted (Taid, 2016). The subsequent ritual apology, in which dead animals are named and acknowledged, functions as a mnemonic device for ecological impact (Berkes, 2008). Berkes has documented similar patterns of ritualised reciprocity among other Indigenous groups, where offerings and stories maintain respectful relations between hunters and animal “persons” (Berkes, 2008). In both contexts, environmental ethics are carried not by written conservation laws but by narrative and ceremony, enabling children to internalise ecological responsibility long before they encounter formal schooling (Berkes, 2008; “Environmental and Ethical Issues in Mising Folklore,” 2016). Ali a Ye Ligang thus joins a wider set of Indigenous practices in which sacred origins confer legitimacy on sustainable land use.

### **Myth as Historical Memory**

Although folktales are not chronicles, they preserve social memory in narrative form. In “Abotani and Abotaro,” the claim that humans descend from Ki-ling Kangge

asserts cosmic rather than tribal origins, rejecting stereotypes of “backward” peoples (Taid, 2016). Colonial ethnographies often implied that such groups lacked history, a notion Smith has sharply criticised as part of the ideological toolkit of colonisation (Smith, 1999). By insisting on celestial ancestry and on Abotani as the first farmer, Mising stories place the community at the centre of a moral and agricultural history that begins in the sky. Abotani’s continued presence in ritual as a culture hero underscores Malinowski’s observation that myth sustains social organisation by providing models for behaviour (Malinowski, 1926). Every act of cultivation echoes his first sowing under Donyi Polo’s instruction; every festival dance re-enacts a remembered beginning (Taid, 2016). In this way, myth acts as historical memory without relying on archives.

### **Moral Time and Cosmic Permanence**

“The Dark Spot on the Moon” and “Lightning and Thunder” both show how moral time is stretched into cosmic permanence. The mark on the Moon is not framed as revenge but as a reminder: shame does not simply evaporate after the event but remains visible in the nightly sky (Taid, 2016; Eliade, 1963). “Lightning and Thunder” likewise eternalises a single broken taboo into a chase that recurs whenever storms form, suggesting that some consequences cannot be undone, only lived with. Eliade describes this as the making of sacred time, where a primordial episode is cyclically re-entered whenever humans participate in ritual or even when they simply look at the relevant natural sign (Eliade, 1963). For Mising children, the sky becomes a book of remembered acts rather than a neutral expanse, teaching moral lessons without explicit didacticism (Finnegan, 2012).

### **Hierarchy without Tyranny**

A striking feature of the Donyi Polo system is the relative absence of divine cruelty. Sun deities in other mythologies often demand sacrifice and obedience under threat. However, in Mising stories, Donyi and Polo appear as benign guardians who lead, teach, and observe rather than as punitive rulers (Misra, 2023). The Mibu in “The Rite of Calling a Soul Back” fears shame before the sky more than he fears physical punishment; moral order rests on honour, mutual obligation, and relational accountability (Taid, 2016; Hallowell, 1960). Hallowell’s description of Ojibwa relational spirituality—where religion is a network of relationships among persons, human and other-than-human, rather than a set of dogmas—offers a useful comparative frame (Hallowell, 1960). The Mising case fits this model: Donyi and Polo are treated as relatives to be respected and thanked, not as tyrants to be appeased. This undermines the stereotype of “tribal religions” as fear-based and implies a vision of law in which memory and respect are stronger regulators than terror.

### **Story as Law**

In the absence of written legal codes, stories perform juridical work. Each of the five tales examined here hides a legal principle in metaphor: “Lightning and Thunder” enforces sexual boundaries; “The Dark Spot on the Moon” polices honesty; “The

Rite of Calling a Soul Back” protects vows; and “Origin of Ali a Ye Ligang” codifies ecological responsibility (Taid, 2016). Lévi-Strauss noted that myth often handles social contradictions by transforming them into structured narratives: desire that breaches kinship becomes a perpetual chase; deceit that harms the innocent becomes a permanent mark on a celestial face (Lévi-Strauss, 1978).

The result is a moral universe in which the natural order is ethically charged. Thunder must follow lightning, just as consequence follows transgression; stains on the Moon cannot be washed away, just as a certain memory of wrong remains (Eliade, 1963). In this system, law is not in a book; it is in the stories that everyone knows and in the sky that everyone sees.

## **Gendered Harmony of Sun and Moon**

Although the Donyi Polo complex does not articulate a formal theology of gender, the tales subtly assign distinct roles to Sun and Moon. Polo is associated with night, fertility, calm, and the quiet recording of shame; Donyi with daylight, clarity, and public visibility (Taid, 2016). In “The Dark Spot on the Moon,” Polo bears the stain of Donyi’s duplicity, suggesting that injustice can fall on the innocent and that the record keeper of wrongs is not necessarily the wrongdoer (Taid, 2016). Male authority is therefore shown as fallible, and the cosmos remembers this. On the human plane, this division mirrors a social pattern in which women often carry memory through song and tale. At the same time, men occupy more visible ritual positions, yet neither sphere is dominant in absolute terms (Thrupp, 1962). Donyi and Polo, taken together, represent equilibrium rather than hierarchy, a point that aligns with historical observations about gender complementarity in many agrarian societies (Thrupp, 1962; Finnegan, 2012).

## **Myth and the Everyday World**

The Donyi Polo of folklore are not confined to ritual settings; it filters into the moral vocabulary of everyday life. Oaths may still be sealed with invocations such as “Let Donyi Polo be my witness,” and elders may caution children that deception cannot be hidden from the Sun and Moon (Taid, 2016; Religious Belief and Practice of Mising Community of Assam, 2019). In such moments, the distinction between mythic past and practical present collapses: cosmology becomes a continuous commentary on current behaviour. Malinowski argued that myths endure only while they function as practical charters of culture (Malinowski, 1926). Mising tales exemplify this principle: they are recalled whenever decisions with moral weight are made, whether in disputes, marriages, or land matters, and thus remain socially active rather than museum pieces (Bascom, 1954; Finnegan, 2012). Oral tradition here performs the same externalising function as written law in literate societies, storing norms outside individual memory yet making them widely available.

## **Solar–Lunar Mythology as Ecological Education**

The environmental teachings embedded in the Abotani cycle amount to a form of

ecological education for an oral society. The instructions to clear land responsibly, defend crops without cruelty, apologise to displaced beings, and give thanks for fertility all appear in narrative and ritual form rather than as written rules (Taid, 2016). Children learn these obligations not from textbooks but from stories and festival performances in which they participate. Berkes notes that many Indigenous societies encode ecological knowledge in symbols, stories, and rituals, enabling new generations to internalise sustainable practices almost unconsciously (Berkes, 2008). The Abotani–Donyi–Polo tales fit this pattern: Ali a Ye Ligang is simultaneously a celebration, a moral lesson, and a rehearsal of proper relations between humans, land, and other beings (“Environmental and Ethical Issues in Mising Folklore,” 2016). To dismiss such performance as superstition is to miss its sophisticated pedagogic function.

### **Morality without Hell or Reward**

One notable aspect of the Donyi Polo cosmos is the absence of elaborate doctrines of heaven, hell, or post-mortem reward and punishment. Wrongdoing is not primarily sanctioned in a separate afterlife court; it is written into the world people inhabit as stains, storms, and broken relationships (Taid, 2016). The worst fate is not divine torture but becoming like thunder, condemned to chase one’s own error forever without being able to erase it. Eliade suggests that when ethics are inscribed in cosmology, the universe itself becomes a law book (Eliade, 1963). Under Donyi Polo, people are not told that the gods will punish them; they are reminded that Donyi Polo see them, and that this visibility itself is the constraint. Moral order is maintained by shame, honour, and the desire not to betray ancestral watchers rather than by fear of torture, which aligns with Hallowell’s portrayal of relational spirituality grounded in respect and reciprocity (Hallowell, 1960).

### **The Sun–Moon Pair as Ancestral Lawgivers**

Although scholars sometimes label the Donyi Polo system “religion,” the tales resist easy classification within standard theological categories (Misra, 2023). There is no exclusive worship, no centralised priesthood devoted solely to the Sun and Moon, and no scriptural canon. Instead, Donyi and Polo operate as ancestral lawgivers and moral companions: humans behave ethically because their cosmic parents taught them, not because a distant sovereign commands them. Hallowell’s notion of religion as a network of relationships rather than a body of doctrine captures this configuration (Hallowell, 1960). In this model, the Sun and Moon are senior kin; humans owe respect rather than blind obedience; morality is social rather than strictly theological; and ritual is gratitude rather than submission (Hallowell, 1960; Pegu, 2016). The Mising world is therefore comparatively free of fear-based theology: the sky watches but does not terrorise.

### **Myth as Resistance to Colonial Narratives**

During the colonial period, European anthropologists and missionaries in Northeast India habitually described Indigenous cosmologies as irrational, chaotic, or unfinished, and translated Donyi Polo as “pagan gods” in need of replacement (Smith,

1999; Misra, 2023). Such portrayals helped justify interventions in ritual life and education by suggesting that Indigenous peoples lacked sophisticated moral systems. Linda Tuhiwai Smith argues that these narratives of inferiority are central to colonial control and must be dismantled if Indigenous knowledge is to be recentered (Smith, 1999).

The Mising folktales discussed here contest these colonial narratives. They reveal complex ethics, environmental responsibility, gender complementarity, and philosophical reflection, all transmitted orally rather than in written theology (Taid, 2016; “Mising Folklore: The Matrix of the Mising Society and Culture,” 2021). By locating human origins in the sky and by casting Donyi and Polo as educators, witnesses, and guardians, the stories assert that law, agriculture, and cosmology long predated colonial presence. No missionary brought morality to this society; it was already written into the lives of the Sun and Moon.

### **The Sky as Archive**

A recurring motif in these folktales is that the sky has a memory. The Moon’s smudge, the streaking chase of thunder and lightning, the Sun’s unblinking gaze during oaths—all signal a universe that records human acts (Taid, 2016). In oral cultures without extensive writing, public symbols and landscapes often serve as external memory devices, and here the sky itself becomes an archive of moral stories (Finnegan, 2012). Finnegan notes that nonliterate societies rely on visible, shared cues to sustain communal memory, whether in built structures, ritual objects, or natural features (Finnegan, 2012). In the Mising case, the material cosmos takes up this role. The night sky is not only a natural fact but a repository of moral fables; each appearance of the Moon or each storm invites a retelling or at least a recollection of the story attached to it.

### **Continuing Relevance in Contemporary Identity**

Many Misings today are literate, urbanised, and shaped by modern schooling and world religions, yet this does not mean that Donyi Polo is obsolete. References to Sun and Moon remain audible in songs, blessings, wedding speeches, harvest rituals, and everyday admonitions, especially among elders (Taid, 2016; Religious Belief and Practice of Mising Community of Assam, 2019). Stories about Abotani, the stained Moon, and the thunder–lightning chase are still told to children during festivals, even when not taken literally, and their moral implications are remembered.

Smith argues that decolonisation involves recentering Indigenous epistemologies and reclaiming oral knowledge as legitimate (Smith, 1999). Mising folklore participates in this project: by being read as philosophy rather than superstition, it offers a source of dignity and identity that does not depend on external validation (Pegu, 2016; “Mising Folklore: The Matrix of the Mising Society and Culture,” 2021). In this sense, Donyi Polo tales are not relics but living tools for thinking about land, kinship, and conduct.

### **Why Solar–Lunar Mythology Matters**

Academic work on Indigenous astronomy has often focused on observational

skill—how communities track seasons, orient themselves, or predict floods—but Mising solar–lunar mythology shows that the sky also carries questions of justice, reciprocity, and identity (Berkes, 2008). Donyi and Polo are not merely clocks; they have consciences. This cosmology connects farming, family honour, truthfulness, ecological care, migration history, and collective memory in a single narrative field (Taid, 2016; “Environmental and Ethical Issues in Mising Folklore,” 2016). The Donyi Polo system demonstrates that Indigenous cosmology can function as a sophisticated moral philosophy articulated in story form. It offers a vision of how to live, share land, behave toward others, and remember origins without relying on written scripture or centralised institutions (Eliade, 1963; Lévi-Strauss, 1978; Smith, 1999). Far from being a “primitive religion,” it is a subtle ethical imagination grounded in kinship, gratitude, and memory.

### Conclusion

The Mising folktales on Donyi Polo present an advanced cosmology in which the Sun and Moon are ancestral beings who continue to instruct moral behaviour, ecological care, and social structure (Taid, 2016). Through narratives of Abotani’s first cultivation, the stain on the Moon, the endless pursuit of lightning and thunder, and the ritual summoning of lost souls, listeners learn about truth, obligation, taboo, reciprocity with nonhuman beings, and gratitude to cosmic parents (Berkes, 2008; Malinowski, 1926). These tales encode philosophy in a form suited to an oral culture: memorable, symbolic, and anchored in the visible world.

The Donyi Polo complex is not a tightly organised cult with temples and dogma; it is a moral relationship between humans and the cosmos, in which Donyi and Polo act as relatives who bequeathed cultivation, inculcated ethics, and still keep watch over vows (Misra, 2023). Transgressions are woven into nature itself—seen in the Moon’s mark, heard in storms, and recalled in ritual speech—so that no one grows up without encountering embodied lessons about deceit, desire, and violence (Eliade, 1963; Finnegan, 2012). Scholars of myth and Indigenous studies have argued that myth is neither irrational nor trivial but a serious intellectual practice; the Mising case confirms this by offering a world of law without scripture, agriculture without caste hierarchy, spirituality without terror, and identity without subordination (Lévi-Strauss, 1978; Malinowski, 1926; Smith, 1999).

In a period when Indigenous lifeworlds are under pressure from modernization, the Donyi Polo system remains relevant: Mising people still invoke Sun and Moon in weddings, quarrels, blessings, and mourning, treating the sky as an archive of memory and a reminder that conduct is always in ancestral sight (Taid, 2016; Religious Belief and Practice of Mising Community of Assam, 2019). As long as these tales are told, the ethical and ecological understandings they contain persist. Solar–lunar mythology in Mising tradition is therefore not a fossil of the past but a living intellectual tradition, one of the most subtle ethical imaginations in the oral cultures of Northeast India.

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### Factors Influencing Investment Decision in Mutual Funds

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### Abstract

*This study investigates the variables influencing funding decisions in mutual funds among Nepali investors. A descriptive and causal-comparative research design was used; both quantitative and qualitative approaches were employed to achieve the study's objectives. Data collection was carried out through a structured questionnaire, using a convenience sampling method, and the sample size was 384 individual investors of cooperatives. The study employed both descriptive and inferential statistical methods. Descriptive statistic techniques were used to recap demographic character, while inferential statistics, including correlation coefficient and regression analysis, were used to examine the relationships between the dependent variable (decision regarding investments) and the independent variables such as economic position, risk-bearing behaviour, return from investment, and access to information. The results show that economic position, risk-bearing behaviour, and access to information have a significant positive effect on decisions regarding investments, while return from investment showed*

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*no significant effect. Particularly, economic position had the highest contribution to the decision regarding investment, indicating its critical role in influencing investor behaviour. The study suggests that mutual fund experts and financial organisations should focus on improving financial literacy and credibility to attract more investors. Future research should explore additional factors, such as psychological influences and peer group pressure and consider comparative research across different investment instruments and demographic groups.*

**Keywords:** *Access to information, decision regarding investment, economic position, risk-bearing behaviour*

## **Introduction**

A mutual fund is a type of investment vehicle that pools money from savers. The collective fund is managed by Mutual fund experts who declare the save investment decisions on behalf of the investors. By investing in a Mutual fund, individuals can access a diversified set of investments, which reduces risk, and benefit from the expertise of the fund managers. (Gahlot, 2019).

Mutual funds are a highly preferred investment option for small and medium investors worldwide. They offer small investors to engage in the capital market without taking on high risk. A key investment principle in the capital market is diversification, often summarised as not putting all your eggs in one basket. Small categories of investors struggle to generate a diversified portfolio due to limited resources. However, mutual funds solve this type of problem by pooling the savings of many small category investors, investing these collective funds in the capital market, and distributing the benefits back to the investors. By investing in mutual fund units, investors can indirectly access the capital market. Additionally, mutual funds employ professional fund managers who handle the investment activities, providing investors with the advantage of their professional expertise.

A mutual fund functions as an investment vehicle wherein many investors pool their resources, which are then managed collectively. This pooled capital is directed towards various assets such as stocks, bonds, and other securities. Investors hold their units in the fund to show their share of the total valid assets. Skilled fund expert, specialised in this domain, curates portfolios according to predefined lending objectives. This portfolio includes all the securities held by the mutual fund. Mutual funds are widely favoured due to their professional management, diversification, affordability, and liquidity. They provide services to individuals who may lack the time or expertise to manage their own investments effectively. (Pant et al., 2022).

The unit trust brings together money from different investors into one big pool, which is managed by a fund expert (Chang et al., 2012). The manager invests this money in different opportunities that might make a profit. Because a professional handles these

investments, there is a higher chance of facing big risks. As a result, unit trusts usually give lower returns.

Gupta and Sharma (2016) described investments as putting money into something for a while to make more money in return. This involves deciding to use money now to potentially earn more in the upcoming days, taking into account the risks involved. Investors raptly use different methods like studying how markets work, analysing a company's financial condition, or making decisions based on their knowledge. They also consider how other investors are doing and what information they have. Psychological factors, like emotions and perceptions, play a big role in how people decide whether to keep, sell, or buy investments.

## **Literature Review**

A mutual fund is a path for different investors to collect their money to save or make a profit. Investing in a mutual fund can be easier than buying individual stocks and bonds. It helps investors spread their money across many investments, reducing risk. Many financial experts like mutual funds for several reasons: they lower risk, let investors pick funds based on how well they've done in the past, offer the option to switch funds easily, are convenient, and can provide better returns with a small amount of money.

Many investors prefer to put their money in mutual funds because they provide high returns with low risk, along with safety and easy access to their funds. As the investment environment changes daily, investors' preferences for different investment strategies also change. (Rathnamani, 2013). However, Gahlot (2019) Investigated how investors view mutual funds, emphasising their preferred schemes, selected plans, and the reasons for their choices. The study also explores other lending options that people prefer, such as postal savings schemes, returning deposits, bonds, and stocks. The findings revealed that many individuals are hesitant to invest in newer options like mutual funds and instead choose safer alternatives, like returning deposits, to minimise risks. An investor has various options for investing their savings. As a result, these savings are allocated to different assets according to their risk and return characteristics (Silva et al., 2012). Individuals invest their excess money in different options according to their risk tolerance. As a result, their financial decisions are shaped by their attitudes and behaviours. Moreover, demographic factors also play a significant role in influencing a person's investment choices (Hemalatha, 2019).

A person's financial situation highly affects their investment behaviour, including how much they invest and how much risk they are agreeable to bear. People with lower financial status usually prefer safer investment options, like unit trusts, because they are less comfortable with high-risk investments. On the other hand, individuals with higher financial status are more likely to invest in riskier assets that could provide higher returns (Khoshsirat & Salari, 2011). An individual's financial status is very important in influencing their investment behaviours, as they see investing as a way to grow their

wealth. Therefore, a person's financial situation not only affects their decision to invest but also determines how much money they are ready to invest in stocks (Wamae, 2013).

Bajracharya and Mathema (2018) conducted the study to determine the investors' perceptions of mutual funds. The results highlighted that the main attitudes were not affected by demographics or socioeconomic status. Among the investors, brokers/agents are seen as the most important source of information, while magazines are seen as the least important. This study reveals that investigating investors' attitudes toward mutual funds is not solely confined to understanding their base on population and socio-economic characteristics. Further, mediators are the most preferred source of information by investors while making their investment decisions. Annamalah et al. (2019) reported that investment revenue does not have a statistically significant relation to investors' behaviours. However, financial status, risk-taking behaviour, and sources of information significantly influence investors' decisions regarding unit trust investments. Among these factors, the availability of information has the strongest impact on investors' behaviours, followed by their risk-bearing tendencies and financial status in different contexts and capital markets. Based on the discussions, this research identifies the variables affecting investment decisions in mutual funds among Nepali investors.

Economic Position can be understood as the overall financial well-being of an individual or entity, determined by their ability to pay for debts and meet other financial commitments. It is a key factor that influences decisions regarding investment. Investment risk can be evaluated better if the investor understands his or her own Economic Position. Investment goals can also be set realistically, and suitable investment options can be chosen according to one's financial situation. Those with a good Economic Position will have more ability to take higher-risk investments for the long term without having to worry about short-term volatility or losses that may occur in these types of investments. However, those with a not-so-good Economic Position may have to go for low-risk investments for shorter terms, ensuring easier liquidity (Jangid, 2017). Based on the discussions, the research hypothesis for the study is Research Hypothesis ( $H_1$ ): Economic Position has a significantly positive effect on decisions regarding investment in mutual funds in Nepal.

Addo et al. (2023) argued that there are three key basics of an investor's risk-bearing ability: motive, expectancy and incentive. Return tends to increase with risk: the more you decide to take risks, the more you stand to gain. However, Hsee and Weber (1998) explained that preference for a specific asset or risky option is shaped by risk perception and the expected return. Within each group with a particular expected value, the interest to pay or risk preference increases as the probability of loss rises, which is positively related to the potential size of gains. The Research Hypothesis ( $H_2$ ): Risk-bearing behaviour has a significant effect on decisions regarding investment in mutual funds in Nepal.

Return on investment refers to the income an investor earns from different

investments, such as dividends from stocks, capital gains from selling stocks or other assets, and interest from fixed deposits and savings accounts. These returns indicate the expected benefits investors are anticipated to obtain from particular investment options (Lusardi & Mitchell, 2013). According to Periasamy and Ramaiah (2019), investment revenue is a major aspect in deciding on stocks and other investment tools. It has a significant effect on investor behaviour. The Research Hypothesis ( $H_3$ ): Return from Investment has a positive and significant effect on the decision regarding investment in mutual funds in Nepal.

Access to Information can be described as processed, structured, or presented data that is useful or meaningful. It can range from facts and numbers to instruction or information that enables people to decide, solve problems, or understand a certain circumstance. Every person needs access to information to be able to communicate, to make decisions, to learn, and to perform other activities. It is important for individuals to access information when making several decisions, especially on investment. The information about the financial instruments used includes past records of a company, dividends, and the past market price of shares. Many factors affect the decision-making of an investor, but information seems to be one of the most impact ones. It becomes crucial as the different factors having importance incorporate it and inevitably influence investor decisions (Annamalah et al., 2019). The Research Hypothesis ( $H_4$ ): Access to information has a positive effect on decisions regarding investment in mutual funds in Nepal.

Overall, the literature shows that financial status, risk behaviour, returns, and information access shape investment decisions, though their influence differs across settings. Evidence from Nepal is still limited, particularly on mutual funds and the combined role of these factors. This gap highlights the need for a focused study that examines how these variables work together to influence investor decisions in the Nepali context.

## **Methods and Procedures**

A descriptive and causal comparative research model was used for the research. A descriptive research design was used to describe the different phenomena of the explanatory and explanatory variables. Descriptive statistics effectively summarise the demographic variables present in the sample, encompassing factors such as age, gender, education level, and occupation. These statistical techniques include generating frequency distributions, calculating percentages, as well as determining means and standard deviations, thereby facilitating a comprehensive understanding of the sample's characteristics.

On the other hand, a causal comparative research design was used to examine the magnitude of the effect of independent variables on the dependent variable. Inferential statistics was employed to assess hypotheses and derive conclusions regarding the broader population based on the sample data. This involved utilising statistical methods such as

correlation coefficient analysis and regression analysis to identify the interrelationships between variables.

The data were collected from the structured questionnaires. A 5-point Likert-scale type questionnaire, indicating 1 strongly disagree to 5 strongly agree, was distributed to the investors who were investing in the mutual funds. A total of 384 respondents were collected through email, messenger, and WhatsApp. To analyse the results from the questionnaire, descriptive statistics, correlation coefficient analysis and regression analysis were employed. Statistical software packages such as SPSS 27 were used to analyse the data.

## The Model

In this study used the multiple regression model was used.

$$DRI = \beta_1 + \beta_2 EC + \beta_3 RBB + \beta_4 RFI + \beta_5 ACC.INF + \varepsilon \dots (i)$$

Where,

$\beta_1$  = Constant

$\beta_{2,3,3,4}$  – Regression Coefficients of the independent Variables

ID = Decisions Regarding Investment

EC = Economic Condition

RBB = Risk Bearing Behaviour

RFI = Return on Investment

ACC. INF Access to Information

$\varepsilon$  = Error term

## Results and Discussion

In this study, descriptive and inferential statistics models were used to analyse the data. Descriptive statistics models serve to effectively summarise the variables of the population present in the sample, encompassing factors such as age, gender, education level, and profession. These statistical techniques include creating frequency distributions, calculating percentages, as well as determining means and S.D., thereby facilitating an inclusive understanding of the sample's characteristics.

On the other hand, inferential statistics was employed to assess hypotheses and derive conclusions regarding the broader population based on the sample data.

This involved utilising statistical methods such as correlation coefficient analysis and regression analysis to explore the interrelationships between variables and make informed predictions about the population.

To analyse the results from the questionnaire, a variety of statistical techniques were employed. Statistical software packages such as SPSS 26 and MS Excel were utilised to assess the reliability of the variables, conduct demographic and descriptive statistics, as well as perform correlation and regression analyses.

### Reliability Test

The reliability of the research mechanism was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha. Validity and reliability are essential criteria for ensuring accurate measurement. Testing for validity and reliability aims to minimise measurement error. The Cronbach's alpha test was done by SPSS software. Table 1 summarises the output of the reliability test.

**Table 1**

*Cronbach's Alpha Correlation Coefficients*

S.N.	Variables	No of items	Cronbach's Alpha
1	Economic Position	4	0.826
2	Risk-bearing Behaviour	4	0.828
3	Return on Investment	4	0.828
4	Access to Information	4	0.824
5	Decision Regarding Investment	4	0.827
	Overall	5	0.841

*(Source: Field survey and SPSS output)*

Table 1 shows Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the independent variables: financial status, risk-taking behaviour, investment revenue, information, and the dependent variable, investment decision. All Cronbach's alpha values are considered acceptable, indicating the reliability of the instruments used in this study (Taber, 2018). Hence, the instruments used in this research are deemed reliable. The overall Cronbach's alpha of 0.841 indicates internal uniformity and confirms that the data is consistent and valid for further analysis.

**Table 2**

*Descriptive Statistics of Financial Status*

Statements	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
My investment amounts are based on my current financial status and income.	384	1	5	3.59	1.200
I do not invest in instruments that exceed my current financial status.	384	1	5	3.65	.778
I make an investment that is within my current affordability.	384	1	5	3.79	1.058
The investment amount varies according to my income.	384	1	5	3.88	1.017
Overall	384	1	5	3.736	1.058

(Source: Field survey and SPSS output)

Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics for individual statements with overall results. Four statements were used to determine investors' perception of economic position, with 384 respondents rating each statement on a five-point Likert scale. The table shows that the mean values for these statement series are between 3.59 and 3.88. The first statement has the lowest mean of 3.59 and a S.D. of 1.20, while the fourth statement has the highest mean of 3.79 and a standard deviation of 1.017. The highest mean of 3.88 indicates the greatest level of agreement, whereas the lowest mean of 3.59 suggests lower agreement among respondents.

Additionally, the first statement exhibits the maximum S.D. of 1.2, reflecting more variability in responses, while the 2nd statement has the lowest S.D. of 0.778, representing less response variability. The overall mean score for economic condition is 3.736, with an overall S.D. of 1.058.

**Table 3**

*Descriptive Statistics of Risk-bearing Behaviour*

Statements	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Investment in a mutual fund is better than other investments based on Risk.	384	1	5	3.61	1.275

Return on investment is a better measurement of the level of risk.	384	1	5	3.58	.982
My personal risk assessment test depends on risk-taking ability.	384	1	5	3.82	1.027
The decision regarding investment determines the risk	384	1	5	3.83	1.114
Overall	384	1	5	3.716	1.09

(Source: Field survey and SPSS output)

Table 3 shows the descriptive statistics for single statements with overall results. Four statements were used to measurement of the lenders' views of risk-taking behaviour, with 384 samples rating every statement on a five-point Likert scale. The table presents the mean values for these statements range between 3.58 and 3.83. The 2nd statement has the lowest mean of 3.59 and a S.D. of 0.983, while the fourth statement has the highest mean of 3.83 and a S.D. of 1.114. The highest mean of 3.83 indicates the greatest level of agreement, whereas the lowest mean of 3.58 indicates lower agreement among respondents.

Additionally, the first statement exhibits the highest range of S.D. of 1.275, indicating high variability, while the 2nd statement has the lowest S.D. of 0.982, indicating less response variability. The overall mean score for economic position is 3.716, with an overall S.D. of 1.09.

#### Table 4

##### *Descriptive Statistics of Return on Investment*

Statements	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Expected rate of return for the investment.	384	1	5	3.71	1.296
Invest in the highest return project	384	1	5	3.61	.947
A mutual fund has the nature to deliver lower investment revenue to investors.	384	1	5	3.81	1.035

The investment revenue affects my investment decision for the instrument.	384	1	5	3.82	1.043
Overall	384	1	5	3.746	1.081

(Source: Field survey and SPSS output)

Table 4 shows the descriptive statistics for single statements with overall results. Four statements were used to determine investors' perceptions of return from investment, with 384 respondents rating each statement on a five-point Likert scale. The table presents the mean values for these statements range between 3.61 and 3.82. The 2nd statement has the lowest mean of 3.61 and S. D. of 0.947, while the fourth statement has the highest mean of 3.82 and S.D. of 1.043. The highest mean of 3.82 indicates the greatest level of agreement, whereas the lowest mean of 3.61. Suggests a lower understanding among respondents.

Additionally, the first statement shows the highest S.D. of 1.296, indicating more variability in responses, while the 2nd statement has the lowest S.D. of 0.948, indicating less response variability. The overall mean score for economic position is 3.746, with an overall S.D. of 1.081.

## Table 5

### *Descriptive Statistics of Access to Information*

Statements	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Recommended for use the information by a reputable organisation like an investment bank	384	1	5	3.57	1.277
Using information that is published and analysed by others to assist decisions regarding investment.	384	1	5	3.69	1.002
Having enough information about an investment option helps me decide whether to choose it.	384	1	5	3.89	1.090

Various sources of access to information tools affect investment decisions.	384	1	5	3.82	1.058
Overall	384	1	5	3.752	1.107

(Source: field survey and SPSS output)

Table 5 shows descriptive statistics for single statements with overall results. Four statements were used to measure investors' perceptions of information, with 384 samples rating each statement on a five-point Likert scale. The table presents the mean values for these statements range between 3.57 and 3.89. The 1<sup>st</sup> statement has the lowest mean of 3.57 and S.D. of 0.277, whereas the third statement has the highest mean of 3.89 and S.D. of 1.090. The highest mean of 3.89 indicates the highest level of agreement, whereas the lowest mean of 3.58 suggests lower agreement among variables.

Additionally, the 1st statement represents the highest S.D. of 1.277, indicating maximum variability of responses, whereas the 2nd statement has the lowest S.D. of 1.002, indicating minimum response variability. The overall mean score for economic condition is 3.752, and the S.D. is 1.107

**Table 6**

*Descriptive Statistics of the Decision Regarding Investment*

Statements	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Continue investing in the mutual fund in the coming days	384	1	5	3.71	1.268
Suggest to my relatives that to invest in a mutual fund.	384	1	5	3.69	.905
I invest in a mutual fund because it gives stable returns and revenues.	384	1	5	3.89	1.035
The mutual fund is a part of my long-term personal financial planning.	384	1	5	3.76	1.061
Overall	384	1	5	3.771	1.067

(Source: Field survey and SPSS output)

Table 6 shows the descriptive statistics technique for single statements with overall results. Four statements were used to analyse investors' perceptions of decisions regarding investment, with 384 respondents rating every statement on a five-point Likert scale. The table presents the mean values for these statements range between 3.69 and 3.89. The 2nd statement has the lowest mean of 3.69 and a S.D. of 0.905, while the third statement has the highest mean of 3.89 and a S.D. of 1.035. The highest mean of 3.89 indicates the maximum level of agreement, whereas the lowest mean of 3.69 advice the lower agreement among variables.

Additionally, the first statement shows the highest S.D. of 1.268, indicating more variability in responses, while the 2nd statement has the lowest S.D. of 0.905, indicating lower response variability. The overall mean score for economic condition is 3.771, with an overall S.D. of 1.067.

### Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis explores the relationship among various variables. For variables with straightforward multiple-choice responses, Pearson's correlation coefficient analysis was used. A positive correlation coefficient indicates that the relationship tends towards positivity, with one variable increasing as the other does, while a negative correlation shows the opposite: one variable rises as the other falls.

**Table 7**

#### *Correlation Analysis*

	FS	RTB	IR	INF	ID
EP	1				
RBB	.745	1			
RFI	.766	.718	1		
ACC. INF	.760	.775	.807	1	
DRI	.790	.781	.723	.745	1

*(Source: field survey and SPSS output)*

Table 7 presents the correlation coefficients between the dependent and independent variables: economic position, risk-bearing behaviour, return from investment, access to information and the dependent variable: investment decision. There is a significant positive relationship between economic position and decision regarding investment in mutual funds in Nepal. The correlation coefficient of 0.790 indicates that the relationship between these variables is strong. The independent variable has a positive linear relationship to the dependent variable at a significance level of 0.05. There is a

significant positive relationship between risk-bearing behaviour and decisions regarding investment in mutual funds in Nepal. The correlation coefficient of 0.781 indicates that the relationship between these variables is strong. The independent variable has a positive linear relationship to the dependent variable at a significance level of 0.05. There is a significant positive relationship between Return on investment and decisions regarding investment in mutual funds in Nepal. The correlation coefficient of 0.723 indicates that the relationship between these variables is strong. The independent variable has a positive linear relationship to the dependent variable at a significance level of 0.05. There is a significant positive relationship between access to information and decisions regarding investment in mutual funds in Nepal. The correlation coefficient of 0.745 indicates that the relationship between these variables is strong. The independent variable has a positive linear relationship to the dependent variable at a significance level of 0.05.

## Regression Analysis

Regression analysis is engaged to find out the causal relationship between variables. While a strong correlation between variables may exist, it doesn't necessarily imply a causal relationship. To establish cause and effect, regression analysis is necessary. Although the Pearson correlation coefficient highlights significant positive relationships between all variables considered in this research and the dependent variable, it doesn't quantify how much each independent variable explains the variation in the dependent variable. For this, a regression analysis was conducted using SPSS 27. Below is the significant table from the SPSS 27 output.

**Table 8**

### *Model Summary of the Analysis*

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.848	.720	.717	.32574

Predictors: (Constant), Access to information, Economic position, Risk Bearing Behaviour, Return from Investment

*(Source: Field survey and SPSS output)*

Table 8 reveals that the R Square is 0.720. This means that the independent variables account for approximately 72% of the variation in the dependent variable, investment decision. The remaining 28% of the variations in the dependent variable are attributed to other factors not identified in this research.

**Table 9**

*ANOVA Results*

ANOVA					
Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	103.384	3	25.095	244.926	.000
Residual	40.323	380	.106		
Total	143.707	383			

Dependent Variable: Decision regarding Investment

Predictors: (Constant), Access to Information, Economic Condition, Risk Bearing Behaviour, Return from Investment

*(Source: Field survey and SPSS output)*

Table 9 presents the p-value (Sig. 0.000) is less than the alpha value of 0.05, and from the ANOVA table F value is higher than 3.75. This result supports the approval of the regression. The regression analysis shows that the study is significant.

**Table 10**

*Multiple Regression Analysis*

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
(Constant)	0.425	0.10			3.88	0
EP	0.36	0.047	0.368		7.71	0
RBB	0.324	0.043	0.345		7.41	0
RFI	0.092	0.048	0.095		1.8	0.05
ACC. INF	0.106	0.047	0.11		2.23	0.02

a. Dependent Variable: Decision Regarding Investment

*(Source: Field survey and SPSS output)*

Table 10 reveals that economic position, risk-bearing behaviour, and access to information significantly predict the dependent variable, investment decision. This is evident from the p-values indicated in the last column (Sig.) of the table, which are below the alpha value of 0.05 for these independent variables, but the return from investment is insignificant because its value is higher than the alpha value of 0.05. The relationship between the variables, as per the regression analysis denoted by the equation below:

$$ID = 0.425 + 0.360 EP + 0.324 RBB + 0.092 RFI + 0.106 ACC.INF + \varepsilon$$

The table presents the analysis of, when other variables are held constant, every one-unit increase in economic position will lead to an increase in the decision regarding investment by 0.360 units. Similarly, every one-unit increase in risk-bearing behaviour will lead to an increase in the decision regarding investment by 0.324 units. Every one-unit increase in return from investment will lead to an increase in the decision regarding investment by 0.092 units, and every one-unit increase in access to information will lead to an increase in the decision regarding investment by 0.106 units.

The result shows that economic position, risk-bearing behaviour, and access to information are statistically significant (p-value less than 0.05) with mutual funds' decisions regarding investment. However, return from investment is statistically insignificant (p-value is higher than 0.05) with mutual funds' decision regarding investment. Annamalah et al. (2019) found that return from investment does not have a statistically significant relation with investors' behaviours. However, economic position, risk-bearing behaviour, and sources of access to information significantly affect investors' decisions regarding investments. This finding is related to Ul-Hameed et al. (2019), who observed a significant impact of economic conditions on mutual funds with investment choices. Similarly, Kaur and Arora (2018) found a significant link between economic position and mutual fund decisions regarding investment.

The research showed that investors' risk-bearing behaviours positively and significantly influenced their decisions to lend in mutual funds. This finding is consistent with earlier studies, validating the connection between risk-bearing behaviour and investment selections in mutual funds. Annamalah et al. (2019) found that investors' risk-taking ability significantly impacts mutual fund investments. Similarly, Ananthasuresh et al. (2023) show that investors' decisions about mutual fund investments were significantly affected by their risk-bearing behaviour. However, Saleem et al. (2021) Identify that risk and return opinion has an insignificant and negative impact on investor behaviour.

The research represents the investors' risk-bearing behaviour positively and significantly influences their decisions to invest in mutual funds. This finding is in line with Hesniati (2020) found that behavioural factors like information asymmetry and risk-bearing behaviour significantly impact decisions regarding investment. The overall Cronbach's alpha of 0.841 indicates internal consistency and confirms that the data is reliable and valid for further analysis. The data support the approval of the regression model. The regression model of the study is significant.

## Conclusion

The study examines the key variables influencing investment decisions in Nepal's mutual fund and market, including economic conditions, risk-bearing behaviour, return from investment, and access to information. Among these, financial status has

the strongest influence, with a correlation value of 0.791. Generally, all these factors positively correlate with investment decisions, financial status, risk-taking behaviour, and information are statistically significant at the 0.05 level, whereas investment revenue is not. The model summary highlights that 71.8% of the variation in investment decisions can be attributed to the examined variables. Particularly, investors are mostly influenced by access to information (mean = 3.753, SD = 1.108) compared to risk-taking behaviour (mean = 3.717, SD = 1.10). These findings highlight the need for enhanced transparency, accessible information, and simplified plans and policies to attract and aware investors. By addressing these aspects, fund experts and investment institutions can improve investor self-confidence, purify mutual fund policies, and plan to implement the growth of the Nepali mutual fund sector.

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