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Aims and Scope

The Journal of National Development (JND) is an interdisciplinary bi-annual peer reviewed & refereed international journal committed to the ideals of a 'world community' and 'universal brotherhood'. The Journal is a joint effort of like- minded scholars in the field of social research. Its specific aims are to identify, to understand and to help the process of nation-building within the framework of a 'world community' and enhance research across the social sciences (Sociology, Anthropology, Political Science, Psychology, History, Geography, Education, Economics, Law, Communication, Linguistics) and related disciplines like all streams of Home Science, Management, Computer Science, Commerce as well as others like Food Technology, Agricultural Technology, Information Technology, Environ-mental Science, Dairy Science etc. having social focus/implications. It focuses on issues that are global and on local problems and policies that have international implications. By providing a forum for discussion on important issues with a global perspective, the *JND* is a part of unfolding worldwide struggle for establishing a just and peaceful world order. Thus, the *JND* becomes a point of confluence for the rivulets from various disciplines to form a mighty mainstream gushing towards the formulation and propagation of a humanistic world- view.

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Navigating Global Forces: International Dynamics in Nepal's Maoist Transformation

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Abstract

This article explores how international structural dynamics compelled transformations in Maoist ideology, strategy, and tactics. Alongside shifts within Nepal's internal structure, global influences-including the impact of globalization, international pressures, and the role of multinational organizations-were crucial in pushing the Maoists to end their People's War and engage in a peaceful democratic movement alongside the Seven Political Parties in 2006. The Maoist insurgency, which began in 1996 under the banner of establishing a 'New Democracy', led to the loss of thousands of lives and left many more injured over a decade of armed conflict. Ultimately, the Maoists transitioned from armed struggle to a peaceful political agreement with Nepal's major political forces, seeking to establish a republican, federal, and secular state. While many scholars have examined the Maoist conflict through a political lens, this article investigates the role of international structural factors in facilitating the transition to peace. Utilizing documentary research, archival analysis, and the historical-comparative method, the study highlights the influence of international actors. For instance, India ceased allowing Maoist activities along its border and played a role in brokering the peace agreement. China also withdrew support for the Maoists. The global context of the post-Cold War era, marked by intensified capitalist, liberal, and globalized relations and the emergence of the United States as the sole superpower, further influenced the conflict. The global anti-terrorism campaign following the September 11, 2001 attacks in the U.S. saw increased international military support for the Nepalese state. Additionally, organizations like UNOHCR and the ICRC acted as mediators to facilitate dialogue between the government and the Maoists. Thus, this article argues that international structural dynamics were significant in shaping the Maoists' transition to a peaceful political process.

Keywords

People's war, Political transformation, International structure, Globalization.

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Navigating Global Forces: International Dynamics in Nepal's Maoist Transformation

1. Introduction

The Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist (CPNM) has remained at the centre of discussion in Nepal after it was involved in the 'People's War' (PW) in 1996. The war was launched with the purpose of establishing 'New Democracy' in place of constitutional monarchy and parliamentary rule. The PW began through a strategy of attacking police camps in Rolpa, Rukum, Sindhuli, Gorkha, Kalikot and rural areas of other districts (Sapkota 2010: 251). Later it got involved in direct war with the Royal Nepal Army attacking its barracks in different parts of the country. The continuous face-to-face war between the People's Liberation Army (PLA) of the Maoist and the Royal Nepal Army (RNA) was responsible for the death of 17,265 peoples. At least 1,302 people also disappeared due to this war. Many others were wounded and displaced from their original places in the process.

The Maoists changed its strategy of war and other tactics from April 2000 onwards by starting dialogue with government for peaceful settlement of its PW. It declared that its PW had advanced to the 'strategic offensive' stage from the 'strategic defence' and the 'strategic balance' stages (Thapa and Sijapati, 2004 : 99). The Maoists adopted the strategy of taking a defensive position and an offensive position when it required (Upreti, 2008 : 67). It adopted an offensive position when the state force was weak or in a critical position. It got involved in the peace dialogue with the government from 2001. In 2003, the central committee meeting of CPNM passed a resolution, entitled 'About the Development of People's Democracy of Twenty-First Century'. This resolution provides an elaborate picture of change in ideological orientation of the party. Through the provision of this resolution, the Maoists accepted for the first time after its involvement in PW to enter into the competitive process. In September-October 2005, it held the meeting of its central committee at Chunwang, Rolpa. Through this meeting, it took a decision in

favour of establishing Nepal into a democratic republic. With this decision, it changed its earlier claim of involvement in war for the establishment of a New Democratic regime in the country. With these changes in strategy and ideology, the CPNM participated in an alliance with seven other political parties to start the Second People's Movement in 2006. The second people's movement reinstated the dissolved parliament. With this event, the CPNM signed a Comprehensive Peace Accord with the alliance of these parties on 22 November 2006 declaring the end of its PW.

With this agreement, it accepted to keep PLA in cantonments under the supervision of the United Nations in seven camps .The CPNM took part in the Constitution Assembly elections held in April 2008 and 2013 and general election held in 2017 and 2021 after promulgation of New Constitution of Nepal in 2015. It transformed from an insurgent type of political organization to a one competing for state power through participation in the electoral process. These dynamics give rise to a curiosity on trying to understand how these changes have affected its ideological position, strategies and its objectives of change in society. This article attempts to highlight these aspects of transformation of CPNM and the structural causes of these transformations.

2. Methodology

It has already been mentioned that this study has focused on identifying international structural dynamics for transformation of Nepalese Maoist from an insurgent political organization to that involved in a peace process forging an alliance with the ruling organization. It has applied the qualitative methodological principle for collection of data. The data used in this article are derived basically through documentary research. It also applied the archival research method and historical-comparative method. The main data set of the study is obtained from documentary research. The use of documentary methods refers to the analysis of documents that contain information about the phenomenon one wishes to study (Bailey, 1994 : 194). The documentary method is the technique used to categorize, investigate, interpret and identify the limitations of physical sources, most commonly written documents whether in the private or public domain (Payne and Payne, 2004 : 61). The article has used the archival records for analyzing the CPNM's activities and events of the study period. Archival research methods include a

broad range of activities applied to facilitate the investigation of documents and textual materials produced by and about any organization (Ventresca and Morh, 2001: 2).

In addition, this article has used Historical-Comparative method to study the historical setting of the CPNM along with the development of the Communist Party of Nepal. Comparative historical research is a method of social science that examines historical events in order to create explanations that are valid beyond a particular time and place. Comparative-historical analysis is a field of research characterized by the use of systematic comparison and the analysis of processes over time to explain large-scale outcomes of such revolutions, political regimes and welfare states performance (Mahoney & Reuschemeyer, 2003 : 4). Mahoney has discussed that comparative-historical research is defined as the part of analysis of sequence of events that occur within cases (Mahoney, 2004 : 88). In his discussion, it is temporal processes and a kind of process analysis.

3. Diverse Interpretation of Maoist's Transformation

Different scholars interpret the Maoist's transformations through different perspectives. The political scientists deal with issues related to transformation of political parties in the form of change of their political activities. For example, Krishna Hachhetu has mentioned that the CPNM transformed itself from an insurgent organization to a party competing for state power through peaceful competitive processes (Hachhetu, 2008 : 33-71). B. C. Upreti has given an inventory of activities of CPNM to indicate that it has politically changed through time (Upreti, 2008 : 145). These understandings do not take into account the social and structural processes under which the Maoist got involved in the PW. They do not discuss the social relationship of Maoist with those organizations against which they were fighting a war.

Some other scholars have attempted to locate the causes of the Maoist insurgency in Nepal. For some, the rampant poverty in the country is its major reason. The poorest countries such as Nepal have higher conflict intensity than richer countries (Tiwari, 2010 : 243). Others say that it was the result of the failure of development endeavors. They argue that the weak state and divided dominant political parties contributed to the growth of Maoist's PW (Lawoti, 2010 : 7). They assert that the centralized state could not pay

attention to the problems prevalent in the countryside. The state could not extend its reach to the vast section of population living there. Still others have argued that it is a result of the inequality in distribution of economic resources among the various classes of social groups (Thapa and Sijapati, 2012 : 56). These arguments have produced a kind of debate in academic discussions. They have, however, not taken into account the issues related to transformation of the political organization.

Other scholars have analyzed the transformation of the Maoist from the point of role played by different other agencies. Some of them have opined that the activities of the Maoist led to the growth of civil society. The social groups formed through this process such as Civic Solidarity for Peace, Volunteer Mediators Group, Nepal Nagarik Manch, Nagarik Awaz, and Citizens for Peace Commission put pressure on the Maoist (Upreti, 2006 : 165). Political parties such as CPN-UML, Nepali Congress and CPN-Unity Centre also put an effort to transform the Maoist from being involved in the PW to adopting peaceful political processes. Some scholars have identified the role of international factors for this process of change. Specifically, they argue that India, China and USA that assisted Nepalese army to fight against Maoist forced it to come to the peace process (Upreti, 2010 : 219).

Very few scholars have tried to investigate the causes of transformation of CPNM from the armed struggle to peaceful politics. B. C. Upreti (2008 : 160-165) has attributed the transformation of CPNM to the party itself, Indian factors that helped in negotiations in between SPA and Maoist, the international support to the RNA and also the role played by the civil society. The Maoists themselves did not find a favourable domestic and international situation. They appeared to be realizing the shortcomings of the communist revolution in the localized context and therefore started looking for an alternative path to realize their goals in the context of the emerging political scenario in the country (Upreti, 2008 : 161). Moreover, Krishna Hachhetu argues that liberal democracy, which is known as bourgeois democracy in Marxist vocabulary, has now become the ultimate destination of many communist parties in the world (Hachhetu 2008: 39). This is not only the case in Nepal. Hachhetu has attributed this transformation of Maoist to the international communities supporting anti-communist force. The Maoist could not foresee the possibility of capturing state power at the center through

armed revolution alone. Hachhetu also discusses the role of internal contradiction between Prachanda faction and the Baburam Bhattarai faction for changing its ideology, strategy and tactics.

Most of the above-mentioned writings are asociological and ahistorical. They have not linked the Maoist's activities with the social structural causes. There are, however some other scholars who attempt to discuss this problem from the structural and historical point of view. Chaitanya Mishra has assessed the political transition of Nepal including the changes found in the CPNM, on the basis of socio-structural condition of Nepal (Mishra, 2007 : 13). The major constitutive features of multi-level historical-structural processes are the awakening and demise of pre-capitalist including feudal, political, economic and cultural forms at multiple levels of social organization, the expansion and intensification of capitalism, democratization based on successively enlarged, intensified and relatively successful popular movements, individualization, capability enhancement and empowerment. However, his assessment is not sufficient in that he did not include the internal class relationship, the role of the dominant group, state crisis as well as international structural condition for the transformation of Maoist. All these discussions are important in some respects. However, they have discussed the individual events of this transformation process as an independent issue in themselves. They have not been able to discuss these issues by placing them within the broader framework of a given type of international structural dynamics.

4. Theoretical Debates on Transformation of Political Parties

There are various theories that analyze the formation and transformation of political organizations. Some of them argue that rational choices of groups, psychology, political mobilization of people, and role of ideology are necessary for collective actions (Downs, 1957; Gurr, 1970; Tilly, 1978; Johnson, 1982). Rational choice theory has simple assumption about the activities of political parties. It traces all social activities depends on rational calculation and decision-making. It gives emphasis on the interest of political parties for their transformation. Downs argues that political parties act solely in order to attain the income, prestige and power, which come from being in state power. Political parties treat ideology and policies as a means to the attainment of their ends. (Downs, 1957 : 28).

In fact, this concept is reductionist in character, which ignores the organizational structure, complexity, interactions among people, and the conflicted stands regarding objectives and preferences (Montero & Gunther, 2003 : 15).

There is a strong argument that social structural forces influence for the formation and operation of activities of political parties. Scott and Marshall define social structure as any recurring pattern of social behaviour; or more specifically, to the ordered interrelationships between different elements of a social system or society such as the family, the government, political, economic, educational institutions, and the religion etc. (Scott & Marshall, 2009 : 740). C. Wright Mills argues that a political actor is interconnected to the historical and social structures of a society. Political organizations cannot be understood without reference to a society in which they are established (Mills, 1959 : 157). A political organization performs its activities within a sequence of its social role. According to Mills, political organizations are not free to perform their activities within a society neglecting the social structure. Social structure changes when innumerable actions of innumerable men modify their milieu (Ibid, 181). This change in social structure transforms the activities of political organizations.

The structural perspectives for transformation of political parties can be categorized into internal class situation, non-class structure and international context. Karl Marx has given importance on internal class structure for transformation of political parties (Marx & Engels, 1962 : 304). He assumes that political activities are class-based movements growing out of objective structural contradictions within historically developing conflict-ridden societies. His analysis has given emphasis to the mode of production, class relations of property ownership and surplus appropriation to understand the change within a society. The perspective of Marx builds on a materialist understanding of societal development. Human being requires the necessary economic activities to provide its material needs. According to Marx, the disjuncture within a mode of production between the social forces and social relations of production creates contradiction between owners and non-owners' class. This contradiction develops in the form of class struggle. Based on Marxist perspective, conflict perspective emphasizes on inequalities existing due to disproportionate control over society's resources (Collins, 1975; Dahrendorf, 1959; Coser, 1956). It illustrates that the differential

distribution of power invariably becomes the determining factor of social conflict. These conflicting interests within a society are not integrative, but divisible with each other. This structural situation leads to formation of political organizations for organizing collective action against the existing relation of production and political power.

Some scholars have attributed social movements for collective actions, formation and transformation of political parties. They argue that political parties are transformed when the issues of social movement changes. The situation of social movement is created among less organized groups of people, who share the belief and action seeking the change in social order (Gusfield, 1970; Diani, 1992; Calhoun, 1993). Calhoun explains that new social movement emphasizes life style, ethical, feminism, peace movement, youth movement and identity concerns (Calhoun, 1993 : 130). The new social movements challenged the conventional division of political parties into right and left. Similarly, Diani argues that political parties are part of social movement (Diani, 1992 : 167). When the issues of social movement changes from their goals of focusing on the large-scale system of state and economy to politicization of everyday life, it leads to the transformation activities of political parties.

On the other hand, Huntington identifies modernization as a tool of transformation that contributes to the formation and transformation of political organizations (Huntington, 2009 : 264). He argues that a revolution takes place in the societies when the process of political modernization and political development has lagged behind the process of social and economic changes. New groups of people always look for opportunities to be involved in politics. They create new political institutions, which then launch revolutions to be able to take part in politics. According to Huntington, the middle class and other groups of city such as lumpen proletariat and industrial workers need the support of peasants in rural areas to overthrow the political system.

Some theories have focused to international structure for formation and transformation of political organization. Arjun Appadurai discusses that grassroots globalization makes collective action against globalization from above (Appadurai, 2006 : 304). The state supports globalization from above by implementing corporate capitalism, new-liberalism and free-market policy (Kellner, 2002 : 287). Similarly, globalization involves sets of social relations and flows of commodities, capital, technology, ideas, forms of culture, and

people across national boundaries through a global networked society. Kellner argues that globalization unleashes conflicts between capitalism and democracy, and its restructuring processes create new openings for struggle, resistance, and democratic transformation. (Kellner, 2002 : 299). The globalization from below results from transnational alliances, which fight for better wages and working conditions, social and political justice, and environmental protection. Political parties can develop ideological affinity with transnational political parties with which they have a common interest or set of values in a particular political configuration (Tarrow, 1989 : 189). The globalization is also important for analyzing the transformation of activities of political parties (Acemoglu and Robinson 2006, Mahoney & Rueschemeyer, 2003, Huntington 1996). The political parties are transformed when they are connected to changing trend of global trade system and international political influence.

Besides these theories, Theda Skocpol has broadly discussed about the structural situation developed within and outside the state under a specific kind of socio-historical reality (Skocpol, 1979). She provides an elaborate discourse of the origin of revolution under different types of historical situations. She is not satisfied with the discussion that the role-played by individuals and their ideologies are sufficient for the emergence of social revolution. She argues that the structural conditions limit the development of the revolutionary organizations and ideology of vanguards (Skocpol, 1979 : 17). This article has focused the structural framework discussed by Theda Skocpol for analyzing the transformation of Maoist in Nepal. Theda Skocpol has argued that the relationship among the nations is also one important factor that contributes to the emergence of social-revolutionary crises and revolutionary struggles and outcomes (Skocpol, 1979 : 19). She argues that all modern collective actions and social revolution, in fact, must be seen as closely related in their causes and accomplishments to the internationally uneven spread of capitalist economic development and nation-state formation on a world scale. She further argues that notions of modernization as an international socioeconomic dynamic harmonize nicely with conceptions of revolutions as purposive movements grounded in and facilitating societal development. Perhaps rapid and disjointed economic expansion stimulates and then frustrates mass expectations, giving rise to widespread discontent and political violence that destroys the existing government (Ibid, 20). Historically,

unequal or competitive relationships among nations have helped shape any given country's state and class structures, thus influencing the existing domestic context from which revolution emerges or not. Modern social revolutions have happened only in countries situated in disadvantaged positions within international arenas.

5. Linkages of the Maoist to Revolutionary Forces Working in other Countries

Like the role played by the international community in political and economic activities of Nepal to instigate the Maoist movement, some other developments in political activities in some other countries of the world also provided support for the Maoist in its revolutionary activities. The Maoist viewed Peru as their role model for launching a revolutionary movement in the country. The Communist Party of Peru (Shining Path) waged a violent movement against the Peruvian state in the 1980s. It followed the Maoist's ideology of protracted guerrilla war. The Maoist in Nepal received the support from Revolutionary International Movement (RIM). It is a worldwide organization of the revolutionary parties, which believe in the ideology of Marxism-Leninism and Maoism. RIM came into existence in March 1984 in London. It provides a forum to the revolutionary parties to discuss issues, problems and challenges to their revolutionary action (Upreti, 2008 : 92). RIM provides possible guidelines and support to such parties and organizations. The Nepalese Maoist had link with Maoist parties of India such as Communist Party of India (ML), Naxalbari, Communist Party of India (MLPW), Maoist Communist Centre, Revolutionary Communist Centre of India (MLM), and Revolutionary Communist Centre of India (Maoist). They took advantage of the open border between Nepal and India. The Maoist received moral support from Worker's Party of Belgium, Worker's Communist Party of Norway and World's Resistance Movement. It played a significant role in uniting the revolutionary parties of South Asia and establishing Coordinating Council of Maoist Parties of South Asia (CCOMPOSA). It seems that the Maoist wanted to strengthen their own movement by organizing support of all revolutionary parties of South Asia. The Maoist established Nepali organizations such as Akhil Bharatiya Ekta Samaj, All India Nepali Students Association, and Nepali People's Progressive Forum Belgium to create international support in favour of the Maoist movement. The Maoist in Nepal had widened

its support bases at the international level that helped them in launching and sustaining their armed struggle. The World People's Resistance Movement (WPRM) supported the Maoist in its People's War (Upreti 2010 : 231). It organized meetings, discussions and interactions in Europe and other parts of the world to garner support for the Maoist in Nepal.

6. International Context after Maoist Started its PW in 1996

When the insurgency began to target the interests and to threaten the continuity of the development programs and the safety of the local staff, the international community engaged with the palace, political parties, military officials, human rights activists, civil society mediators and representatives of various communities to calm down the Maoist's People's War (Upreti, 2008 : 118). In 2002, the Maoist threatened foreign missions, including the US Embassy, to discourage foreign governments from supporting the government of Nepal. The United Nations and its organ Office for the High Commissioner of Human Rights (UNOHCHR) were active in stopping the breach of human rights by both the Maoist and the state. The European Community in 2004 called upon all constitutional forces in Nepal to work closely together in support of a common strategy for achieving a comprehensive and inclusive settlement in the country, based upon the principle of multiparty democracy and constitutional monarchy (Ibid, 235). Some INGOs such as the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Amnesty International, the International Crisis Group (ICG), Human Rights Watch (HRW), and the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) were actively engaged in resolving the problems of Nepal's armed conflict. Donors joined Nepal's civil society organizations in requesting the deployment of a robust UN human rights mission (Frieden, 2012 : 107). The UN Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights (UNOHCHR) involved in a dialogue with the state's security forces as well as with senior Maoist cadres. This shows that the prolonged People's War of Maoist was not only the concern of Nepalese state; rather it was the concern of international community.

The major events in the world during the period after 1990 were the end of Cold War and the emergence of the United States as the only superpower. The terrorist attack in New York and Washington

on 11 September 2001 had challenged this position of the United States. The USA declared the war against terrorism. A few months later Taliban of Afghanistan was finally defeated and a new government was established in Kabul. The United States did not want to see the expansion of radical communists like Maoist in Nepal (Upreti, 2010 : 227) and wanted to expand its influence in the Nepal army by providing military resources. The United States and India were getting closer after 9 September 2001 (Raj, 2004 : 130). Both USA and India assisted Nepalese Army in its fight against the Maoist insurgency. The United States supported Indian views to handle the problem of the Maoist and put the Maoist in a watch list of secondary type of terrorist organizations. It signed an agreement with Nepal for anti-terrorist assistance including the offer of advanced and investigative security and counter-terrorism technique. The United States kept Nepalese Maoist in the same position as Khmer Rouge in Cambodia, Shining Path in Peru or Al Qaida (Ibid, 140). In Peru, the Shining Path was demolished after the arrest of Comrade Gonzalo and involvement of the army with brutal and repressive measures. Andean peasants were caught in the crossfire with 25,000 Peruvians being killed. Khmer Rouge was accounted for forcible conscription of children, destruction of schools, torturing and killing civilians, looting of food from humanitarian aid projects. The intervention of USA was highly criticized by the Maoist in their document.

Before the royal massacre of June 1 in Nepal and the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks in the USA, India was less concerned with the Nepali conflict. The Indian response towards the Maoist was always contradictory and reflected a double standard (Upreti, 2006 : 45). Maoist leaders took shelter on Indian territory and many meetings of the central committee of Maoist were held in India. However, after the royal massacre of 1 June in Nepal and the terrorist attack in USA on 11 September 2001, India adopted a more aggressive position. India felt that the Maoist insurgency was a threat not only to the security of Nepal but also to the security of India. The Indian government had taken a stand that the Maoists were terrorists. Indian authorities handed over Maoist leader Suresh Ale Magar and MatrikaYadav, who were arrested in India to the government of Nepal. India also arrested C.P. Gajurel in Chennai and Kiran Baidhya in Siliguri and were jailed (Thapa & Sijapati, 2012 : 193). After the royal takeover of 1 February 2005, King Gyanendra followed his own roadmap neglecting India and tried to

develop a close relationship with China. As a result, India's role changed drastically against the monarchy. India supported the collaboration between the Maoist and democratic political forces of Nepal to topple the king. China was also dissatisfied with the Maoist's people war. The Chinese government had branded them as terrorists accusing them of 'misusing' the name of Chairman Mao Tse-Tung and did not like to call them Maoists but had been calling them 'anti-government forces' (Raj, 2004 : 123). The Chinese Foreign Minister supported Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba, who declared a state of emergency to maintain peace and stability in the country. When the Chinese Prime Minister Zhu Rongji visited Nepal in May 2001, he said that the Maoist insurgency did not have any relationship with present day China. China's ambassador kept a close eye on the development of Nepal's domestic situation. It declared that the peace talk between Maoist and government of Nepal was an internal matter of Nepal. On the other side, China participated in a conference hosted by Britain in London on 19-20 June 2002, where the discussion was to find a solution to the problem of Maoist insurgency in Nepal. The Chinese were too pre-occupied with their own affairs and were not interested in interfering in the internal affairs of a friendly country like Nepal (Ibid, 126). In fact, China supported the Indian and other efforts to resolve the Maoist conflict in Nepal.

Immanual Wallerstein developed the concept of world system in 1974 to explain the interconnection between economically dominant state and other individual nation-states (Wallerstein, 2000 : 88-91). Theda Skocpol argues that the states are interdependent in the international states system (Skocpol, 1979 : 22). Recently, globalization is a major transforming force of the world's societies (Curry, Jiobu & Schwirian 2008 : 73). With globalization individuals, groups and nations become interdependent. In other words, it is the intensification of worldwide social relations, which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice-versa (Giddens, 1990 : 64). Due to the effects of globalization, nation states are no longer conceived as sovereign agents. On the other hand, globalization contributes to democracy through the international financial and political integration after the end of cold war (Acemoglu and Robinson, 2006 : 48). Multiparty Democratic system was reinstated in Nepal in 1990 following the epoch-making global events such as the fall of Berlin

Wall and the wave of democratization and globalization phenomena. Thus, the political and economic interconnection of nations prevents Maoist to establish New Democracy in Nepal. Chaitanya Mishra illustrates that Nepal could not become a New Democratic because it was placed in between two capitalist neighbours. He argues that the state could not reach New Democracy and Socialism without development of capitalism. On the other hand, Maoists did not have the youths to fight in their armed PW for a long time. Hari Rokka argues that large workforce migrated to India and other foreign countries seeking employment. Maoists could not analyze the changing trends of workforce shifting from agriculture to international arena. As a result, they realized that they could not sustain its armed struggle over a decade.

The Maoist could not have overlooked the military supremacy of the state security forces. It had 95,000 army personnel, 25,000 Armed Police Force personnel and 40,000 civilian police personnel that were backed by international anti-communist and anti-terrorist support (Hachhetu, 2008 : 52). Nepalese state was able to procure sophisticated weapons and military gadgets from USA, the UK, India and other countries and thus CPNM needed to take part in the negotiations to offset the international pressure. The Maoist realized that the international situation after 9 September 2001 was not favourable for revolution. Then, the Maoists were ready to revise their ideology, strategy and tactics for a new kind of polarization nationally and internationally. They were ready to forge a coalition with Seven Party Alliance to end the direct rule of the king and establishment of multiparty system.

7.   Conclusion

The structural conditions discussed by Theda Skocpol (1979) for emergence of revolution and collective action are important for analyzing the transformation of Maoist. The dynamics of international structure affect the process of revolution within a country. The international structure is also an important factor for leading to transformation of Maoist to peaceful political process. Many studies find that the international support for development of Nepal could not enhance productive sectors of Nepal. It creates a situation of disparity between urban and rural areas. This structural situation supported Maoist for launching its PW. However, the relationships among nations were more intense after 1990s due to

capitalism, liberalization and globalization. USA emerged as the only superpower due to the end of Cold War. The international community did not want to lose their dominance in the economic and political power of Nepal. India, China and USA stood against PW launched by the Maoist. They provided their support to the dominant political parties. India played a positive role in negotiations between the Maoist and alliance of seven political parties. The empirical facts show that the transformation in ideology, strategy and tactics of the Maoist led to a change in its ultimate aim of establishing a New Democracy. The terrorist attack in USA on 11 September 2001 had started the anti-terrorist war worldwide. Nepalese state received intensive military support from international community. The international organizations such as UNOHCR and ICRC played the role of a mediator to hold dialogue between the government of Nepal and Maoist. They forced the dominant political parties and the Maoist to forge an alliance against the absolute monarchy to establish multiparty democracy. This structural situation compelled Maoist to transform its ideology and strategy towards peaceful political process.

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Pierre Bourdieu's Capitals and its Impact on Primary Education in Government Schools

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Abstract

The Government of India has been focusing on improving access to education among the lowest socioeconomic groups. Despite the significant investment of the GDP in education and the implementation of various flagship programs, municipal schools still struggle to provide quality education. This analysis is based on empirical data and aims to identify the root causes of poor academic performance and learning outcomes among students attending municipal schools. Our research includes suggestions based on primary data collected from municipal schools and interviews with primary assistant teachers. We found that students lack the social, economic, and cultural capital discussed by sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, which contributes to their underprivileged position. To address these challenges, it is essential to allocate resources effectively, conduct thorough inspections, and learn from successful schools in the same areas as municipal schools to improve competitiveness and efficiency.

Keywords

Primary education, Municipal schools, Assistant teachers, Capitals, Students.

2

Pierre Bourdieu's Capitals and its Impact on Primary Education in Government Schools

1.   Introduction

The foundation of a person's success is built during their primary education years. In today's knowledge-driven world, access to vast amounts of information is readily available due to mobile technology and affordable data plans. However, the challenge lies in determining what information is relevant and appropriate for students based on their age. This issue is even more critical for young children who are just beginning their formal education journey.

The learning environment and guidance play a crucial role in shaping young minds. If the educational environment fails to provide essential elements of quality education, it can have long-term consequences. Disparities in access to education among children from diverse social and economic backgrounds lead to differential outcomes.

Education serves as a bridge between the family and society. Family influences an individual based on their cultural background and then entrusts them to the school, which prepares them for a more expansive societal role. The impact of the family on an individual lasts a lifetime, gradually diminishing as the individual transitions from their family of origin to their own family. Studies have shown that the early years of life have a lasting impact on an individual's social and psychological development.

Society's cultural capital is perpetuated across generations through education. The realization of inclusive education goals relies on providing quality education to all segments of society. However, achieving this vision requires careful consideration of diverse local needs in curricula, textbooks, teaching methods, and other educational resources.

2.   A Brief History of Education in India

The ancient Indian education system was structured to meet the specific and holistic needs of society, focusing on Critical Enquiry

(in areas such as philosophy, ethics, logic, mathematics, literature, and grammar), Technical and Vocational skills (including ayurveda, agriculture, pottery, jewelry making, etc.), and Inner disciplines (encompassing spirituality, moral education, yoga, meditation, etc.). This system was practical and aligned with the societal requirements of that era.

During British rule in India, modern education was introduced, emphasizing rational and scientific subjects, leading to the establishment of numerous village schools, particularly in regions like Bihar and Bengal. These schools primarily focused on moral and character-building education, tailored to the local environment and preserving the societal culture.

In independent India, Mahatma Gandhi introduced Basic Education (Nai Talim) with a vision to make every village self-sufficient. This approach emphasized vocational skills and productive activities like spinning and weaving, and advocated for the use of the mother tongue as the language of initial education.

Subsequent to this, various commissions, such as the Radhakrishnan Commission of 1948, the D S Kothari Commission of 1964-66, the National Education Policy of 1986, and the recent National Education Policy of 2020, have been appointed to recommend reforms in the education system. These initiatives have led to constructive changes, albeit with limitations such as diversity, finances, population, and resources. Despite these challenges, considerable progress has been achieved in the Indian education system.

3. Capitals

French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's capital theory consists of three forms of capital: economic, cultural, and social. Economic capital refers to material assets and income sources, while cultural capital includes qualifications, skills, and social etiquette. Social capital encompasses connections and networks in society. These three forms of capital collectively influence an individual's education and success, with formal education serving as the foundation for numerous employment opportunities.

Individuals from underprivileged backgrounds often lack one or more forms of capital, perpetuating this disadvantage across generations. Possessing strong economic capital can facilitate the

acquisition of other forms of capital, such as providing access to quality education and enhanced social networking opportunities.

The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan initiative, conceived by the late former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, aimed to democratize education by providing access to underprivileged communities. This initiative sought to allow children from disadvantaged backgrounds to pursue education, free from financial constraints, to integrate into mainstream society, and to pursue their dreams with enhanced opportunities through formal education.

Examining the extent to which the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan initiative has realized its objectives over 75 years, including the role of associated changes in primary and upper primary classes, is the focal point of this study.

4. Rationale of the Study

The study aims to identify the factors contributing to poor educational outcomes in municipal primary and upper primary schools, despite significant government investment in infrastructure, student incentives, and educational programs. While increased spending on education as a share of GDP is crucial, it does not guarantee desired educational outcomes. The quality of primary education forms the basis for subsequent levels of education and plays a vital role in breaking the cycle of poor education, skill development, limited employment opportunities, and poverty.

5. Objective of the Study

The study's objectives include investigating the reasons for the subpar educational outcomes despite government efforts to provide resources and motivation for students to attend school and receive cost-free education.

6. Hypotheses

An attempt has been made in this study to test the following Hypotheses:

H1: There is a correlation between Economic capital and learning outcomes of students in Municipal schools.

H2: There is a correlation between Cultural capital and learning outcomes of students in Municipal schools.

H3: There is a correlation between Social capital and learning outcomes of students in Municipal schools.

7.   Methodology

This research is based on a combination of primary and secondary data sources. The primary data was gathered through interviews with 140 government assistant teachers and onsite visits to 48 schools under the basic Shiksha Parishad in Uttar Pradesh, covering classes 1 to 8 in both primary and upper-primary levels in Kanpur Urban. The fieldwork took place between August 2023 and December 2023, and the interview schedule was used as the data collection tool. Each interview lasted 45 to 50 minutes, during which both closed-ended and open-ended questions were employed to ensure comprehensive insight gathering. The secondary data consists of reports from government authorities, relevant published works, as well as reputable magazines, newspapers, and other credible sources. This research forms a part of my doctoral thesis.

8.   Data Analysis

8·1 Capitals

Economic Capital : All the schools visited have students coming from underprivileged backgrounds. The Mid-day-meal program was launched in 1995 in Tamil Nadu to increase school enrollment for students from deprived backgrounds. It was later implemented nationally to decrease dropout rates and enhance school enrollment. Additional schemes were introduced to provide more educational benefits to students and their parents, making education completely free of cost. Over the years, the government has increased funds to improve school infrastructure and essential amenities. Today, each school is well-equipped with digital classrooms, advanced books, and other facilities. However, even children from relatively better economic backgrounds did not choose these schools.

Cultural Capital : The parents of these students mostly work in the labor market, as daily wage earners, house helps, or in local shops, primarily in the unorganized sector where earnings only support survival. These children lack cultural capital in terms of academic excellence and training, important for accessing the best opportunities in the market, which affects the next generation.

Social Capital : The role of social capital in the life chances of individuals and children is significant. The importance of networking

in contemporary education has increased. Students in these schools all come from underprivileged backgrounds, and it's not expected for them to have a wider network in society to understand the importance of quality education. Freebies and the Mid-day-meal were the main motivations for them to attend school. Families in the lower strata of society generally have higher fertility rates. They choose these schools to make it easier for parents to work. Once the children learn in school and the parents' financial status improves, they take their children out of municipal schools and enroll them in private schools. The absence of all three capitals in the families of the students attending government schools, specifically municipal schools, significantly affects the learning outcomes.

8·2   Objective Issues with the Schools

There are following objective issues with the schools:

‣ In 5 schools, classes from 1 to 5 are held in a building with only one or two separate rooms, causing chaos about which subjects to teach when. As a result, common topics are taught most of the time. The rest of the 43 schools met expectations in terms of infrastructure and basic amenities, including advanced classroom systems.

‣ There are no specific subject teachers dedicated exclusively to one subject. One teacher handles all subjects in these smaller classes in all schools visited.

‣ The boundary walls of the schools are not sufficient to secure teachers and students. The locality of such schools is hard to find, leading to multiple visits to gather data and inputs from teachers.

‣ Serious security concerns were found in 47 out of 48 schools visited. There were no additional services, including security guards at entry gates and cleaners in schools. Some boundary walls were occupied by vendors. Additionally, adult children were found within the campus of one school, and in another school, empty alcohol bottles were discovered. The absence of proper security allows unauthorized individuals to enter the school premises. Citing one statement of the respondent here:

"Ma'am, this is the case now and then, in the absence of proper security, after the school gets over, adult children jump over the wall and enter school and do fishy activities. The next day when

we come to school, we find such things and try to clean them in time. Anybody can enter school anytime in the absence of adequate security."

8·3 Subjective Issues with Severe Underperformance of School Children

The monthly parent-teacher meetings (PTMs) are an important opportunity for parents to engage with teachers and support their children's education. However, it's observed that only a few parents attend these meetings. There's a need to improve participation and collaboration between parents and teachers for the benefit of the students.

It's evident that many parents, who are often daily wage workers, struggle to attend PTMs due to work commitments. However, it's important to address the concerns raised by parents regarding the timely provision of essential school items and government benefits.

Teachers have noted that some students struggle academically due to a lack of cultural and economic capital at home. This highlights the need for additional support within the school system. Furthermore, the decreasing attendance of girls from class 5 onwards is a concern, and it's important to create an environment that supports their continued education.

It's crucial to find ways to address these challenges and create a more inclusive and supportive educational environment for all students and their families.

8·4 Hierarchy of Education

The study revealed that not a single teacher expressed interest in enrolling their own children in the schools where they teach. It was observed that for many teachers, the job was an end in itself rather than a means to an end. Twenty-five per cent of the respondents had recently joined and 35 of them were preparing for higher level exams. The remaining 105 were nearing retirement, and for them, the job was primarily a means of achieving financial independence and decision-making power in their families. The teachers seemed to be more concerned with their own status in their families and society than with bringing about positive changes in the lives of underprivileged students.

The study also highlighted the factors that make private schools the preferred choice over government schools, even for families facing financial challenges. Despite the economic difficulties posed by the pandemic, many middle-class families still choose private schools for their children, willing to pay high fees. This preference for private schools is influenced by the competitiveness between schools to achieve academic results and attract admissions, as well as they lack of government funding for public schools. There is a need to elevate the standards of government and municipal schools. Teachers at these schools should be held accountable for their students' performance, and students and parents should also be responsible for ensuring regular attendance and active participation. Additionally, the focus should shift from emphasizing perks and freebies for students and leaves for teachers to highlighting student performance in schools. The aim should be to create a culture where schools are valued based on their performance, rather than just their societal status. Municipal schools need to incorporate successful practices from other schools in the city. Rather than just being centers for freebies and salary distribution, municipal schools should truly become educational hubs for underprivileged students, giving them hope and aspirations.

9. Conclusion and Discussion

The situation of students in government schools, particularly under Basic Shiksha Parishad, presents significant challenges. These students often face stigmatization due to their perceived slow learning abilities and disadvantaged family backgrounds. Therefore, it is crucial for teachers to be highly dedicated and capable of nurturing these young minds without assuming any prior educational foundation.

Accountability in primary education is a critical aspect that requires immediate attention. Despite substantial government spending in this sector, the actual outcome is far from satisfactory. Reports, such as ASER, provide evidence that students beyond class 8 struggle with basic reading and comprehension skills, unable to engage with material from lower grade levels.

It's important to note that a large portion of permanent teachers in primary schools come from families with financial constraints. Furthermore, many students are forced to assist their

parents after school, leaving little time for revising their coursework. Private tuition is not a viable option for these students.

The low attendance of parents in Parent-Teacher Meetings (PTMs) contributes to a lack of oversight regarding the educational outcomes of these students. Additionally, there seems to be a lack of moral responsibility among teachers in facilitating the academic progress of underprivileged students. This is compounded by the fact that parents from similar backgrounds lack the resources to advocate for their children's education, leading to a concerning cycle.

For many parents, schools serve primarily as daycares for their children while they work, and the provision of mid-day meals and educational materials adds to the appeal, particularly in areas with high fertility rates. There are conflicting perspectives on the government's investment in free education for the most underprivileged in society, and its actual impact on the lives of these children.

While government schools often boast extensive outdoor spaces and employ highly qualified teachers, the effectiveness of these resources is questionable. Despite the presence of infrastructure and educators, students in these schools continue to underperform, which ultimately impacts their future opportunities and confidence levels.

I made a critical observation while visiting different schools: the campuses are close to nature with vast green areas, compared to some private schools with closed, concrete environments. Teachers go through a rigorous recruitment process and have the necessary qualifications, but the real question is what they do after starting their positions and how much effort they put into teaching children. Despite having infrastructure, teachers, and students, the combination is resulting in underperformance. As a result, students lack dreams, and when they enter the real world, they find themselves in a highly competitive environment, leading to feelings of inferiority and low confidence.

Through my field visits, I also observed a disheartening trend where parents, upon gaining some economic stability, choose to transfer their children from government schools to private institutions. This highlights a clear stigma associated with attending government schools, perpetuating a cycle of disadvantage for these students.

In conclusion, it is evident that there are numerous complex challenges facing government schools, but there are also opportunities for improvement. By addressing accountability, teacher support, parental involvement, and the overall perception of government schools, we can work toward creating a more inclusive and effective educational environment for all students.

Based on the analysis of the data presented above, it has been determined that all three hypotheses were thoroughly examined and have been substantiated by the findings.

10. Way Forward toward establishing Educational Equity

NEP 2020 has significantly neglected the socio-cultural aspect, which has greatly affected the learning outcomes of students. The schools under Basic Shiksha Parishad were established to provide education to every child in society. Although the government has implemented various policies successfully to ensure student enrollment, the real concern lies in the quality of education being imparted. Students are progressing from one class to another without acquiring the necessary knowledge for their respective classes.

98 percent of the respondents were first-generation women who obtained government jobs. Many of them view their jobs as the ultimate goal rather than a means to an end. They perceive it as their only opportunity, and if they find a better government job, they are likely to pursue it. There seems to be a lack of innovation among these individuals, and they only adhere to government mandates for their job responsibilities.

The "NIPUN" program is well-designed, but it has created some pressure on teachers to ensure that students qualify and become "NIPUN". While there are some issues with this approach, it initially aims to enhance the productivity of school education and teachers.

Parent-teacher meetings (PTMs) can be utilized to educate parents monthly on creating a conducive environment at home for their child's education. This form of parent education, focused on their children's schooling, can be incorporated into a broader curriculum. Mandatory attendance at PTMs for parents could be enforced, and penalties or benefits may be applied to encourage compliance.

The term "free" often carries the stigma of being associated with "poor people". In today's society, where status is often linked

with material possessions and aesthetics, it's important to change this narrative and approach it in a more respectful and dignified manner. The dignity of individuals should be prioritized across various societal aspects such as class, culture, and background.

The study brought attention to the low student-teacher ratio in certain schools, for example, 44 students with 3 permanent teachers in the class 1 to 5 category. The introduction of composite schools (Class 1 to 8) by the government is a commendable initiative, as it will consolidate resources and provide more facilities by having more teachers in one location.

During the school visits, a notable finding was the absence of a "creche" facility in any of the schools, specifically to cater to the needs of children of new mothers employed as teachers. While the option of "Child Care Leave" exists, teachers tend to reserve it for urgent situations, thereby not utilizing it to care for their young children at the school. However, it is crucial for children, especially those newly enrolled in school, to have access to their mothers when needed. To address this issue, a potential solution could involve incorporating a "BALVATIKA" setup within the school premises. This concept envisions the establishment of a comprehensive educational institution, encompassing a playgroup through Class 8, at a single location. By doing so, all government support programs could be integrated at one dedicated site, while simultaneously affording teachers the peace of mind to focus on their professional responsibilities, undistracted by concerns for their children's welfare. It is important to note that these insights are drawn from observations at three reputable private schools in urban Kanpur, and do not encompass findings from government "ANGANWADI CENTRES".

The implications of the findings stress the critical importance of effectively utilizing available resources and maximizing attendance by implementing motivators and penalties. Additionally, the need for thorough inspection and the adoption of competitive elements commonly seen in private schools within government schools is underscored. This integration aims to cultivate a healthy and competitive educational environment, which would benefit both teachers and students while serving as a model for others to follow.

Furthermore, it is essential to ensure that students in these schools are not regarded as "Left-Overs of mainstream society", neither by the educators nor by the government responsible for their

well-being. Education is not just a matter of quantity, but also of quality - it is a fundamental human right. Moral ethics should be upheld in the workplace, particularly when bearing the responsibility for those who are unable to bear it themselves.

When individuals prepare for a government job, the commitment, dedication, and extensive effort required are apparent. However, the recognition and celebration of this achievement should extend beyond the initial days. Regrettably, for a significant portion of individuals, this celebration becomes an ongoing struggle, akin to a lifetime insurance policy. Furthermore, the joy associated with this achievement often remains confined to immediate family members for an extended period.

For example, the ambitious project of the respected figure Shri Ratan Tata Ji, the "NANO" car, aimed to make it accessible to all. However, it failed to take into account the aversion to being labelled as "POOR", a societal stigma that contributed to the project's ultimate failure.

In order to facilitate diverse learning experiences among students in a single classroom, it is crucial to acknowledge and nurture the unique combination of skills, knowledge, and experiences that each student brings. By understanding and valuing the diverse forms of capital possessed by each student, we can create a more inclusive and effective learning environment that supports the growth and development of all students.

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Understanding the Gurungs: Culture, Identity and Practices

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Abstract

The population history of Nepal is deeply intertwined with migration. Over time, people from different directions and backgrounds migrated to Nepal. They brought unique languages, cultures, and customs with them, which later became defining features of the Indigenous communities of these regions. The Gurung community is one such example. The Gurung also known as Tamu, mainly live in the hilly areas of western and central Nepal, in districts like Lamjung, Kaski, Syangja, Gorkha, and Manang. Their roots are closely linked to the Tibetan and Himalayan populations. The dominance of Hindu rulers led to Hinduization within these communities, however, Indigenous and ethnic communities were largely autonomous before the influence of the Hindus. The Gurung community is no exception. Despite socio-cultural changes over time, the Gurungs are trying to balance their traditional practices with the changes brought. As a result, they have managed to retain their distinct practices, which sets them apart from other Indigenous and ethnic communities. The paper reflects insights gained from the author's experiences with the Gurung community, highlighting their cultural practices, traditions, and the transformations they have undergone.

Keywords

The Gurungs, Ethnic group, Culture, Identity, Tradition and Practices.

3

Understanding the Gurungs: Culture, Identity and Practices

1. Introduction

Although a small country, Nepal is rich in natural and cultural diversity. Over time, people from different directions and backgrounds migrated to Nepal. Many of these groups brought unique languages, cultures, and customs with them, which later became defining features of the indigenous communities of these regions (Tamang, 2004). Even today, the languages, cultures, and customs of Nepal's ethnic groups differ widely based on their location and identity. The history of Nepal's indigenous peoples is predominantly transmitted through oral traditions, with few written records available.

There is no uniformity in the social, political, and economic conditions of indigenous groups within Nepal. Although agriculture serves as the primary livelihood for all indigenous communities, significant economic disparities exist among them. Similar inequalities are evident in social and political realms as well. For instance, it is impossible to compare the conditions of the Raute community with those of the Gurung, Magar, or even Newar and Thakali groups in any aspect. Recognizing this diversity, the Federation of Indigenous Nationalities (NEFIN) classified different listed indigenous groups into five categories based on their social, economic political and other situations in 2004. They are advanced, disadvantaged, marginalized, highly marginalized, and endangered. The Newar and Thakali communities were categorized as advanced, while Gurung, Rai, Limbu, Magar, Sherpa, and others were placed in the disadvantaged group. Groups like the Sunuwar, Tharu, Tamang, and Bhujel were classified as marginalized. The highly marginalized category included communities such as Chepang, Siyar, and Majhi. Lastly, endangered groups like Kusunda, Raute, and Banariya were identified.

Indigenous communities were largely autonomous before the unification of Nepal initiated by Prithvi Narayan Shah (Nakarmi, 2022). The arrival of the Aryans, along with their dominance in

politics and culture, significantly impacted the way of life, traditions, and social structures of these indigenous communities. Many scholars believe that the caste-based social stratification introduced by King Jayasthiti Malla in the 14th century in the Kathmandu Valley was the initial undemocratic encroachment on indigenous rights (Tamang, 2004). Further, it was institutionalized by Prime Minister Jung Bahadur Rana through the enactment of the first Muluki Ain (National Code) in 1854 Hindu rulers had historically maintained a dominant role in Nepal's political system; however, the introduction of the Muluki Ain greatly increased the discrimination and marginalization of indigenous peoples. It systematically framed indigenous communities into the Hindu caste hierarchy by categorizing them into lower tiers and placing Brahmins and Kshatriyas at the top of the social hierarchy (Hofer, 1979). This paper aims to highlight the Gurungs as a distinctive and significant ethnic group in Nepal, emphasizing their cultural heritage, traditions, and the transformations they have undergone. This paper begins with a brief introduction to the diversity of Nepal in terms of cultural groups followed by a methodological part. The subsequent sections explore ethnic groups and their perceptions of Nepal, the Gurungs' ancestral connections, their social structure and practices, occupations, the unique institution of Rodi, and their traditional attire.

2. Methodology

This paper is based on the author's personal experience and interactions with the Gurung community. Being closely connected through familial ties, as the author's spouse is from this community, the author has had numerous informal conversations with relatives, friends, and other members over the years. These discussions, often held in family or community settings, have provided meaningful insights. However, the author's familial ties are limited to the Gurungs of Lamjung, so some discussions in the paper may not be generalisable to the community. To further enhance understanding, the author also reviewed a wide range of literature on the Gurungs.

3. Ethnic Group

A group characterized by distinct oral or written history, specific geographical area, cultural heritage, native language, traditions, and customs is recognized as an indigenous group or *Janajati* (Ethnic Group). The National Foundation for Development

of Indigenous Nationalities (NFDIN) uses similar criteria to classify indigenous and ethnic communities in Nepal. In Nepal, indigenous people are considered native ethnic groups and are often referred to as indigenous nationalities. They are unique and not part of the Hindu caste system. There is a general assumption that indigenous groups do not have hierarchical structures, concepts of purity and impurity, or untouchability like the Hindus (Onta, 2006). However, Hierarchical notions can be observed among some of the ethnic groups, such as the Newar, Gurung, etc. Despite the influence of the Hindu caste system, the Newar hierarchy is not entirely the same as the Hindu model (Nakarmi, 2024), and the clan divisions among the Gurung are even more distinct than the Hindu system. This highlights the need for a unique indigenous perspective to better understand Ethnicity and Ethnic groups in Nepal's context. Frederic Barth's concept of ethnicity could be useful in addressing this complex issue. According to Barth, it is not sufficient for a group to claim its cultural aspects are different from others; others must also recognize and acknowledge these differences (Barth, 1996). The cultural characteristics of groups such as the Newar, Gurung, etc. are unique and do not entirely match with other indigenous and ethnic groups. Every indigenous and ethnic group listed by The National Foundation for Development of Indigenous Nationalities (NFDIN) are widely recognized as a distinct cultural group.

4. Understanding the Gurungs as an Indigenous Ethnic Group

4·1 Ancestral Linkage

The Gurung also known as Tamu mainly live in the hilly areas of western Nepal, in districts like Lamjung, Kaski, Syangja, Gorkha, and Manang. Their roots are closely linked to the Himalayan region, and their history reflects a journey shaped by migration, cultural changes, and social and political developments in Nepal. The Gurungs are thought to have come from Tibet and other Himalayan areas. Their language, which belongs to the Tibeto-Burman family, supports this connection to the Tibetan Plateau (Messerschmidt, 1972; Pignede,1993; Gurung, 2023). The Gurungs' linguistic and genetic heritage links them to the Tibeto-Burman group, which migrated from the Tibetan Plateau. Their language, a part of the Sino-Tibetan family, supports the idea that their ancestors were likely nomadic or semi-nomadic people who moved south into the

hills of Nepal, seeking better grazing lands and climates. However, some tried to link their ancestral linkage with the Huns of Central Asia. The Huns were a nomadic group from Central Asia in ancient times, known for their horse riding skills and lifestyle based on herding (Bista, 1972). However, there is no clear evidence of a direct ancestral connection between the Huns and the Gurungs. Instead, the Gurungs' lineage is more closely linked to the Tibetan and Himalayan populations than to the Huns. According to the oral history, their ancestors, known as Tamu-mai, came from the Tibetan region. They moved south in search of better places to live. In Gurung traditions, their ancestors are believed to have come from sacred Himalayan regions. Mountains like Machhapuchhre (Fishtail) and the Annapurna range are considered spiritually important and seen as their divine homeland.

4·2 Social Structure and Practices

Traditionally, the Gurungs had an open society with no discrimination. Over time, however, they developed a two-tier social hierarchy and divided themselves into two main clans. One is Char Jat (Four Clans), which includes Lama, Lamichhane, ghale and Ghotane. They are considered ritually superior to other clans. The other is called Sorha Jat (Sixteen Clans), which is regarded as a subordinate group within the Gurung community. Traditionally, these two group do not intermarry under normal circumstances (Bista, 1972). In some cases, the Gurung community, especially in urban areas, has accepted love marriages between the two clans. However, arranged marriages remain quite challenging. Marriage practices among the Gurungs are distinctive. Traditionally, they preferred cross-cousin marriages, referring to a cousin boy as Nholo (Solti) and a cousin girl as Nohlosy (Soltinee), though this practice has been declining in recent times. The Gurungs strictly prohibit marriage between parallel cousins. Marriage partners may be chosen from within or outside the home village.

The Gurungs are believed to have originally practised animism and followed an ancient pre-Buddhist religion similar to Bon. Pachyu are the traditional priests of the Gurung community, performing rituals and ceremonies tied to their indigenous Bon religion. They handle life events like births, marriages, and funerals, lead communal worship of nature and ancestors, and preserve oral traditions. Similarly, Gyabre are shamans and spiritual healers in

the Gurung tradition. They act as bridges between the physical and spiritual worlds. Gyabre performs a healing ritual. In the Gurung tradition, the roles of both priests (Pachyu and Gyabre) are essential. Pachyu is primarily responsible for conducting ceremonies and rituals as priests, while Gyabre focuses on shamanic healing and communicating with the spiritual realm (Pignede, 1993). Apart from them, Buddhist Lamas who practice Vajrayana Buddhism serve as spiritual leaders and priests for the Gurung community who practice Buddhism. Many Gurungs follow this practice. However, the influence of Hindu rulers led to Hinduization within the Gurungs, mostly among the influential and dominant members of the community. They began employing Hindu priests. Despite this, with the growth of the Indigenous movement, many Gurungs are now returning to their ethnic and traditional practices. They have started employing Pachyu and Gyabre and trying to preserve their traditional practices or started employing Buddhist Lama and practising Vajrayana Buddhism.

The Gurungs have their language, which is called TamuKi. It belongs to the Tibeto-Burman family. The Gurung population speaks the Gurung language. When looking at Nepal's history closely, it is clear that as the Gorkha kingdom expanded, the Khas language later known as Nepali Language was given priority and protection, while other local and indigenous languages were gradually excluded and marginalized (Gurung et al., 2014). Over time, the Nepali language became the national and official language. During the Rana period, which lasted for 104 years many indigenous languages in the Kathmandu Valley were banned. Even after democracy was established in 1951, the government's control over language did not stop. During the Panchayat system, the government implemented a 'One Nation, One Language' Policy, which excluded languages other than Nepali. This negatively affected the participation of Indigenous communities, as their native languages were overlooked, limiting their involvement in various sectors. The Gurung community was not excluded from this. According to the 2021 Census of Nepal, approximately 1.12% of the total population speak the Gurung language, indicating that many young Gurungs are losing connection with their mother tongue. However, the Gurung language remains widely spoken within the Gurung community, especially in Gurung villages in the western hilly regions, where it continues to be an important part of daily life and cultural identity.

4·3 Occupations

The Gurungs were historically involved in Himalayan trade and pastoralism. They were renowned for their sheep and yak herding. Transhumance pastoralism is also traditionally practised by the Gurung community and known as Qu Pron in their language. This is a traditional method of sheep herding where herders move their livestock to different locations during specific seasons to ensure adequate food and water. Livestock are taken to highland grazing areas during summer and brought down to the lowland in winter (Gurung, 2024). During the summer, herders spend a few months in the highlands where there is enough food to feed their sheep. Before winter begins, they gradually bring their herds down to the lower hills to protect the sheep from cold temperatures and to find fresh pasture and water sources. Transhumance herders possess traditional knowledge about using grazing areas at different altitudes. This practice is an important cultural tradition especially in Hilly areas of Nepal now gradually declining. Over the past few decades, pastoralists worldwide have faced numerous challenges, including climate change, social change, conservation, government policies population growth, etc.

After democracy was restored in 1990, Nepal adopted a liberal market policy, which expanded markets in rural areas and led to changes in transhumance pastoralism. Government policies on community forests and grazing areas have also significantly influenced this shift. These policies have affected farming in lower hilly areas by breaking the link between farming and livestock, increasing unused land, and pushing herders aside in winter. This change threatens not only the traditional way of life but also valuable local knowledge like seasonal herding cycles, environmental practices, and medicinal herb use (Gurung, 2024). As transhumance pastoralism declines, the younger generation of the Gurung community is exploring different ways of earning income. Some have started commercial sheep farming while others are involved in foreign employment, teaching profession, hotels and restaurant business, homestay business, and other businesses.

The Gurungs have a long history of military service, both in Nepal and abroad. They are known worldwide for their bravery as soldiers in the Gurkha Regiments in the U.K., India, and Singapore. They also played a key role in the unification of Nepal through their

military skills. After the Treaty of Sugauli in 1816, the British Indian government began recruiting them. Since then, many young Gurungs have eagerly sought to join the British Army, and if not, the Indian Army because of the good pay. If they are unable to do so, they look for work abroad. Today, the money earned from working abroad, whether through military service or labour migration, has become an important part of the Gurung community's economy.

4·4   A Fading Tradition 'Rodighar'

Rodighar, a traditional practice of Gurung community, seems to be disappearing in the Gurung villages. However, in cities like Kathmandu, Chitwan, Butwal, and Pokhara, many restaurants are now being opened using the name Rodighar. Such restaurants do not represent the essence of the traditional Rodhi culture. Hence, experts believe this is harmful to the traditional Rodighar culture of the Gurung community. Rodighar is a unique part of Gurung traditions. Rodighar is a unique socio-cultural institution of the Gurungs where young unmarried boys and girls gather in a communal space. It is a place for recreation, learning, and social interaction. Older generations share their wisdom, traditions, and stories with the youth. Young people learn societal values, cultural practices, and responsibilities(Bista, 1972).

Rodighar helps in the process of socialization of young Gurungs. It also helps develop skills like singing, dancing, and handicrafts. Traditional Gurung songs and dances like Ghatu and Sorathi are performed and taught here. Rodighar promotes communal spirit, mutual respect, cooperation, and cultural preservation. Ghatu dance songs reflect different aspects of life, such as birth, actions, hunting, and farming. The dance begins with two non-menstruating girls dressed in traditional clothes. The number of girls chosen for the performance depends on the story. The start and end of the dance are particularly interesting, according to Ghatu dance expert Gurung. Similarly, Sorathi is a traditional Gurung dance that narrates the story of a king who has seven wives but no children (Bista, 1972). This dance lasts for sixteen days and takes place between Dasain and Tihar. Sorathi dance is also popular amongst the Magars of Nepal

Rodighar serves as an institution managing social, cultural, economic, religious, and educational activities in the community. However, due to the influence of Hindu culture, it is declining and may soon disappear. Gurung villages no longer have dedicated

Rodighar. Rodighar was more important when other entertainment options were limited in society. It is a social place where people gather to have fun, share ideas, and exchange emotions. Over time, many social practices have disappeared. Rodighar helps with cultural growth, entertainment, labour exchange, marriage, and passing culture between generations. However, it is declining in the Gurung villages. In the Gurung community, there are separate Rodi houses for girls and boys. Sometimes, the boys' group invites the girls' group, or vice versa, to enjoy and dance together. Occasionally, one village invites another village's group for such gatherings. Instruments like madal, majura, murali, bansuri, and khaijadi are commonly played during these dances. Today, the new generation has completely moved away from Rodighar culture. Young Gurung boys and girls are not familiar with it. Instead, they are more interested in using the internet, watching television, and movies for entertainment.

4·5 Traditional Dresses

Gurung men and women have their own traditional clothes. Women wear velvet or velvet-bordered cholo, ghalek, cotton lungi, black velvet tiki, patuka, and pachyauri. They also wear ornaments like bangles, rings, green necklace, jantars, mugga necklaces, naugedi, shirbandi, lahure phuli, etc. Similarly, men wear white kachhad, peti, white bhoto, black velvet stakot, etc. along with ear rings and a galbandi around their neck (Gurung, 2035). These clothes are usually worn on special occasions like Lhosar and other festivals. After the restoration of democracy, Nepal gave priority to diversity, which led various ethnic groups to take pride in their cultures. As a result, Gurungs have also shown increased interest in their traditional attire .

Today, especially during the Gurung New Year known as Lhosar, young boys and girls celebrate in their cultural dress. Lhosar refers to the day when the old year is celebrated farewell and the new year is welcomed. This shows the increasing connection and awareness among the Gurung youth towards their traditional clothing. However, on days other than special occasions, they are usually seen preferring modern clothing. In Nepal, there are three main types of Lhosar celebrated. Gurungs observe Tamu Lhosar, while Sonam Lhosar is celebrated by the Tamang community, and Gyalbo Lhosar by the Sherpas. Tamu Lhosar is celebrated annually

on the 15th of Push according to the Nepali calendar. In communities that celebrate Lhosar, people's age and years are calculated on the basis of the Lhosar cycle. There are twelve different years, each named after animals and creatures like the rat, ox, tiger, rabbit, dragon, snake, horse, goat, monkey, bird, dog, and pig.

5.   Conclusion

The Gurungs' ancestry is closely linked to the Tibetan and Himalayan populations. Their language and genetic heritage connect them more to the Tibeto-Burman Himalayan people who migrated to Nepal. Their unique traditions and culture set them apart from other indigenous and ethnic groups. During Shah regimes in Nepal, the dominace of Hindu rulers led to Hinduization within the Gurungs, mostly among the influential and dominant members of the community. After democracy was restored and with the rise of the Indigenous movement, many Gurungs are now returning to their traditional customs. As a result, they are showing more interest in their culture, clothing, and practices, and are proud of their heritage. We can witness this, especially during Tamu Lhosar.

Factors like globalization, modernization, and political changes significantly impact people worldwide, the Gurung community is no exception. Socio-cultural transformation is a continuous process observed throughout human history. However, the Gurungs are currently trying to balance their traditional practices with the changes brought by modernity. Changes are now visible in both their material and cultural aspects. A key factor driving this change is their exposure to the outside world through service in the British and Indian armies, as well as more recently through overseas employment. The younger generation born abroad naturally expects more in terms of material comforts.

The family and social structures are evolving, with a shift from traditional roles to more modern, individualistic ways of living. The rise of English-medium boarding schools, the influence of mass media, the internet, and social media, along with the increasing dominance of cities and towns and the migration of people to these areas, has begun to erode the language and culture of society as a whole. The new generation of Gurung youth has also become an agent of positive change. Like other ethnic communities, the Gurungs are now actively involved in all areas of socio-economic,

cultural, and political life. The Gurung youth are better educated and in a stronger position to express their concerns on behalf of the community. Traditionally, the Gurungs had an open society without discrimination.

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Women Empowerment through Handloom and Handicraft: Transforming Economic and Social Status

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Abstract

In recent times, women's empowerment has emerged as a growing concern at both national and international levels. In India, this issue of women's empowerment needs to be primarily addressed in the non-formal sectors, where the majority of the workforce consists of women. One such sector is the handloom and handicraft industry. It also provides direct or indirect employment to the population after agriculture and also passed on generations to generations. Nearly 72% of handloom and handicraft workers are woman. Women artisans, often balancing traditional skills with innovative designs, contribute significantly to the state's economy while preserving its artistic legacy. The empirical study aimed to assess women's employment and income from the handicraft and handlooms products on the economic and social empowerment on woman. Through this paper, an attempt has been made to identify major challenges faced by the woman artisans. Hence, the government can ensure better initiatives, policy interventions, and the promotion of local crafts for the growth of handloom and handicraft industry. This study concludes that fostering the handicraft and handloom industry is essential not only for sustaining traditional art forms but also for empowering women and driving inclusive development in the region.

Keywords

Economic, Empowerment, Handicraft, Handloom, Social upliftment, Transformation.

4

Women Empowerment through Handloom and Handicraft: Transforming Economic and Social Status

1.   Introduction

Empowerment of a community is essential for its social and economic development. It results in upliftment, betterment, and welfare of society as a whole. The Constitution of India grants equal rights to both men and women. However, women have not been covered equally or do not avail themselves of the equal rights that have been provided to them in rural settings. These situations result in distress and inefficiency in rural communities, which affect the overall development of the state. A characteristic feature of Indian constitutional development plans and policies is the emphasis laid down on the special development of weaker sections of society. Yet, with the passage of time, neither a significant improvement in the economic, political, and social status of women has occurred, nor have changes been brought about at the grassroots level of the community. However, the world has now begun to realize the economic contribution of women engaged in farm and non-farm activities of development by making them financially stronger. To achieve this, collection, diversification, and redistribution of both formal and informal resources and production are vital for the better half of the total rural population in the development sector.

2.   Handicraft and Handloom in Himachal Pradesh: A Brief Introduction

Himachal Pradesh, hitherto known as a state where agriculture was the main occupation of the people, having limited scope for future development, is now witnessing the beginning of an era of change and transformation. Towards economic development and prosperity in the sphere that is new to it, namely the manufacturing of handicrafts, women have been engaged. These women have always played an important yet invisible and underappreciated role in economic activity, contributing not only to subsistence but also significantly to the economic welfare of their

families. Since time immemorial, most rural women have been confined to the boundaries of their households and work only there in inhospitable conditions without receiving any sort of appreciation, recognition, or reward. The textile industry in Himachal Pradesh has a rich history, deeply tied to its cultural heritage. Known for its exquisite handloom and handicraft products like Kullu and Kinnauri shawls, woolen garments, and carpets, the industry has been a source of livelihood for rural artisans for centuries. The modern framework for promoting textiles began with the establishment of the Ministry of Textiles, which focuses on policy-making, skill development, and market integration for the textile and handloom sectors across India. Also, The Handicrafts & Handlooms Exports Corporation of India Ltd. (HHEC), established in 1958 and renamed in 1962, focuses on promoting exports and trade development of handicraft and handloom products.

In Himachal Pradesh, the Himachal Pradesh State Handicrafts and Handloom Corporation (HPSHHC) was established in 1974. It has been pivotal in promoting traditional crafts, providing training, financial assistance, and marketing opportunities for artisans. Over the years, it has facilitated participation in national and international trade fairs and introduced schemes for artisan welfare.

According to the 2011 Census, over 15,000 households in Himachal Pradesh were engaged in handloom weaving and handicrafts. The Handloom Census of 2019-20 recorded about 2,144 active weavers in the state, highlighting the industry's role in preserving heritage while adapting to modern demands. Efforts like the Pashmina Promotion Programme (2013) and the introduction of design innovation schemes have further strengthened the sector's growth. This industry has long been a vital part of women's lives, especially in rural areas, where they have been the primary artisans, preserving traditional skills passed down through generations.

3. Review of Literature

Srivastava & Bishnoi (2023) discussed that the handloom industry was experiencing a downturn, with many weavers having taken their lives in recent years due to various challenges. Weaving was the sole source of income for the respondents. According to them, some of the major issues they faced included the lack of state support, competition from power looms, financial pressures, and the presence of middlemen. Most handloom weavers live below the poverty line,

lacking proper housing, access to nutritious food, and adequate clothing. Many expressed a desire for their children to pursue careers as goldsmiths or secure permanent government jobs.

Aswani & Bhat (2022), adopted a descriptive research method to study 150 weavers from Chendamangalam taluk in Kerala. The primary objective of the study was to highlight the major challenges/problems of the handloom industry in Chendamangalam Taluk. The major issues highlighted in the study area were related to production (scarcity and high cost of raw material, lack of technological up-gradation, shortage of labour, inadequate design and product development, insufficient credit facility, unorganized sector), marketing related problems (competition from power loom, exploitation by middlemen/intermediaries, lack of consumer awareness, seasonality of demand etc.), lack of advertising and promotion, limited understanding of government programs and policies, rigidity in weavers etc. The study suggests that immediate government intervention shall be inevitable for the survival of the handloom weavers. Effective Administration of the programs introduced by the government would also ensure that the weavers get the benefits of government programs.

Vinodini (2022) discussed the problem of living standard of woman in handloom sector in India. With the help of secondary data, various problems like uneducated, physiological issues, gynecological problems etc. were highlighted. Various schemes were explained related to handloom sector to generate large-scale employment in this sector as study shows this sector is still unorganized. The study concluded that with the help of long-term vision, strong policies and schemes can protect women weavers. With the help of shift in skills and increased burden on their physique can improve the structural position of the woman.

Mishra & Mohapatra (2022), studied the motivational factors, changes, reasons for slow growth in the women entrepreneurship. As per handloom sector reports, handloom sector contributes 15% share of the total production of Textiles. The study pointed out some reason to find out the slow growth of women weavers viz; unfavourable family background, lack of business education, dual role of woman, lack of training, in adequate infrastructure facilities, shortage of raw material, corruption and absence of ideal market conditions. The study concluded that women entrepreneurs should be encouraged,

availability of raw material, awareness, self-employment opportunities, training should be there.

Roy & Chouhan (2017) point out that handloom weavers in Dakshin Dinajpur (West Bengal) were living in poverty. A lack of employment opportunities had led many young weavers to migrate to other states. Weaving was mainly carried out by women and the elderly. While weaving had been their primary source of income, many had transitioned to agriculture and other occupations to improve their living standards. The researchers emphasized the need for effective planning and implementation of government programs to ensure the well-being of the weavers.

Das (2015), studied the socio-economic profile of the handloom weavers by collecting primary data from 100 weavers in Bargarh District of Odisha. A classification of weavers like: Independent weavers, weavers working under master weavers, weavers working for co-operative societies have been mentioned. The researcher found the maximum population in Bargarh district to be of traditional weavers who majorly were wage- weavers working for more than 8 hours a day, accompanied mostly by their entire family. Owing to their poor socio-economic conditions they were in a pitiable condition. Das also highlighted a number of challenges faced by the weavers like financial constraint, inability to purchase latest machinery, poor working conditions, and lack of marketing strategies, low remuneration and the absence of enough government support in this study.

4.   Objectives of the Study

Objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To examine the impact of women's employment and income from the handicraft and handlooms products on their economic empowerment.
2. To examine the impact of handicraft and handloom on the social empowerment of women.
3. To identify the manufacturing and marketing problems faced by women engaged in handicraft and handlooms products.

5.   Methodology

The primary study is based upon primary data collected from the sample respondents. The primary data was collected from the woman artisans of handicraft and handloom sector. At the first

stage, three districts namely Kullu, Mandi and Kangra were selected. These districts were selected as per the highest number of women registered in the textile ministry website. At the next stage, 6 blocks (2 block) were selected from the selected district. A sample of 420 women (140 from each district) artisans who were registered at the ministry of textiles was drawn using random sampling to conduct the present study. Informal discussion was also conducted with the women artisans for the study.

6.   Results of the Study

The collected data of this study are presented in three different tables. The results of the study are calculated with the help of 5 point scale viz.: SD denotes Strongly Disagree; D denotes Disagree; N denotes Neutral; A denotes Agree and SA denotes Strongly Agree. The collective opinions have been analyzed in the following table-1 on 5 statements:

S-1. Handicraft and handloom become the primary source of income.

S-2. I feel financially independent because of the earnings from handicraft and handloom work.

S-3. Handicraft and handloom provide me full time employment at home.

S-4. I am able to save money regularly from the earnings.

S-5. It minimizes the financial dependency on other members of the family.

Table-1 : Opinion about Impact of Women Employment and Income on Economic Empowerment from Handicraft and Handloom

Statements	Kangra District					
	SD	D	N	A	SA	Total
S-1	—	14 (10.00)	41 (29.29)	80 (57.14)	5 (3.57)	140 (100.00)
S-2	—	—	28 (20.00)	55 (39.29)	57 (40.71)	140 (100.00)
S-3	3 (2.14)	17 (12.14)	25 (17.86)	65 (46.43)	30 (21.43)	140 (100.00)
S-4	5 (3.57)	30 (21.43)	17 (12.14)	69 (49.29)	19 (13.57)	140 (100.00)
S-5	—	—	5 (3.57)	94 (67.14)	41 (29.29)	140 (100.00)

Statements	Mandi District					
	SD	D	N	A	SA	Total
S-1	—	17 (12.14)	39 (27.86)	76 (54.29)	8 (5.71)	140 (100.00)
S-2	—	—	33 (23.57)	42 (30.00)	65 (46.43)	140 (100.00)
S-3	5 (3.57)	21 (15.00)	29 (20.71)	59 (42.14)	26 (18.57)	140 (100.00)
S-4	3 (2.14)	26 (18.57)	19 (13.57)	65 (46.43)	27 (19.29)	140 (100.00)
S-5	—	—	3 (2.14)	98 (70.00)	39 (27.86)	140 (100.00)
Statements	Kullu District					
	SD	D	N	A	SA	Total
S-1	—	12 (8.57)	42 (30.00)	74 (52.86)	12 (3.57)	12 (8.57)
S-2	—	—	25 (17.86)	61 (43.57)	54 (38.57)	140 (100.00)
S-3	7 (5.00)	13 (9.29)	20 (14.29)	70 (50.00)	30 (21.43)	140 (100.00)
S-4	3 (2.14)	13 (9.29)	14 (10.00)	71 (50.71)	39 (27.86)	140 (100.00)
S-5	—	—	7 (5.00)	98 (70.00)	35 (25.00)	140 (100.00)
Statements	Overall					
	SD	D	N	A	SA	Total
S-1	—	43 (10.24)	122 (29.05)	230 (54.76)	25 (5.95)	420 (100.00)
S-2	—	—	86 (20.48)	158 (37.62)	176 (41.90)	420 (100.00)
S-3	15 (3.57)	51 (12.14)	74 (17.62)	194 (46.19)	86 (20.48)	420 (100.00)
S-4	11 (2.62)	69 (16.43)	50 (11.90)	205 (48.81)	85 (20.24)	420 (100.00)
S-5	—	—	15 (3.57)	290 (69.05)	115 (27.38)	420 (100.00)

Source : Field Survey.

Note : i) Figures in parenthesis represents percentage.

ii) 'S' denotes 'Statement'; SD denotes Strongly Disagree; D denotes Disagree; N denotes Neutral; A denotes Agree and SA denotes Strongly Agree.

Data contained in table-1 reveal that 54.76 per cent of respondents were agreed with the statement that Handicraft and handloom become the primary source of income while 29.05 per cent were neutral on it. 41.90 per cent of respondent were strongly agreed with the statement that they feel financially independent because of the earnings from Handicraft and handloom work whereas 37.62 per cent were agreed with it and 20.48 per cent were neutral on it. 46.19 per cent of respondents were agreed with the statement that Handicraft and handloom provide me full time employment at home whereas 20.48 per cent were strongly agreed with it. While 17.62 per cent were neutral on it. 48.81 per cent of respondents were agreed with the statement that they were able to save money regularly from the earnings. 20.24 per cent were strongly agreed with the statement whereas 16.43 per cent were disagree with the statement. Majority of respondents were agreed with the statement that it minimizes the financial dependency on other members of the family.

Further, an attempt was made to elicit the responses of selected sample on following 5 statements which have been shown in table-2:

S-1. I actively participate in SHGs/Cooperatives.

S-2. I receive support from government's schemes for handicraft and handloom works.

S-3. Handicraft and handloom works has increased my respect and recognition in the family and community.

S-4. Handicraft and handloom work improved my social status.

S-5. It minimizes the financial dependency on other members of the family.

Table-2 : Opinion about Impact of Handicraft and Handloom on the Social Empowerment of Women

Statements	Kangra District					
	SD	D	N	A	SA	Total
S-1	—	3 (2.14)	10 (7.14)	97 (69.29)	30 (21.43)	140 (100.00)
S-2	—	20 (14.29)	40 (28.57)	65 (46.43)	15 (10.71)	140 (100.00)

S-3	—	—	5 (3.57)	55 (39.29)	80 (57.14)	140 (100.00)
S-4	—	—	7 (5.00)	59 (42.14)	74 (52.86)	140 (100.00)
S-5	—	—	3 (2.14)	98 (70.00)	39 (27.86)	140 (100.00)

Statements	Mandi District					
	SD	D	N	A	SA	Total
S-1	—	2 (1.43)	14 (10.00)	114 (81.43)	10 (7.14)	40 (100.00)
S-2	2 (1.43)	17 (12.14)	33 (23.57)	65 (46.43)	23 (16.43)	140 (100.00)
S-3	—	—	3 (2.14)	61 (43.57)	76 (54.29)	140 (100.00)
S-4	—	—	9 (6.43)	42 (30.00)	89 (63.57)	140 (100.00)
S-5	—	—	5 (3.57)	94 (67.14)	41 (29.29)	140 (100.00)

Statements	Kullu District					
	SD	D	N	A	SA	Total
S-1	—	5 (3.57)	7 (5.00)	94 (67.14)	34 (24.29)	140 (100.00)
S-2	—	15 (10.71)	42 (30.00)	61 (43.57)	22 (15.71)	140 (100.00)
S-3	—	—	9 (6.43)	39 (27.86)	92 (65.71)	140 (100.00)
S-4	—	—	2 (1.43)	49 (35.00)	89 (63.57)	140 (100.00)
S-5	—	—	9 (6.43)	88 (62.86)	43 (30.71)	140 (100.00)

Statements	Overall					
	SD	D	N	A	SA	Total
S-1	—	10 (2.38)	31 (7.38)	305 (72.62)	74 (17.62)	420 (100.00)
S-2	2 (0.48)	52 (12.38)	115 (27.38)	191 (45.48)	60 (14.29)	420 (100.00)

S-3	—	—	17 (4.05)	155 (36.90)	248 (59.05)	420 (100.00)
S-4	—	—	18 (4.29)	150 (35.71)	252(60.00)	420 (100.00)
S-5	—	—	17 (4.05)	280 (66.67)	123 (29.29)	420 (100.00)

Source : Field Survey.

Note : i) Figures in parenthesis represents percentage.

ii) 'S' denotes 'Statement'; SD denotes Strongly Disagree; D denotes Disagree; N denotes Neutral; A denotes Agree and SA denotes Strongly Agree.

The above Table-2 shows that majority (72.62 per cent) of respondents were agreed with the statement that they actively participate in SHGs/Cooperatives related to handicraft/ handloom while 17.62 per cent were strongly agreed with it. 45.48 per cent of respondent artisans were agreed with the statement that they receive support from government's schemes for handicraft and handloom works while 27.38 per cent were neutral on it. 59.05 per cent of respondents were strongly agreed with the statement that Handicraft and handloom works has increased their respect and recognition in the family and community. Majority of respondents were agreed with the statement that Handicraft and handloom work improved their social status. 66.67 per cent of respondents were agreed with the statement that Handicraft and handloom work enhanced their self-confidence. Overall, it was concluded that involvement in handloom and handicraft activities enhanced their social status.

Finally, an attempt was made to elicit the responses of selected sample on following 6 statements about problem/challenges faced by the handicraft and handloom activities which have been shown in table-3:

S-1. Decreasing demand due to change in the taste, trend and interest of people.

S-2. Gain is less as compared to hard work.

S-3. Lack of training and skill development programmes.

S-4. Competition with latest machine-made products of large industries.

S-5. Middlemen earn huge profit.

S-6. New generation is not interested in handicrafts.

Table-3 : Opinion about Problem/ Challenges faced by the Handicraft and Handloom Activities

Statements	Kangra District					
	SD	D	N	A	SA	Total
S-1	—	20 (14.29)	40 (28.57)	65 (46.43)	15 (10.71)	140 (100.00)
S-2	—	—	7 (5.00)	59 (42.14)	74 (52.86)	140 (100.00)
S-3	—	—	5 (3.57)	55 (39.29)	80 (57.14)	140 (100.00)
S-4	—	—	3 (2.14)	98 (70.00)	39 (27.86)	140 (100.00)
S-5	3 (2.14)	7 (5.00)	23 (16.43)	95 (67.86)	12 (8.57)	140 (100.00)
S-6	3 (2.14)	40 (28.57)	40 (28.57)	42 (30.00)	15 (10.71)	140 (100.00)
Statements	Mandi District					
	SD	D	N	A	SA	Total
S-1	2 (1.43)	17 (12.14)	33 (23.57)	65 (46.43)	23 (16.43)	140 (100.00)
S-2	—	—	9 (6.43)	42 (30.00)	89 (63.57)	140 (100.00)
S-3	—	—	3 (2.14)	61 (43.57)	76 (54.29)	140 (100.00)
S-4	—	—	5 (3.57)	94 (67.14)	41 (29.29)	140 (100.00)
S-5	2 (1.43)	5 (3.57)	16 (11.43)	98 (70.00)	19 (13.57)	140 (100.00)
S-6	3 (2.14)	61 (43.57)	41 (29.29)	20 (14.29)	15 (10.71)	140 (100.00)
Statements	Kullu District					
	SD	D	N	A	SA	Total
S-1	—	15 (10.71)	42 (30.00)	61 (43.57)	22 (15.71)	140 (100.00)
S-2	—	—	2 (1.43)	49 (35.00)	89 (63.57)	140 (100.00)
S-3	—	—	9 (6.43)	39 (27.86)	92 (65.71)	140 (100.00)

S-4	—	—	9 (6.43)	88 (62.86)	43 (30.71)	140 (100.00)
S-5	—	—	9 (6.43)	88 (62.86)	43 (30.71)	140 (100.00)
S-6	9 (6.43)	43 (30.71)	20 (14.29)	52 (37.14)	16 (11.43)	140 (100.00)

Statements	Overall					
	SD	**D**	**N**	**A**	**SA**	**Total**
S-1	2 (0.48)	52 (12.38)	115 (27.38)	191 (45.48)	60 (14.29)	420 (100.00)
S-2	—	—	18 (4.29)	150 (35.71)	252 (60.00)	420 (100.00)
S-3	—	—	17 (4.05)	155 (36.90)	248 (59.05)	420 (100.00)
S-4	—	—	17 (4.05)	280 (66.67)	123 (29.29)	420 (100.00)
S-5	5 (1.19)	12 (2.86)	48 (11.43)	281 (66.90)	74 (17.62)	420 (100.00)
S-6	15 (3.57)	144 (34.28)	101 (24.05)	114 (27.14)	46 (10.95)	420 (100.00)

Source : Field Survey.

Note : i) Figures in parenthesis represents percentage.

ii) 'S' denotes 'Statement'; SD denotes Strongly Disagree; D denotes Disagree; N denotes Neutral; A denotes Agree and SA denotes Strongly Agree.

The above table depicts that 45.48 per cent were agreed with the statement that decreasing demand due to change in the taste, trend and interest of people whereas 27.38 per cent were neutral on it. Majority of respondents were strongly agreed with the statement that Gain is less as compared to hard work. 59.05 per cent of respondents were strongly agreed with the statement that Lack of training and skill development programmes whereas 36.90 per cent were agreed with the statement.66.67 per cent of respondents were agreed with the statement that competition with latest machine-made products of large industries while 29.29 per cent of respondents were strongly agreed with it. 66.90 per cent of respondents were agreed with the statement Middlemen earn huge profit whereas 17.62 per cent strongly agreed with it. While 11.43 per cent were neutral on it. 34.28 per cent of respondents were disagreed with the statement that new generation is not interested in

handicrafts whereas 27.14 per cent were agreed with the statement and 24.05 per cent were neutral on it. Hence, it can be inferred that there are still challenges of decreasing demand, limited training, competition with machine-made products, exploitation by middle-men, and mixed generational interest.

7. Findings and Discussion

On the basis of present study, it can be concluded that a significant majority of respondents actively participate in SHGs/Cooperatives related to handicraft and handloom, experience enhanced respect, recognition, and social status within their communities and families, and report increased self-confidence due to their engagement in these activities. It was observed that handicraft and handloom work serve as a primary source of income for many respondents, fostering financial independence, regular savings, and reduced financial dependency on family members, with a notable portion also benefitting from full-time employment at home. There were several challenges faced by respondents, including decreasing demand due to changing consumer preferences, low financial returns compared to effort, lack of training opportunities, competition with machine-made products, and the significant profits earned by middlemen, while opinions on the disinterest of the new generation in handicrafts were mixed. To address these challenges, promote demand through modern marketing strategies while preserving tradition, and enhance artisans' skills through regular training programs. Establish direct marketing platforms to reduce middlemen, ensure fair pricing, and improve financial literacy. Encourage youth participation through incentives and modernize designs to effectively compete with machine-made products.

8. Conclusion and Suggestions

Handloom and handicraft industry are the highly growing-oriented industry in India as the larger number of labour force engaged in and also export has been increased over the time due to demand of Indian products. Hence, we can say that this industry is the future of the world market and it was noticed that Indian handloom and handicraft market is running with the help of the women specifically of rural areas. Only a long-term vision, along with robust policies and schemes, can safeguard this ancient custodian of tradition. Specifically, ensuring a consistent supply of raw materials will help preserve this art form and shield it from being listed among endangered traditional crafts.

Acknowledgements

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Nepotism and Governance: Analyzing the Trend of Continuity of Administrative Malpractices in Nepal from the Shah to the Republican Era

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Abstract

This paper investigates the (mis)management of public administration in Nepal from the Shah regime through the republican era, highlighting the persistent influence of nepotism, favouritism, and the chakari system. It reviews the historical context of administrative practices and the impact of political leaders and their families on bureaucratic appointments. Despite the establishment of numerous administrative reform commissions, the recommendations aimed at enhancing efficiency and accountability have largely gone unimplemented. This study underscores the need for a merit-based system to foster effective governance and development in Nepal.

Keywords

Nepotism, Chakari, Panjani, Malpractices, Public Administration, Nepal.

5

Nepotism and Governance: Analyzing the Trend of Continuity of Administrative Malpractices in Nepal from the Shah to the Republican Era

1. Introduction

The evolution of public administration in Nepal has been marked by a series of political regimes, each leaving its imprint on bureaucratic practices. Beginning with the Shah regime, the central government was characterized by a hierarchical structure that included various levels of officials, such as Chautaria and Mulkaji. The Rana regime further entrenched nepotism within the bureaucracy, with the influence of political families dominating administrative appointments. Even after the establishment of democracy, efforts to reform public administration, such as the Buch Commission, have struggled against entrenched practices. This paper aims to explore the historical trajectory of public administration in Nepal, focusing on the systemic challenges that have hindered the implementation of reforms and the perpetuation of a bureaucratic culture rooted in favouritism.

2. Methodology

This study employs qualitative research methodology, utilizing content analysis of historical documents, reports from various administrative reform commissions, and academic literature. The analysis encompasses a review of the recommendations made by these commissions from 1952 to 2014, assessing their implementation status and the ongoing challenges within the Nepalese public administration system. Interviews with key stakeholders and experts in the field provide additional insights into the persistent issues of nepotism and favouritism in bureaucratic appointments.

3. (Mis)management of Public Administration in Nepal

During the Shah regime, apart from the King, the central government consisted of Chautaria, Mulkaji, Kaji, Rajguru, Purohit, Sardar, Kharidar, Kapardar, Khajanji, Taksari, Dharmadhikari, Dithha, Bichari and so on. Third level employees included addai, pradhan, baithake, nausinda, bhansari, sipahi and tahaluwa

(Regmi, 2074 : 207). There was influence of the Rana family and their relatives during the Rana regime. The situation did not improve even after the establishment of democracy. Buch Commission was established after the establishment of democracy for independence of administration. Some improvements were made by the initiative of that commission. However, not well managed and institutionalized attempts have been made for revolutionary change in administrative system (Nepal, 2075).

During the Panchayat regime too, rulers treated the administration as the institution to fulfill their will and desires. The first elected government established the Administrative Reform Commission in 1990. The commission was provided with the responsibility of identifying the weaknesses of the public administration and providing suggestions for adopting efficient and low-cost administration. The commission submitted a report on April 5, 1992, to the Prime Minister. According to the report, there is lack of motivation, unrolled and extravagant expenses, lack of accountability in the administration of Nepal. However, the government did not implement the recommendations of the report. Rather, the politicizing of the administration went on increasing (Thapa and Bhandari, 2065). The situation is similar during the republican regime as well. The administrative reform commissions are formed during the tenure of every government in Nepal (Table-1) but the implementation of the recommendations is not done.

Table-1 : The Improvement of Administration Commissions, their recommendations and Implementation Status

Year	Report	Major Recommendations	Implementation Status
1952	Administrative Reform Committee (Report of Buch Commission)	• Limiting the number of ministries to 11. • Appointing new employees only by consultation with the Public Service Commission. • The facilities of the employees should be revisited by the Public Service Commission. • The solution for the investigation of corruption should be found • The system of cabinet secretary should be removed, and the arrangement of chief secretary should be made. • Decentralization should be adopted. • The law should be made for public administration and financial administration.	Among the recommendations of the commission, except for the chief secretary and a few other recommendation, no others have been implemented.

1956	Report of the District Administration Reorganization of Nepal	• Developing necessary administrative laws. • Establishment of Administrative Training Center. • Establishment of Planning Development Ministry. • Establishment of National Planning Commission. • Starting the five-year periodic plan. • Reforming the financial administration. • Dividing development and general expenditure. • Giving emphasis to rural development. • Reorganizing public employees and reducing the number of employees. • Reorganizing the ministries. • Reorganization of district administration. • Establishment of district, village, and blocks for administrative decentralization.	Only a few recommendations in the report were implemented. However, recommendations such as reorganization of ministry and district administration were not implemented.
1968	Report on administration reform commission.	• The number of ministries should be limited to 12 from 18 • Separating the District Panchayat and District Administration. • The Chief District Officer should be freed from District Panchayat. • There should be a chance for the employees to hear before giving departmental punishment. • Performing audit by the Auditor General.	The recommendations such as decreasing the number of ministries were not included.
1976	Report on administration reform commission	• Decentralization of decision-making process. • Giving more priority to the local levels. • Decreasing the number of the ministries. • Establishing a permanent administration reform committee. • Unification of government corporations. • No political appointments were made except for the post of Anchaladhesh. • Increasing the salary of the government employees based on the increase in market prices.	Most of the recommendations such as decreasing the number of ministries have not been implemented.
1992	Report of administration reform commission	• Limiting the number of ministries from 21 to 18. • Enabling the non-government organizations in economic activities. • Limiting the tenure of the gazette is special class officers. • Preparing job description for the employees and implementation. • Making regular monitoring mechanism of administration reform.	The majority of the recommendations of this report were not implemented.

		• Cutting off 25 percent of government employees. • Limiting the relationship between the ministers and bureaucrats. • Reform in management of public corporations and limiting government interference. • Making laws for making corruption controlling institutions capable.	
2009	Report on Administration Reorganization Commission	• Ending the impunity. • Ending the political interference on bureaucracy. • Ending the system of forming a lot of commissions. • Promoting E-Governance.	Many recommendations with long-term importance were not implemented.
2014	The report of administration reform recommendation committee.	• Limiting the number of ministries to a maximum of 18 and to 12 when the federal system would be implemented. • Not developing unnecessary structures without study and justification. • Punishing the corrupt people and institutions to develop immaculate administration. • Nepal Civil Service Employees Union formed with the political faith should be dissolved. • Adopting the concept of E-Governance. • Discouraging the trend of expenditure towards the end of fiscal year. • Adopting a one-door public distribution mechanism.	The major recommendations with long-term importance have not been implemented.

Source : content analysis, 2024

Altogether 7 commissions were formed from 1952 to 2014 with the motive of reforming the administrative system in Nepal. However, the implementation status of the recommendations made by the commission has been very weak. One common recommendation of all 8 commissions was to reduce the number of ministries. Also, the number of ministries was to limit to 12 after the implementation of federalism. But the recommendation has not been implemented. The cabinet has the right to decrease or increase the number of ministries and government offices. While the executive body can increase the ministries in its desire, the contemporary Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba had increased the number of ministries to 27 from 22 in 1996 to sustain his government. While there were limited buildings for the ministries, two to three ministries were adjusted in only a building (Thapa and Bhandari, 2065 : 19). After the implementation of federalism, the number of ministries was 21 while the recommendation was to limit it to 12.

Fukuyama (2004) argues that able and effective governance is only possible with compact. In contrast, there is practice of establishing institutions and offices excessively and which act as political intake system which has become a characteristic of democratic and republican regime.

During the democracy today, the public administration is like the administration of United Kingdom before 1853. At that time, there was practice of appointing the family and relatives in public administration. The practice of appointing public officials through competition on a merit basis was started in 1853 (Kingston, 2011). The administration reform commissions formed in Nepal in various times have provided recommendations for administrative reform. The reports have kept an ambition of inert administration for development of a country. The merit-based administration with competition is one of the recommendations. Further, decentralized administration is another expectation of the commissions. However, from the Shah regime to republican regime, the recommendations of these commissions have not been implemented. As a result, the public administration of Nepal is not efficient until today.

Furthermore, professional and efficient public administration and bureaucracy are the prerequisites of development. However, with the change in political regime, the professionalization of public administration and bureaucracy could not be initiated in any regime.

4. Promote to Relatives Rather than Merit

In Nepal, the bureaucracy is heavily influenced by the party in state power. There is no importance of merit basis in bureaucracy. Because they had contributed to unification campaign of Nepal, Thapa, Basnet, Kunwar and Bhandari had greater domination in Nepalese administration (Whelpton, 2005). There was hegemony of the first Prime Minister of Nepal, Bhimsen Thapa's family and relatives in bureaucracy and politics during his tenure. His nephew, Mathawar Singh Thapa had been in power during that time. There were Bhimsen Thapa's family and relatives in majority of important posts (Subedi, 2061).

This kind of practice continued during the Rana regime as well. There had been hegemony for their family and relatives in the administrative system. Further, business and contracts were also captured by them. With the condition of offering a big part of profit to the Prime Minister, the monopoly was certified to the relatives. Only

the Prime Minister's relatives and their confidant were permitted to establish big shops in the border area between Nepal and India (Shah, 1982).

The Rana administration was not based on a merit system. Employees were selected for administrative duties based on family and personal preferences. The public administration was characterized by favouritism, nepotism, and bribery at all levels (Amatya, 2004 : 28). By birth, Ranas were provided with the colonel post in Nepal Army. They were provided with money to spend from national treasury for the occasions in their homes like, Chhaiti, Nwaran, Pasni, Brata Banda, marriage and death. Their children got allowances from an early age. They were also provided with guards at their gates (Regmi, 2074 : 336).

After the movement in 1951, the first alliance government of NC and Rana prepared a few policies for introducing merit-based appointment in bureaucracy. During this, the practice of providing allowance to Rana and families, money as gifts and land to the public employees was ended. The practice of taking exams to appoint the public employees started. After this as well, the relatives and families were favoured. There has not been drastic change in bureaucratic structure and characteristics. Nepotism continued in the public administration rather than promoting the capable candidate (Mahat, 2006 : 52).

Neither did this practice changed in the republican regime. For example, from April 1, 2007, to September 30, 2007, Rajendra Mahato had been Minister for Industry, Commerce and Supplies. During his tenure, he had provided 14 different political appointments in various public enterprises and corporations in the post of chairman and managing director most of whom were his relatives and party leaders. Among them, he had appointed his own brother, Yogendra Mahato as the chairman of Nepal Transit and Warehousing Company Limited (Thapa and Bhandari, 2065). Another example is of contemporary Minister for Physical Infrastructure and Transport, Hisila Yami, a leader of UCPN (Maoists) had excessively appointed her relatives and cadres during her tenure. On June 3, 2007, she had appointed her party cadre Laxmi Prashad Devkota in the executive committee of Nepal Water Supply Corporation. Similarly, her sister Chiri Shova Tamrakar had been appointed as a member in the corporation. Later, Tamrakar was provided with the responsibility of chairperson of the recruitment committee in the corporation. During her tenure,

Tamrakar had appointed 130 family members, relatives, and party cadres in the corporation (Thapa and Bhandari, 2065).

The contemporary Minister Yami appointed her sister Timila Yami as the chairman of Kathmandu Upatyaka Khanipani Limited (KUKL) in September 2007. Also, she appointed her brother Bidhan Ratna Yami as a member of the Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Fund Development Board. She appointed her relative B K Man Singh Pradhan who had been accused of involving in corruption in Nepal Industrial Development Corporation and Nepal Airlines Corporation, as the chairman of Kathmandu Valley Water Supply Management Board. On June 3, 2007, she appointed her party cadre Krishna KC as the chairman of (Thapa and Bhandari, 2065 : 107).

The concept of nepotism rather than capable had been flourished since Shah and Rana regime which has been continuing in the Panchayat, democratic and republican regime as well. Public institutions act as offices to provide employment to the family, relatives and party cadres of high-level officials, politicians, and elite leaders. The chairman, executive committee, managing directors and CEOs are changed with the change of government (Koirala and Gautam, 1998). Effective governance and capable bureaucracies are the key factors of development (Chakravarti, 2005). In contrast, the rulers have not given priority to strengthening the capacity of employees and appointing capable people for an effective administrative system.

One of the common characteristics of bureaucracy from Shah regime to the republican regime is that there is no priority to merit. There was dominance of families or relatives in bureaucracy during the Shah and Rana regimes. During the Panchayat system, there was dominance of the royal palace and Panchayat rulers. After this, the dominance of political leaders' families and relatives and the party's cadres are seen. The exercise of promoting the closed ones rather than giving priority to the merit system could not bring professionalism into bureaucracy and public administration. As a result, the governance system became very weak. The ultimate effect was seen in economic growth and development of the country.

5. Nepotism, Favouritism, and Chakari in Public Administration

Nepotism, favouritism and Chakari are the main characteristics of Nepali public administration. During Rana regime, only those who

were familiar to Bhardars and Ranas were provided with jobs (IIDS, 2061). The military and civil employees had to do chakari to get a job (Pande, 2039). They had to be present at the palace in the morning and evening. The chakari was a main means to administrative control (Thapa and Bhandari, 2065). The Ranas had institutionalized the chakari system to control political dissatisfaction in people. To sustain the good relationship with the Ranas, the elites had to be present formally certain hours every day in the palace (Bista, 1991 : 94).

The favouritism, nepotism and chakari system continued after the Rana regime in different forms. The mainstay of rules of law could not be established in the country. For instance, the government was formed under the leadership of Matrika Prasad Koirala on November 16, 1951. After that Koirala nominated 80 of his relatives and party cadres in civil service (Dhakal, 2060 : 76). Similarly, the first elected government started reorganizing public administration on July 25, 1959. In the name of reorganization of the administration, the nepotism and favouritism flourished (Thapa and Bhandari, 2065 : 4).

Many people got good posts during the Panchayat regime through chakari. The chakari tradition passed to the Rana from the Prime Minister after the establishment of democracy in 1950. During the tenure of King Mahendra, people had to go to Paschim Dhoka (West Gate) for chakari. Through Hukum Pramangi, those who went to chakari could get job as well as promotions directly (Thapa and Bhandari, 2065). It was impossible during Panchayat system to carry out business without chakari of royal palace and to get appointed in the high-level posts (Manandhar and Sharma, 2053 : 46). The autocratic regime of the Rana regime has been continued after abolished it. It was not possible to get jobs and contract without recognizing the people in power (Shakya, 2018 : 51).

The nepotism got increased in the latest republican regime too. The former secretary who spent years in Nepalese administration says:

> The nepotism and favouritism that started during the Rana regime exist today in different forms. Today also, the leaders in power and ministers appoint the people in good posts. The employees who can carry out chakari are provided with the responsibility they wish. The responsibilities are not provided in terms of capability. As a result, the public administration is not able to provide a relative delivery service with changing time.

The incompetence, favouritism and anarchy has been flourishing in Nepal (Based on interview on November 10, 2021).

Political nominees-relatives, friends, clients are regularly appointed to the positions in the administration, especially the more attractive ones, i.e., those with the greatest opportunities for graft which has a direct effect on the overall development of a country (Theobald, 1990 : 98). Holmes (2015; 26) argues that nepotism and favouritism always discourage honest, well-qualified people, who become frustrated at not securing good positions or being promoted.

The nepotism, favouritism, chakari and chaplusi that flourished in the Rana regime continued until the republican regime. This trend got more institutionalized in the republican regime. Appointing the cadres and relatives in the important administrative posts and giving political appointments has been continuing. The trend has not only proven to be a hindrance to the capable person but also the public resources have been exploited. This has directly affected the development process of the country.

6. Continuation of Pajani Tradition

Pajani was a tool for the employees in administration to make them sincere. Pajani is a traditional system of annual screening of the administrative personnel. During the Shan and Rana regime, Pajani was implemented strictly in which the relatives and others the rulers favoured were continued with their job. The rest of the employees were discontinued. In fear of Pajani, employees obeyed the rulers rather than the law.

Before Rana regime, King performed Pajani of all the employees including the Prime Minister (Thapa and Bhandari 2065 : 2). As the continuation of this practice, there used to be Pajani annually after Dashain festival during Rana regime. The reporting was done by all the employees before Pajani. The evaluation was, however, based on not the good work but chakari and loyalty towards hakim (senior). The right to financial security was at the center and thus those employees who were not favoured by the rulers had to lose their job (Regmi, 2074). The personnel were appointed for one year to be reappointed or dismissed after each pajani, a system which, far from improving the administration, bedeviled it by accentuating insecurity among civil servants about their incumbency (Amatya, 2004).

Pajani tradition ended formally with the abolition of the Rana regime. After this, various laws and acts were formed for managing

the bureaucracy. However, the pajani continued in some different forms. The government formed on June 15, 1953, did pajani of high-level officials. The officials who were not favoured by the rulers were transferred to appoint new officials. Similarly, King Mahendra had done pajani of secretaries on October 14, 1955. At that time, some employees were kept as additional groups and new intakes were taken. The new form of pajani continued in Nepal with the establishment of autocratic Panchayat system by dissolving the democratic government in 1960 (Devkota, 2058). The public administration which was just being nurtured was dispersed during Panchayat system and the highly trained and capable employees were rejected (Mihaly, 2002; 139).

Within 13 days of establishment of Panchayat system in Nepal, many Badahakim (District Head Officials) were discontinued with their job. On February 8, 1961, there had been extensive pajani. 13 secretaries were transferred, and 28 new appointments were made. Similarly, a new post, anchaladish (Chief of Zone) was formed for political control in district and village levels and vigilance over the employees. Panchayat regime which claimed for modern state with rule of law, appointed incapable persons as anchaladhish and discontinued them if rulers did not like (Dixit, 1994). During the Panchayat regime, there had been a provision for the employees who completed 20 years of their job to discontinue them if not needed. This provision made the public administration unstable and weak. The employees were compelled for adulation (Thapa & Bhandari, 2065; 7).

Girija Prashad Koirala became first elected Prime Minister after restoration of democracy in Nepal on May 26, 1991. The government had made a policy level decision on November 6, 1992, for employee's cutbacks which was a modern form of pajani. Continuing the 20 years provision of Panchayat regime act, the government discontinued 2 hundred and 94 employees and 3 thousand employees using 30 years provision. Later, the Prime Minister accepted that it was a pajani blunder. He said, "I transferred 7 secretaries to show myself powerful. Due to some loyal and high-level administrators also borne had to face it. It was my fault" (Nepal, 2067 : 145).

Prime Minister Koirala dissolved the parliament due to the internal conflict within the NC. After this, the CPN (UML) formed a minority government on November 30, 1994, as the biggest party. This government also continued the pajani tradition. A number of secretaries were transferred to the Atirikta Samuha (additional

group), and joint secretaries were appointed as an acting secretary on March 2, 1995 (Thapa & Bhandari, 2065). After the contemporary King Gyanendra dissolved the parliament and the coup occurred, 8 secretaries were put on an additional group on March 2, 2005. The secretaries continued their work this way for 14 months (Bhatta, 2071 : 215).

During the republican regime, pajani has been flourished more in a new form. Shan and Rana rulers did pajani once a year. But in the republican regime, pajani occurs like once in a month. After the people's movement of 2006 when Pushpakamal Dahal became Prime Minister of Nepal on August 15, 2008, the employees transfer occurred for 13 times until the first week of November (Thapa and Bhandari, 2065 : 17). This trend has been continuing till today. Former secretary Gopi Nath Mainali whose job was terminated in 2021 was transferred 10 times during his 5-year tenure. He was transferred after working for only 4 months in one office. A former secretary takes this act as a form of Pajani tradition. He says:

According to the civil service act, an employee should be transferred every two years. But during my tenure as the secretary, I was transferred 10 times I could not spend a full year in any office. I was transferred even after 4 months in an office. It seemed that we could spend more time in a ministry only if we work as desired by the ministers. I take this kind of practice as a modern form of pajani (Based on the interview on November 10, 2021).

The Pajani system was developed during the Shah and Rana regimes for keeping control over the employees. After the establishment of democracy in the country, the modern adminis-trative mechanism was developed. However, the regimes changed but the pajani tradition continued in the public administration of Nepal. The Pajani system was not eradicated, rather, continued in different forms. Earlier, the employees who were not liked by the rulers were sacked off the job through Pajani. This system has two major consequences. *First*, the employees who do not do chaplusi and chakari are either shifted shortly or kept in additional places. They are not able to work according to their skill, knowledge, and experience. *Second*, the employees are compelled to work according to the will of rulers to save their positions. As a result, the bureaucracy cannot contribute to the development process of the country.

7.   Centralized Mode of Governance

Since the start of unification of Nepal, the public administration of Nepal did not run with policy, rules, or system. Rather, the rulers always mobilized the public administration in accordance with their desires. Order was above the law during Shah and Rana regimes. This kind of order system persists in public administration. The civil servants also seem to obey the order of the rulers rather than policies, rules and laws. The Hukum (order) of the Rana Prime Minister was more than a law (Pande, 2076). The Rana politics had controlled the lives of general people. The Shah and Rana ruler were against sharing even the minimum administrative power (Mahat, 2006 : 45).

There was a centralized administrative system during the Shah and Rana regime. The Rana administration was the hierarchical of a political organization in which authorities passed from the top to the successive lower levels. The administration was thoroughly totalitarian in its sweep, which dominated the people. They also controlled judicial, legislative, and executive functions of government. There was no rule of law (Amatya, 2004 : 336).

The order system persisted in the other regimes as well. During the Panchayat and democratic regimes, the trend of appointment of the civil servants continued with the order of the King (Nepal, 2075). This trend has been continuing even during the republican regime. The major reason for the third world countries that act as a hindrance for sustainable development is excessively centralized governance (Hagen, 2017; 5). The centralized government prevents people from participating and bearing responsibilities.

Through the centralized governance system, rulers mobilized the public administration according to their desire and wish. The bureaucracy could not make plans and strategy to address the development expectations of the people. The budget allocation could not synchronize with the expectations of people. This created hindrance to development in Nepal.

8.   Conclusion

The findings of this study reveal that the public administration in Nepal continues to suffer from deep-rooted issues of nepotism, favouritism, and a lack of accountability. Despite the establishment of multiple reform commissions, the failure to implement their

recommendations has perpetuated a bureaucratic culture that prioritizes political loyalty over merit. This has resulted in inefficiencies that hinder the overall development of the country. To achieve effective governance, it is imperative for the Nepalese government to prioritize merit-based appointments, reduce political interference in the bureaucracy, and commit to implementing the recommendations of past commissions. Only through such reforms can Nepal hope to build a professional and efficient public administration that serves the interests of its citizens.

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Utilization Pattern of Kisan Credit Card Scheme in Mansa District of Punjab

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Abstract

Agribusiness is the primary source of income for the majority of people in our nation. Growing the productivity of the agriculture sector has been made possible in large part by institutional finance. In Mansa district, Punjab, from 2010-11 to 2020-2021, a study was conducted to ascertain the credit consumption trend of the Kisan credit card. The information gathered from 60 KCC and 60 Non-KCC holders who were chosen from the study region and interviewed using a pre-tested, well-structured questionnaire for the year 2020-2021 served as the study's foundation. This study's primary goal is to assess the utilization pattern of Kisan credit card of the farmers. According to the findings, of the sixty farmers who received the credit, only 30 per cent fully utilized the credit, 33.33 per cent partially utilized the credit and 36.67 per cent totally misutilized the credit. The primary cause of credit misusage by KCC holders was discovered to be social ceremonies, which accounted for 22.73 per cent of total expenses. To summarize, the majority of the total funds obtained in Punjab under the KCC plan were not utilized for the purposes of crop production and other farming-related needs for which the loan was originally meant.

Keywords

Agribusiness, KCCs, Utilization pattern, Institutional finance.

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Utilization Pattern of Kisan Credit Card Scheme in Mansa District of Punjab

1. Introduction

Agriculture is the main industry in India. Agriculture produces the majority of the nation's income. The Indian economy is largely attributed to its farmers. Punjab state, commonly known as Punjab, is a region that lies between the borders of Pakistan and India. The primary source of income for the people of Punjab is agriculture. Farmers in Punjab have benefited from the KCC system from its inception by being able to obtain credit through it to meet their demands for crop production and related activities. The KCC plan was an attempt to make it easier for borrowers from official financial institutions to obtain short-term borrowing. The program was launched in 1998-1999 in response to the Shri R. V.Gupta Committee's recommendations. For Indian farmers, there is a multi-functional credit card program called the Kisan Credit Card (KCC) Scheme. It offers options for crop financing, consumption credit, and term credit (GOI, 2017). Furthermore, it has made obtaining credit for all farmers easier and less complicated. The study made use of primary data on KCC.

2. Review of Literature

Meghana (2018) looked at the credit utilization trends for South Gujarat's KCC plan during 2016-2017. According to the report, 46.25 per cent of Kisan credit card holders used their credit limit only for agricultural purposes, while 17.50 per cent of cardholders used their credit limit for non-agricultural purposes it indicates that they misused the credit. Among all respondents, 17.50 percent gave the following explanations for not using the credit for constructive purposes: Old debts and salt, among other things. The major problems faced by the respondents in use of KCC are lengthy paper work, insufficient credit limit and high interest rate etc.

Verma et al. (2019) attempted to investigate the usage patterns of the Kisan credit card among farmers in the Baghpat district of

Uttar Pradesh in the years 2017-2018. It was noted that the respondents had made the most use of the loan with regard to components like increased agricultural produce, which was followed by increased income, crop production activity, use of credit for vegetable production and related activities, and length of credit utilization. Also, it was discovered that the respondents had only minimally used the loan for crop insurance, crop pattern changes, and diversified farming.

3.   Objective of Study

The main objective of this study is to analyze the utilization pattern of credit through KCC scheme by the beneficiary farmers in Mansa district of Punjab.

4.   Methodology

The primary data for the current study were gathered in 2020-21, and the study is based on a random sample of 120 respondents from the study area. The necessary information was gathered through the creation of an interview schedule and 2010-11 to 2020-21 is the time frame for which we studied. The information was tabulated and analyzed using a variety of statistical techniques, including mean, percentage, and proportion, using Microsoft Excel software.

5.   Presentation and Analysis of Data

This article aims to evaluate the credit utilization pattern of the Kisan Credit Cards scheme (KCC) in the Mansa District of Punjab, with respect to the number of cards issued and the amount of loan sanctioned. The tables below display the findings pertaining to the goals that were specified for this study.

Table-1 Presents the study's findings on the utilization pattern of credit obtained through the KCC scheme (categorized by the number of KCC beneficiaries) in Mansa district of Punjab. The table shows that out of the 60 beneficiary farmers, only 18 (30.00%) fully utilized the credit, 20 (33.33%) partially utilized the credit, and 22 (36.67%) totally misutilized the credit. Among 20 small farmers, only 6 (30%) fully utilized and partially utilized the credit, whereas 8 (40%) totally misutilized the credit. Whereas, medium farmers (20), 7 (35%) fully utilized and partially utilized the credit, and 6 (30%)

totally misutilized the credit. However, only 5 (25%) fully utilized the credit, 7 (35%) partially utilized the credit, and 8 (40%) totally misutilized the credit out of the 20 large farmers.

Table-1 : Utilization Pattern of Credit Availed through KCC in Mansa District of Punjab

(By Number of Beneficiary Farmers)

Utilization of Credit	Categories of Beneficiary Farmers			Total
	Small	Medium	Large	
Fully utilized	6 (30.00)	7 (35.00)	5 (25.00)	18 (30.00)
Partially utilized	6 (30.00)	7 (35.00)	7 (35.00)	20 (33.33)
Totally misutilized	8 (40.00)	6 (30.00)	8 (40.00)	22 (36.67)
Total	**20 (33.33)**	**20 (33.33)**	**20 (33.33)**	**60 (100.00)**

Source : Field Survey

Note : Figures within the parentheses are percentages to the total.

The large farmers had the highest percentage of mis-utilization and the lowest percentage of full utilization of the credit. The small farmers also had the highest percentage of total misutilization. The medium farmers had a balanced distribution of utilization levels, with equal percentages of full utilization and partial utilization of the credit. This table provides insights into the utilization patterns of credit availed through KCC in Mansa District among different categories of beneficiary farmers. It shows that a significant proportion of the total sample partially or totally misutilized the credit, which could have implications for agricultural productivity and financial outcomes in the region.

Table-2 presents the study's findings on the utilization pattern of credit obtained through the KCC scheme (categorized by the amount of credit) in Mansa district of Punjab. In alignment with the observations in Haryana, it is noted that a significant portion of the availed credit (55.13% of the total amount) was used for activities other than its intended purpose, although to a lesser extent than in Haryana.

**Table-2 : Utilization Pattern of Credit Availed through KCC in
Mansa District of Punjab**

(By Amount of Credit Utilized)

Utilization of Credit	Categories of Beneficiary Farmers			Total
	Small	Medium	Large	
Fully utilized	2348902.3 (41.99)	6943093.34 (61.51)	6245134.66 (35.20)	15537130.3 (44.87)
Totally misutilized	3245678.45 (58.01)	4343782.41 (38.49)	11497824.76 (64.80)	19087285.62 (55.13)
Total	**5594580.75 (33.33)**	**11286875.75 (33.33)**	**17742959.42 (33.33)**	**34624415.92 (100.00)**

Source : Field Survey

Note : Figures within the parentheses are percentages to the total.

It is evidently clear that only 44.87 per cent of the credit was directed towards the intended purpose under the KCC scheme. Analyzing different farmer groups, the highest proper utilization was observed among medium KCC beneficiaries (61.51%), followed by small beneficiary farmers (41.99%) and large beneficiary farmers (35.20%). Conversely, misutilization was most pronounced among large farmers at 64.80% and least prevalent among medium farmers at 38.49 per cent. In summary, a significant portion of the total amount borrowed through the KCC scheme in Punjab was not employed for the cultivation of crops and other farming-related necessities for which the loan was originally intended.

Table-3 displays the findings on the misutilization pattern of credit through the KCC scheme in Mansa district of Punjab, categorized by the number of farmers. Mirroring the trends observed in Haryana, social ceremonies emerged as the primary reason for credit misutilization, accounting for 22.73 per cent. Other notable reasons included capital expenditures and other expenditures, each at 18.18 per cent. Moreover, 13.64 per cent of farmers in the district misused the loan amount for house construction and settling old debts. Non-farm business and plot purchasing were reported as reasons for misuse by 9.09 per cent and 4.55 per cent of farmers, respectively. Examining different farmer categories, social ceremonies and other expenditures were the main reasons for misutilization among small farmers, while capital expenditure was the primary reason for medium farmers. For large farmers, social

ceremonies remained the predominant reason for misutilization of the loan amount.

<div align="center">

Table-3 : Misutilization Pattern of Credit Availed through KCC in Mansa District of Punjab

(By Number of Beneficiary Farmers)

</div>

Reasons for Misutilization	Categories of Beneficiary Farmers			Total
	Small	Medium	Large	
Social ceremonies	2 (25.00)	1 (16.67)	2 (25.00)	5 (22.73)
House construction	1 (12.50)	1 (16.67)	1 (12.50)	3 (13.64)
Settling old debt	1 (12.50)	1 (16.67)	1 (12.50)	3 (13.64)
Capital expenditure	1 (12.50)	2 (33.33)	1 (12.50)	4 (18.18)
Non-farm business	1 (12.50)	—	1 (12.50)	2 (9.09)
Plot purchasing	—	—	1 (12.50)	1 (4.55)
Other expenditures*	2 (25.00)	1 (16.67)	1 (12.50)	4 (18.18)
Total	**8 (100.00)**	**6 (100.00)**	**8 (100.00)**	**22 (100.00)**

Source : Field Survey

Note : Figures within the parentheses are percentages to the total.

Table-4 illustrates the findings on the misutilization pattern of credit obtained through the KCC scheme in Mansa district of Punjab, categorized by credit amount on next page. Data contained in this table indicates that social ceremonies were the main reason for credit misutilization, accounting for a 25.22 per cent share. Other important reasons for misutilization included other expenditures and capital expenditures, with shares of 17.21 per cent and 14.95 per cent respectively.

The total misutilized amount for social ceremonies in Mansa district was reported to be ₹8,732,677.48, followed by other expenditure and capital expenditure activities with ₹5,959,422.61 and ₹5,177,430.40, respectively. The loan amount used for house construction was reported to be ₹5,121,335.00, while for settling old

debt it was ₹4,151,938.77, and for plot purchasing it was ₹3,667,469.71. It is observed that the least amount was used for non-farm business, i.e., ₹1,814,141.95.

Table-4 : Misutilization Pattern of Credit Availed through KCC in Mansa District of Punjab

(By Amount of Credit Utilized)

Reasons for Misutilization	Categories of Beneficiary Farmers			Total
	Small	Medium	Large	
Social ceremonies	1876422.38 (33.54)	1630953.55 (14.45)	5225301.55 (29.45)	8732677.48 (25.22)
House construction	1127308.02 (20.15)	1981975.38 (17.56)	2012051.60 (11.34)	5121335.00 (14.79)
Settling old debt	906881.54 (16.21)	1690773.99 (14.98)	1554283.25 (8.76)	4151938.77 (11.99)
Capital expenditure	440293.51 (7.87)	2863480.38 (25.37)	1873656.51 (10.56)	5177430.40 (14.95)
Non-farm business	451482.67 (8.07)	—	1362659.28 (7.68)	1814141.95 (5.24)
Plot purchasing	—	—	3667469.71 (20.67)	3667469.71 (10.59)
Other expenditures*	792192.63 (14.16)	3119692.46 (27.64)	2047537.52 (11.54)	5959422.61 (17.21)
Total	**5594580.75 (100.00)**	**11286875.75 (100.00)**	**17742959.42 (100.00)**	**34624415.92 (100.00)**

Source : Field Survey

Note : Figures within the parentheses are percentages to the total.

Data depicted in the table also reveal that among small and large categories of farmers, social ceremonies were identified as the main reason for misutilization of the loan. For medium farmers, other expenditures emerged as the primary reason, with the largest percentage of farmers (27.64%) utilizing the credit for this purpose. In the case of small and medium farmers, no part of the misutilized amount was used for plot purchasing, whereas among large beneficiary farmers, 20.67 per cent of the total misutilized amount was utilized for plot purchasing, and 7.68 per cent was used for non-farm business, making them the only category to misuse the loan amount for this purpose.

6.   Conclusion

It may be concluded from the above finding that most of the part of credit provided through kcc scheme were misutilized in the study area. The results revealed that out of the 60 beneficiary farmers only 30 per cent utilized the credit, 33.33 per cent partially utilized and 36.67 per cent totally misutilized the credit. The activities for which maximum part of loan was misutilized were notes as social ceremonies, house construction, old debt setting, capital expenditure non-farm business and plot purchasing etc. out of these activities social ceremonies were found to be the main reason for misutilization of credit with 22.73 per cent (in terms of number of farmers) and 25.22 per cent share (in terms of credit amount). The other important reasons for misutilization of credit were house construction and settling of old debts. The limit of the loan amount per acre provided through kcc scheme to be extended for including more farmers under this scheme.

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Challenges of People with Disability in Public Transportation: A Case Study of People with Disability in Bhrikutimandap, Kathmandu

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Abstract

The entitled article 'challenges faced by people with disability in public transportation' was on during the summer of 2023. This article discusses about the challenges faced in everyday life by the people with disability. In our daily life, we need different access to deal internal and external environment. Realizing that most public transportation still lack in terms of good design and facilities especially for people with disability. So, researcher have tried to find out the major challenges of people with disability they have been facing during their everyday activity. To facilitate this research, both descriptive and exploratory research design have been applied. The fieldwork was carried out around the Bhrikutimandap, Kathmandu area where most of the people with disability come to visit their office. Similarly, interview method, observation method and questionnaire methods are used as a research tool. According to the filed study, the major challenges faced by the people with disability are worse because of bad condition of road, unmanaged footpath, frequently moving bus stops and lack of disable friendly roads. Because of the bumpy road many of the disable people got accident during their everyday journey.

Keywords

Disable, People with disability, Problems, Challenges, Transportation.

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Challenges of People with Disability in Public Transportation: A Case Study of People with Disability in Bhrikutimandap, Kathmandu

1. Background of the Study

This paper has been discussed on issues affecting of the transport and mobility needs of People with Disability in Kathmandu valley. The Present condition of the transportation system of Kathmandu valley, there are numerous problems, which has been trying to be tackled by Department of Transportation, and Traffic Police Head office. People are facing many problems related to traffic jam, accidents, pollution and many more which have affected their lives directly. People are not getting transportation services effectively which has negative impacted on their livelihood. The magnitude of this problem has been spiraling day by day. It has become an important issue to be addressed by the Government and Private Sector. As well there may be more difficulties for People with Disability, (Disable) people too.

From the perspective of Health, People with Disability is common term that denotes activity limitation, impairments and involvement restriction. It is a major health problem, which signifies the negative relation between individual condition and individual's environmental factors. (Subedi, 2012). WHO introduce and applied three different term in 1976 impairment or deficiency or abnormality of physiological/body structure. People with any sort of disability is a absence of ability to achieve or perform any activity with a normal human can perform normally in his/her daily routine (WHO, 2005). The World Health Organization revised this definition in 1980 and published the international classification of functioning that the People with Disability and Health. International Classification of Functioning distinguish between bodies function and body structures.

Accessibility is very important aspect of human life especially when dealing with external and internal environment. Public transport stations still lack in terms of good design and facilities. A

serious concern for the matters is needed to safeguard the convenience for all but especially for Disable people. So, many researchers have been trying to find out the challenges faced and impact in the People with Disability in Public transportation. This study may help to identify the problems as well to find out new ideas which they have been facing in everyday life. It may help to explore their freedom and rights. Also, this study might be helpful as preliminary information to policy makers, planner's as well new scholars.

"Any person whose normal bodily or mental functions or both are partially impaired is referred as a Person with Disability". Earlier, the term for them used to be "Differently Abled People". Many studies have shown that mobility can be a serious challenge for persons with disability. As they face different types of obstacles and difficulties on the streets or public transport systems. The nature and extent of these difficulties vary according to the type of disabilities. People who are unable to walk or visually impaired usually use wheelchair and white cane. Both wheelchair and white cane users often face several obstacles on the road and public transport facilities. On the road, wheelchair and white cane users find it difficult to negotiate curbs, stairs, steep slopes, long road gradients, narrow paths and uneven road surface with potholes. Similar to public transport vehicles, obstacles for wheelchair users include narrow entrance, steps, and insufficient space to accommodate wheelchairs. Furthermore, public transport services need to have accessible stops, counters, and information. (Subedi, 2013)

For example, a mother with a mobility of People with Disability can be disadvantaged in her opportunities to be there for her children due to limited transportation options. Parent teacher conferences, soccer games, scouting activities, campouts, all of these events are easy for private vehicles to access. Another example, University Shuttle systems could employ students to provide a par transit-type service for individuals with disabilities. Students are more affordable to employ for all hours of the day, and the shuttle system would be a great opportunity to test flexible network strategies.

But are they readily available for everyone and everywhere? How can we provide this access in a flexible way? Could we better plan land use to provide all of these opportunities in more accessible locations? Or is it the transportation systems that are easier to change? Utilizing planning and universal design we need to address

these social issues while we can, before they become more difficult to manage. Transportation planners need to identify ways to be flexible with the services they provide.

The purpose of this study was to examine and to identify the major challenges of individuals of disable people in relation to their access to transportation. To address this purpose the following two research questions are made:

- What are the impacts and challenges when the people with disability faced in transportation?
- What are the reasons behind those challenges?

2.   Review of Literature

2·1   Medical Models of People with Disability

This Models of people with Disability especially deals or relate with pathology. If a person born with the disability of hearing or cannot hear is consider as a disabled. But in this model the person or individual who has any sort of disability is treated or viewed as a defect of his organ and can or have to be treated my medical professional. Medical Models of the People with disability take the individual through pathology and identify the circumstance and level of disability, this result the action of describing the severe ness of disability which helps them for qualifying to get aid, accommodations, and social security identification. (WHO, 2005)

2·2   Social Model of People with Disability

An individual with vision weakened or disabled is not disabled by the vision incapacity, but by Environment not offering or providing the suitable resources to the individual. This model is proven by the medical model who have been branded other Models. Social Models are defined as individual ability of freedom and functioning. (WHO, 2000)

The social model of disability says that disability is caused by the way society is organized, rather than by a person's impairment or difference. It looks at ways of removing barriers that restrict life choices for disabled people. When barriers are removed, disabled people can be independent and equal in society, with choice and control over their own lives. Disabled people developed the social model of disability because the traditional medical model did not explain their personal experience of disability or help to develop more inclusive ways of living.

2·3 The Individual-Environment Model of People with Disability

The Individual Environment Model of People with Disability emerge with broad concept of disability in 1980, WHO release new concept on model of people with disability which is known as ICIDH (International Classification of Impairment, Disability and Handicap). International Classification of Impairment, Disability and Handicap has revised time to time. The latest restatement International Classification of Impairment, Disability and Handicap was defined in 2002. ICIDH examined the interaction between the health and functioning to define the rate and range of disability at individual's medical, social and environmental level of Disability. Individual Environment Model of People with disability function system of organ level is measured, Activity is measured at individual level, and social level is compared with the individual's participation ability. External environmental factors and in internal factors are included in circumstantial factors. Basically Medical Model and Social Model of People with Disability is consider to formulate the ICIDH by WHO. (Mike and Oliver, 1980)

3. Methodology

To accomplish the research objectives, descriptive and exploratory research designs were used. For the data collection, researcher had conducted the study with the visitor around the Bhrikutimandap area because all the major and government organization dealing with Rights of People with disabilities is located in this area. Total 20 respondents were taken where 12male and 8 females were taken for the interview. Purposive sampling was used to collect data.

Both qualitative and quantitative data has been collected and analyzed for further detail information. As well as both primary and secondary data has been used in this study. Primary data has been collected from field survey through observation, case study, interview and questionnaires and secondary data has been collected from various published and unpublished reports published and unpublished articles, research reports etc.

The data have been collected by using two set of interview questionnaires: one for the data collecting interview and other for case study.

4. Data Presentation and Analysis: Challenges of People with Disability in Public

4·1 Transportation

In the current scenario of the transportation system of the valley, there are multiple problems, which are trying to be tackled by the Department of Transportation, and Metropolitan Traffic Police. People with Disability have been facing problems of traffic jam, road side accidents, pollution and many more which have affected their lives. People are not accessing transportation services effectively which has impacted on their livelihood. The magnitude of this problem has been spiraling every day. It is a crucial issue to be addressed by the Government.

This research study has attempted to find out the major challenges faced by the People with Disability in Public transportation and also the current scenario of the public transportation of the valley. An important body of this rapid growing society is transportation. Public transportation provides people with mobility. It plays vital role in development of any particular nation as we are aware that most of the modern and developed countries are giving great emphasis on transportation facilities by knowing its important and role for the sustainable development.

After finding the current scenario and the challenges this study might be helpful as the guidelines for further plan and policy about the transportation and road ways. Also, it might be helpful to new learner.

4·2 Types of Disability of Respondents

Disability refers to any kind of differently able capacity. According to World Health Organization, disability is any restriction or lack of ability to perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered normal for human being. Biomedical model of illness is actually implied in it in this definition.

Table-1 : Respondents by Disability Type

Disability Type	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Blind	10	50.0	50.0	50.0
Wheelchair User	10	50.0	50.0	100.0
Total	20	100.0	100.0	

Source : Field Survey, 2023.

Data contained in Table-1 show that out of 20 respondents half of them were blind and another half were wheel chair user. While choosing the respondents in this research study researcher select the respondent equally.

4·3 Gender of Respondents

Gender is a biological concept which refer to the social and cultural differences a society assigns to people based on their sex. It is the biological traits that society associates with being male or female. It is one of the widely used compositions of respondents in the research the composition of the respondent on the basis of Gender is present in following table:

Table-2 : Gender of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	12	60	60	60
Female	12	60	60	60
Total	20	100.0	100.0	

Source : Field Survey, 2023.

The above table, which depicts data on the composition based on gender of the respondents, reveals that six out of the total respondents are male and remaining four out of ten are females. This distribution shows the disable percent is more among males as compared to that of females.

Table-3 : Gender and Disability Type of Respondents

Gender	Disability Type	
	Blind	Wheelchair User
	Frequency	Frequency
Male	8	4
Female	2	6

Source : Field Survey, 2023.

It is evident from the data contained in the above table that out twelve male respondents, eight were blind and four were wheel chair user. Similarly, out of 8 female respondents, two were blind and 6 were wheelchair user.

4·4 Educational Status

As we all know that education is most important thing for everyone. Education brings positive changes in the attitude of any human being. Education only can bring positive change in the eye of community and can raise living standard of any human being.

Table-4: Respondents by Educational Qualification

Educational Qualification	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Never gone school	4	20	20	20
Primary education	1	5	5	25
Lower secondary	1	5	5	30
Secondary	4	20	20	50
Higher secondary	7	35	35	85
Bachelors	2	10	10	95
Masters	1	5	5	100
Total	**20**	**100**	**100**	

Source: Field Survey, 2023.

In the above table one-fifth of respondent have never gone school before, one in each twenty (5%) have received primary education, and same proportion of them have education upto lower secondary. One-fifth (20%) respondents have completed secondary level, 7 (35 %) respondents have completed higher secondary level, 2 (10%) of them have completed Bachelors and 1 (5%) respondent has done upto Master's level.

4·5 Mode of Travel

The different modes of transport include air, water, and land transport, which includes rails or railways, road and off-road transport. However, travelling may be a challenging task for a disabled person. Barriers are everywhere, but a disabled person faces lot of difficulties while travelling. The data collected in the field situation is as under:

In this section, different questions related to reservation, human response, campaign, socialization awareness, facilities, challenges are asked to the respondents, presented and described below respectively.

Table-5: Respondents' Mode of Travel

What Mode of Transportation do you use the most?	Do you travel every day?	
	No	Yes
	Frequency	Frequency
Drive your personal vehicle	—	2
Ride with others	—	—
Public transportation	2	13
Social and volunteer service	—	—
Other	—	3

Source : Field Survey, 2023.

The above table shows that among the total respondents, 18 respondents (90%) travels every day. 2 respondents (10%) do not travel every day. 10% of them have personal vehicle 75% travel in public vehicle 15% percentage use other means of transportation. Other means of transportation means now a days online booking bike and taxi are popular. So some of them use online transportation which is cheap and easy to use.

The responses of the respondents on reserved seat on public transportation is mentioned in the following table:

Table-6 : Reserved Seat on Public Transportation

Reserved Seat	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	20	100.0	100.0	100.0
No	—	—	—	—

Source : Field Survey, 2023.

The table above shows that 100% respondents gets reserved seat on public transportation. This is good point of this field survey. They are happy by getting reservation facility.

Table-7 : Disability Id Card issued by Government

Id Card issued	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	1	5	5	5
Yes	19	95	95	100
Total	20	100	100	

Source : Field Survey, 2023.

Data contained in table-7 show that among the respondents, 19 respondents (95%) holds the disability ID Card issued by the government and 1 respondent (5%) doesn't have disability ID Card issued by the government. It also shows that the awareness level has significantly increased.

Table-8: Discount Provision by showing Identity Card

Discount Provision	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	1	5.0	5.0	5.0
Yes	19	95.0	95.0	100.0
Total	**20**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

Source : Field Survey, 2023.

The above table show that 95% of the respondents gets discount by showing people with disability ID Card issued by government on public Transportation while remaining 5% claims not getting discount in public vehicles. The government of Nepal has provided the Identity Card to each person with disability. They can get privilege in any hospital, education and hospital sector by showing that card.

Table-9 : Accident while Travelling

Accident	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	7	35	35	35
Yes	13	65	65	100
Total	**20**	**100**	**100**	

Source : Field Survey, 2023.

The above table reveals that among the total respondent 65 % have had accident while travelling and 35% had not been to any short of accident. This is serious problem occurring nowadays. Day by day such accidents were increasing rapidly because of improver road construction and not having enough disability free roads. Public transportation do not follow the rules and compete to collect only the passenger which harms to the disables in pick up and drop. Government should focus on it and reduce the rate of accidents.

4·6 Challenges

Being disable itself is a great challenge and surviving in under develop and developing country like Nepal. Socially, everyone should have equal access of everything but after this study it may be said that the disability is great loss of life and very hard to describe in individual sense of view. Most of them have very bad impact and few of them have normal. While researching and interviewing researcher has found lots of challenges faced by disable people. Different questions related to reservation, human response, campaign, socialization awareness, facilities, challenges are asked to the respondents, presented and described below respectively. Major challenges are shown below.

Table-10 : Challenges faced by People with Disability while Traveling

Challenges Faced	Frequency
Bad road ways	3
Bad behaviours of public transportation operator	2
bus stop finding	1
Finding vehicle is great problem	1
Lack of disable friendly transportation	1
Lack of information	1
Parking problem	1
Road and footpath	1
Road and pavement are very bad	1
Road are very bad	1
Road are very bad	1
Road public toilet	1
Road system	1
Unmanaged Bus Stop	1
Unmanaged Washroom in long travels	1
Unsafe road	3
Unsafe roads, unfriendly people	1

Source : Field Survey, 2023.

The above table clearly shows that the major problem of public vehicles for People with disabilities are facing everyday. Bad Road

condition is the major challenging factor which leads them to accident and makes impossible for mobility.

The another challenging in transportation is bus stop around the Kathmandu valley. Major causes of facing those problems are because of negligence of public transport operation and improper bus stops in Kathmandu city. Finding vehicle is little more hard in Kathmandu valley for the people with disability due to high population and more public vehicle user. The major problem faced by them is while getting on or off from the vehicles due to not having disability free bus stairs. Public transportation don't have any short of audio visual information system in waiting station which brings issues in finding their destination.

Unmanaged parking is major issues in urban area due to unmanaged urbanization and centralization of hospital, government offices etc without willingness of people and without the authorities of government body. Tactile pavement is not made in each city by targeting to the blind. Many of the respondent were suffering in public transportation because of above challenges.

Table-11 : Involvement of Respondents in Disability Campaign/Organization

Involvement	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	10	50.0	50.0	50.0
Yes	10	50.0	50.0	100.0
Total	**20**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

Source : Field survey, 2023.

The above table shows that among total respondent 50% of them are seem to be engaged in any short of campaign or activities related to people with disability and 50% are ideal.

Being disable himself is involving in campaign and movement is positive and great step to improve policies and laws as it will help to upgrade the lifestyle of disability. We should also engaged in such campaign and conduct awareness program for the further progress of our society.

4·7 Case Study of Sunita Mahato

Around 43 years woman, named Sunita Mahato, a wheel chair user is the person who suffered from the road accident. After the frequent follow-up with Sunita Mahato, we have

been able to manage time for the interview. When she was coming to visit National Disabled Fund for her counseling and treatment. She was one of the victim of road accident while she was walking by the side of a road at Siraha. She was taken to the nearby hospital named Saptarishi Nursing Home Lahan and got immediate medical attention. After few hours of surgery, she felt very unusual with her body because her leg was cut. According to her, that was happened negligence of doctors have cursed her with lose of her one leg. They cut her leg without any proper counseling. She is now on the process of implanting artificial leg.

She is independent and challenging woman but never gone school. She is very familia with the rules and regulation of the nation.

Challenges faced by Sunita Mahato are as under:

Being a woman is a big challenge in our society she says it is very difficult for her to get in local transportation. She feels that nobody is willingly to help her as she lives in Terai region the behaviour of men are very rude towards her. One of the incident shared by her is that, she has got very bad injury while walking on the street by other people because at that moment the person was talking on mobile phone and pushed her away. From that day, she feels fear to walk on the street. As well public transportation do not stop for her. Vehicle operator also don't care about her situation. So, she told that she used taxi and friend's vehicles to travel.

Other people perception on Sunita Mahato is good and helpful. She cares and respect other. Whenever she needs help and care her friends helped her without any hesitation but her relatives don't give her more attention.

By knowing her challenges, I felt very bad and thought to mention her story in this case study. Being disable in the context of men and women, it's very hard to describe how women is being treated in the society. For men it will be easy to live and survive in the society from every aspect of human nature but for women, they are unequal to other women and nobody cares about them and they can't live happy life due to the societal wrong concept and human behaviour.

5.   Major Findings

Out of the 20 informants there were 10 blinds and 8 wheelchair users. Among 18% respondents travel everyday, 2% do not travel everyday and only 10% of them have personal vehicle. 75% of them travel in public vehicle and 15% use other means of transportation like pathao, indrive, tootle. This study shows that 100% respondents get reserved seat on public transportation provided by the government and 90% of the respondent had Identity Card issued by the government of Nepal.

This research also shows 95% of the respondent get discount by showing people with the disability Identity Card on public transportation. Among total respondent, 30% of respondent feel good response on public transportation and 55% of the respondent feel bad, 15% of respondents were satisfied with the response from public transportation operator. While using the public transportation 10% respondent did not get any help and 90% of respondent get help in pick up and drop in public transportation. Out of 20% respondent, 65% respondents had accident while traveling and 35% have not been to any sort of accident.

People with the disability facing so many challenges while traveling in public transportation. Bad road ways, bus stop finding, finding vehicles and lack of disable friendly transportation lack of information, parking problem, road and footpath, public toilet, unmanaged bus stop are the problems faced by the people with the disability. People with disability's everyday life is affected by the challenges among total 35% respondent feel no effect and change in their daily activities. While 65% respondent feel affect or change in everyday life.

6.   Conclusion

This study try to explore the challenges faced by the people with disability in public transportation. People with the disability are facing so many challenges in everyday day life which make their life more harder. This study highlights the major challenge for people with disability's is very bad road condition which lead them to accident and make it impossible for mobility. This study shows the other problems of public transportation for disable are footpath, bus stop and frequently moving bus stops or lack of bus stop and condition of road. Another thing is lack of information center, proper

washroom with disable friendly and bad attitude of people toward disable people. Lack of disability friendly stairs people facing problems while on and off. Public transportation do not have any short of audio visual information system in waiting station. It brings issues in finding their destination.

This study highlights the major issues in urban area are due to unmanaged urbanization and centralization and centralization of hospital and government office. Tactcile pavement is not made in each city by targeting to the blind.

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Policy Gaps in GST for the Manufacturing Sector: A Study

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Abstract

The introduction of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) in India marked a paradigm shift in the country's indirect taxation system, aiming to streamline taxation and boost the manufacturing sector. However, several policy gaps continue to hinder its full potential. This study identifies key gaps in GST policies impacting the manufacturing sector, such as compliance burdens, input tax credit (ITC) restrictions, and classification ambiguities. Through a literature review and analysis of manufacturing sector data, this paper suggests reforms to address these issues, emphasizing simplification, transparency, and inclusiveness. The recommendations aim to enhance operational efficiency, competitiveness, and economic growth.

Keywords

GST, Manufacturing sector, Policy gaps, Input tax credit, Tax reforms, India.

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Policy Gaps in GST for the Manufacturing Sector: A Study

1. Introduction

The introduction of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) in India on July 1, 2017, represented a watershed moment in the country's economic history. GST replaced a complex and fragmented system of indirect taxes, including excise duty, service tax, value-added tax (VAT), and several state-level taxes, with a unified framework. This reform aimed to simplify tax compliance, enhance transparency, and promote ease of doing business across sectors. For the manufacturing sector, a critical contributor to India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and a major source of employment, GST was hailed as a transformative measure to streamline operations, reduce cascading taxes, and improve supply chain efficiency.

Despite its ambitious objectives, the GST regime has encountered several challenges, particularly in the manufacturing sector. While the system has succeeded in reducing logistical bottlenecks and creating a common national market, policy gaps have emerged that hinder the sector's ability to fully leverage the benefits of GST. These gaps manifest in various forms, such as the complexity of compliance processes, restrictions on input tax credit (ITC), ambiguities in the classification of goods, and the inverted duty structure in certain industries.

The compliance burden under GST remains a significant issue, particularly for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in the manufacturing sector. Frequent changes in regulations, coupled with technical glitches in the GST portal, have further complicated tax filing processes. Similarly, restrictions on ITC for expenses such as capital goods and certain services create liquidity challenges for manufacturers, affecting their working capital and financial health. The inverted duty structure, where the tax rate on inputs exceeds that on finished goods, continues to plague industries like textiles, footwear, and renewable energy, leading to unutilized credits and increased costs.

Another critical issue lies in the classification of goods and services. The existence of multiple tax slabs under GST has resulted in classification disputes, with manufacturers often facing litigation due to differing interpretations of tax rates. Moreover, the lack of sector-specific provisions within GST fails to address the unique requirements of different manufacturing industries, from traditional sectors like textiles and steel to emerging fields such as electric vehicles and green manufacturing.

Given the manufacturing sector's pivotal role in India's economic ambitions, including its potential to generate jobs and drive exports, addressing these policy gaps is essential. Initiatives like "Make in India" and "Aatmanirbhar Bharat" envision a globally competitive manufacturing ecosystem, which can only be achieved by resolving existing challenges within the GST framework. This necessitates a more inclusive, transparent, and simplified taxation system that supports the diverse and dynamic needs of manufacturers.

This paper delves into the critical policy gaps in GST that impact the manufacturing sector, analysing their implications on operations, competitiveness, and growth. Through a comprehensive examination of these issues, the study proposes actionable reforms aimed at fostering a more conducive tax environment. By addressing these gaps, the government can unlock the full potential of the manufacturing sector, ensuring its alignment with broader economic goals and enhancing its contribution to India's growth story.

2. Literature Review

The implementation of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) in India has been a significant reform in the country's tax structure, with widespread implications for the manufacturing sector. While the new tax regime has simplified several aspects of taxation, it has also introduced new challenges. This literature review explores various studies and reports analysing the impact of GST on the manufacturing sector, focusing on compliance challenges, input tax credit (ITC) issues, classification ambiguities, and the inverted duty structure.

Kumar and Singh (2018) examined the compliance burden of GST on small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in the manufacturing sector. Their study highlighted that the multi-tier filing system,

which includes GSTR-1, GSTR-2, and GSTR-3, imposes a significant administrative burden on businesses. Frequent changes in GST rules and technical issues with the GST portal exacerbate these challenges. Similarly, Aggarwal (2019) emphasized the disparity in compliance requirements between large manufacturers and SMEs, arguing that the one-size-fits-all approach under GST disproportionately impacts smaller businesses.

The availability of ITC is a critical factor affecting the liquidity and working capital of manufacturers. Sharma et al. (2020) noted that restrictions on ITC for specific expenses, such as goods used for employee welfare and capital investments, create liquidity challenges. Their study also highlighted delays in ITC refunds, particularly for exporters, which adversely impact cash flow. Mehta and Joshi (2021) expanded on these findings by analyzing the impact of ITC mismatches, emphasizing the need for automated systems to minimize manual errors and ensure timely refunds.

The GST regime's reliance on multiple tax slabs has led to classification disputes, which have a direct impact on the manu-facturing sector. Gupta and Rao (2020) explored classification issues, highlighting instances where similar products were taxed under different rates due to ambiguous guidelines. For example, products such as confectioneries and snacks often face disputes over whether they should be taxed as processed foods or luxury items. Rana et al. (2021) argued that these ambiguities result in increased litigation and compliance costs, thereby hindering business operations.

Several studies have identified the inverted duty structure as a significant issue under GST. Verma and Singh (2019) analysed the impact of this structure on sectors such as textiles, footwear, and renewable energy. Their research revealed that higher tax rates on inputs compared to outputs lead to unutilized ITC, increasing the financial burden on manufacturers. Das et al. (2021) suggested that rationalizing input and output tax rates could address this issue, enabling manufacturers to utilize ITC more effectively.

The manufacturing sector encompasses diverse industries with unique needs. Jain and Kapoor (2022) observed that the "one-size-fits-all" approach of GST fails to accommodate these variations. For instance, emerging industries like electric vehicles and renewable energy require customized tax policies to foster growth, but such provisions are largely absent under GST.

3.   Methodology

This research paper employs a qualitative approach to investigate the policy gaps in the Goods and Services Tax (GST) framework as they pertain to the manufacturing sector. The methodology involves secondary data analysis, stakeholder consultations, and case studies to identify, analyze, and propose actionable reforms for addressing these gaps.

4.   Policy Gaps in GST for the Manufacturing Sector

The implementation of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) in India was expected to simplify indirect taxation, streamline processes, and enhance ease of doing business. However, certain policy gaps within the GST framework have created challenges for the manufacturing sector, impeding its growth and efficiency. These key policy gaps include:

4·1   Complex Compliance Framework

- **Multiple Returns Filing :** Manufacturers, especially small and medium enterprises (SMEs), face difficulties in managing the compliance requirements of filing multiple returns, including GSTR-1, GSTR-3B, and annual returns.

- **Frequent Rule Changes :** The continuous amendments in GST rules create confusion, increasing administrative burdens for businesses.

- **Technical Issues with GSTN Portal :** Technical glitches in the GST Network (GSTN) portal disrupt timely filing of returns and hinder smooth compliance, especially during peak periods.

4·2   Input Tax Credit (ITC) Restrictions

- **Blocked Credits :** Certain expenses, such as employee welfare and capital goods, are ineligible for ITC, creating liquidity issues for manufacturers.

- **ITC Mismatches :** Mismatches between supplier invoices and buyer claims lead to ITC denials, impacting working capital.

- **Refund Delays :** Delays in ITC refunds, particularly for exporters and industries facing the inverted duty structure, affect cash flow and operational efficiency.

4·3 Inverted Duty Structure

⤳ **Higher Input Taxes :** In industries like textiles, footwear, and renewable energy, the tax on raw materials often exceeds the tax on finished goods.

⤳ **Unutilized ITC :** The inverted duty structure results in the accumulation of unutilized ITC, increasing the cost of production. Despite refund provisions, delays in processing refunds exacerbate the issue.

4·4 Ambiguities in Classification and Tax Rates

⤳ **Multiple Tax Slabs :** The GST framework includes multiple tax rates (0%, 5%, 12%, 18%, and 28%), leading to confusion in classifying goods and services.

⤳ **Classification Disputes :** Manufacturers often face disputes over the classification of goods, such as whether a product qualifies as essential or luxury, resulting in increased litigation and compliance costs.

⤳ **Lack of Clarity for Emerging Sectors :** Industries like electric vehicles and renewable energy struggle with ambiguous classification and inconsistent tax rates, limiting their growth potential.

4·5 Compliance Costs for SMEs

⤳ **Disproportionate Impact :** Small and medium manufacturers face challenges in hiring skilled personnel for GST compliance, given the complexity and costs involved.

⤳ **Threshold Concerns :** The turnover threshold for GST registration, though aimed at excluding micro-businesses, sometimes creates an uneven playing field for SMEs competing with larger players.

4·6 Limited Focus on Sector-Specific Needs

⤳ **One-Size-Fits-All Approach :** The GST framework lacks tailored provisions for different sectors within manufacturing. Traditional industries like textiles and new-age sectors like electronics have unique needs that are not adequately addressed.

➽ **Export-Oriented Units :** Exporters in the manufacturing sector face refund delays and compliance complexities, undermining their competitiveness in global markets.

4·7 High Tax Burden on Capital Goods

➽ **Tax on Capital Goods :** High GST rates on machinery and capital goods increase the cost of setting up and expanding manufacturing facilities.

➽ **Delayed Credit Utilization :** Restrictions on claiming full ITC on capital goods further strain the financial resources of manufacturers.

4·8 Limited Automation in Processes

➽ **Manual Errors in Reconciliation :** The reliance on manual processes for ITC reconciliation and tax filing increases the chances of errors, resulting in penalties and delays.

➽ **Underutilization of Technology :** Despite advancements, the adoption of automation in GST processes remains limited, especially among SMEs, due to cost constraints and lack of awareness.

4·9 Cross-State Variations in Compliance

➽ **State-Level Interpretations :** Though GST aims to create a unified tax regime, differences in state-level implementations and interpretations lead to operational complexities.

➽ **Logistical Challenges :** Manufacturers with interstate operations face compliance burdens related to e-way bills and state-specific requirements.

5. Suggestions for Reform

5·1 Simplification of Compliance

➽ Introduce a simplified compliance framework for SMEs, with quarterly filing options and fewer documentation requirements.

➽ Enhance the GST portal's user interface to improve accessibility and minimize technical glitches.

5·2 Revamp ITC Mechanism

➽ Allow ITC on all legitimate business expenses, including capital goods and employee welfare.

» Ensure timely ITC refunds through automated systems, reducing dependency on manual verifications.

5·3 Resolve Classification Ambiguities

» Establish a centralized classification authority to provide binding rulings on tax rates and product classifications.

» Adopt uniform rates across closely related products to reduce disputes.

5·4 Address Inverted Duty Structure

» Rationalize input and output tax rates to eliminate the inverted duty structure.

» Introduce specific refund mechanisms for industries affected by this structure.

5·5 Sector-Specific Incentives

» Provide tax incentives and exemptions for emerging sectors like green manufacturing, electric vehicles, and renewable energy.

» Develop industry-specific GST guidelines to address unique challenges.

5·6 Strengthen Policy Dialogue

Foster regular consultations between policymakers and industry stakeholders to address evolving challenges.

Create grievance redressal mechanisms for resolving compliance and classification disputes efficiently.

6. Conclusion

While GST has significantly transformed India's tax landscape, the manufacturing sector continues to grapple with compliance burdens, ITC restrictions, and rate ambiguities. By addressing these policy gaps, the government can foster a more conducive environment for manufacturing, aligning with India's vision of becoming a global manufacturing hub.

This paper highlights actionable reforms to simplify compliance, enhance transparency, and ensure sector-specific inclusiveness, ultimately boosting competitiveness and economic growth. A collaborative approach between policymakers, industry stakeholders, and tax authorities is essential for realizing GST's full potential in the manufacturing sector.

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Androgynous Problems in Identity Formation: Quest for Healing in Ursula K. Le Guin's *The Left Hand of Darkness*

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Abstract

This paper discusses on the complexity of identity formation of the androgynous structure seen in Ursula K. Le Guin's The Left Hand of Darkness and it shows the healing power to free from the most problematic condition. Objective of preparing this paper is to explore the resistance and healing issues seen in the new scientific investigations of the Gethenian world. This paper is prepared in an alternative framework applying feminist theory as a methodological tool to dig out the causes and consequences of the modern practices of the identity formation in an androgynous society. It is analyzed through the lenses of Judith Butler, Simone de Beauvoir and Betty Friedan. The paper shows Le Guin's subverting binary notion of gender-based issues. It presents the fluidity of Gethenian society as a gift of scientific discoveries. In Gethen, individuals embody both masculine and feminine roots during the kemmer cycle. Gender issues are socially constructed phenomenon rather than an innate characteristic. This paper exposes cultural tensions in addition to the shape and structure of the gender formation and it also empowers the healing traits. It shows the roots of identity formation conveying messages, and suggests the readers to rethink over their assumptions in a new way in relation to the new world and the scientific investigations.

Keywords

Androgyny, Heterosexual, Identity formation, Gethenian society, Kemmer cycle etc.

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1. Introduction

Minimizing the anatomy role, alternative mode of androgyny stands as a medium for change that functions as an output of the modern scientific investigation. It plays an active role to neutralize the gender-based debates about an identity formation and role play in the society. In this sense, androgyny can be seen as a space of resistance in itself that redefines the ways in which gender identity is formatted. Androgyny thus projects gendered rejection through the paternal prohibition of the mother that would constitute the female part of the biological development. Process of the gender determination and formation is irreducibly debatable as it moves around the different problematics of subject formation. The heterosexual difference located in the body as a discursive development structures masculine and feminine identities related with the biological construction. Discourses in the power dynamics has offered an alternative opposition that reinforces to change the constructivist position which we can find in this novel as a healing power for the women who suffer of the gender-based dominance and devalue of their works. Ursula K. Le Guin's *The Left Hand of Darkness*, thus, depicts a quest for an othered worldly race of anatomically neutral beings who take on male or female physical characteristics respectfully in an equal position. Le Guin's concern with gender formation and cultural biases is evident based that gives a lesson for protest and helps to heal out from the androgynous developments in the problems of identity formation.

In *The Left Hand of Darkness*, Genly Ai; investigator, developer and envoy for the Ekumen, includes representatives from eighty-three planets in a new scientific Gethenian society. He persuades the local inhabitants to join under a chain. Ursula K. Le Guin meets him in the space travel as she writes about the new Scientific investigations of the Gethenian society. She writes, "Space travel is one of these metaphors; so is an alternative society, an

alternative biology; the future is another. The future, in fiction, is metaphor" (*The Left Hand of Darkness* 5). Le Guin perceives Genly Ai. as an excellent mediator as he approaches the King of Karhide to unite the people and rule over them. Ai receives warm welcome as a member of the alternative society who reveals the reality of an androgynous society. Orgoreyn on the other hand is subsequently imprisoned and sent to a labor farm. Estraven comes to his rescue zone after his escape across the Gobrin Ice. The place is a vast uninhabited part that is totally covered with snow. The journey continues up to fifty days in a difficult situation of the starvation and exhaustion.

The journey is risky. Estraven exposes himself to the patrol and is nearly killed, while Ai escapes. The scientific investigators and the developers call his ship down to the planet and they go to get a welcome from the King of Karhide. Karhider is a kind-hearted King who provides a parental treat to the people and teaches his people to treat the others well, even to their children at home and the outside. There is no gender biasness in his Karhide kingdom and Gethen about which Orgoreyn narrates:

> The parental instinct varies as widely on Gethen as anywhere. One can't generalize. I never saw a Karhider hit a child. I have seen one speak very angrily to a child. Their tenderness toward their children struck me as being profound, effective, and almost wholly unpossessive. Only in that unpossessiveness does it perhaps differ from what we call the "matrnal" instinct. I suspect that the distinction between a paternal instinct and maternal instinct is scarcely worth making; the paternal instinct, the wish to protect, to further, is not a sex-linked characteristic. (*The Left Hand of Darkness* 51)

The King treats his people well with parental responsibilities and he teaches them to be soft corner in every steeps of life. He welcomes the Ekumen delegation and other reports to make a change in the worldly practices. In the due time, myth like story is reported by Ai that incorporates the report of the field visit as an investigator, legend and story teller of the Gethenian society. He says, "Gethenians are yellow -brown or red-brown, generally but I had seen a good many as dark as myself" (21). Genly Ai as a scientific observer discusses about the color, structure and performances of the people.

Ai recollects the stories of pregnancy, child birth and the cultural construction of gender and its progress within the period of

twenty-six days. Ai, thus, does the classification more scientifically of an androgynous society in a scientific way as Judith Butler argues, "sex not only functions as a norm, but it is a part of a regulatory practice" (*Gender Trouble: Feminism and Subversion of Identity* 27). Butler's argument draws an attention in fallibility of the supposed neutrality observed phenomenon that is practices in the society. Butler's concept helps to look at the society through inner eye that helps for gender equality and so androgynous society is imagined and set as an alternative place in Le Guin's novel.

2. Critical Observations of the Narratives in Ursula K. Le Guin's *The Left Hand of Darkness*

Observing Le Guin's narratives from an alternative perspective; it is not surprising that a male observer would see the Gethenians as male unless they are explicitly feminine and it is extremely telling that a female observer would work within the same set of assumptions. Stating the Gethenians as neither male nor female, Ai inscribes at the outset of the novel, "Truth is a matter of an imagination and it is implying in the universe" (*The Left Hand of Darkness* 12). The statement ultimately draws an attention of the readers during the course of the novel's critique. Ai's identification about an androgynous construction through an example of Estraven's conversion consists of his own words, sharing the same "sex" with him (against all physical evidence), that relates the female scientist's identification with masculine practices. The slippage from biological "truth" to gender construction is evident. Ai's disrespect to the Gethenian society as an androgynous construction is a symbolic haunt regarding the cases of Ekumen benevolence that questions on identity formation. Feminists challenge the established root of the cultural imperialism based on the sameness of its patriarchal vision.

This challenge, however, is not limited to male, as Le Guin makes clear through her use of a female observer, Ong Tot Oppong, one of the earliest scientific authorities in Gethen. Oppong's internalization of masculinist discourse in her field report is, therefore, ironic that questions to the biological construction. Opposing the male's "neutral standard" is a case for Cixous's "other bisexuality" (36). Thus, after her initial and brief caution, opposing male equally begins to project the androgynes males as apologizing factor of the gender debates. Le Guin's use of the masculine utterances make confused to the readers as she says, "gender roles lead me

continually to forget the Karhidish, I am with-is not a man, but a manwoman" (95). She takes the man and manhood as a different entity. As a woman engaged in a scientific enterprise, her psychological identification with the "female" aspect of the androgynes must be suppressed in favour of the "neutral" discourse that helps for healing from the structured set of the gendered identification. The structured social pattern takes male as superior and female as an inferior being. The feminist insight in the modern time inspires women to resist the established norms of male dominance over the female body that is challenged in Le Guin's narratives. She opposes the masculine practice through Estraven's conversion and Ai's exercises to challenge the social structure which relegates women's position.

Le Guin creates the plots in an androgynous setting that confuses the readers to identify in between whether the character is male or female. Thus, the narratives in her novel arouse questions to the identification and social position of male and female, both, as they are changing and challenging in the Gethenian world. The pregnancy, child birth and an identity formation in a short period of twenty-six days of the kemmering process is questionable that how does the process complete its cycle. Gethenian's sexual cycle lengths nearly for twenty-six days. Le Guin through Ekumen sees the absence of a continuous sexual drive in terms of social practices. Speculating on the experiences, sexual frustration in Gethenian society does not exist, since sexual desire disappears once in a kemmering cycle that is over in a certain period. Again, opposing the assumption, sublimation is possible only because of the male sex drive. She corrects herself a minute later, however, realizing, to some extent, the implications of her statement in doing so falls into a similar trap that she does not detect. It is assumed, "But of course they are not eunuchs, in somer, but rather more comparable to pre-adolescents: not castrate, but latent" (96). According to Oppong, therefore, it is the Ekumen who are the adults, whereas the androgynes, while in somer (which is four-fifths of their adult life), are the children. The scientific eye, however, is not satisfied with depicting the androgynes simply as emasculated males. The investigators are aware that the androgyne has another side, one that as in Irigaray's formulation, resists the "representation of the self-same, the dark, obstructive and enigmatic soul" (19). The observation re-states to the dark part of femininity.

Le Guin dramatizes Kristeva's notion of the female imaginary as the repressed underside of Western masculinist discourses. Gender based discussion in the androgynous society haunts ideas of the perfect self-sufficient male criticisms. The politics of dominance and subordination require that the other be perceived this way. As a result, while in one breath insisting on the masculinity of the androgynes, the Ekumen observers paradoxically condemn, at the same time, the androgyne's femininity by extension of their own gender confusions. Ekumen and Ai's identity formation years are questionable as it is said, "Ekumen, which is a hundred light-years from border to border, will be patient with us a while" (*The Left Hand of Darkness* 12). The short term of life cycle in an androgyny of the Gethenians, consequently, is tainted as well by its association with the female body. Oppong's reference to kemmering cycle displays the traditional scientific abhorrence that remains trapped in the body politics of the patriarchal structure privileging the mind over body.

Ursula K. Le Guin's *The Left Hand of Darkness* focuses to the Gethenian practices in relation to the human activities and kemmering cycle. She interrogates the system of dichotomies of masculinist versus feminists' relationships in regards to the self and the others that investigates upon the dark and light side of the life. She takes the world as a crucifer in the crossroad of the messages in short and writes, "Toward greatness, if you go more wisely than I went. Gentlemen I have been with the Envoy, I have seen his ship that crossed the void, and I know that he is truly and exactly a messenger from elsewhere than this earth" (46). Le Guin's narratives try to interlink the readers between the real world and an imaginary space of Gethen. The androgynous society in Gethenian world practices heterosexual activities in an amusing way that lasts within the short conversion and the kemmering period of only twenty-six days. An interesting narrative about Estraven's conversion, observation of the new world and the sexual experience is:

> I tried to, but my efforts took the form of self-consciously seeing a Gethenian first as a man, then as a woman, forcing him into those categories so irrelevant to his nature and so essential to my own. Thus, as I sipped my smoking sour beer I thought that at table Estraven's performance had been womanly, all charm and tact and lack of substance, specious and adroit. Was it in fact perhaps this soft supple femininity had I disliked and disturbed in him? For it was impossible to think of him as a

woman, that dark, ironic, powerful presence near me in the firelit darkness, and yet whenever I thought of him as a man I felt a sense of falseness, of imposture: in him, or in my own attitude towards him? His voice was soft and rather resonant but not deep, scarcely a man's voice, but scarcely a woman's voice either……..but what was it saying? I'm sorry, he was saying that I have had to forestall for so long this pleasure of having you in my house; and to that extent at least I'm glad there is no longer any question of patronage between us. (*The Left Hand of Darkness* 10)

The society perceives Estraven's conversion as the part of cultural and biological shocks in an androgyny construction. The novel compels readers to rethink how a biological development puzzles people and it sometimes raises the questions in the identity of the I ness and Younes. This paper critiques to the complex nature of androgyny construction. It interrogates factors related to the dichotomy of sex/gender and the development of the culture. The androgynous Gethenian Estraven displays that the achievement of individual integrity and humanity lies in coexistence of the opposites.

3. Theoretical Underpinnings

Ursula K. Le Guin is a feminist writer who promotes issues related to gender, identity, and social structure in a patriarchal society through her writings. In *The Left Hand of Darkness*, Le Guin critiques the social practices and challenges the rigidity of gender role perceived in contemporary society. The Gethenians' ambi-sexuality serves as a thoughtful experiment to explore the implications of a society where "gender is fluid and changes with sexual cycles" (Said 23). This setup allows Le Guin to question the stereotype limitations imposed by fixed gender roles. The novel also delves into cultural anthropology and sociology. It examines how gender impacts social structures, politics, and relationships by presenting a society where individuals are neither distinctly male nor female except during their sexual cycles, known as kemmering. Depicting a society without fixed gender identities, the novel challenges the cultural constructs of gender roles that define masculinity and femininity. The protagonist, Genly Ai, is a human envoy who struggles to understand and communicate with the Gethenians due to his own ingrained gender biases. His journey as

an investigative tool helps for the gender influence in interpersonal relationships in societal dynamics.

There are multiple reviewers and among them Martin Bickman critiques, "Le Guin exposes the blindness of scientific neutrality to its own cultural biases. Ai as anthropologist, observer, and envoy exemplifies the limitation of a discourse" (72). In this way, the Ai-created body used in Guian's experimental narrative functions as a vehicle for illustrating traditional society's perceptions and gender roles. He claims, "Guin reveals Ai for what he really is not a 'neutral' observer, but rather, he is a story teller, one that invents, and in inventing, reveals, not the other, but himself" (73). It suggests that portraying the feminine as benign or nurturing represents a positive shift from the traditional depiction of women as dangerous temptresses in science fiction. It reflects an evolution towards more nuanced and less negative portrayals of female characters in the society.

Martin Bickman in his research entitled "Le Guin's *The Left Hand of Darkness: Form and Content*" explores, "The whole scheme of the work consisted in the opposition of the two worlds: the unreal world of books of chivalry, the ordinary everyday world of the seventeenth century" (45). In this regard, K. Le. Guian's writing resists the conventional notion of gender identity by subverting gender through the representative character Genly Ai to show the real body narrative in modern society. Likewise, Kayla B. Stephenson, in his article entitled "One's a Crowd: Gendered Language in Ursula K. Le Guin's *The Left Hand of Darkness*" examines how the science-fiction novel deals with the idea that there is no such thing as a gender in traditional society. The role of domination and exploitation based on one's gender subjectivity does not exist on the margins of society. He claims, "*The Left Hand of Darkness* was meant to be an exploration of society without gender constraints, yet the result still constraints to our perception of reproduction" (32). In this respect, women are critiquing their identity and position that existed in traditional society by writing and creating a new gender identity. It reveals the reality of Ursula's writing that explores an imaginative society where the role of gender does not foreshow any individual in the name of sex.

Shu-yuan Chang, in his review article "A New Genesis: Rethinking Gender Expression in Ursula K. Le Guin's *The Left Hand of Darkness*" presents the world from the perspective of heterosexual

identity. The homogeneous nature of man on the earth are falsifying the nature of domination, suppression, and social narrative. The writer creates a planet like earth to observe the reality of traditional society. Evidently, he contends, "Ai observes everything on Gethen from an Earth-like perspective; in other words, he tends to judge the society from a heterosexual perspective" (77). The statement reflects Genly Ai's views regarding the sex centered disparities in Gethen and Ekumen society. It is clear how gender and identity shape the society from male perspective. He elaborates, "Eve is created in accordance with the image of submission and obedience. She is not allowed to be smarter or more brilliant than her male partner Adam. Accordingly, woman is considered inferior and is defined as the other to man" (2). This concept seems to be biased in the gender roles and it devalues women as inferior beings from the period of gods and goddesses. Eve is not allowed to make decisions by herself and stays under the "shadow of Adam" (Allen 21). After the distinctions in sex and gender expression between men and women are resolved. Women struggle to uncover their true selves beneath gender norms.

Virginia Kashyap in her article "*The Left Hand of Darkness* by Ursula K. Le Guin as Feminist Fantasy Writing", shows that there is no any fix gender in human life, this is only a perception of the society. She writes, "Humanlike creatures which are neither male nor female, with no sexual differences between the inhabitants, there can be no prejudice against the male or female. The prejudices that are present among the human can be seen from the 19th century, through to this day, which includes women being labelled as the weaker gender" (4). This shows that society presents gender according to the environment in which they live. In Ursula's work, the character Genly Ai is from earth, so he was surprised and got confused by seeing the Gethenian sexual cycle, kemmer.

Mascha Helene Lange in his article emphasizes, the reader attention to provoke the concept of male and female. It shows the concept of gender to widen in broad lenses. He writes, "*The Left Hand of Darkness* provokes readers to deliberate on the necessity of categories such as male and female, but it is not free from discourses that naturalize sex itself and needs to be read critically. A critical reading can be achieved, as explicated in this essay, through an intersex lens" (136). In this aspect, the novel also delves into the psychological and emotional aspects of gender fluidity, particularly through the relationship between the protagonist, Genly Ai, and the

Gethenian, Estravan. Their evolving bond highlights the potential energy for deeper connections when freed from conventional gender constraints practices of the society. William Sims Bainbridge publication of research title "Women in Science Fiction" claims that though traditionally science fiction, it was used to promote science and technology, women authors have chosen this genre to analyze current sex roles and advocate for change. He reveals, "Women authors have made science fiction a medium for analysis of current sex roles and for advocacy of change."

Judith Butler's principle theory on *Gender Trouble: Feminism and Subversion of Identity* critiques how power operates through established norms that control gender identities. It critiques patriarchal power structures by presenting a society where gender roles are not rigidly enforced. Butler states, "Genders can be neither true nor false, neither real nor apparent, neither original nor derived. As credible bearers of those attributes, however, genders can also be rendered thoroughly and radically incredible" (180). Butler's statement redefines that the gender role is not inherently true or false, real or apparent, or original or derived. Instead, gender is a construct that can be questioned and deconstructed, revealing its fluid and arbitrary nature.

Like Judith Butler, Simone de Beauvoir argues that women have historically been seen as the "Other" in relation to men, defined in contrast to men and often oppressed as a result. As argued by them, in *The Left Hand of Darkness*, Gethenians challenge this binary notion of gender by embodying both male and female characteristics. The concept of "Otherness" by presenting a society where gender is not defined in opposition to another gender exists fluidly within each individual. De Beauvoir claims, "What peculiarly signals the situation of woman is that she is free and autonomous being like all human creatures-nevertheless finds herself living in a world where men compel her to assume the status of the Other" (27). The book, The Second Sex, questions to the gender practices in the existed world and asserts, "It is a marginal world, on the edge. Out beyond it towards the South Orion Arm no world has been found where men live" (145). In this regard, the situation of women is marked by their inherent freedom and autonomy and so the androgynous setting of the society respects them. Despite this, societal structures force them to assume the status of "the Other," in "contrast to men" (Acker 12). This illustrates how gender-based

hierarchies create a marginalized and secondary status for women. Gethenians' ability to shift between genders during kemmering process reflects this ambiguity, as individuals are not confined to fixed gender roles. Simone de Beauvoir's theory in The Second Sex, thus, critiques traditional concepts of gender identity. This theory excavates gender issues and challenges constructed setup within cultural and social contexts.

4. Methodology

This paper is prepared in qualitative research method and it is especially a library-based study. While preparing this paper, this researcher studies Ursula K. Le Guin's experimental novel *The Left Hand of Darkness* as a primary text and uses the reviews and criticisms as the secondary resources to critique the text in a context. It is analyzed in the framework of feminist theory. It examines the root cause of how Ursula K. Le Guin's *The Left Hand of Darkness* critiques conventional gender norms. Applying Judith Butler's theory of Gender Trouble: Feminism and Subversion of Identity, Simone de Beauvoir's The Second Sex, and Betty Friedan's The Feminine Mystique, this paper shows how Le Guin challenges readers to reconsider social constructions of gender identity as a healing power for the women. It explores the implications of these constructions for individual agency and societal structures. This methodology integrates theoretical frameworks to analyze how Le Guin's novel contributes to discussions about gender identity formation in the androgynous structure of the society. It offers new insights into the complexities of gender representation and critiques in speculative form.

5. Results and Discussions

This paper discussed on an issue of traditional practice of the masculine society and it brought a result that the gender biasness caused a major problem within the framework of gender equality, inclusive participation and the social changes. Gender discrimination and the social biasness invited androgynous practices of the Gethenian world that treats the people equally; they are neither male nor female at all. Socially established norms of the gender identities take "male as a superior being and the women as inferior" (Barrett 27). Feminist advocators oppose the views and speak for social reformation. This paper advocates against inequalities by subverting

gender roles made by authoritative male dominated social structure. Ursula K. Le Guin's *The Left Hand of Darkness* reveals the overshadowed movements of the women that subverts gender concept and challenges the gender and cultural dominances. The concept is projected in this paper to make the women free from the pre-designed imprisonment. In patriarchy, males dominate females, and as a result, the patriarchal system maintains these dominations and normalizes them as everyday life practices and so an androgynous Gethenian world can be an alternative platform for them.

Dominant groups create certain narratives and regard them as real. Such narratives often elevate the status of men while depicting females as mean and dependent on men. These stories play a significant role in making these suppressions seem "final, fixed, and ultimate truths" (Bell & Daniel 23). To some extent, such narratives become researchable to biological science. In other words, these patriarchal stories define the female body as weaker and more helpless. Making these falsehoods irrevocable became the weapons for men to dominate women for a long time. Consequently, the establishes gender binaries: male and female ultimately play a crucial role in political and cultural power sharing exercises. Stereotyped social and cultural functions of gender roles fix females as other and different from males. This paper shows the possibility of dual gender roles that is known as an androgyny. In the present context, dominated females are searching for their identity and rights by subverting the preoccupied notions regarding gender and sexuality.

In Ursula K. Le Guin's *The Left Hand of Darkness*, an exploration of gender roles transcends mere narrative as an alternative reading of the society that helps for healing from the conventional practices. Le Guin through the protagonist Genly Ai's journey and interactions with the Gethenians, navigates fluidity, ambiguity, and the arbitrary nature of gender distinctions. Le Guin's narrative technique, character development, and thematic exploration in this paper analyzes Guin's writing subverting the traditional gender roles. It challenges readers to envision a more egalitarian and liberated future that is to be learnt from an androgynous exercise. Examining the implications of Le Guin's literary choices within the context of her time and our contemporary understanding of gender, this paper seeks to illuminate the novel's enduring relevance in shaping androgynous discussions on gender politics and identity formation.

This paper, thus, explores innovative concepts of gender roles and identity. The study examines various scholarly perspectives on how Le Guin subverts traditional gender roles through the unique society of Gethen. She focuses on androgyny, cultural implications, and psychological dimensions. It envisions a new world of equality where gender roles are absent. Genly Ai also discusses the sharing of technology and the development of entrepreneurship. All the aspects of human life are "cumulative forces to understand and address the issues appropriately" (Bryson 53). In this way, this paper advocates against discrimination aligning with the expectations of the feminist movement. It projects a portrait of gender roles in social activities and suggests that they are not natural but they are constructed by the society.

Gethenian gender roles highlight an arbitrariness that challenges the wrongly constructed societal divisions. Social norms and rules are not fixed to one gender on Gethen and so androgynous cultural differences between the planets are vast. Genly's culture is based on gender roles, while on Winter, there are no such roles as there is a certain kemmering period. There is no gender-based discrimination. Understanding and cognition about gender are beyond their concerns. All these aspects are based on performative discourse. Guin's work encourages readers to reflect on their own perceptions of gender and consider alternative possibilities beyond binary definitions. Le Guin, thus, challenges the notion of established masculine setup and advocates for gender equality.

6. Conclusion

The Left Hand of Darkness explores an androgynous problem and seeks the trail of an identity formation in the Gethenian world. Feminist critics critique the masculine practices of the traditional society and seek to escape from it for which androgynous structure of the modern scientific world can work as a healing power. Le Guin seeks for an alternative root that helps in healing from the existed values. An androgynous practice of the Gethenian world can be an alternative solution that treats the people equally by omitting the debate of male and female where in this world the people are neither completely male nor female as they can disguise, converse and participate in the kemmering process as Estraven does. This paper explores the problems of gendered treats and discusses to the issues of identity formation. Ursula K. Le Guin subverts gender identity

engaging with the concepts of intersectionality, materialist feminism, and feminist science fiction. This paper, thus, highlights an exploration of the gender formation and an identity creation within the power politics of the Gethenian world. Guin's novel is, therefore, gripping tale of political intrigue and adventure with a profound exploration of the human power in nature whether they are male or female. Androgynous practices of the Gethenian society provides energy to think in an alternative mode as a healing power to get rid from an existed problem of the masculine society.

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Class, Marriage and Marital Status in Nepal

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Abstract

The trends and patterns of marriage and marital status are gradually changing worldwide, including in Nepal. These changes are influenced by various factors, such as employment, income, and economic status or class. This paper examines the evolving patterns of marriage and marital status among individuals in Nepal over the past 25 years (one generation), utilizing high quality longitudinal data from the Nepal Living Standard Survey (NLSS) from 1995/96 to 2022/23. Nepali society is progressively shifting from poverty to prosperity as efforts to reduce poverty take effect. This paper argues that as long as poverty persists among a significant portion of the population, noticeable differences in marital status will remain between the poor and the non-poor, highlighting a significant association between economic class and marital status. However, as prosperity increases and the proportion of the population categorized as poor decreases, the association between marital status and economic class diminishes. Consequently, marriage and marital practices are primarily influenced by the existence of two distinct economic classes within the broader population: the poor and the non-poor (poverty and prosperity), which also includes varying consumption quintiles. This conclusion aligns with Karl Marx's thesis that the economic base (class structure) fundamentally shapes the superstructure, including marriage and marital practices, as observed in the context of Nepal.

Keywords

Class, Marriage, Marital status, Nepal.

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1. Introduction: Marriage and Family

Marriage and family are fundamental institutions of human society, existing in various forms across different cultures. As noted by Mishra (2010), a variety of marriage practices have prevailed since the dawn of human society. As social institutions develop, new practices emerge and continue to evolve over time. This trend of change is likely to persist in the future. Nevertheless, the structure and function of marriage and family continue to fulfill essential human needs throughout this changing landscape.

In this context, Perini and Sironi (2016) highlight the evolving patterns of marriage and family. They observe, "Family structure across the world has changed in recent decades. In particular, there has been a significant increase in marital disruptions, which are primarily caused by two main factors: poor relationship quality and weak commitment to marriage" (p. 41). Therefore, it is crucial to study marriage and family empirically to understand and explain the dynamics occurring in different parts of the world. Numerous researchers have conducted studies on these issues.

Perini and Sironi (2016) report that various studies have identified marital disruption as a social phenomenon that can have significant consequences for individual well-being. A key aspect of this discussion is the definition of well-being itself. While many studies use income or poverty status as indicators of economic well-being, these measures have notable limitations (Aassve et al., 2007). The simplistic poor/non-poor dichotomy in defining poverty has been criticized (Cheli and Lemmi, 1995). Although using income as a measure can address this dichotomy, it complicates our understanding of how a loss in income translates to a real decline in living standards (p. 42).

In conclusion, Perini and Sironi (2016) note that "both income and poverty status represent only the monetary dimension of well-being, defined as 'objective well-being', which also encompasses

a non-monetary dimension" (p. 42). Thus, family well-being and its economic status play a vital role in shaping the nature of marriage and family in all societies of the world including Nepal.

2. Change in Marriage Foundations over Time

Sociologically, marriage is regarded as a fundamental micro social institution. Killewald (2016) discusses the current state of marriage in relation to its historical changes. As a social institution, the rates of marital stability and their determinants can vary across time and place. Killewald (2016) writes:

> In the United States, over the second half of the twentieth century, women's college completion rates caught up with and surpassed those of men, their labor force participation increased dramatically, and the gender earnings gap among full-time workers narrowed (Goldin 2006). At home, wives' average time in unpaid labor declined substantially (Bianchi et al. 2012). Couples married later and were more likely to divorce (Fitch and Ruggles 2000; Stevenson and Wolfers 2007), women's earnings became positively associated with marriage formation (Sweeney 2002), and gender role attitudes became more egalitarian (Thornton and Young-DeMarco, 2001 : 699).

These observations highlight a variety of factors associated with marriage and marital status; however, the determining factors differ across societies and cultures. The foundational elements of marriage and family are rooted in social structures and systems. Change in social structure causes change in the nature of marriage and family. MO (2016 : 29) elaborates:

> Family dissolution has long been regarded as an important issue socially and academically. Several theoretical approaches are relevant to establishing the causal relationships between socio-economic and cultural factors and marital disruption. Despite some literature addressing the influence of these factors on divorce trends, most studies are concentrated on the Western world, and there is no consensus on the determinants of marital dissolution.

Indeed, socio-cultural factors not only shape the nature of marriage and its dissolution but also influence the marital status of individuals across societies. Variations in social and cultural

practices directly impact marital status. Among these factors, the nature of the economy and its structure play a crucial role in shaping marriage and the marital status of individuals in any society which is the focus of this paper.

3. Economic Class, Marriage, and Marital Status

Class is a crucial basis of social stratification and inequality, encompassing various forms. When discussing class, it is often understood in economic terms, which serves as a fundamental foundation in all human societies. However, the basis of class changes from one society to another and across different time periods. To comprehend the factors influencing marriage and marital status in any society, empirical study is essential. In this context, Andersson (2016) states that "over the past few decades, increases in the prevalence of divorce and non-traditional family forms (Andersson and Philipov, 2002) have generated interest in how attitude orientations relate to these demographic outcomes" (p. 51). Andersson further notes, "Across both countries (Surkyn and Lesthaeghe, 2004) and cohorts (Paginini and Rindfiiss, 1993), macro-level data show that the presence of non-traditional family behaviour, such as cohabitation and union dissolution, is associated with a general tolerance toward such phenomena" (p. 51). These phenomena are shaped by a number of micro and macro social structures.

At the micro level, however, individuals who adhere to traditional ideals-such as being married with children-tend to exhibit less permissive attitudes toward non-traditional family behaviours compared to divorcees or cohabitants (Sieben and Verbakel, 2013). This observation leads researchers to hypothesize that family-related attitudes may influence demographic behaviour to some extent (Andersson, 2016 : 51). Such hypotheses are grounded in existing empirical evidence and theories regarding marriage and family structures.

The Marxist perspective emphasizes the economy as the foundational structure that shapes all social and cultural practices within a society. As Ritzer (2011 : 87) highlights, one of Marx's most concise summaries of his materialist conception of history is as follows:

> In the social production which men carry on, they enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of

their will. These relations of production correspond to a definite stage of development of their material forces of production. The totality of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, which is the real foundation on top of which arises a legal and political superstructure, to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. At a certain stage of their development, the material forces of production in society come into conflict with the existing relations of production or-what is but a legal expression of the same thing-with the property relations within which they had been at work before. From forms of development of the forces of production, these relations turn into their fetters. Then occurs a period of social revolution. With the change of the economic foundation, the entire immense superstructure is more or less rapidly transformed. (Marx, 1859/1970 : 20-21)

Marx's ideas closely connect the economy with social relations. The nature of a society's economic structure profoundly influences its social relationships and institutions, shaping the broader legal, political, and cultural systems.

The changing nature of social structures and institutions is often discussed in relation to capitalism and imperialism. In his book Capitalism and Nepal, Mishra (2070 VS) addresses the impact of imperialism on Nepali culture. When capitalism and imperialism infiltrated the economy and state regime, they began to dominate the local culture, transforming it in the image of imperialist countries. This phenomenon of imperialism created two major issues: first, the concept of the local became narrowed; second, it imposed a singular economic status and a uniform cultural model.

As Mishra (2070 VS) explains, imperialist culture began to assimilate national culture into its own framework, gradually erasing local features. This can be observed in many poorer countries, where one politico-economic model coexists with another cultural form. Such dynamics create conditions akin to planting one type of plant in a different root system. This phenomenon occurs across all cultural domains, including marriage, family, and marital status.

This paper arises from questions related to the globalization of capitalism and imperialism at the local level, particularly examining the processes of hybridization or modernization in the context of marriage and marital status.

4. Objectives, Data Sets and Methods

Nepali society and culture have undergone rapid changes over the past two to three decades, particularly across a generation (25 years). Marriage and family are fundamental units of society, serving as the starting point for social change. This paper explores the transformations occurring within Nepali society and examines how changes in individuals' marital status are associated with their economic status or class, which is also evolving.

To track changes in the living standards of the Nepali population, the Nepal Living Standard Survey (NLSS) has been conducted periodically, typically every five years, by the government of Nepal. The fourth NLSS, carried out over an 11-year span from 2010/11 to 2022/23, follows the third round of the survey. Each survey includes a question regarding the marital status of every member of the surveyed household.

The NLSS is primarily designed to measure poverty levels within the country. In measuring poverty, it also accounts for prosperity, categorizing households that are not poor as non-poor or prosperous. The households are further categorized into different consumption quintiles which manifest different class categories. This paper defines economic class based on the dichotomy of poor and non-poor statuses of households or individuals on the one hand and consumption quintiles on the other. Utilizing survey data sets from three different NLSS rounds-first, third, and fourth-this study explores the relationship between marital status and economic class. Bivariate analysis was employed to assess this relationship, with economic class and marital status cross-tabulated to generate two-way tables displaying the results.

Given the changes in individuals' economic class, corresponding shifts in marriage and marital status are anticipated. There has been a gradual decline in poverty over the 27-year period from 1995/96 to 2022/23. This paper examines the results on economic class, marriage and marital status at three specific points in time: 1995/96, 2010/11, and 2022/23, using cross-sectional data. Each time point is discussed separately, followed by a comparison of the changes observed over the 27-year period. In this context, the comparison of cross-sectional data across time provides a longitudinal perspective.

The application of cross-tabulation and statistical techniques offers descriptive statistics, including two-way tables and non-parametric hypothesis testing using the Chi-Square test. Based on the analysis of these two-way tables and tests of association or independence, conclusions are drawn regarding the relationship between economic class and marital status.

NLSS data sets were chosen for a number of reasons. First, the researcher agrees with Russell (1994 : 336), who asserts, "I see no reason to collect new data in the field if there are documentary resources already available that address some of your research questions." The NLSS data set is, in fact, a large set of data that includes a number of variables applicable to specific kind of research. Second, the credibility of the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) and World Bank (WB) is undoubtedly high. Third, NLSS has an adequate sample size, which is a national scale survey that represents the population of Nepal in general and major caste/ethnic groups in particular. Fourth, it has adequate sample across ethnic categories. Fifth, it follows scientific survey methods by mobilizing the trained staffs of the NSO (previously CBS) as well as provides necessary 77 exercise to upgrade the quality of survey and data. Finally, NDHS also has similar advantage, regarding the quality of data. Furthermore, data obtained from NLSS and NDHS were also used by various research institutions as well as individual researchers within and outside Nepal. This is enough to justify the selection of the data sets for the study (Gautam, 2013 : 49).

5. Subjective Well-being and Marital Status

Economic class significantly influences individual decisions about marriage and marital status, as well as subjective well-being and aspirations for a better life. However, an individual's perceived economic class may not always align with their actual economic standing, affecting their expectations and decisions. In this context, Perini and Sironi (2016) discuss how these dynamics play out differently for men and women, highlighting the importance of considering gender perspectives in understanding the relationship between marital status and subjective well-being.

Perini and Sironi (2016) emphasize that gender differences are especially pronounced when examining the effects of separation and divorce on depression. They suggest that the emotional consequences

of marital breakdowns may not be the same for men and women due to their differing social and cultural experiences. Citing Oldehinkel et al. (2008), they note that women tend to be more emotionally affected by separation due to higher sensitivity to life changes and stressors. However, this increased emotional distress in women may also stem from material changes post-separation, as women's financial conditions often deteriorate significantly following separation, whereas men's incomes remain relatively stable and tend to recover more quickly.

This research highlights that, while not all studies on marital status focus explicitly on gender differences, the socio-economic and cultural structures in society intensify these disparities. Various theoretical frameworks in gender, marriage, and family studies provide insights into how social, economic, and cultural factors uniquely impact men and women in the context of marriage and marital transitions.

6. Theoretical Foundation of Marriage

Interest, attitude, and choices regarding social matters are largely shaped by societal constructs. Individual, household, and family backgrounds-particularly social, economic, and cultural factors-play a critical role in influencing one's views on marriage and marital status. Changes in individual attitudes significantly impact family dynamics. Andersson (2016) discusses these theoretical perspectives on individual attitudes and family structures, arguing that while marital status decisions are personal, they are also shaped by the social structure and economic background within which individuals operate.

Andersson (2016) notes that studies in social psychology and sociology have examined how behaviours impact family attitudes, drawing on theories like Cognitive Dissonance Theory (CDT) and the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA). CDT (Festinger, 1957) posits that when behaviours conflict with personal attitudes, it creates cognitive dissonance, prompting attitude adjustments to reduce discomfort. For example, an individual who views marriage as oppressive may experience distress if they marry, potentially shifting their perspective to support marriage. TRA (Ajzen and Fishbein, 2000), meanwhile, suggests that attitudes are context-specific evaluations, influenced by experiences and attitudes towards particular

behaviours. Andersson (2016) considers TRA particularly useful for examining how attitudes evolve concerning gendered family roles, offering insights into gender-based differences in family dynamics.

Davis and Love (2017) provide further sociological insights, suggesting that social hierarchies and identity influence interpersonal dynamics and shape stability in personal identity. Their work, grounded in identity theory, shows that individuals with higher social status are more able to validate their identity, while those with lower status experience more identity instability. This dynamic affects various social interactions, including those within families, the workplace, and educational settings, further illustrating how social positions influence identity and behaviour.

The sociological literature on marriage also addresses the declining role of traditional norms in shaping relationships. Green, Valleriani, and Adam (2016) discuss the evolution toward what Giddens (1992) calls the "pure relationship", characterized by mutual satisfaction rather than traditional obligations of procreation or economic stability. This shift reflects a broader trend toward individualization, where personal goals and relationships are defined less by societal expectations and more by individual needs.

Killewald (2016) explores the changing dynamics in marital stability over recent decades, noting shifts in employment, household labor, and gender role expectations. While financial stability has historically influenced divorce rates, evolving gender norms have reshaped marital expectations. For instance, while the traditional role of the wife as homemaker has declined in importance, the husband-as-breadwinner norm remains influential, underscoring that marital stability is embedded in broader, shifting gender structures.

Killewald (2016) also highlights that economic independence is often linked to divorce risk, although financial factors shape not only divorce but also marriage decisions. While studies provide extensive, sometimes contradictory, findings on the relationship between money, work, and marital outcomes, the social and cultural context remains crucial in understanding these connections. Thus, a nuanced understanding of marriage stability and family life requires recognizing how economic, social, and cultural factors interact within specific societal frameworks.

7. Theoretical and Analytical Framework

The concept of economic class and marital status can be effectively operationalized through Killewald's (2016) insights on how individual background and personal choice are constructed within specific social contexts. Conceptually, divorce may occur when one or both partners believe they will be better off separated; thus, the risk of divorce is influenced by the perceived gains from marriage (Becker, Landes, and Michael, 1977). Killewald (2016) notes that, according to the economic independence perspective, divorce rates are likely to rise when financial dependency on marriage decreases, as partners are then more able to exit unsatisfactory relationships (Ruggles 1997; Sayer et al. 2011; Schoen et al. 2002). Women's economic independence, in particular, is shaped by work experience, education, and occupation, as well as by external support factors, such as child support policies and government assistance. However, the significance of economic independence varies across societies.

Marital status-including marriage and divorce-is closely tied to individual backgrounds, especially economic conditions. In the U.S., evidence for the economic independence perspective is mixed, with some studies finding support (Dechter 1992; Heckert, Nowak, and Snyder 1998; Ruggles 1997) and others finding contrary evidence (Rogers and DeBoer 2001; Sayer and Bianchi 2000). Interestingly, men's divorce decisions may also be influenced by their economic well-being post-divorce (Sayer et al. 2011).

Ritzer (2011) discusses Marx's perspective on how economic class, as the base structure, shapes various social and cultural practices, collectively referred to as the superstructure. According to Marx, the base comprises the ways people meet their material needs and the resulting economic relations. In contrast, the superstructure includes noneconomic relations, social institutions, and prevailing ideologies.

Importantly, Marx's view of history does not suggest a simple, one-way alignment of the superstructure with the base. Human history is driven by the pursuit of need satisfaction, but these needs evolve over time. Progress in meeting existing needs often generates new ones, making human needs both the foundation and the outcome of the economic base. Therefore, it is evident that an individual's economic class significantly influences social and cultural practices, including marital status (Ritzer, 2011).

Ritzer (2011 : 87) explains that Marx was able to critique capitalism from the perspective of its future due to his belief in history's predictable course, rooted in his materialist conception of history-commonly referred to as historical materialism (Vandenberghe, 2005). According to Marx's historical materialism, the way people meet their material needs fundamentally determines or conditions their social relationships, institutions, and even dominant ideas.

The concept highlights the critical role of the "base", which consists of the material means of production and the resulting economic relations. In contrast, "superstructure" refers to non-economic aspects, such as social institutions and prevalent ideologies. Importantly, Marx did not propose a simplistic model where the superstructure passively aligns with the base (Ritzer, 2011).

Human history, according to Marx, is driven by the ongoing effort to satisfy needs, but these needs evolve over time. Advances in satisfying existing needs often generate new ones, making human needs both the foundation of and a product of the economic base. This dynamic interplay underpins the historical processes Marx sought to explain (Ritzer, 2011).

Economic status thus serves as a fundamental determinant of marriage and family outcomes. However, social and cultural practices shaped by economic status vary between societies. Roth and Dashper (2016) explore how gendered experiences are shaped by factors such as race, class, marital, and parental status. For instance, Ramazanoglu (1989) critiques a singular "feminist standpoint", arguing that women's varied experiences highlight the importance of intersectionality. Academic research reflects this as well; Platt (2007) examined three leading British sociology journals from 1950 to 2004 and found a male author majority, with women more frequently publishing on topics related to family, gender, and feminism, often using qualitative methods. This gendered academic landscape reflects broader social and cultural influences.

In Nepal, Nakarmi (2021) discusses the Newari community, where socio-economic background significantly affects cultural practices and resource access. Due to occupational and cultural differences, Newari caste groups experience unequal access to education, employment, and other resources, often stratified by gender. This socioeconomic stratification influences marriage

practices across class in Nepal, as argued by Pandey (2010) and Gautam (2013). Access to education, employment, and healthcare is primarily determined by economic class, with wealthier groups accessing more resources, which, in turn, shapes social and cultural norms around marriage, including age at marriage, divorce, and separation.

In sum, analyzing marriage and marital status across economic classes in diverse societies, such as Nepal, reveals the complex interdependencies of economic, social, and cultural factors shaping marital outcomes worldwide.

8. Trends and Patterns of Marriage and Marital Status in Nepal

The Nepal Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS) of 2022, reported by the Ministry of Health and Population (MOHP, 2023), provides detailed insights into marriage and marital status trends in Nepal, with significant gender and economic differences in age at first marriage. According to the report, women tend to marry earlier than men, with a median age at first marriage of 18.3 years for women and 22.3 years for men between the ages of 25-49. Over time, the median age at first marriage has gradually increased, rising from 16.2 years in 1996 to 17.9 years in 2016, and reaching 18.3 years in 2022 for women. Among men, it increased from 20.1 years in 2001 to 21.7 years in 2016, and 22.3 years in 2022 (MOHP, 2023).

The NDHS (2022) also highlights that 75% of women and 63% of men aged 15-49 are currently married or in a union, while 22% of women and 36% of men in this age range have never married. Age-wise, marital status disparities are notable: among those aged 15-19, 21% of women are married or in a union compared to just 5% of men. By the age of 20-24, 68% of women are married or cohabiting, compared to 35% of men. The data reveals a trend toward later marriage among young women, with a decrease in adolescent marriage rates. For instance, the proportion of married women aged 15-19 has declined from 43% in 1996 to 27% in 2016 and to 21% in 2022. Similarly, the percentage of women aged 20-24 who are married has decreased from 84% in 1996 to 68% in 2022 (MOHP, 2023).

The report also links economic status to age at marriage. For women aged 20-49 and men aged 25-49, the median age at first marriage varies by economic quintile: 17.8 and 20.6 years for women and men, respectively, in the lowest quintile, and rising to 18.7 and

23.0 years in the fourth quintile. This trend aligns with the national averages of 18.5 for women and 22.3 for men, showing that economic status is closely related to marriage timing in Nepal.

This analysis underscores how marital status, including age at marriage, is influenced by both economic and gender factors, reflecting broader socio-economic disparities in Nepal.

9. Class (Economic: Poverty, Prosperity) and Marital Status in Nepal

Marital status is defined and categorized by researchers based on societal norms and the relevance of these categories in a particular social context. Cheng (2016) organized marital status into three mutually exclusive categories: (1) never married, (2) married with spouse present in the household, and (3) other (including divorced, widowed, or separated, collectively referred to as "divorced" in subsequent analysis). To address missing data on marital status, Cheng (2016) imputes an individual's current marital status by referring to records from previous periods.

In Nepal's Living Standards Surveys (NLSS), marital status is categorized in a similar manner, though with some variations over time. For instance, NLSS includes categories such as (1) married, (2) divorced, (3) separated, (4) widow/widower, and (5) never married. However, in NLSS-III, the categories were expanded to include (1) never married, (2) single married, (3) poly-married, (4) remarried, (5) widow/widower, (6) divorced, and (7) separated-showing notable differences from NLSS-I and NLSS-IV. The analysis of marital status across economic classes follows the survey categorizations, covering survey years from 1995/96 (Table 1) to 2010/11 (Table-2) and 2022/23 (Table 3). Economic class is defined by poverty status, distinguishing between "poor" and "non-poor" categories as measured by the NLSS across different years.

The 1995/96 data reveal notable differences in marital status between economic classes in Nepal (Table 1). In the non-poor category, 56.8% of individuals were married, compared to 60.6% in the poor category-a 4 percentage point higher likelihood of marriage among the poor. Divorce rates were almost twice as high among the non-poor (0.4%) compared to the poor (0.2%), suggesting that divorce is more prevalent among the non-poor. Similarly, separation rates were higher in the non-poor group (0.6%) compared to the poor group (0.3%), indicating a greater likelihood of separation among non-poor

individuals. The percentage of never-married individuals was also higher among the non-poor (34.8%) compared to the poor (32.7%), with a 2.1 percentage point difference. Widowhood, however, was observed equally among non-poor and poor individuals (6.6%).

These data reflect how marital status varies by economic class, highlighting a tendency for higher marriage rates among the poor and higher rates of divorce and separation among the non-poor.

Table-1 : Economic Class and Marital Status in Nepal

(N=14734)

Economic Class	Marital Status (in percentage)					Total
	Married	**Divorced**	**Separated**	**Widow/ Widower**	**Never Married**	
Non-Poor	58.7	0.4	0.6	5.5	34.8	100.0
Poor	61.3	0.2	0.3	5.6	32.7	100.0
Total	**59.8**	**0.3**	**0.4**	**5.6**	**33.9**	**100.0**
Pearson Chi-Square= 139478.489, df= 4, p=0.000 (Sig. 2-sided), =0.01						

Source : Computed by the researcher based on NLSS-I: 1995/96 data sets;
Note :   The results obtained and presented in the table are weighted.

The observed differences in marital status across economic classes were tested using the Chi-Square test of independence, yielding a Chi-Square value of 139478.489, which was statistically significant ($p = 0.000 <   = 0.01$). This result provides strong evidence to reject the null hypothesis, indicating a significant association between economic class and marital status.

Over time, the poverty rate in Nepal has shown a consistent decline, dropping from 41.8% in 1995/96 to 20.27% in 2022/23. This trend reflects a steady improvement in economic conditions, with the poverty gap decreasing from 11.75 in 1995/96 to 4.52 in 2022/23, as reported by NSO (2024). Additionally, income inequality, as measured by the Gini index, has also declined from 32.2 in 1995/96 to 30 in 2022/23, suggesting a gradual reduction in economic disparity across classes.

This economic progress has implications for marital status differences between poor and non-poor groups. While the inequality remains, the gradual decrease in poverty and increase in prosperity has been accompanied by shifts in marital practices that align more closely with patterns observed in the non-poor category. This

evolution suggests that as economic status improves, the marital status dynamics of previously poorer groups increasingly mirror those of the more prosperous groups (Table-2).

Table-2 : Economic Class and Marital Status in Nepal

(N=22360)

Economic Class	Marital Status (In Percentage)							Total
	Never married	Single married	Poly married	Re-married	Widow/widower	Divorced	Separated	
Non-Poor	35.5	55.2	0.8	3.0	4.9	0.2	0.4	100.0
Poor	36.0	52.5	0.8	4.5	5.5	0.2	0.4	100.0
Total	**35.6**	**54.5**	**0.8**	**3.4**	**5.0**	**0.2**	**0.4**	**100.0**
Pearson Chi-Square=221762.533, df= 6, p=0.000 (Sig. 2-sided), =0.01								

Source : Computed by the researcher based on NLSS-II: 2010/11 data sets;

Note :   The results obtained and presented in the table are weighted.

The analysis of marital status by economic class in Nepal shows notable shifts in marital patterns from 1995/96 through to 2022/23, coinciding with changing poverty levels and economic development.

In 2010/11, the NLSS survey found slight variations in marital status between economic classes. For instance, 35.5% of non-poor individuals were never married, compared to 36% among the poor. Single marriage rates were slightly higher among the non-poor (55.2%) than the poor (52.5%), with a small difference of 2.7 percentage points. Similarly, widow/widower status was marginally higher among the poor (5.5%) than the non-poor (4.9%), and non-poor individuals had higher rates of divorce (0.2%) and separation (0.4%) than the poor (0.2% and 0.4%, respectively).

Additionally, two unique categories of marital status, "poly-married" and "re-married", were included in the 2010/11 survey, reflecting more traditional marital practices. Poly-marriage was common among non-poor individuals (0.8%) than the poor (0.8%). Conversely, re-marriage rates were significantly higher among the poor (4.5%) compared to the non-poor (3%), nearly doubling among the poor.

The 2010/11 survey period also saw a reduced poverty rate of 25.2%, a marked improvement from 41.8% in 1995/96, reflecting broader economic growth. This improvement in economic conditions corresponded with evolving marital patterns across economic classes, suggesting that marital status variation between the poor and non-poor narrowed as poverty decreased.

The Chi-Square test of independence for 2010/11 yielded a significant result (x^2 = 51.598, p = 0.000 < = 0.05), confirming an association between economic class and marital status. The data suggests that prosperous individuals tend to have higher rates of marriage, divorce, and separation than poorer individuals, while patterns of marital status become more similar as economic inequality diminishes.

In the 2022/23 NLSS survey, where poverty rates had further declined to 20.3%, differences in marital status between economic classes were minimal. Married rates were nearly identical for poor and non-poor individuals at 60.1%. Divorce (0.2% and 0/3%) and separation rates (0.8% and 1.0 %) were equal across both groups (non-poor and poor) respectively, and widowhood was also different, with 4.7% for the non-poor and 5.6% for the poor. This alignment suggests that as poverty declines and a larger share of the population experiences economic prosperity, marital status differences between economic classes diminish.

Table-3 : Economic Class and Marital Status in Nepal

(N=38951)

Economic Class	Marital Status (in percentage)					Total
	Never Married	Married	Widow/ Widower	Divorced	Separated	
Non-Poor	33.5	60.7	4.7	0.2	0.8	100.0
Poor	34.5	58.5	5.6	0.3	1.0	100.0
Total	33.7	60.3	4.9	0.2	0.9	100.0
Pearson Chi-Square= 83719.675, df= 4, p=0.000 (Sig. 2-sided), =0.01						

Source : Computed by the researcher based on NLSS-IV: 2022/23 data sets;

Note : The results obtained and presented in the table are weighted.

This progression highlights how economic improvement contributes to uniformity in marital practices, supporting the conclusion that as economic class inequality decreases, the diversity in marital status among classes also reduces.

The Chi-Square test results from the recent data (χ^2 = 83719.675, p = 0.000 > α = 0.01) provide valuable insight into the relationship between economic class and marital status in a context of declining poverty rates. These findings indicate that, at a 1% significance level, there is enough evidence to conclude an association between economic class and marital status. Thus, the null hypothesis-that marital status and economic class are independent-cannot be rejected.

This lack* of significant association implies that as the poverty rate decreases and a larger proportion of the population becomes prosperous, marital practices tend to converge across economic classes. In other words, when economic inequality diminishes, differences in marital status between economic classes become negligible. This suggests that prosperity fosters a more uniform pattern in marital practices, likely due to increased access to similar social and economic resources across different segments of society.

In summary, these results underscore that lower poverty and rising prosperity levels contribute to reducing distinctions in marital status based on economic class, supporting the idea that economic equality fosters greater similarity in marital behaviours across the population.

10. Discussion

Marriage and marital dynamics are indeed fundamental aspects of human society, shaping individual life courses and broader social structures. Recent shifts in union formation and marital behaviours, as noted by Carlson, Wimer, and Haskins (2022), reflect significant changes over the past several decades. The trend toward later marriage and the increasing acceptance of alternatives to marriage highlight a transformative period in family life.

In the United States, the median age at first marriage has reached historic highs, with women marrying at an average age of 28.6 and men at 30.4 as of 2021. This trend mirrors broader societal changes, including greater emphasis on education and career establishment before marriage, as well as changing cultural

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*The unweighted results of NLSS IV data set on Pearson Chi-Square= 4.863, df= 4, p=0.302 (Sig. 2-sided), and α=0.05 clearly show there is similarities in marriage and marital status among the poor and non-poor categories. This is enough evidence to argue that the declining gap between poor and non-poor ultimately creates similar features of marriage and marital status.

attitudes toward relationships and family structures. Similarly, in Nepal, there has been a noticeable increase in the median age at first marriage, reflecting a gradual shift in societal norms and economic conditions that influence marital decisions.

The decline in annual marriage rates and the proportion of currently married women in the U.S. further illustrates this shift. The annual marriage rate dropped from 76.5 per thousand unmarried women in 1970 to just 31.3 in 2018, and the percentage of women who are married has also decreased significantly over the decades, from 65% in 1960 to 46% in 2018 (Schweizer, 2020). This trend indicates a growing preference for alternative forms of partnerships, which could be attributed to changing societal values, economic factors, and an increase in women's autonomy and opportunities.

The findings from recent opinion surveys, such as those conducted by Horowitz, Graf, and Livingston (2019), reveal a complex relationship with marriage. While many Americans still view marriage as important, a significant portion considers it "important but not essential" for a fulfilling life. This perspective underscores a broader societal acceptance of diverse family structures and relationship forms, including cohabitation and single parenthood.

In summary, the evolving landscape of marriage and marital behaviour reflects profound societal changes influenced by economic conditions, cultural shifts, and individual choices. Both in the United States and in Nepal, the increase in age at first marriage and the acceptance of alternative partnership arrangements signal a new understanding of family and commitment in contemporary society.

11. Conclusions

The transformations in marriage and family structures that have occurred globally reflect profound shifts influenced by economic, social, and cultural changes. The processes of globalization and modernization have also led to significant changes in marriage, divorce, cohabitation, and fertility behaviours in many Western industrialized nations, including the United States. This transition, characterized by increased diversity and instability in family structures, suggests that traditional notions of family are being redefined.

The relationship between economic status and marital practices is particularly noteworthy. In contexts where poverty

remains high, significant disparities in marital behaviours exist between poor and non-poor individuals. For example, economic hardships can lead to different marriage rates, divorce rates, and cohabitation patterns. When a large portion of the population lives in poverty, economic class can greatly influence marital status, leading to distinct practices that reflect the broader economic realities.

As economic conditions improve and poverty rates decline, studies indicate that the differences in marital practices between economic classes also diminish. In economically homogeneous societies, where a larger segment of the population experiences similar levels of prosperity, variations in marital status become less pronounced. This phenomenon suggests that as economic disparities narrow, social and cultural practices regarding marriage and family life may converge.

The research by Eads and Tach (2016) underscores the impact of economic stability on marriage. Their findings emphasize that economic hardships can lead to increased marital conflict, which is a key predictor of divorce. This perspective is supported by the family stress model, which posits that financial pressures can undermine the quality of marital relationships, resulting in higher rates of conflict and instability. Economic hardships, whether measured through income levels, poverty rates, or specific hardships such as housing insecurity, consistently correlate with increased marital distress.

The link between economic class and marital status underscores the broader societal impact of economic conditions. As inequality persists or diminishes, family life and marital practices will continue to evolve. Understanding these dynamics is essential for addressing the needs of diverse family structures and fostering policies that promote stability across economic classes.

This conclusion aligns with Marxist theory, which argues that the economic base shapes social and cultural practices, including marriage, as part of the superstructure. However, Marx's perspective does not imply a simple, one-way relationship between the base and the superstructure. Human history is driven by the pursuit of need satisfaction, but these needs evolve over time. Progress in meeting existing needs often generates new ones, making human needs both the foundation and the outcome of the economic base. Consequently, an individual's economic class significantly influences social and cultural practices, including marital status (Ritzer, 2011).

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Breaking the Silence: Systemic Challenges and Social Prejudices Facing Nepal's LGBTIQ+ Community

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Abstract

Sexual and gender minority individuals are forced to live with systemic discrimination and social prejudice in different areas of their lives in every corner of the globe. The present study focuses on the systemic barriers and social discrimination faced by sexual and gender minorities, particularly the LGBTIQ+ community residing in the Kathmandu Valley, Nepal. Along the same line, I conducted semi-structured, in-depth, qualitative interviews with seven participants based on the quota sampling of the LGBTIQ+ population. On the one hand, I observed that sexual and gender minority individuals were subject to numerous challenges across various domains of their lives, such as name-calling, harassment, verbal aggression, physical aggression, and exclusion in the workplace. In addition, I realized that they were constantly being subjected to systemic discrimination and social stereotypes, including institutional ineptitude and the lack of effective policy implementation. On the other hand, the transgender and intersex populations often face significant stigma, such as being humiliated in healthcare facilities, having housing off-limits, and being harassed in public. For this reason, the present research proposes that the promotion of equity and dignity for all members of the LGBTIQ+ community depends critically on the presence of supportive environments, which are often dependent on family acceptance of individuals' LGBTQ+ identities and broader inclusive social attitudes. The proposed measures include public awareness exercises, more legal protection, and gender-sensitive facilities.

Keywords

LGBTIQ+, Systemic discrimination, Societal prejudice, Verbal harassment, Gender identity.

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1. Introduction

Sexual minorities indicate a group of people whose gender identity and sexuality are not congruent with the normalized heterosexual orientation. This applies to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, and queer (UNDP/USAID, 2014; UNHCR, 2024; Ojha, 2024) people. In addition, each member of this category has a different identity and sexual orientation. Those individuals, primarily women who identify as lesbians, experience romantic or sexual attraction to other women. Just as, an example of a sexual and gender minority, gay refers to that male population that is attracted to other males, regardless of gender. Moreover, a second category that has emerged, bisexual, is individuals with sexual attraction to members of both sexes, disrupting the model of heterosexual attraction. Similarly, another group describes themselves as transgender individuals who redefine conventional standards of gender by identifying with a gender other than the one assigned at birth (Zambon, 2023). Equally, the group of intersex subjects also involves a category of physical or biological traits that do not strictly correspond to classical notions of the opposite sex. Just as some sexual minorities identify themselves as 'queer', meaning deviant from the normative gender binary or heterosexuality (Vijlbrief et al., 2019), another group of sexual minorities should also be recognized themselves under the term "queer".

The concepts of sexual orientation and gender identity are closely related but distinct. Sexual orientation refers to various forms of emotional and physical romantic attraction that can be contrasted with heteronormative perspectives (Moradi et al., 2009). In contrast, gender identity is the internal sense of self of an individual which can include or exclude conformance with expectations of a particular society that are based on biological sex at birth (NCTE, 2009). For example, transgender patients may require medical treatment to align their physical appearance with their gender identity. Prejudice in society, including homophobia and

transphobia, magnifies the marginalization of LGBTIQ+ people and takes the form of both overt aggression and covert microaggressions (Weinberg, 1972; Taylor & Peter, 2011; Kasula, 2023).

The LGBTIQ+ rights movement has been accompanied by both achievements and failures. Historically, events such as the establishment of the Scientific-Humanitarian Committee in Berlin in 1897 and the Stonewall Riots in New York in 1969 triggered cross-cultural activism for equality. On the one hand, the legalization of marriage for same-sex couples in the Netherlands in 2001 and Argentina in 2010 stands as a landmark step toward equality. On the other hand, the fragility of these accomplishments is evident in cases like Russia's 2020 constitutional amendment, which explicitly prohibits same-sex marriage (Angelo et al., 2021).

In Nepal, the landscape is marked by paradoxes. On one hand, Nepal is recognized as a progressive state in South Asia due to its legal recognition of LGBTIQ rights at both international and domestic levels (Khadgi, 2024). By contrast, deeply ingrained social stereotypes perpetuate discrimination and marginalize these groups in schools, workplaces, and public spaces. This article investigates conditions of LGBTIQ behavioural discrimination experienced by LGBTIQ persons in Nepal, such as their social perceptions and lived experiences. Moreover, the purpose of this research is to explore the systemic challenges and social prejudices faced by Nepal's LGBTIQ+ community, particularly in the Kathmandu Valley, to raise awareness and promote inclusive social change by amplifying the voices of marginalized groups.

2.   Literature Review

2·1   Theoretical Understanding of Sexual and Gender Minorities

Anthropological paradigms reveal that gender and sexuality are learned and culturally and socially embedded, that is, they are constructs of the history and social conditions of the society. Sex binary classification of the human sex (male/female) about corresponding characteristics and behaviours is neither stable nor universal (Kottak & Kozaitis, 2022). The traditional idea of biology as determinism, in which biological sex is associated with fixed gender roles, has been challenged by strong evidence of the social construction of gender and sexuality (Kottak & Kozaitis, 2022).

Gender role cultural variation provides compelling evidence of the dynamic nature of this construct. In the Lahu communities of

both China and Thailand, gender roles focus on complementarity, and the contributions of men and women are highly valued, in contrast to the hierarchical gender roles in the majority of other societies (Du, 1999). Also, social organizations that favour cooperative patterns of gender roles (e.g., matrilineal systems found in certain Indigenous societies) illustrate other models of gender role development emphasizing work, collaboration, and mutual trust instead of domination and control (Zhou, 2002).

Contemporary anthropological scholarship takes into account feminist, queer, and post-colonial perspectives when examining the relations between gender, power, and identity. The field of studies includes themes, such as reproductive rights and mobility, and the consequences of globalization and transnationally located and transiting populations for gender relations. These questions exemplify the role of historical and cultural backgrounds in forming personal experiences and collective organizations (Du, 1999; Zhou, 2002; Ojha, 2020, 2023a, 2023b). When anthropologists call attention to the cultural variation in gender expressions, they question the cultural fixity of Western gender categories, and they argue for a more culturally diverse understanding.

2·2   The Evolution of Anthropology in Sexuality Studies

The anthropological study of sexuality has followed suit and is in step with broader social change. Pioneering research, such as Diderot's eulogizing of Polynesian sexuality in 18th century Europe (Diderot, 1989), placed non-European sexuality at the top of the hierarchy. The 20th and early 21st century evolutionary theories have interpreted sexuality through the paradigm of 'primitive promiscuity.' This view was then dismantled by scholars such as Malinowski and Westermarck who underscored that sexual norms differ culturally (Westermarck, 1906-08; Malinowski, 1987).

During the mid-20th century interest in sexuality decreased as anthropologists became interested in gaining scientific respectability and bypassed sensitive or autobiographical issues (Lyons & Lyons, 2004). However, both the feminist, but also gay and lesbian people organizations "new wave" of the 1970s revived interest in sexuality studies and promoted a critical discussion on metropolitan and marginal sexualities. The queer theory emerged as an effective analytical device, deconstructing heteronormativity and providing complex understandings of sex identity (Lyons & Lyons, 2004).

2·3   Power Dynamics and Sexuality

Sexuality operates within complex systems of power and morality. As scholars such as Foucault have shown (Lyons & Lyons, 2006), discourses of sexuality are woven into the fabric of social control (Lyons & Lyons, 2006). For instance, debates surrounding same-sex marriage in religious spaces have, on occasion, reflected a deeper war between institutional power and evolving moral perspectives. As a further example, problems such as human trafficking have revealed the confluence of coercion, consent, and structural disadvantages and have thus helped disrupt the discourse of sexual agency (Lyons & Lyons, 2006).

3.   Study Area and Methodology

This study focuses on the lived experiences of LGBTIQ people in Nepal, more specifically the Kathmandu Valley, an area of cultural pluralism and urbanism. In this study, I employed a qualitative research design and conducted in-depth, face-to-face interviews to collect the data from the participants. Similarly, to fulfill the purpose of the study, I used quota sampling to select eight participants among the population of LGBTIQ+ in Kathmandu Valley. In addition, participants were reassured as to anonymity and confidentiality by the use of pseudonyms and, therefore, their identities were not disclosed. These ethical measures created a perception of trustworthiness and motivated study participants to share sensitive information openly and without any social or legal repercussions.

The study aimed at revealing patterns of behavioural discrimination, surveying social attitudes, and assessing participants' knowledge about their rights. Concentrating on the lived experiences of marginalized people and how it bleeds into the more general systemic problems of the LGBTIQ+ community in Nepal. This paper also contributes to an understanding of the hidden systemic challenges of the LGBTIQ+ population in Nepal, in which recommendations to foster inclusivity and equality can be drawn.

4.   Systemic Challenges & Social Prejudices Facing Nepal's LGBTIQ+ Community: Evidence from the Field

Nepal's LGBTIQ+ community has been facing many systemic challenges and social prejudices. During my fieldwork, I observed the

profound social constraints that sexual and gender minorities in the Kathmandu Valley face in every aspect of their daily lives. Moreover, individuals who identify as LGBTIQ+ constantly experience humiliation, harassment, stigmatization, and discrimination because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. In addition, deeply rooted social stigmas marginalize this community, fostering hatred and violence that weaken them mentally, emotionally, physically, and socially. Opportunities for LGBTIQ+ individuals remain scarce, which further exacerbates their struggles.

On the one hand, Nepal's LGBTIQ+ community faces a deeply entrenched system of barriers and social stigma that pervades every aspect of life. On the other hand, despite the existence of laws meant to safeguard their rights, weak enforcement allows discrimination to persist across sectors such as education, healthcare, housing, and public services. Members of this community endure daily stigma and marginalization rooted in their sexual orientation or gender identity. Families reject many of them, employers bully them at work, and harassment on the streets is a common occurrence.

Furthermore, cyberbullying, economic exploitation, and institutional indifference reveal how deeply prejudice is embedded in Nepali society. These systemic failures highlight an urgent need for social acceptance, meaningful policy reforms, and stronger institutions that protect the dignity and rights of LGBTIQ+ individuals. Without addressing these challenges and enforcing existing laws, true equality will remain an unachieved goal for this marginalized community.

4·1 Verbal and Physical Harassment

While researching the fieldwork, I asked participants if they had faced name-calling and harassment. The answer to this question from lesbians was "not much". Since this response was unexpected, I was curious and asked why. They replied that no one can assume their sexual orientation unless they reveal it. However, when I asked the same question to transgender men and transgender women, their answers were different. Anshu (Pseudonym), a 43-year-old Trans Woman, stated, "People recognize me because of my voice, and they call me names like chakka and hijra (a derogatory slur). I was also harassed while walking in an alley by some men. I was really scared, and I ran quickly". This shows the reality of society, where people still mentally and physically torture transgender women. She also

added, "While I was walking near Ratnapark (a place in Kathmandu), they assumed I was a sex worker and came to deal with me. When I denied it, they used rough words". Because of these experiences, she further stated, "People assume we are sex workers and harass us. I feel this is a very serious issue because not all transgender women are sex workers. People pass judgment based on a few transgender women who work as sex workers."

A different response was given by Dhiren (Pseudonym), a 31-year-old, Trans Man. He stated, "I have faced verbal abuse in public spaces. They used to tease me, asking if I was a boy or a girl. But luckily, I have not faced any kind of physical harassment. In today's society, verbal abuse has become very common because people think it is okay to say anything to anyone without thinking about others' feelings." While talking about name-calling and harassment, Rupak (Pseudonym), a 28-year-old Gay, expressed, "Five years ago, I was working in a company, and my duty was to lock the office after work. One day, one of my colleagues, who was senior in position, said he had a lot of work to complete but was just using his mobile. At 6 pm, he started making sexual comments. I felt a bad touch of his hands on my thigh. I was literally so scared, and I ran away. I left that job." His story made me realize that offices are not safe for everyone. While we were having an in-depth interview, he said, "I am in a dilemma about whether I should share or not share another incident that happened to me." I assured him to only share if he was comfortable. Rupak further expressed:

> One day, my transgender friends dressed me up like a girl, did my makeup, and told me they would take me to Dohori Sanjha (a restaurant or venue where live duets are performed). My first client was a foreigner. I continued working as a sex worker for around two years. My clients used to come in cars and negotiate with me. One day, five clients took five of us to a hotel room and asked us to be naked. One of them took out a knife from his pocket and stabbed me in the chest. Luckily, the knife was not sharp. We shouted, and they ran away. We complained to the police, and they were arrested. However, the police gave them two or three slaps and released them just because we were dressed like transgender women. I still have the marks from the stab. That incident still haunts me."

After finishing the story, he showed me the marks on his chest. This incident was breathtaking. Such incidents are life-threatening,

and it is hard for them to know whom to trust and whom not to trust. While researching, some participants did not want to share their stories, perhaps because they had to relive those incidents again. Devika (Pseudonym), a 29-year-old Trans Woman, shared her experiences:

> My friends call me by my dead name instead of using my preferred name, which makes me feel super uncomfortable. Even my teacher asked me why I was behaving and dressing like a girl. They used to bully me, discriminate against me, and talk behind my back. I was so depressed that I could not concentrate on my studies.

However, she added, "Luckily, I have not faced any kind of physical harassment because I am an activist and raise my voice whenever anything wrong happens to me." She further mentioned that most name-calling and harassment occur during school life. The response to name-calling and harassment from Suresh (Pseudonym), a 31-year-old Trans Man, was different. He expressed, "People bully me on social media platforms. They tease me by asking, 'How do you have sex?' They ask unnecessary questions on my social media platforms. They even threaten to photoshop my picture by attaching a nude body to my face." He added, "I got so mentally depressed because of such harassment that, for my peace of mind, I stopped using social media platforms."

A similar incident happened to Sonam (Pseudonym), a 36-year-old, Intersex. He stated, "I get lots of hate, vulgar, and threatening messages on my social media. Luckily, I have not faced any kind of physical harassment." He explained that cyberbullying is faced by most LGBTIQ people who are on social media platforms. Since they try to avoid and ignore such messages and comments, most of them leave social media because of the humiliation they face. Anju (Pseudonym), a 37-year-old Lesbian, expressed, "I have not faced any kind of harassment or name-calling. I am feminine in nature, so people do not know I am a lesbian unless I disclose it". After conducting my research, I realized that lesbians do not face harassment as often as others in the community.

4·2 Harassment in Public Transportation

I asked the participants whether people act differently toward them in public transportation, and the answers were similar. While sharing her experience, Anshu (Trans Woman) expressed, "While I

travel on public buses, people stare at me as if I have eaten their food. It is so uncomfortable." She further stated, "I don't like to travel on public transportation. When I take a bus, people gossip about me. I mostly wear masks so no one notices me." Because of this, she feels suppressed and is forced to hide her identity or even stay confined within the four walls of her room. Such suppression often makes people anti-social. This sad reality shows how society forces them to suffer, even though everyone has the right to walk freely without being judged.

Sonam (Intersex) added, "I feel so uncomfortable on public buses when I am alone, so most of the time, I use Pathao or Tootle, which are more convenient for me." However, he also mentioned, "It's not possible for everyone to pay the expensive fares of Tootle, Pathao, or even taxis. In order for this to change, the perception of people must be changed." Similarly, Dhiren (Trans Man) shared his experience before transitioning. "In public buses, when I reached my destination and talked to the conductor, he used to laugh and say out loud, 'I thought you were a brother, but you are a sister'. All the passengers laughed at me, and I felt so insulted." He added that it was very difficult to use public transportation before transitioning because of such behaviour from both conductors and passengers. However, after transitioning, he mentioned, "I haven't faced any kind of discrimination so far."

On the same question, Devika (Trans Woman) said, "I try not to speak while traveling on public buses. If I speak, because of my voice, they stare and talk about me." She explained that staring and talking behind her back is quite common on public buses whenever people see someone from the LGBTIQ+ community. Moreover, Rupak (Gay) provided a different perspective, stating, "Since I don't have any feminine behaviour, I haven't faced any problems in public transportation so far." Similarly, Anju (Lesbian) said, "I have not faced any problems in public transportation either." Tanuja (Pseudonym), a-33-year old Trans Woman, shared a different response. She expressed, "Even if they tease me or say something, I don't feel bad when I'm alone. But when I am traveling with my family, it really hurts." Her experience highlights that while she has become familiar with the behaviour she faces daily on buses, people need to understand that it's not acceptable to behave strangely toward someone just because they are different. Suresh (Trans Man) reflected on his experiences before transitioning. "Before transition,

it was very difficult to travel on public transportation. As our voices hadn't changed, they used to stare, point fingers, and laugh at us."

According to my research, most transgender men and women have faced discrimination in public transportation before transitioning. Although it is common for people to stare, gossip, or talk behind someone's back whenever they see members of the LGBTIQ community, the experiences of gay and lesbian participants were different. In my in-depth interviews, both gay and lesbian participants reported that they have not faced any kind of discrimination in public transportation.

4·3   Barriers in Healthcare Institutions

During the field trip, I raised a question about the challenges they face in hospitals. Since transgender men take hormones to look like men and transgender women take hormones to look like women, they encounter various problems. Most transgender women have undergone breast augmentation surgery, and transgender men have had top surgery or use binders to hide their breasts. Moreover, both transgender men and transgender women take different hormones during their transition. Because of this, it becomes difficult to convince hospital staff about their gender identity, even while filling out forms.

In the in-depth interview, one of the participants, Anshu (Trans Woman), stated, "It is so hard in hospitals, even while filling up the form. They become confused about our gender identity. The staff in hospitals and health centers should have awareness and knowledge about sexual and gender minorities. In order to provide better care, it is crucial for them to create an LGBTIQA+ friendly environment." Tanuja (Trans Woman) shared a similar incident, saying, "My friend, who is a trans woman and dresses like a woman, had an accident. We immediately rushed her to the hospital, but the nurses there laughed at her and gossiped about her." While researching, I asked Devika (Trans Woman) the same question. She stated:

> Government hospital staff have a very bad attitude and behaviour toward us. Although private hospital staff behave very nicely, we are forced to go to government hospitals for checkups due to financial issues. Doctors and staff in government hospitals assume that we are sex workers or that we have sexually transmitted diseases, and that is why we have come for checkups. Because of such discrimination and

humiliation, we avoid visiting these hospitals again, even if we are suffering from a severe disease.

I asked the same question to Anil (Gay), and his response was, "I have not faced any kind of discrimination in hospitals. However, for trans men and trans women, the behaviour is different. As a gay man, I have not faced any challenges in hospitals." A similar response was given by Anju (Lesbian). She stated, "As a lesbian, I have not faced any kind of challenges in hospitals. Furthermore, most gay men and lesbians don't have issues in hospitals." In contrast, Dhiren (Trans Man) shared, "We face discrimination from the moment of registration. They tick 'male' on the form just by looking at us. Sometimes, we visit a gynecologist for issues related to the uterus or urinary tract infections, but because of their behaviour, we feel mentally and physically stressed and don't want to visit the hospital again."

Similarly, Suresh (Trans Man) shared, "In hospitals, trans men who haven't had top surgery feel uncomfortable during x-rays. The staff are unaware and react weirdly. If we visit for a simple blood test or a normal health checkup, doctors make HIV/AIDS tests mandatory, which is very discriminatory. It gives us mental torture." Although he acknowledged the importance of HIV/AIDS tests, he added, "Checking only our community is discriminatory. Such discrimination and stigmatization by hospitals must stop. They should educate their doctors and staff about LGBTIQ people." Sonam (Intersex) also highlighted the lack of awareness among hospital staff. He stated, "It is very difficult for us to approach doctors. Even doctors are unaware of body tests and the hormones used during the transition period. Proper training and guidance should be provided to doctors so that they behave respectfully toward patients."

4·4 Discrimination in Housing

While researching, I asked if it was easy for the LGBTIQ+ community to find rooms to rent, and the answers to this question varied from respondent to respondent. For instance, Tanuja (Trans Woman) stated, "People don't want us to stay even on rent. They give different excuses because of our gender identity." As a result, such behaviour makes them feel excluded from society. She added that it is a basic right for an individual to live happily in society, but this right is often denied to people like her. A transgender man, Suresh, expressed, "My landlord don't know about my gender identity and

sexual orientation. I stay with my partner in the room. I have lied to the landlord that we are a married couple." He further explained that if he had told the truth, the landlord wouldn't have given them the room to stay. Because of this, he felt very bad about having to lie just to find a room on rent.

Another response to the same question came from Rupak (Gay). He shared, "Me and my partner faced a lot of problems. We were told to leave the room immediately. Some people poisoned the landlord's mind against us." Because of this, they were also denied the chance to live near the community. "People think we are a disgrace to society and create an imbalance in it. It is disheartening to hear such things and experience this behaviour," he added. He also emphasized that society needs to accept the fact that sexual and gender minorities (SGM) are normal like straight people and deserve equal rights, which should be implemented. Dhiren (Trans Man) expressed a similar sentiment, saying, "While renting flats, we have to lie and keep it a secret; otherwise, they will not let us stay, even though we are paying. My landlord once kicked out a trans woman who was staying on rent because of her gender identity." In addition, he shared that some landlords ask for legal documents like citizenship before renting out rooms, which makes it even more difficult to find a place.

Anshu (Trans Woman) echoed this struggle, stating, "Most landlords give excuses and don't allow us to stay on rent. Even if they do, they charge double the price and increase the rent monthly." She added, "It is inhuman behaviour. Just because our gender identity is different doesn't give landlords the right to treat us unfairly." Similarly, Sonam (Intersex) shared an equally troubling experience. "I have used my friend's citizenship to stay in a room. If they knew my real identity, they would either kick me out or ask me to pay double the rent." He explained that many in the LGBTIQ+ community are forced to hide their identity using others' legal documents because they cannot afford to pay huge amounts for small rooms. However, Devika (Trans Woman) stated that finding rooms in some areas was easier. "In some areas, it's not that difficult for our community to find rooms. People there are aware and positive about us. But in other areas, it's very difficult to convince landlords." In contrast, Anju (Lesbian) said, "I have not faced any kind of problems in finding rooms."

According to my study, most LGBTIQ+ individuals hide their real identity in order to stay on rent. If they do not hide, they are often asked to pay double the rent for a small room, which increases

every month and makes survival difficult. From my research, it is clear that, except for lesbians, everyone in the LGBTIQ+ community has faced significant challenges in finding rooms or flats.

4·5   Discrimination in Public Restrooms

During the field study, I asked, "Do you use public restrooms/ toilets, and did people pass any sort of comments while using such public restrooms?" The answer to this question was "yes" from most of the participants. However, the responses from gay and lesbian participants indicated no problems in public restrooms, whereas the opinions of transgender men and transgender women were different. They explained that there is no sign or provision for LGBTIQ+ people in public toilets. Public toilets are discriminatory because the signboards only display "male" and "female".

Devika (Trans Woman) stated, "Gender-friendly toilets should be established so that transgender men, transgender women, gender-fluid, gender-binary, and non-binary individuals don't have to feel uncomfortable using public restrooms." Each respondent had different opinions regarding toilets. For instance, Tanuja (Trans Woman) said, "I have not faced any problems; I go to the female washroom." Similarly, Rupak (Gay) shared, "I haven't faced any problems in public restrooms, but they should focus on making transgender-friendly washrooms." While researching, I asked the same question to Dhiren (Trans Man), and he expressed, "When I was in school while using restrooms, my classmates used to judge me for using the girls' restroom by saying, 'A boy has entered the girls' restroom.' He added that before transitioning when he used male restrooms, people used to stare at him."

Discrimination in public toilets is very common. Because of this, most LGBTIQ+ individuals avoid using public toilets altogether. For instance, Sonam (Intersex) expressed, "Gender-neutral and closed-system toilets should be made so that it becomes easy for our community to use public restrooms." I agree with his statement, as closed-system toilets would provide privacy and ease for all individuals. Anju (Lesbian) stated, "As a lesbian, I have not faced any kind of discrimination in restrooms because they don't know my sexuality unless I reveal it to them." A different response was given by Anshu (Trans Woman). She expressed, "It is very difficult for us to use public restrooms. Normally, I don't prefer going to public restrooms, as I have already faced discrimination and

humiliation." Suresh (Trans Man) also shared his experience, saying, "Before transitioning, I used to go to girls' restrooms, and people would stare at me. After transitioning, I used male restrooms. It is common for people to stare whenever LGBTIQ+ individuals use public washrooms."

In conclusion, the discriminatory design of public toilets, which are limited to "male" and "female", should be changed. Gender-neutral toilets with a closed system should be introduced so that LGBTIQ+ individuals can use them without fear of judgment or humiliation.

4·6　Discrimination in Markets

During my field visit, I asked participants whether they faced any form of discrimination while shopping. For this question, Anshu (Trans Woman) stated, "People just look at us, pass comments, and laugh at us as if we have done something wrong. They stare, joke, and laugh, which makes us feel humiliated, insulted, and mentally tortured." Because of such behaviour, many transgender individuals do not want to appear in public spaces. For the same question, Dhiren (Trans Man) shared, "When I went shopping, the shopkeeper discriminated against me by saying, 'This is boys' clothing; here is girls' clothing'. Even though I dress like a man, such attitudes and behaviour while shopping hurt emotionally." In contrast, Devika (Trans Woman) expressed, "I haven't faced any kind of discrimination while shopping. I am very simple in nature, so their attitude toward me is very good."

There was a different response given by Suresh (Trans Man), who stated, "While shopping, the shopkeeper tries to sell bad-quality clothes or ill-fitting clothes. As a trans man, I normally prefer wearing loose-fitting clothes. I don't like visiting shops because customers stare at us, and shopkeepers force us to buy things we don't even like." A similar response was given by Tanuja (Trans Woman). She expressed, "While shopping, people stare at us, but I haven't faced any kind of discrimination beyond that." Likewise, Sonam (Intersex) shared, "People just make us uneasy and uncomfortable by staring at us." However, Rupak (Gay) and Anju (Lesbian) both said that they had not faced any problems while shopping.

From this study, it is clear that transgender and intersex individuals experience discrimination while shopping, whereas gay and lesbian individuals do not. This is because people cannot easily

assume their sexual orientation or gender identity. For transgender individuals, however, their transition phase often involves cross-dressing and noticeable differences in voice, which makes it easier for others to assume their gender identity and discriminate against them.

4·7   Ignorance by Authorities

The government has made different laws and policies for sexual and gender minorities, but these have not been implemented. While conducting field visits, most participants stated that it is very difficult for them to access rights in each and every sector. Anish KC (Trans Man) said, "The government should provide constitutional rights and strictly implement them. Specifically, LGBTIQ rights should be clearly written like other minority groups in the constitution." In addition, he suggested:

> The health sector should have an LGBTIQ-friendly environment with some discounts for the community. In education, there should be a curriculum on LGBTIQ issues and a teacher training manual. Citizenship should be provided easily for us, just like for heterosexual people, and marriage equality should be ensured for all. In all provinces, awareness programs should be conducted, and educational documents should be made easy to change. Furthermore, there should be empowerment programs focusing on LGBTIQ people and the inclusion of LGBTIQ children in child-related policies.

Similarly, Devika (Trans Woman) stated, "The main ignorance of the government lies in the issue of citizenship. Marriage equality and adoption rules should also be made friendly for us." She added, "Most transgender individuals go abroad for surgery because the government does not provide such facilities at a low cost. In order to create fairness, there should be a quota system for our community in public service commission exams." During the field study, Rupswee observed:

> Although laws and policies exist, they are not being implemented. For instance, the law regarding the right to obtain citizenship under one's gender-male or female-is granted only after a full body checkup, which is humiliating and discriminatory. Because of this, most LGBTIQ people obtain their citizenship before they come out as gay, lesbian, transgender, intersex, or queer. However, there is no process to correct these documents after transitioning.

Tanuja (Trans Woman) expressed a similar concern, stating, "There should be equality in all sorts of opportunities because we belong to the same country." Her statement was short but clear: "We should be given equal opportunities, and treatment should be equal for everyone." Likewise, Suresh (Trans Man) emphasized, "The government should treat us equally and provide the same facilities that heterosexual people receive without any struggle. Whereas heterosexual people get all their rights without difficulty, sexual and gender minorities have to struggle just to obtain basic rights." Sonam (Intersex) shared, "The government should provide identity cards for sexual and gender minorities so that we can get discounts for things like hospital services and bus fares." Anju (Lesbian) shared a similar view, stating, "The government should focus on the proper implementation of all the laws and policies."

In addition, Rupak (Gay) pointed out, "The laws and policies related to marriage equality, adoption rights, the right to change names in educational documents after transitioning, and the right to citizenship without discrimination should all be implemented by the government." A similar response was shared by another respondent, Anshu (Trans Woman), who stated, "We face discrimination everywhere-whether it's in schools, colleges, public spaces, police stations, buses, or even while shopping. Because of this, we are not safe anywhere."

From my research, most participants shared similar opinions about the importance of implementing laws and policies, especially regarding marriage equality for all. Although laws exist, they have not been implemented at all. Therefore, this must change, and the government should take the initiative to ensure equal treatment for everyone.

5. Findings and Discussion

The findings from the introduction and literature review show the shared and unique challenges faced by sexual and gender minorities. Anthropological perspectives highlight that gender and sexuality are social constructs rather than fixed biological categories (Kottak & Kozaitis, 2022). This perspective aligns with the experiences of Nepal's LGBTIQ+ community, where deeply rooted social stigmas continue to foster discrimination, even though their rights are legally recognized (Khadgi, 2024). Both contexts demonstrate how societal norms marginalize LGBTIQ+ individuals-

whether through exclusion in Nepal's public spaces or through historically rigid gender roles globally (Du, 1999; Zhou, 2002). While Nepal's legal progress is noteworthy, examples like the gender- equal systems in Lahu communities (Du, 1999) offer alternative approaches that promote inclusion, contrasting sharply with Nepal's ongoing struggles in implementing its policies effectively.

The literature review also highlights the global shift in the study of sexuality, moving away from rigid heteronormative frameworks toward a more critical queer theory approach (Lyons & Lyons, 2004). Nepal's situation reflects a similar paradox, where legal advancements coexist with widespread societal discrimination. Foucault's insights on power dynamics in sexuality (Lyons & Lyons, 2006) resonate strongly here, as institutional neglect and cultural stigma hinder LGBTIQ+ rights in Nepal. Challenges such as discrimination in education, housing, and healthcare mirror global patterns, showing that even in regions with legal reforms, prejudice remains deeply entrenched in societal and institutional structures. These findings highlight the need for intersectional approaches that address both legal and cultural barriers to create meaningful, lasting change.

6.   Conclusion

The findings of this study, combined with insights from anthropological paradigms, highlight the shared and specific challenges faced by sexual and gender minorities. In particular, in Nepal, deeply rooted societal stigmas continue to marginalize LGBTIQ+ individuals, even though their rights are legally recognized. Similarly, this reflects global patterns where societal norms and institutional barriers maintain discrimination. Moreover, anthropological studies point to the social construction of gender and sexuality, with examples like the Lahu communities showing inclusive approaches to gender roles that challenge hierarchical norms. However, Nepal's struggle between progressive legal frameworks and poor implementation underscores the need for broader societal change to match legal advancements.

Globally, the evolution of sexuality studies highlights the shift from heteronormative frameworks to intersectional perspectives, such as queer theory, which deconstructs power dynamics in sexual and gender identities. Although Nepal reflects this global dichotomy, its legal progress is often overshadowed by institutional indifference and cultural stigma. Therefore, the findings of this research call for

intersectional approaches that address not only legal reforms but also cultural and systemic inequalities. In order to achieve meaningful change, it is essential to bridge the gap between policy and practice, foster greater societal acceptance, and amplify marginalized voices to ensure a truly inclusive and equitable society.

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Perceptions of Climate Change Impacts on Tharu Livelihoods: A Case Study from Birendranagar, Nepal

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Abstract

This study set out to explore how the Tharu community in Birendranagar Municipality, Surkhet District, experiences and responds to the impacts of climate change, particularly in areas like farming, health, income, and the environment. Information was gathered through discussions, interviews, and observations involving 35 community members and one knowledgeable local for their insights. Although climate change is a prominent issue in the world and country, depending on discussions, very little attention is given to climate's impact on indigenous peoples, such as the Tharu, and its mitigation implications. Moreover, research shows that Nepal's Himalayan regions, especially the middle and higher altitudes, are particularly vulnerable. Within this context, the investigation revealed that Tharu people hold varying attitudes and experiences with respect to the impact of climate change on their agriculture, health, and the natural environment. On the one side, the results draw attention to the difficulties of rural communities in adapting to weather variability and environmental modification. However, they also show that rural groups are relatively less informed of the adverse effects of climate change than urban groups. Additionally, the paper brings attention to the implementable tactics being used by the Tharu people in their attempts to manage these difficulties and reduce their effects on their lives. As a conclusion to this research, however, it is highlighted that solutions must be developed with a special focus on the specific challenges faced by rural and indigenous peoples, so as to truly ensure that their voices are heard and their needs are heeded appropriately.

Keywords

Climate change, Tharu community, Biodiversity, Livelihoods, Adaptation Strategies.

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Perceptions of Climate Change Impacts on Tharu Livelihoods: A Case Study from Birendranagar, Nepal

1.   Introduction

Climate change is a ubiquitous power that affects the globe on many levels and is one of the most pressing global issues of the 21st century. It is of important environmental, economic, and human health implications. According to Malla (2008), climate change influences the daily lives of people in various ways, impacting agricultural production, health systems, and natural ecosystems. Nepal is one of the countries most affected by climate change, with its diverse topography and dependence on agriculture exacerbating the problem.

Average annual temperature of Nepal rose by 0.03°C-0.06°C respectively between 1977 and 1994 and at an accelerated pace in higher altitude areas than in the low lands (Gurung and Bhandari, 2009). This rate of warming is far greater than the global 0.74°C average warming for the 20th century. Additionally, such weather extremes are also frequent enough, with the monsoon period being shortened and rainfall intensity rising causing traditional agricultural practices to be compromised.

Climate change has created profound problems in Nepal, in the form of altered climate conditions, decline of biodiversity, water stress and the transmission of tropical diseases like malaria and dengue. It has also resulted in more landslide and flood events, which present a serious threat to humans' lives and property. Carey (2007) claims that local communities may possess insider knowledge of the effects of climate change, which could be distinct from scientific storytelling. These communities offer important insights on climate change at shallow ground level, with regard to disasters, and glacial advances.

Studies in Nepal reveal the growing problem of increasing precipitation extremes with serious implications for water management and farm systems (Karki et al., 2017; Devkota et al., 2017). Simultaneously, agro-meteorological information services have also been instrumental in providing farmers with tools for

decision-making based on climate-resilient choices in adjacent areas such as India (Nesheim et al., 2017). But in other parts of the world, including Africa, concerns about the reliability and access to climate data, thus, hamper development of accurate adaptation policy (Dinku, 2019).

The importance of indigenous knowledge systems and local perspectives in describing climate impacts and designing adaptive responses, most notably in the Himalayas or the Tibetan villages settlements (Negiet al., 2017; Byg and Salick, 2009a, 2009b) has been key. Evidence from Ghana and Mongolia yet again illustrates the challenges in connecting scientific methods with folk practices and incidences in farmers' adaptation to climate variability (Ndamani & Watanabe, 2015; Marin, 2010).

Climate change has had tangible effects on food security and agricultural production in Nepal and has led communities to implement varying coping strategies to reduce risk (Budhathoki & Zander, 2020; Dhungana et al., 2020). Research examining the spatial and temporal variability of extreme climatic events, such as precipitation and drought risks, provides valuable insights for designing targeted adaptation strategies (Talchabhadel et al., 2018; Dahal et al., 2016). Policy work, such as the National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA), has been successful in mobilizing inclusive and systematic building resilience to climate risks in Nepal (MOE, 2010).

However, from an international perspective, climate impacts warrant adaptive actions that draw on local experience, especially in climate-impacted areas such as Africa, the Himalayas or others experiencing large-scale climate-induced risks (Zvobgo et al., 2022; Chaudhary et al., 2021). Together, these results highlight the complex issues associated with climate change and the role of science, policy, and community engagement in developing climate resilience.

In this context, this research is intended to examine views of the Tharu indigenous group residing in Birendranagar Municipality, Surkhet District, with respect to the influence of climate change on their type of economic activity. It specifically examines how climate change affects agriculture, health, biodiversity, and economic systems, contributing to a deeper understanding of the local and indigenous narratives on this critical issue.

2.   Literature Review

The term "climate change" often refers to global warming, but it encompasses broader changes in climatic patterns, including temperature, precipitation, and wind. The National Academy of Sciences defines climate change as any significant alteration in climate measures over time, whether due to natural processes or human activities (Sapkota, 2064). Climate change has been a topic of discussion for decades, but its multifaceted impacts are increasingly becoming a focus of research.

Anthropology offers a special view of climate change that focuses on the inseparable nature of cultural, social, and environmental factors. Anthropologists claim that human adaptation, migrations, and evolution have been affected by a dynamic climate. For example, Marry Doguls points out that good climate conditions in Africa allowed the emergence and development of hominids. Likewise, climatic characteristics of the Ice Age heavily affected human behavior and adaptation (Barnes et al., 2013).

The Himalayan area, and in particular Nepal, is highly susceptible through climate change due to its delicate ecosystem and socio-economic systems (Ojha, 2022). Khattri and Pandey (2021) are observed to recommend that raditional socio-ecological systems in the area are threatened by alterations in rainfall regime, rise in temperature, and biodiversity depletion which are all affecting traditional livelihoods. In districts like Manang and Mustang, rainfall patterns have reversed in recent years, leading to shifts in agricultural practices and housing structures (Dahal, 2009).

Climate change also has significant health implications. Increases in temperature also set conditions for it to be carried by vector-borne diseases, such as malaria and Japanese encephalitis (CARE, 2011). Moreover, with the tendency for heatwaves to become more frequent, floods, and droughts to turn more severe the situation complicates health risks. Gurung (2009) has highlighted that the consequences of climate change on health can be further aggravated by limited health infrastructure, especially in the rural world.

Farbotko (2012) has claimed that climate change is a material issue and a narrative issue and that this issue needs the incorporation of various perspectives to get a comprehensive grasp of climate change impacts. Local knowledge, especially knowledge of indigenous peoples, is of great benefit in recording the impacts of

climate change and in creating appropriate adaptation strategies. According to Poudel (2018), employing ethnographic approaches to capture the experiences of local populations is of great value, as the latter can offering what is missed in the scientific approaches.

This research is based on such viewpoints and attempts to analyze the effects of climate change on the livelihood of Tharu community of Birendranagar Municipality. It tries to make a contribution toward a more complete understanding of climate change and its effects, by integrating local stories and empirical evidence.

3.   Research Site and Methodology

The study was carried out in Birendranagar Municipality, Surkhet District, which is in mid-hill zone of Nepal. Home to a variety of ecological systems and an exuberant cultural legacy, particularly for the Tharu people, the region is located in the middle Himalayas and susceptible to the effects of climate change. Through the past decades, dramatic alterations in the biodiversity, agricultural systems, and climatic scenario have made this area the best testing ground to examine the consequences of the climate change on local lives. The survey used an exploratory design to look into the views of the Tharu community on climate change. In this manner, this strategy was chosen to examine emerging and underexplored phenomena. Thirty-five respondents were selected through purposive sampling and one informant for key informant interview in Raharpur Village to include respondents who have one or more of the relevant experiences and insights. Data collection methods included interviews and key informant interview.

4.   Data Presentation and Interpretation

Climate change is perceived by the local Tharu community as a major threat to their livelihoods, primarily due to its adverse effects on agriculture, water resources, and overall well-being. Changes in climate patterns, such as unseasonal and erratic rainfall, have disrupted traditional farming practices, while increasing temperatures have exacerbated pest infestations and diseases in crops and humans. These shifts have led to a growing sense of uncertainty and insecurity regarding food availability, agricultural productivity, and daily life.

The community has also observed significant changes in water resources, which have directly impacted irrigation and drinking

water availability. Local respondents associate these challenges with broader climatic changes, including delayed monsoons, reduced rainfall, and prolonged drought periods, which have intensified their vulnerability.

4·1   Impact of Climate Change on Agriculture

Rainfall patterns in the region have become increasingly irregular, with significant variations in timing and intensity. These changes have caused floods during the planting season and droughts during critical growing periods, leading to reduced crop yields and food insecurity. Respondents described struggling to maintain their livelihoods, as they have to work harder to secure basic food needs due to declining agricultural productivity.

One of the critical impacts of low rainfall has been the gradual disappearance of water resources and the degradation of wetlands. Table 1 provides an overview of the perceived effects of low rainfall on water resources in the community.

Table-1 : Effects of Low Rainfall on Water Resources

S. No.	Effect on Water Resources	Respondents Number	Respondents (%)
1.	Drying of water resources	11	31.42
2.	Reduction in pond water levels	10	28.57
3.	Loss of wetlands	14	40.00
Total		35	100.00

Source : Field Survey, 2024.

The above table shows that 31.42% of respondents reported drying water sources, while 28.57% highlighted declining water levels in ponds. Additionally, 40% noted the loss of wetlands, which has severe implications for irrigation and household water use. Wetland degradation, driven by erratic rainfall, has also contributed to the aridification of previously fertile areas, further straining agricultural productivity.

The community observed that the reduced availability of water for irrigation has made it increasingly challenging to maintain traditional farming practices. Delayed monsoons and insufficient rainfall have disrupted the cropping cycle, shortening the growth and maturity periods of crops. As a result, farmers are left with lower yields and higher risks of crop failure.

4·2   Effects of Low Rainfall on Agricultural Production

The impacts of reduced and irregular rainfall on crop production are significant and far-reaching. Table 2 highlights how these changes have affected the agricultural system.

Table-2 : Effects of Low Rainfall on Agriculture

S. No.	Effect of Low Rainfall	Respondents Number	Respondents (%)
1.	Increased production	—	—
2.	Decreased crop production	21	60.00
3.	No change in production	4	11.42
4.	Difficulty in cultivation	10	28.57
	Total	**35**	**100.00**

Source : Field Survey, 2024.

The above table indicates that majority (60%) of respondents reported a decline in crop production, attributing it to inadequate rainfall and shifting climatic conditions. Another 28.57% mentioned facing significant challenges in cultivation due to changes in weather patterns, such as prolonged dry spells and unseasonal rain. These respondents explained that traditional farming methods are no longer sufficient to cope with the unpredictable climate, requiring new strategies and techniques.

4·3   Effect of Irregular Rainfall on Agriculture

Irregular rainfall poses an additional challenge, causing both flooding and inadequate water supply at different times. Respondents shared their experiences of crop damage due to excessive rain or waterlogging, while others struggled with low yields from insufficient irrigation. Table 3 summarizes these findings.

Table-3 : Effects of Irregular Rainfall on Agriculture

S. No.	Effect of Irregular Rainfall	Respondents Number	Respondents (%)
1.	No cultivation	4	11.42
2.	Crop drowning	2	5.71
3.	Flooding	14	40.00
4.	Irregular crop production	15	42.85
	Total	**35**	**100.00**

Source : Field Survey, 2024.

Table-3 indicates that 42.85% of respondents experienced irregular crop production, while 40% reported flooding due to heavy rains. Crop drowning (5.71%) and disrupted cultivation (11.42%) were also noted as significant consequences of erratic rainfall. These issues highlight the pressing need for adaptive measures to mitigate the adverse effects of unpredictable weather on agriculture.

4·4   Impacts of Temperature on Agriculture

Rising temperatures have further compounded the challenges faced by the Tharu community. Higher temperatures have disrupted natural growth cycles, increased the prevalence of pests and diseases, and reduced the germination period for seeds. Table 4 illustrates these impacts.

Table-4 : Impacts of High Temperature on Crops

S. No.	Effect of Irregular Rainfall	Respondents Number	Respondents (%)
1.	Irregular flowering	11	31.42
2.	Reduced germination period	4	11.42
3.	Spread of pests/diseases	20	57.14
	Total	**35**	**100.00**

Source : Field Survey, 2024.

The above table shows that more than half of respondents (57.14%) reported widespread pest infestations and crop diseases due to rising temperatures. Additionally, 31.42% noted irregular flowering of plants, leading to lower yields and delayed harvests. Reduced germination periods (11.42%) further compound the problem, as farmers struggle to adapt to changing growing conditions.

4·5   Broader Impacts of Rising Temperatures

The effects of increasing temperatures extend beyond agriculture, influencing daily life, health, and economic stability. Table-5 provides insights into these broader impacts on next page. This table shows that a large portion of respondents (42.85%) observed an increase in insects such as flies and mosquitoes, which are associated with higher temperatures. Additionally, 14.28% noted the emergence of new diseases affecting humans and livestock. These challenges have added to the community's healthcare expenses and reduced their overall quality of life.

Table-5 : Problems Caused by Rising Temperatures

S. No.	Effect of Irregular Rainfall	Respondents Number	Respondents (%)
1.	Increased insects (flies, mosquitoes)	15	42.85
2.	Emergence of new diseases	5	14.28
3.	Irregular rainfall impacts	15	42.85
Total		**35**	**100.00**

Source : Field Survey, 2024.

Respondents also highlighted the social and economic burdens of these changes, including increased mortality rates among the elderly, higher disease prevalence, and reduced livestock productivity. The cumulative effect has been a significant strain on the community's resources and resilience.

4·6   Loss of Biodiversity

The effects of climate change on biodiversity in Raharpir, Birendranagar, are becoming more and more obvious. Degradation in temperature by air and land and irregularity of rainfall and climate has led to extinction of both plants and crops that have long supported the community. Forests, grasslands, and wetlands are all losing condition in consequence of which ecological and economic resources are deteriorating. Irregular flowering and fruiting periods of crops and plants, such as rhododendrons blooming prematurely and oranges ripening earlier than usual, disrupt agricultural cycles. These ecological changes, caused by climate change, are at risk of not only biodiversity but also cultural identity and provision of food security in the area. During my fieldwork, one of my respondents, Prem Tharu, aged 47, expressed it as follows:

> I am Prem Tharu, I lived in Raharpir, Birendranagar my whole life. I have witnessed the transformation of our forests and fields over the last 10 years more than I care to remember. Trees and plants which were once the cornerstone of our lives are vanishing. We used to have plenty of Kafal (Myrica esculenta), Kaulo (Maesa chisia), Lapsi (Choerospondias axillaris), and Rani Sallo (Cupressus torulosa), but now these trees are rare. Some have disappeared entirely. Medicinal plants including Pipla (Piper longum) and Gurjo (Tinospora

cordifolia) which our seniors used for curing diseases are no longer available in this location.

Our crops have also suffered. Traditional paddy varieties like Kalo Dhan and Atte Dhan, once a staple of our fields, no longer grow. Even the Pani Makai maize, unique to our village and a source of pride for us, is under threat. It pains me to see our agricultural traditions fade away. I have also noticed strange changes in plants. Rhododendrons flower too early in January or February. Oranges are matured in September or October much earlier than before. Even Kavra (Ficus lacor) shoots appear out of season. These imperfections worry me about the future of our community and our way of life.

The life story of Prem is a stark example of how climate change affects biodiversity in Raharpir in a devastating way. The attrition of native plant species, with trees, weedy motive crops, and medicinal plants all losing their stands, is a direct statement of the ecological imbalance generated by increasing temperatures and unpredictable rainfall. These alterations upset the local ecosystem homeostasis, resulting in the depletion of key resource ends in the fields of food, medicine, and culture. The aberrant flowering and fruiting cycles reported by Prem indicates the breaking of ecological cycles that will impact by pollinators, dispersal of seeds, and agricultural production. Not only do these have the effect of decreasing the stock of food and income but also the cultural identity of the Tharu community, which is inseparable from land cultivation.

The story highlights the importance of conservation action, to secure endemic species such as Pani Makai, which has ecological, economic, and social value. These impacts can be alleviated through a number of strategies, including the implementation of reforestation, climate-resilient crop promotion, and the recording of indigenous knowledge. The destruction of biodiversity can be prevented in Raharpir through the identification of the causes behind the loss of biodiversity and the engagement of the local population in adaptation measures where securing the natural and cultural heritage of Raharpir for future generations is possible.

5. Major Findings

⇥ Irregular rainfall led to the occurrence of flooding during planting time and drought during crucial crop growing time,

hampering agriculture production and forcing farmers to perform effort to meet their basic food requirements.

 ⇀ Lower rainfall has broken traditional cropping cycles, shortening the duration for crop growth and development and thereby reducing yield and crop loss risk, many respondents identifying the need for adaptation in farming strategies.

 ⇀ Unsteady rainfall led to floods, waterlogging, and erratic crop yield which severely disrupted agriculture activity and traditional approaches have proven to be inefficient to cope with all types of weather variability.

 ⇀ Higher temperatures have disrupted natural growth cycles, reduced seed germination periods, and increased the prevalence of pests and diseases, directly impacting crop yields and delaying harvests.

 ⇀ Increases in ambient temperature have led to higher incidence of insects and emerging diseases which have outstripped the community's health care capacity and increased the economic costs while also impacting the quality of life and weakening the capacity of the community.

 ⇀ Climate change has led to the extinction of species of native plants, crops and medicinal plants of great importance to the Raharpir population, which have periodic, erratic flowering and fruiting that disrupts natural ecological cycles, agricultural practices and food security, along with losing cultural heritage.

6. Conclusion

Climate change presents a serious threat to the livelihood of the Tharu community in Raharpir, Birendranagar, in agriculture, access to water, biodiversity conservation, and life in general. The results demonstrate that uncontrolled rainfall, increasing temperatures and long dry spells have impacted traditional agricultural practices, agricultural production and availability of water for irrigation and household use. These developments have also yielded the intensification of pest infestations, the transmission of human and animal diseases, and the deterioration of natural environments which have rendered the community more and more susceptible. The disappearance of native plants, food crops, and traditional medicinal species represents an emerging ecological disruption, which is not

limited to food security, but also affects the cultural identity and traditional knowledge of Tharu people.

In order to cope with these challenges, adaptive and ecological solutions that incorporate, local knowledge and experience is highly necessary. Conservation measures, including reforestation, the preservation of threatened, endemic species, such as Pani Makai, and the encouragement of climate-adaptive agricultural practices, are vital to biodiversity conservation and livelihoods security. In addition, educating communities, providing financial opportunities and ICT access, can contribute to protecting their resilience in the face of climate-related risks. Through a combination of local actions and wider policy measures, it is attainable to preserve the ecological, economic, and cultural legacy of threatened populations, such as Raharpir, for future generations.

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Exploring the Prevalence, Gender Dynamics, and Age-Specific Trends of Bullying Behaviours in School Environments: A Case Study from Lalitpur, Nepal

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Abstract

Bullying is a critical issue in schools, deeply affecting students' physical health, emotional stability, and academic performance. This research explores the prevalence, gender differences, and age-specific trends of bullying among students in private schools in Lalitpur, Nepal. Based on data collected from 154 students aged 10-16 through survey questionnaires, the study provides insights into the forms and patterns of bullying. The findings indicate that boys are more frequently subjected to physical, verbal, and cyberbullying, whereas girls experience higher rates of indirect bullying, although less commonly. Younger students (10-12 years) are found to face more physical and verbal bullying, often driven by impulsive behaviour and struggles for social dominance. In contrast, indirect and cyberbullying are more prevalent among older students (16 years and above), linked to greater use of digital platforms and a tendency towards non-confrontational methods of harassment. The study highlights the influence of societal factors, including gender expectations and access to technology, in shaping bullying behaviours. Addressing these issues requires age-appropriate interventions, such as promoting empathy, inclusivity, and digital responsibility, alongside tackling systemic challenges like toxic masculinity and peer pressure. These measures aim to foster a safer and more inclusive school environment, ensuring the overall well-being of students.

Keywords

Bullying, Gender dynamics, Cyberbullying, School environment, Nepal.

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Exploring the Prevalence, Gender Dynamics, and Age-Specific Trends of Bullying Behaviours in School Environments: A Case Study from Lalitpur, Nepal

1. Introduction

Bullying has long been endemic to education and has changed over time in response to shifting cultural values and advances in technology which have brought about new variants and mechanisms of harassment. Although physical and verbal aggression (the conventional type of bullying) still dominates, the arrival of digital technologies has allowed the emergence and diffusion of cyberbullying, thereby enhancing the range and strength of these acts (Meyer, 2016). Understanding the complexities of bullying today requires not only a clear definition of the term but also a comprehensive examination of its prevalence, its evolving nature, and the factors that influence who becomes a target.

Bullying is generally defined as the intentional and repeated infliction of harm on another individual, whether physically, verbally, or psychologically (Meyer, 2009). Physical bullying, by which one punches or kicks another, is the most overt and therefore generally the easiest to spot. Verbal bullying, such as teasing and threats, is also well-recognized. Nevertheless, psychological bullying, which is, insidious but causes great suffering behaviours such as social isolation and manipulation, is frequently disregarded by the principals and has a terrible negative psychological effect on the victims. Meyer (2016) points to the stealthy aspect of psychological bullying, the fact that it is traumatic and difficult to pick up in school institutional settings.

Furthermore, the advent of cyberbullying presents an additional layer of the problem. Cyberbullying is the use of technology to attack, torment or injure another person and cyberbullying exploits social media, email and mobile phone applications to attack victims. In comparison to traditional types of bullying which are limited to the school environments, cyberbullying

expands its threat beyond the physical environment to infiltrate the personal and private lives of its victims. Social media, above all, is the main communication channel for such behaviours, intensifying its effect and creating ubiquitous threats (Horn, 2006). These processes also highlight the changing character of bullying and the growing emphasis on tackling the technological aspects of bullying.

The occurrence and type of bullying are greatly affected by social identities, including gender and sexual orientation. Studies have shown that LGBTIQ+ youth are overrepresented in the targets of comparisons, with others who are straight youth, and that metaphors derived from the works are misused (Kasula, 2023; Ojha, 2024). Horn (2006) has shown that sexual minorities in adolescence are more likely to suffer from bullying, not only traditional bullying but also cyberbullying. Moreover, individuals who deviate from conventional gender norms, regardless of their sexual orientation, face heightened levels of victimization. Cyberbullying statistics also demonstrate these patterns with Meyer (2016) reporting that 41% of LGBTQ+ youth had experienced cyberbullying, including frequently sexualized and biased ways. These patterns also show the interaction of bullying behaviour with societal stereotypes of gender and sexuality, and it is clear that it is important to target both societal and intrapersonal biases.

Gendering does not only dictate the target of the bullying behaviour but who bullies. Research shows that males more frequently are labeled perpetrators of both traditional and cyberbullying compared to females (Meyer, 2009). This trend may be explained by the cultural values that ascribe masculinity to aggression. Moreover, men are typically held to a higher standard of conforming to the socialization of traditional gender roles while deviating from traditional gender roles is met with harsher social disapproval. According to Horn (2006), heterosexual men who did not conform to stereotypical masculine characteristics were punished more severely than homosexual men who conformed to gender norms. These results illustrate the ubiquity of toxic masculinity that metastasizes aggressive behaviours and reproduces binary gender stereotypes that inflict harm on offenders and victims.

The impact of bullying has been drawn to attention for several decades, and that has formed the basis of current research into the phenomenon. Olweus (1993) also noted that bullying frequently arises as the result of an uneven power balance, whereby a powerful

peer exerts control over a perceived powerless peer. behavioural, and emotional factors like anger, jealousy, and fear are especially strong during childhood and drive the development of bullying behaviour. Over time, scholarly attention to bullying has grown exponentially. A search in the PsycINFO database of keywords such as bully and schools produced 1,703 publications of which 1,458 dated from 2000 to 2010 (Atik, 2011). This upsurge in academic interest stems from a greater awareness of the extent and effects of the problem on educational institutions.

Bullying occurs in diverse forms, such as physical violence, verbal aggression and relational victimization. Physical bullying, such as hitting or pushing, is categorized as direct bullying due to its overt nature. Verbal bullying involves taunting and name-calling and relational bullying involves rumor and gossip as well as social isolation (Rothon et al., 2011). Past studies, such as Olweus (1993) and Rivers and Smith (1994), have classified the different types of bullying, including physical, verbal, and indirect forms, emphasizing their multifaceted, negative effects. The physical and social spaces within schools also play a significant role in the occurrence of bullying. Classrooms, hallways, cafeterias, restrooms and even school buses are all known to be locations where bullying behaviours occur (Karkara et al., 2006). Although, for instance, physical bullying in classrooms is typically accompanied by covert behaviours (e.g., pinching, hair-pulling), overt actions (e.g., pushing, hitting) are more frequent in poorly supervised environments. Cyberbullying, facilitated by mobile phones and the internet, extends the problem beyond physical spaces, making it even more pervasive. Underlying causes include insufficient teacher training mobilization, poor training, and poor social awareness of bullies' and antisocial behaviour's consequences.

School bullying leaves effects that extend far beyond victims' physical and mental state. Victims frequently suffer depression, lack of self-worth, health problems, poor academic performance, and lasting psychological consequences (Rana, 2008). A school culture tolerant of bullying negatively impacts the entire educational environment, emphasizing the need for proactive and comprehensive interventions (Rothon et al., 2011). Conventional methods based on making only the infrastructure or teacher's abilities have failed. On the other hand, the creation of a positive and anti-bullying context has become, in itself, of primary importance to improve the teaching-learning experience (Olweus, 1993).

Tackling the underlying systemic nature of bullying requires coordinated action among the school, community, and policymakers. Efforts toward breaking down the ideology of toxic masculinity, dismantling rigid gender roles, and embracing inclusivity can lead to healthier environments that are safe for all students. Moreover, integrating empathy training, conflict resolution skills, and digital literacy into school curriculums can help mitigate the prevalence of bullying in both physical and virtual spaces. Such holistic methods are important for enabling the creation of a context in which students can learn happily and free of fear and bullying.

In this context, the purpose of this study is to investigate the incidence and pattern of child bullying and victimization among school-aged students in Lalitpur, Nepal. It aims to describe the kinds of and the nature of bullying behaviour, to define the main victims of bullying according to their gender and age, and to identify the main districts in schools where bullying happens. By addressing these aspects, the study endeavors to understand the factors contributing to victimization and provide insights into the cultural and behavioural patterns of bullying in schools. It has the ultimate goal of shedding light on the root causes of bullying and leads towards the design of specific interventions to promote a safer and more inclusive school atmosphere.

2. Literature Review: Sociological Perspective on Bullying

Bullying continues to be an endemic issue in schools all around the world, which expresses itself in different ways that change according to cultural and technological development (O'Higgins Norman, 2020). A global study conducted between 2003 and 2015 found that approximately 30.5% of children aged 12 to 17 experienced bullying at school within the previous 30 days (Biswas et al., 2020). In the US, a national survey found that 22.2% of students reported school victimization during the current academic year (National Center for Education Statistics, 2024). Good solutions to this problem have been difficult to find, as most anti-bullying programs have only seen small decreases in the prevalence of bullying (Evans et al., 2014; Gaffney et al., 2021). A promising strategy is a whole-school strategy that involves parents, teachers, administrators, and members of the community working together to prevent bullying (Gaffney et al., 2021).

The whole-school model is based on the social-ecological model, which investigates processes at the individual, micro, meso, and macro levels of investigation and intervention as a way to understand and combat bullying (Bronfenbrenner, 1975). This model approach analyzes the influence of peers, families, teachers, and societal relations and focuses on the ways and means that power disparities and social expectations underlie bullying. Nevertheless, although the social-ecological model is overall adequate to account for the dimensionality of these multiple levels, the model does not account for the mechanisms parallel to them that directly connect these levels with bullying incidents (Hong et al., 2014; Shafer Silverman, 2013). Complementary theories, like social learning theory, provide further explanations as they identify how people learn bullying behaviours by observing and being reinforced by others in their social world (Bandura, 1969; Espelage et al., 2008).

Sociological frameworks of the topic of bullying enhance these models, by considering the relationship between structural disadvantage and group processes. Bullying often reflects broader societal patterns of inequality, such as those related to race, gender, class, and sexual orientation (Pascoe, 2013). For instance, marginalized identities can amplify power imbalances leading to particular students being at risk of victimization. Sociological points emphasize the importance of tackling these systemic problems to build a school climate that encourages inclusion and equity.

An analysis of social networking also reveals the reasons why bullying occurs and the consequences it has on school communities. It is known that some degree of bullying is adaptive, and used by adolescents to consolidate social hierarchies. Aggressive behaviours can increase an individual's status within their peer network, particularly for those occupying central positions in social groups. Nevertheless, social network studies challenge many conventional notions regarding bullying, demonstrating that even peers with high social status can be bullies and victims of aggression with dramatic social and health implications (Faris, 2012). Moreover, bullying between friends illustrates the inherent complexity of friendship interaction as it can lead to aggression despite friendship (Callejas & Shepherd, 2020).

The cultural factors of school bullying further complicate the responses to diminish them. Schools can become a site for the expression of wider, societal expectations (heteronormativity, CIS

normativity, gender roles). These expectations can build upon and/or deepen stereotypes and inequalities of power as students learn and enact discriminatory actions. For instance, students who are members of the LGBTQ community could be more victimized because of gender control or because of the acceptance of heterosexual norms in school environments (Pascoe, 2013). Efforts to protect marginalized groups can sometimes backfire, as overly protective measures may unintentionally reinforce stereotypes or isolate these students further (Payne & Smith, 2016).

All of these hurdles notwithstanding, sociological work highlights that cultural change through students and small peer clusters is rife with potential. Interactionist theories illustrate how youth can affect school norms by repeatedly excluding aggressive behaviours and rewarding inclusivity (Shepherd, 2017). A dynamic social-ecological model that includes these interactionist perspectives has the potential to yield a more adequate description of the bidirectional influences that bind individuals to their environment, and as such, has greater practical value for anti-bullying interventions.

Bullying is a multilevel problem originating from a complicated social and cultural system. Although current methods, for example, the whole-school model, provide useful options, sociological theory relevant to power, inequality, and social networks, can increase what is known and what is done in terms of bullying. When educators and policymakers focus on addressing systemic inequities and building inclusive school-wide climates, students with existing vulnerabilities are less likely to experience bullying and may also benefit from improved well-being.

3.   Research Site and Methodology

The research was conducted in Lalitpur, Nepal, with an emphasis on private schools. These schools were selected because they have a mixed student and have relatively recent facilities that make a special and changing environment for study of the bullying behaviours. The research aimed to explore the prevalence, types, and causes of bullying, along with identifying specific locations within school premises where bullying incidents are most likely to occur. To accomplish such objectives, a descriptive research design was adopted. The study used a purposive sampling method to select 154 students aged 10-16 years from classes 5 to 10. This methodology

made representation among different genders, age cohorts, and school sizes, thus directing a holistic view of the nature of bullying dynamics. The data collection included a combination of qualitative and quantitative methodology.

Students were instructed to respond to validated survey questionnaires, all of which contained questions regarding their personal experiences with different types of bullying, including physical, verbal, indirect bullying, and cyberbullying. The collected data were systematically examined with the simple statistical techniques. The analysis was centered around the detection of patterns and trends in victimization, comparing male and female/age differences and pinpointing the physical school areas where bullying was most common. Achieving through a blend of strong data collection techniques and focused analysis, the study offered some interesting findings about the multifaceted character of bullying behaviours among Lalitpur's private schools.

4. Data Presentation and Interpretations

4·1 Physical Bullying by Gender

Physical bullying, also known as direct bullying is the use of physical force to gain control of others. This refers to behaviours, including striking, kicking, punching, or forcefully taking another person's property. Such behaviour is usually found in situations where the power of one over the other are unbalanced, where the power holder uses the victim's assumed vulnerability for their own advantage. Boys tend to participate in physical bullying more often than girls due to more involvement in outdoor activity and sports game, which in turn may lead to disputes or the negative information transferring into an aggressive situation. Table-1 provides a comparative analysis of male and female students based on the frequency of physical bullying they experienced in a month, categorized as no experience, occasional experience (1-5 times), and frequent experience (6 or more times) on the next page.

The above mentioned table-1 data shows the statistical evidence of gender differences with respect to physical bullying experiences. A higher percentage of females (68%) did not report any physical bullying incidents than males (40%). This implies that girls may be less prone to receive such an attention, probably because of their temperamentally typified lower tendency to aggressive and

impingement. Conversely, boys exhibited a higher frequency of occasional bullying, with 32% reporting being bullied 1-5 times in a month, compared to 23% of females. This discrepancy might be explained by the high levels of involvement in competitive activities of boys, in which, confrontations and physical dominance often occur.

Table-1 : Victims of Physical Bullying by Gender

Frequency of Being Physically Bullied	Female (%)	Male (%)
Nil	46 (68)	34 (40)
1-5	16 (23)	28 (32)
6 and above	6 (9)	24 (28)
Total	**68**	**86**

Source : Field Survey, 2024.

While only 9% of females reported experiencing frequent physical bullying, a substantial 28% of males faced repeated victimization. This suggests an inclination for boys to be victimized by physical bullying for extended periods of time, which may be a product of group dynamics or the attempt to gain a level of social or athletic dominance. General, the data helps to clarify that boys are exposed to physical bullying more readily, meaning the behavioural patterns are related to their involvement in physically demanding activities as well as to their tendency for competitive aggression.

4·2   Physical Bullying by Age

Physical bullying is a typical issue in grade school children, which is usually triggered by the natural behavioural maturation of the young. Adolescents, especially in the 10-12 years old range, are prone to engaging in physical bullying due to its impulsive and restless character. This population has a tendency to express, through behaviour that included striking out physically, rather than verbally or indirectly. The adolescents, between 13-15 years and older than 15 years, can be considered relatively less constrained, this may be attributed to their greater-age maturity as well as emotional restraint

Table-2 explores the relationship between age groups and the frequency of physical bullying, categorized as no experience, occasional experience (1-5 times), and frequent experience (6 or more times) in a month on next page.

Table-2 : Victims of Physical Bullying by Age

Age Group	Frequency of Being Physical Bullied			Total
	Nil (%)	1-5 (%)	6 and above (%)	
10-12 years	26 (40)	24 (37)	15 (23)	65
13-15 years	43 (63)	13 (19)	12 (18)	68
16 years and above	11 (52)	6 (29)	4 (19)	21

Source : Field Survey, 2024.

Data contained in the above table show differential patterns of physical bullying among age groups. In children (10-12 years) 40% reported no experience with physical bullying, meaning most this age group experience at least some form of physical bullying. This is also corroborated by the number of victims of occasional bullying (37% (1-5 times) or frequent bullying (6 or more times) (23%. These figures indicate not only the increased risk level of younger children for victimization, but also of being bullies themselves because of their energy and reactive tendency to act impulsively.

By contrast, the 13-15-year age group does not report significant physical bullying (only 18% reporting being bullied 6 or more times. The majority (63% reported no physical bullying events, implying that children progressively withdraw from physical fighting as they mature. Similarly, among those aged 16 years and above, 52% reported no experience of physical bullying, while only 19% faced frequent incidents. This set shows the greatest degree of self-control, probably a consequence of greater age and their tendency for using the non-physical resolution of conflicts.

On the whole, the table shows that physical bullying decreases over the age. Physical types of bullying are more prevalent in younger children, both as perpetrators and as victims, and in elder children, who are less prone to perpetrate it and demonstrate their increasing emotional and social maturity. This trend emphasizes the necessity to respond to physical bullying at the youngest age so that healthier relationships can be created while children move from the younger to elate age groups.

4·3 Verbal Bullying by Gender

Verbal bullying, which includes the use of cruel language, insults, and offensive nicknames and jokes, is a common bullying

phenomenon in the school years. This type of bullying is often influenced by societal norms and language practices, where children imitate the informal or insensitive language they hear from adults or media. From an aggressor and competitive viewpoint, the boys are much more likely to be verbal bullies, while girls tend to be more restrained in their verbal interaction.

The following table provides a detailed comparison of verbal bullying experiences among male and female students, categorized into three groups: no experience, occasional experience (1-5 times), and frequent experience (6 or more times) in a month.

Table-3 : Victims of Verbal Bullying by Gender

Frequency of Being Verbally Bullied	Female (%)	Male (%)
Nil	38 (56)	20 (23)
1-5	17 (25)	36 (42)
6 and above	13 (19)	30 (35)
Total	**68**	**86**

Source : Field Survey, 2024.

The above table data present a remarkable gender difference of experience in the verbal bullying. Among female students, 56% reported no experience of verbal bullying, suggesting that over half of the girls are not subjected to this form of mistreatment. Conversely, among male students, only 23% reported no experience, highlighting that boys are more likely to encounter verbal bullying. In addition, verbal bullying (1-5 times per month) was reported by 42% boys and 25% girls, thus boys are the subject of verbal harassment more often in the category of verbal bullying too.

The biggest difference appears in the category of frequent victimization (6 or more times per month). While 35% of boys reported being frequently bullied verbally, only 19% of girls faced such incidents. This pattern indicates that boys are more likely to be exposed to chronic verbal aggression and, perhaps, as a result of their early engagement in competitive and aggressive activities, derogatory language is tolerated more often.

Overall, the table highlights that boys' verbal bullying is much higher than that of girls. Boys are not only a more likely victim, but also a perpetrator of verbal bullying, which correlates with their aggressive traits and social relations. However, girls seem to be much

less affected, which might be due to their more passive attitude and stronger emotional tolerance. This data highlights the importance of specific strategies in the management of verbal bullying in order to promote a more acceptable and friendly school climate.

4·4 Verbal Bullying by Age

Verbal bullying, which is often fueled by age-related behaviours and group interactions, refers to the act of inflicting painful nicknames, teasing, or impugning insults on victims, in order to control or purposely embarrass them. Verbal bullying for the younger children (age 10-12 years) with special vulnerability makes it a main and obvious means for the children to join other social groups. With the increasing age span of the children, their mode of interaction alters and verbal bullying is less common in the older age groups as a result of greater maturity and self-regulation. The following table analyzes the prevalence of verbal bullying across three age groups: 10-12 years, 13-15 years, and 16 years and above, categorized by the frequency of bullying experiences in a month.

Table-4 : Victims of Verbal Bullying by Age

Age Group	Frequency of Being Verbally Bullied			Total
	Nil (%)	1-5 (%)	6 and above (%)	
10-12 years	18 (28)	30 (46)	17 (26)	65
13-15 years	31 (46)	15 (22)	22 (32)	68
16 years and above	9 (43)	8 (38)	4 (19)	21

Source : Field Survey, 2024.

The above table reveals obvious age-related trends in verbal bullying-related experiences. Limited to 28% of participants in the 10-12 years age range reported no prior experience with verbal bullying, meaning that the majority of children within this age group experience verbal abuse in some form. This includes 46% who experienced occasional bullying (1-5 times) and 26% who faced frequent verbal bullying (6 or more times). These results are in line with the impulsive and aggressive behaviour of preschoolers, as more verbal aggression is likely to be employed by preschoolers in order to gain social dominance.

In 13-15 years, age range, 46% respondents claimed ignorance of verbal bullying, which is an improvement when compared with

12-15 years age group. Nevertheless, 22% still reported episodic bullying as well as a high number of 32% reported frequent bullying. This shows that although verbal bullying is reduced somewhat in adulthood, a considerable proportion of adolescents in this population, even still typical of disruptive peer relationships, both are victims of, and/or engage in verbal harassment, often resulting from peer pressure and group effects.

For the oldest group, aged 16 years and above, the data shows a marked decline in verbal bullying, with 43% reporting no experience and only 19% facing frequent bullying. In this age group, self-control and maturity are extreme, making them less prone to verbal harassment. Nevertheless 38% still described bullying occasional, which indicates that verbal abuse still happens even among older students.

Under the conclusion, the table shows that verbal violence is most frequent among 10-12 year-old age group, and it decreases with age. These patterns draw attention to the necessity for early intervention against verbal bullying in order to reduce the consequences of early-life bullying and to foster healthier social interactions as children develop.

4·5 Indirect Bullying by Gender

Indirect bullying, which includes behaviours such as spreading rumors, excluding others from social groups, and making mean gestures, is a subtle yet harmful form of bullying. Indirect bullying tends to be overlooked by teachers and adults, and as a result is more difficult to intervene against. Gender differences are at work in the ways in which this kind of bullying occurs, boys and girls are likely to use indirect bullying tactics in different ways depending on their social networks and personality.

Table-5 compares the experiences of male and female students with indirect bullying, categorized by frequency : no experience, occasional experience (1-5 times), and frequent experience (6 or more times) in a month on next page. The data presented in this table show some interesting sex differences in the proportion of indirect bullying. Among female students, 65% reported no experience of indirect bullying, indicating that the majority of girls are not exposed to this form of harassment. However, 26% of girls experienced occasional indirect bullying, and 9% faced frequent incidents. These statistics clarify that although indirect bullying is less prevalent in

girls, it occurs and is frequently characterized by such forms of bullying as rumor-spreading or exclusion-inducing social exclusion, both of which are in line with prevalent traditional gender-based (non-confrontational) patterns of conflict.

<div align="center">Table-5 : Victims of Indirect Bullying by Gender</div>

Frequency of Indirectly Bullied	Female (%)	Male (%)
Nil	44 (65)	45 (52)
1-5	18 (26)	29 (34)
6 and above	6 (9)	12 (14)
Total	**68**	**86**

Source : Field Survey, 2024.

It may also be observed that only 52% of male students reported they have not been exposed to indirect bullying, which isolates male students as being slightly more likely to be a victim of this type of mistreatment. A higher percentage of boys (34% reported occasional indirect bullying compared to girls, and 14% of boys experienced frequent incidents, which is also higher than the percentage for girls. That although indirect bullying is less apparent, boys are not immune to it and may engage in it as a means of achieving competitiveness or group cohesion.

In summary, the table reveals that indirect bullying is more frequent in boys than girls even if the difference is less than for physical or verbal bullying. Because of the latent quality of indirect bullying, it can be disguised and harder to notice and deal with, which emphasises the necessity for raising awareness among both students and staff of its consequences. Promotion of inclusive behaviour and formation of positive peer relations may be able to decrease the incidence of this type of bullying in boys and girls.

4·6 Indirect Bullying by Age

Indirect bullying (e.g., rumor spreading, social exclusion, and personal insults) is somewhat different across age groups. Young pupils may exhibit such behaviour as an instrument of social power doing this because such is the prevailing culture in English schools, and older pupils whose emotional maturity is more advanced may employ what is termed indirect bullying as a non-aggressive, asserting, way of power or of attempting to resolve conflicts.

The following table examines the frequency of indirect bullying across three age groups-10-12 years, 13-15 years, and 16 years and above-categorized into no experience, occasional experience (1-5 times), and frequent experience (6 or more times) within a month.

Table-6 : Victims of Indirect Bullying by Age

Age Group	Frequency of Being Verbally Bullied			Total
	Nil (%)	1-5 (%)	6 and above (%)	
10-12 years	41 (63)	20 (31)	4 (6)	65
13-15 years	42 (62)	15 (22)	11 (16)	68
16 years and above	6 (29)	11 (52)	4 (19)	21

Source : Field Survey, 2024.

Data in the above table show age-related variations in experience of indirect bullying. For the youngest age group (10-12 years), 63% of participants claimed to have never experienced indirect bullying, 31% reported sporadic exposures (1-5 episodes), and 6% reported repeated exposure (6 or more times). This suggests that although a large proportion of younger students do not partake in indirect bullying, a considerable number do participate in or suffer from this behaviour (presumably as a result of a social hierarchy struggle).

For the 13-15 years age group, the percentage of students with no experience (62% is similar to the younger group, but the percentage experiencing frequent bullying (16% is notably higher. This indicates that in early adolescence students may be increasingly moving to indirect bullying as an adaptation to academic conflict or to obtain dominance that is more sophisticated and covert.

The oldest age group ?16 years) is a clear exception. Only 29% reported no experience of indirect bullying, indicating that this behaviour becomes more common in terms of exposure as students grow older. The large majority (52% suffered from some form of occasional bullying incidents, with 19% with regular bullying. This trend is consistent with the maturity and tactical behaviour of older students, previously opting for indirect bullying instead of direct confrontation.

Overall, the table points out that indirect bullying changes with maturity, decreasing the frequency of bullying among the youngest, and increasing, but less aggressive, frequency among older school

students. This trajectory highlights the importance to consider interventions with differentiated approaches according to the age involved and aims at providing educators with methods to teach empathy and active ways to handle conflict escalation in all age-groups and thereby to prevent indirect bullying.

4·7 Cyberbullying by Gender

Cyberbullying, characterized by the use of electronic communication to intimidate, harass, or demean others, has become increasingly common with the proliferation of technology. This form of bullying often takes place through emails, social media, text messages, or gaming platforms. Gender differences in cyberbullying relate to differing access to technology and to varying ways in which boys and girls experience digital worlds. The following table compares the frequency of cyberbullying experienced by male and female students, categorized into no experience, occasional experience (1-5 times), and frequent experience (6 or more times) within a month.

Table-7 : Victims of Cyberbullying by Gender

Frequency of Cyberbullied	Female (%)	Male (%)
Nil	58 (85)	55 (64)
1-5	8 (12)	24 (28)
6 and above	2 (3)	7 (8)
Total	**68**	**86**

Source : Field Survey, 2024.

It may be seen from the above table that there is significant gender-related differences in the cyberbullying prevalence. A high proportion of female students (85% reported no history of having been cyberbullied implying girls are less susceptible to cyberbullying in the online environment. However, 12% of girls reported occasional bullying (1-5 times), while only 3% faced frequent cyberbullying (6 or more times). These values suggest that although cyberbullying is less frequent in girls, it continues to be an issue, particularly when dealing with repeated harassment.

In male single students, the percentage of students with no experience for cyberbullying is smaller, i.e., 64%, which indicates that boy is more often victim of cyberbullying than girl in the cyberspace. Among the boy population, a significant 28% of the boys

reported cyberbullying some time, and 8% of the boys reported cyberbullying often. These higher rates in men may be due to the more intense role of men in that domain (i.e., making use of the internet for online games and social networks, where violence and competition are more commonplace).

In conclusion, the table shows that boys are at greater risk for cyberbullying than girls and that they experience both occasional and frequent incidents at a greater share. This difference illustrates the importance of digital literacy and cyber safety training for boys in preventing dangers related to online experience. Attempts to develop safer online environments and campaigns to raise awareness on the psychological effects of cyberbullying can be instrumental in reducing its occurrence in both genders.

4·8   Cyberbullying by Age

Cyberbullying, a modern form of harassment facilitated through digital platforms such as social media, messaging apps, and gaming networks, impacts students differently across age groups. Children under the age of the internet may receive no exposure to technology, thereby making them less likely to be cyberbullying victims. Nevertheless, with the maturity of the students and the technological access, the number of cyberbullying tend to increase. The following table explores the frequency of cyberbullying experiences among three age groups-10-12 years, 13-15 years, and 16 years and above-categorized into no experience, occasional experience (1-5 times), and frequent experience (6 or more times) within a month.

Table-8 : Victims of Cyberbullying by Age

Age Group	Frequency of Being Cyberbullied			Total
	Nil (%)	1-5 (%)	6 and above (%)	
10-12 years	58 (83)	7 (11)	4 (6)	65
13-15 years	54 (79)	12 (18)	2 (3	68
16 years and above	4 (19)	13 (62)	4 (19)	21

Source : Field Survey, 2024.

Data presented in the table above amply demonstrate a trend of consistent cyberbullying prevalence by age. Among the youngest group (10-12 years), 83% reported no experience of cyberbullying,

reflecting their limited exposure to technology and online platforms. Only 11% reported occasional cyberbullying and 6% reports per day cyberbullying. These small figures point to the fact that toddlers have less of a 'website' to be targeted in the digital space, given their limited activity online.

Specifically, in the 13-15 yrs. age group, the proportion of students reporting no prior experience of cyberbullying drops to 79%, and 18% admitted to some experience of cyberbullying. Daily cyberbullying is infrequent in this population (3% of participants experienced cyberbullying). This suggests that, as the adolescents age and start to use technology in a more active way, the likelihood of coming into contact with cyberbullying increases, although it remains relatively low at this age.

The eldest one (16 years) is characterized by a dramatic change where only 19% did not report any experience with cyberbullying. A majority (62% reported occasional cyberbullying, and 19% experienced frequent harassment. This phenomenon is an indication of the increased digital exposure of senior students who are heavily involved in social media and other online activities, thereby making them more vulnerable to cyberbullying. The heavy use of technology in conjunction with the hiddenness and pervasiveness of digital communication may be responsible for the increased prevalence of cyberbullying in this age group.

In conclusion, the table illustrates that cyberbullying becomes more prevalent with age, as older students have greater access to and reliance on digital technology. These results highlight the imperative for proactive preventative strategies, such as digital literacy education and cyber safety education, to shield learners from cyber bullying on the internet. Early intervention and responsibility in the digital world for students, to reduce the consequences in all age groups, should be addressed.

5.   Major Findings

⇶ Boys experience significantly more physical bullying than girls, with 60% of boys reporting incidents compared to 32% of girls, and frequent bullying (6 or more times) being notably higher among boys (28%) than girls (9%).

⇶ The highest rate of physical bullying occurs from the ages of 10-12 years, with 37% reporting occasionally bullying and 23% reporting frequently bullying, but declines in older students.

- ⇝ Boys are more vulnerable to verbal bullying than girls, with 77% of boys reporting incidents compared to 44% of girls, and frequent verbal bullying being higher among boys (35%) than girls (19%).

- ⇝ Verbal bullying occurs with highest prevalence among 10-12-year-old children, 72% reporting verbal bullying, of whom 26% reported repeated verbal harassment.

- ⇝ Boys experience indirect bullying somewhat more than girls (48% of boys versus 35% of girls as targets of bullying incidents, primarily occasional instances).

- ⇝ Indirect bullying is the most common among (age group) students aged at least 16 years (71% reporting incidents) which indicates younger students' tendency to prefer more covert, non-confrontational approaches of bullying.

- ⇝ Boys are a much greater target of cyberbullying than girls (36% of boys report incidents while only 15% of girls report incidents), probably because boys are more active in online environments.

- ⇝ Cyberbullying is most common among students aged 16 years and above, with 81% reporting incidents, including 19% who experienced frequent harassment, due to increased access to technology in this age group.

6.   Conclusion

Bullying in its various forms—physical, verbal, indirect, and cyber—is a pervasive issue that affects students across gender and age groups. Boys appear to have a higher susceptibility to physical, verbal, and cyberbully compared to girls, offering evidence of boys participation in competitive and aggressive social interaction. However, girls instead suffer from less obvious types of bullying, e.g., indirect bullying, slightly though less frequent than the case for boys. Age is another important factor, younger students (10-12 years old) are more vulnerable to physical and verbal bullying from their impulsive nature and relatively immature social behaviour. With age, online and cyberbullying are observed to be increasingly on the rife scale, especially for adolescents 16 years and older, as they rely more on technology and often seek non-encountering forms of harassment.

Results also raise the need for age- and gender-specific interventions to prevent bullying in schools. It is important to teach

younger children how to handle their energy and emotion effectively, in order to prevent physical and verbal bullying. For mature students, digital literacy development and cultivation of ethical and responsible online behaviour for counteracting cyberbullying is important. In any age, fostering empathic, inclusive and pro peer relationships can be used to decrease bullying in all its versions. Teachers and parents need to cooperate in order to establish a protective and positive climate in which bullying is explicitly discouraged, and victims are made to feel able to access support.

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Identity Denied: Examining Socio-economic Exclusion and Marginalization of Landless Communities in Urban Nepal

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Abstract

The marginalization of landless people living in informal settlements in urban areas around the world seems to be a systemic issue of citizenship denial and socio-economic exclusion. This study examines how landlessness and the lack of legal identity are intertwined, focusing on marginalized groups such as the Janajati, Dalit, and women in the Kathmandu Valley of Nepal. For this purpose, I collected data by interviewing 30 respondents, selected through purposive sampling, to represent diverse ethnic, gender, and socio-economic backgrounds from the selected urban settlements. In this study, I revealed that landless people face extreme exclusion because they are unable to obtain citizenship certificates, which require landownership and other documents they do not have. In addition, it is further uncovered that those without citizenship are intentionally excluded from access to education, health, work, property, and political rights. Furthermore, women, on the other hand, have to face further challenges due to patriarchal norms that link their access to citizenship with male family members. So, this combination of landlessness and citizenship denial creates a kind of dual nature of marginalization that deepens socio-economic insecurity. Therefore, this study proposes a dual marginalization framework, combining global insights from citizenship literature with Nepal's specific challenges, such as caste discrimination and restrictive land tenure systems. Finally, to solve these issues, this study suggests legal reforms and formal recognition of informal settlements to ascertain equal opportunities for marginalized communities to participate fully in citizenship and socio-economic dynamics.

Keywords

Marginalization, Citizenship Denial, Landlessness, Socio-economic Exclusion, Nepal.

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**Identity Denied: Examining
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1. Introduction

Nepal has experienced rapid urbanization in recent years, and over half its urban population resides within the Kathmandu Valley (Asian Development Bank, 2020). Yet, the process of urbanization and its consequences, in the form of this rural-urban fringe and the gains that derive from it come at a great socio-economic cost, particularly to vulnerable groups, Janajatis, and the inhabitants of informal settlements—who have traditionally faced disadvantages to tenure over rural land and also in belonging to a besieged political/social space. Since citizenship certificates are crucial for accessing fundamental rights and public services, such as education, employ- ment, land ownership, and political participation (FWLD, 2017), many individuals in Nepal remain excluded from these benefits due to a lack of legal identity. As a result, this denial fuels processes of poverty and social exclusion as people who lack citizenship are deprived of full participation in economic, social, and political activities.

The situation is hardest for landless and informal settlement groups, informally referred to as Sukumbasi Basti, usually existing in groups whose members have been living for centuries on land they own, but without formal land titles or legal recognition of ownership. Because they are usually not part of policy and program measures, a precarious situation puts them even at higher risk of repossession and also at risk of being abused (FWLD, 2017). Furthermore, the inseparability of landlessness and lack of citizenship is also evident in Nepal, where household landholding is frequently a requirement for obtaining citizenship certificates. Accordingly, in the absence of legal proof of residence and land tenure, individuals are vulnerable to acquiring legal identity (Bishwokarma, 2018).

As urbanization has worsened the plight of landless groups, the Kathmandu Valley, a center of economic activity and urban population movement, has 42 informal settlements because of poor

rural development, poverty, and lack of livelihood opportunities in the rest of the country (Subedi, 2018). Despite the lack of security of tenure and government-recognized status as settled communities, these residents have no benefit from the basic infrastructure such as sanitation, potable water, and electricity (Shrestha, 2013). In addition, the loss of a path to obtain citizenship disproportionately isolates them because they are deprived of important legal rights, including registration of births and marriages, tertiary education, driving permits, etc., (FWLD, 2017). In turn, this structural culling traps people and families in a cycle of socioeconomic disadvantage.

Despite the characteristics shared by landless peoples in Nepal with the features of global urban marginalization, the same issues can also be found in some rapidly urbanizing nations like Indonesia. For instance, cities lure rural migrants to seek expanded opportunities, yet a majority of the migrants do not manage to get stable jobs and are locked in a vicious circle of marginalization. In Indonesia, marginalized urban communities face limited access to formal economic opportunities, housing, and infrastructure, resulting in the proliferation of slums on riverbanks, railway tracks, and unused public lands (Suparlan, 1990). Equally, in Nepal, the lack of land, dwelling, and urban management of complexities color distrust of the landless populations (United Nations Habitat Programme, 2003).

Because the physical environment of informal settlements exacerbates the exclusion of marginalized communities, poor housing conditions and inadequate infrastructure-such as the absence of sanitation, proper drainage systems, and clean water-pose significant health risks to residents, particularly in densely populated areas (Kurniasih, 2007). In addition, the lack of formal acknowledgment of these settlements leaves the residents at risk of forced evictions and their inability to enjoy their right to access public services and benefits.

As education is a primary means of sustaining marginalization, individuals without access to education tend to experience a range of forms of intersectional exclusion into employment and civic activity, which in turn reinforces their socioeconomic disadvantages (Percy, 2000). Lack of citizenship in Nepal restricts children from landless families to the academic sphere. Consequently, this further perpetuates cycles of poverty and exclusion. Therefore, this multilayered, intersectional exclusion phenomenon signals the urgent need for systemic changes to tackle both relative poverty and landlessness.

To tackle urban marginalization, comprehensive interventions are needed. These approaches also need to be able to identify informal settlements, integrate the poorest districts into integrated city plans, and provide cheap people's housing (Handayani, 2007). Furthermore, infrastructure (such as efficient drainage systems and waste management) is also necessary to enhance the living environment of informal settlements. Inclusive urban policy and practice in which marginalization groups are included in decision-making have also been shown to be relevant for social inclusion and equity production (Panudju, 1999).

As the purpose of this study deals with the experience of landless and informal settlement communities of their residents in Nepal, this paper examines the socio-economic consequences of not having citizenship certificates. It also investigates into the systemic obstacles that disable these people from attaining citizenship, such as poverty, geographic exclusion, and discriminatory administrative practices. Moreover, consideration of the wider consequences of this anomaly across the domains of education, employment, housing, and political activity is also provided in this paper. Thus, to understand the relationship between landlessness and citizenship denial, the present study seeks to contribute to a better understanding of this complex issue, and therefore, to guide the policy for protecting the rights and dignity of excluded communities in Nepal.

2.   Literature Review

2·1   Sociology of Citizenship

The idea of citizenship has a key role in sociology because it unites the rights of the individual with the obligations of society within the system of governance and collective flourishing. As citizenship is a sociological phenomenon that goes far beyond the strict definition in law, it involves a dynamic relationship between rights, responsibilities, and societal membership. According to Janowitz (1980), the maintenance of this balance between these dimensions is important for the stability of democratic values and the promotion of equity.

2·1·1 Citizenship as a Balance of Rights and Obligations

Obligations and Rights critique the prevailing tendency in Western democracies to prioritize the expansion of citizen rights at the expense of obligations. Because he argues that the essence of

citizenship lies in maintaining a balance between these two facets, he asserts that democratic citizenship is fundamentally about "ruling and being ruled" (Janowitz, 1980 : 3). This duality underpins a functioning democracy, where individuals are not merely beneficiaries of rights but also active contributors to the welfare of their communities.

Janowitz is based heavily on the writings of Aristotle and T.H. Marshall, meanwhile, presents their ideas to cope with the changing issues of citizenship in modern industrial societies. Even if, in both works, the definition of Aristotle's conception of citizenship involved an important notion of "being in charge", Marshall's conceptualization of citizenship described a dialectical evolution of citizenship through civil, political, and social rights. Nevertheless, Janowitz criticizes Marshall's method of not giving enough weight to the dimension of "obligations", because it leaves the notion of citizenship too bare, and too individualistic.

2·1·2 The Role of Institutions in Shaping Citizenship

Janowitz investigates the institutional conditions that permit or prevent the fulfillment of citizen rights. Although he emphasizes the essential functions of education, taxation, military service, and voluntary organization as means by which the duties of citizenship can be performed, he observes that education is both a right and a duty to equip people for civic engagement. Analogously, taxation and military service are the involuntary components of duties, which, when performed with knowledge and honesty, help maintain social order. According to Janowitz, electoral participation is not enough in terms of nurturing lively citizenship in the processes of contemporary democracy. Thus, he also argues for greater participation in voluntary organizations and industrial relations, which he calls "industrial citizenship", to redress social inequality and expand civic participation.

Janowitz offers an applicable theoretical framework for understanding the socio-economic off-limits and marginalization of the landless population in urban Nepal. Due to his focus on the relationship between rights and duties within citizenship that is framed for the needs of these communities—which are often deprived of basic rights, such as land ownership, political power, and social integration—it is clear that structural restrictions prevent them from

meeting their civic duties. As these groups are further marginalized by the lack of the following institutional supports, namely, schooling, work, and decision-making within the community, Janowitz's elegance lies in emphasizing the importance of institution-based change, in the form of voluntary associations, collective mobilization, and inclusive civic engagement, to break the cycle. Although his critique of the imbalance in citizenship underscores the importance of creating pathways for landless communities to assert their identity and contribute actively to society, it also moves beyond the narrative of dependency. Focusing on structural injustice and empowerment, this framework provides an in-depth analysis of how urban marginalization can be countered and positions itself as a powerful perspective for exploring the denial of identity and socioeconomic rights of marginalized populations in Nepal.

2·1·3 Citizenship Denial and Marginalization

The problem of socio-economic marginalization and exclusion of landless communities in urban Nepal can also be approached from the theoretical perspective of citizenship denial and interaction with structural deprivations. This framework, as described by McKeever (2007), enables us to gain important insights into the systemic obstacles that drive exclusion in transitional or conflict societies and constitutes an ideal prism through which to view the experience of Nepal's landless communities.

2·1·4 Citizenship and Its Denial

Although citizenship, as defined by T.H. Marshall (1963), rights to civil, political, and social rights that allow men and women to be fully integrated into society, denial of citizenship through legal, social, or structural means, has the effect of depriving men and women of their capacity to claim rights. As a result, they are therefore cut off from the social and political field of their societies. McKeever (2007) points out that citizenship denial is not just a legal question but a system issue that includes poverty, lack of recognition, and exclusion from state benefits and state protection. Due to that disruption, landless communities are disenfranchised from the potential for basic rights and access, such as housing, education, and economic security, from the lack of formal landownership in Nepal, too often unfortunately, means the absence of formal legal identity.

2·1·5 Marginalization Through Structural Inequalities

Marginalization as analyzed by McKeever, derived from political ex-prisoner research in Northern Ireland, occurs as a consequence of state and self-disenfranchisement. As state exclusion is formulated in law and regulation, that is, denial of issuing citizenship documents or reason, land use title, it necessarily means the barring of access to the wider social sphere. For instance, peasant communities, landless, are systematically marginalized from the state benefits or rights that citizenship typically accords to them. This is analogous to the lived experience of disadvantaged communities in Northern Ireland, where social disadvantage generates virtuous cycles of marginalization and deprivation (McKeever, 2007).

In addition, McKeever characterizes poverty as the core impediment to social inclusion, stressing how the causal effect of systemic deprivation is not just to deepen social inequalities, but to perpetuate marginalization. In the Nepali landless communities where poverty and denial of citizenship are a reflection of the process of illusory identity, the absence of legal identity limits schooling, work, and social welfare scheme opportunities, creating cyclical social-economic exclusion.

2·1·6 Social Citizenship as a Path to Inclusion

For McKeever (2007) social citizenship, focused on entitlement to welfare, education, and economic security, is both a necessary condition and a foundation for both inclusion and for addressing systemic exclusion. Because of the rapid urban and socioeconomic change of transitional societies like Nepal, some segments are left behind in this change. Therefore, social citizenship offers a pragmatic pathway toward integration. The requirements of Nepal's landless portions must be addressed through powerful interventions, i.e., social welfare policies, inclusive urban governance, and citizenship documents that will keep this population from becoming alienated.

2·1·7 Recognition and the Role of the State

Denial of citizenship is always connected to the ineffectiveness of the state to constitute, that is, to acknowledge. As McKeever (2007) argues that recognition is central to citizenship-justifying people's claims to rights and benefits-it is not so surprising that it continues to foster exclusion. Due to the lack of formal land entitlement in Nepal, the "undisclosed" status of the landless group

is common and they are excluded from State service as well as mainstream social recognition. As this situation is mirrored by the experience of marginalized social groups in Northern Ireland, in which the inattentiveness of the state to the political legitimacy of ex-prisoners deprived them of access to social and political inclusion, Nepal's landless communities need recognition by way of legal reforms and inclusive policies to dismantle systemic barriers.

2·1·8 Implications for Socio-Economic Exclusion in Nepal

If McKeever's theoretical model is applied to the case study of Nepal's landless people, the rather obvious truth emerges that citizenship denial, structural disadvantage, and socio-economic pauperism are inextricably linked. Although it also highlights the importance of breaking down the structural obstacles in the legal and policy field to advance inclusion, social citizenship, as defined by McKeever, represents a tool to overcome the socio-economical marginalization of landless people. Therefore, it also points to the critical role of state accountability and state action towards exclusion.

Therefore, the theoretical framework suggested by McKeever (2007) may be considered an especially relevant theoretical model for investigating the socio-economic marginality and exclusion of landless people in urban Nepal. Since it reveals how citizenship denial contributes to the perpetuation of structural inequality and how social citizenship can become a way for inclusion, policymakers may start to break down the systemic mechanisms sustaining exclusion by way of overcoming citizenship barriers and acknowledging the rights of excluded social groups.

3. Research Site and Methodology

This study focused on individuals living in landless and informal settlement communities within the Kathmandu Valley, specifically targeting areas of Thapathali, Ramhiti, Sankhamol, Sinamangal, Manohara, and Bansighat. As these communities were intentionally drawn to offer rich and relevant information about landlessness and the issue of the absence of citizenship certificates, an explorative and descriptive study design was used to examine this phenomenon. Despite enabling greater insight into the socio-economic reality, coping strategies, and systemic barriers of these disadvantaged groups, the same also highlighted the urgently needed, inclusive policy measures.
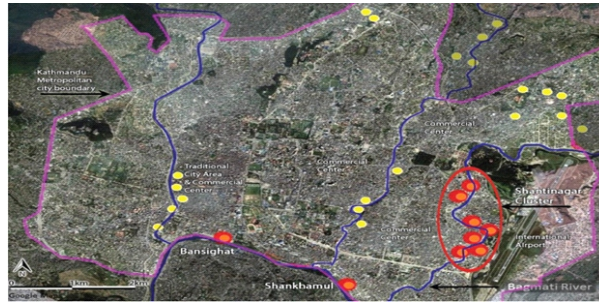
Figure-1 : Map showing the location of squatter settlements in Kathmandu Valley, Nepal (Thapathali, Ramhiti, Sankhamol, Sinamangal, Manohara, Bansighat, and others). Map data: © Google, Airbus, Technologies.

Similarly, using a purposive sampling method from the universe, a total of 30 families were selected, with a mixed representation of their backgrounds to provide valuable contributions to the study. The data were collected through face-to-face interviews, tabulated, and analyzed using simple statistical tools and techniques. As the protection of respondents' confidentiality, the informed consent, and the withdrawal of the participants in case of their discomfort in the process have been given priority, the present study followed the best ethical practices.

4. Data Presentation and Interpretation

4·1 Ethnicity of Respondents

Ethnicity is an important factor in analyzing socio-economic marginalization in Nepal, mostly found among landless individuals. This is because citizenship is closely linked to land administration and family records, which are hampered by disadvantaged marginalized ethnic groups in Nepal. The following table shows the ethnic breakdown of the respondents and provides insight into the disproportionate experience of a particular community's denial of citizenship:

Table-1 : Ethnicity of Respondents

Ethnicity	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Janajati	14	47.0
Dalit	8	27.0
Madhesi	1	3.0
Other	7	23.0
Total	**30**	**100.0**

Source : Field Survey, 2024.

The data depicted in Table-1 show that Janajati 47% and Dalits 27% form the majority of respondents without citizenship certificates, reflecting their disproportionate exclusion. The lower percentage of Madhesi respondents is 3%. The "Other" group 23% represents other marginalized ethnic groups, demonstrating that social reality denial of citizenship is a problem faced by a broad spectrum of communities, although its disproportionate impact is observed among Janajati and Dalit populations. These results reveal the systemic character of citizenship denial in Nepal.

4·2 Gender Disparity in Citizenship Access

The denial of citizenship disproportionately affects women due to deeply entrenched patriarchal norms and gendered legal frameworks. Women at risk of statelessness are usually denied access to education, the labor market, health, and property rights, trapping them in socio-economic precariousness. These legal and social obstacles are considerably more difficult for women than for men to obtain a legal identity. Table-2 shows the gender breakdown of respondents, and clearly shows how deep the over-representation is and the systematized gender-biased exclusion of women resulting from their efforts to obtain citizenship.

Table-2 : Gender Disparity in Citizenship Access

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Women	23	77.0
Men	7	23.0
Total	**30**	**100.0**

Source : Field Survey, 2024.

Data depicted in the above table reveal that 77% of the respondents denied citizenship are women, while men account for only 23%. This drastic difference reflects the ingrained gender-differentiated exclusion from Nepal's citizenship regime. Women's dependency on male family members for documentation not only delays but often entirely blocks their ability to secure legal identity. This is especially the case for women living in landless or marginal areas where access to resources and social capital is to a greater extent already restricted.

4·3 Access to Financial Services

Access to formal financial services is a key channel for fostering socio-economic inclusion and stability. Without access to basic

financial instruments like bank accounts, loans, and credit, individuals are unable to secure financial independence or invest in opportunities for growth, such as education, entrepreneurship, or property acquisition. In Nepal, citizenship is a prerequisite for opening a bank account, applying for loans, and participating in cooperative savings systems. Financial barriers faced by respondents based on citizenship denial category are described in the following table, including the severe barriers that respondents face in accessing formal financial systems.

Table-3 : Access to Financial Services

Access to Financial Services	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Cannot open bank account	18	60.0
Denied loans	10	33.0
Rely on informal savings groups	4	13.0
Total	**30**	**100.0**

Source : Field Survey, 2024.

Data contained in the above table show that 60% of respondents are unable to open bank accounts, which significantly limits their ability to save securely or access basic financial services. Without bank accounts, these people are financially excluded from formal economic systems and thus are deprived of the possibility of receiving government subsidies, managing their savings, and accessing secure payment systems. This exclusion further perpetuates their socio-economic marginalization.

Further, 33% of respondents have declined loans, which points to another significant implication of lost citizenship. Without access to credit, these individuals cannot invest in small businesses, education, or housing, which are essential for improving their quality of life and breaking the cycle of poverty. The absence of formal financial access often forces them to resort to informal savings groups or very high-interest moneylenders, which can have the effect of perpetuating economic exploitation. Formal financial services are limited, although informal savings groups are used by only 13% of respondents, nor are they secure and provide the potential of formal financial services.

4·4 Impact on Children's Education

The denial of citizenship has significant consequences for children, most notably with respect to their access to education, a

fundamental right and a tool for the interruption of cycles of poverty and exclusion. Citizenship certificates and/or birth certificates are commonly needed to enroll in a school, sit for an examination, or receive an educational certificate in Nepal. Children from landless/dispossessed families who are without citizenship can be exposed to a confluence of disadvantageous circumstances. The following table provides a detailed description of the educational issues that the families have to deal with, as their families are facing in the country without citizenship:

Table-4 : Impact on Children's Education

Educational Impact on Children	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Denied admission due to no ID	9	30.0
Unable to take exams	11	37.0
Dropped out of school	10	33.0
Total	**30**	**100.0**

Source : Field Survey, 2024.

The above table reveals that 37% of children from families without citizenship are unable to sit for exams, despite being enrolled in schools. Furthermore, 33% of children are forced to leave school because of systemic discrimination and the stigmatization of being undocumented. But not only does the negligence of the dropout cease to be individual personal development, but the victim's level of personal exploitation also increases, for example, through child labor or poverty. A particularly notable result is that 30% of children are denied entry to schools because they are not able to produce ID documents. This blanket refusal of access to education keeps them voiceless and without human rights and without the possibilities to seize a better future.

4·5 Psychosocial Effects of Statelessness

Statelessness caused by the deprivation of citizenship has deep and long-lasting psychosocial consequences that go beyond the need for access to socio-economic opportunities. Uncertainty about the fate of those without formal identity can lead to a high burden of mental health problems. The fear of not receiving essential services, the lack of the possibility to plan an everyday life on an individual scale, and the social stigma of being undocumented lead to increased levels of anxiety and stress. Beyond the personal difficulties, stateless people

often experience social alienation. They can also be labeled as outsiders or illegitimate, not only damaging to the self-esteem but also disrupting the ability to establish a firm foothold in society. This disenfranchisement fosters feelings of isolation and powerlessness, which in turn aggravates their mental health conditions. As illustrated in the following table-5, the psychosocial impact reported by respondents is classified according to the emotional and social consequences of statelessness.

Table-5 : Psychosocial Effects of Statelessness

Psychosocial Effect	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Anxiety about future	12	40.0
Social stigma	10	33.0
Depression or stress	8	27.0
Total	**30**	**100.0**

Source : Field Survey, 2024.

The above table indicates that 40% of participants reported having experienced worrying fears for the future. Social stigma was described (33% by respondents), which illustrates the discrimination and intolerance of stateless people in the society. Mental health burden through depression or stress was reported in 27% of participants, which is consistent with the mental health issue that comes with statelessness. These findings show the urgent need for psychological treatments and community-based interventions to reduce the psychological distress of statelessness.

4·6   Political Exclusion

Citizenship is embedded in political engagement, which is guaranteed to the citizen through the right to suffrage, to candidature, and to community control. However, in the case of noncitizens, these experiences are completely beyond reach, leading to political frustration and exclusion from the political process. Political exclusion has profound consequences, as it systematically erases the political identities of stateless individuals and prevents them from advocating for their rights or influencing policies that affect their lives. Table-6 classifies the level of political disenfranchisement experienced by survey respondents and describes the systemic obstacles towards political participation for those lacking in citizenship on the next page.

Table-6 : Political Exclusion

Political Exclusion	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Unable to vote	18	60.0
Excluded from community committees	8	27.0
Denied political candidacy	4	13.0
Total	**30**	**100.0**

Source : Field Survey, 2024.

The above table shows that 60% of interviewees are unregistered voters because of a lack of citizenship, effectively canceling their individual participation in electoral processes. Moreover, 27% of respondents reported being excluded from community committees, which play a critical role in local governance and resource allocation. In addition, 13% of respondents reported that they were prevented from seeking political office. These results illustrate the extensive political marginalization experienced by landless people. Being denied the right to vote, to sit on community committees, or to stand for political office means that their political identity is systematically erased and their marginalization is further cemented.

4·7 Forced Evictions

Forced evictions are a major problem in informal settlements for households that are landless. Due to the lack of legal recognition of their land or civil status, these communities get subjected to an ongoing risk of eviction, and that places them in an uncertain life characterized by vulnerability. Evictions are commonly executed without prior notice or fair process, directly displacing families from their homes and breaking their links to school, health, and work. The following table-7 analyzes the frequency and nature of eviction experiences reported by respondents and provides information on the vulnerable housing situations in the landless population.

Table-7 : Forced Evictions

Eviction Impact	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Evicted without notice	8	27.0
Constant threat of eviction	15	50.0
Relocated without compensation	7	23.0
Total	**30**	**100.0**

Source : Field Survey, 2024.

The information in table-7 shows that 50 percent of respondents live under a permanent threat of eviction, which emphasizes the precarious living situation of landless groups. Further, 27% of participants reported being unlawfully evicted, illustrating the absence of legal redress for landless individuals. A total of 23% of participants also stated that they were displaced uncompensated. The results bring to light the systemic marginalization experienced by the landless population, who are considered adventitial residents residing in these places for generations. Forced evictions not only are a violation of their right to housing, but they snatch from them their dignity and belonging feeling.

4·8 Barriers to Accessing Citizenship

Citizenship is of pivotal importance for entitlement to basic rights and services; nonetheless, the road to acquiring citizenship is full of difficulties, especially for the disadvantaged and landless communities. A large number of applicants cannot fulfill the document related requirements, like a certificate of birth or evidence of parental status entitlement, which are mandatory criteria for citizenship applications. The following table describes the type of barriers respondents have encountered, which offers a deeper insight into the systemic barriers operating within the citizenship process.

Table-8 : Barriers to Accessing Citizenship

Barrier	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Lack of required documents	12	40.0
Bureaucratic delays	8	27.0
Family/spousal disapproval	6	20.0
Geographic/administrative issues	4	13.0
Total	**30**	**100.0**

Source : Field Survey, 2024.

The above table reveals that the most frequent barrier to obtaining citizenship, by which 40% of the interviewees stated that the difficulty of obtaining the necessary documents is due. Bureaucratic delays, experienced by 27% of respondents, highlight inefficiencies within the system that discourage applicants or leave their cases unresolved for extended periods. Family or marital disapproval was reported as a major obstacle by 20% of respondents, driven by the impact of patriarchal social expectations on

applications for citizenship. Geographic and administrative issues (reported by 13% of respondents) are further challenges to those in rural or remote areas.

These results shed light on the systemic issues inherent in the operation of Nepal's citizenship machinery. The blocking of these barriers requires legislative changes to ease burdens of bureaucratic record keeping, enhance administrative ease, and provide equal access to citizenship for disadvantaged segments of the population. Construction of networked service hubs and provision of mobile outreach services may help overcome geographical obstacles, and promoting public understanding of citizenship entitlements alongside challenging patriarchal practices may increase the inclusivity and fairness of the service.

4·9   Dependency on Informal Networks

The lack of legal status, i.e., citizenship, compels landless people to strongly depend on informal networks in order to satisfy their core needs. Living outside of formal financial structures, healthcare, or governmental assistance, these people are not included in stable and regulated means of provision. Consequently, they reach out to family, community organizations, or informal creditors to deal with their financial and social difficulties. Table-9 below classifies the modes of informal dependencies reported by the respondents, highlighting the unstable character of their survival strategies.

Table-9 : Type of Dependency on Informal Networks

Type of Dependency	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Borrowing from relatives	15	50.0
Informal loans (high interest)	10	33.0
Community savings groups	5	17.0
Total	**30**	**100.0**

Source : Field Survey, 2024.

The above table shows that 50 respondents rely on their relatives for financial support. Additionally, 33% of respondents reported turning to informal loans with high interest rates. Community savings groups, in which 17% of respondents participate, are one of several coping mechanisms. These results highlight the tenuous nature of the dependence of stateless individuals on informal networks, which in turn are frequently unreliable, unethical, and

abusive. To deal with this problem, specific interventions are needed to bring marginalized groups into the formal system. Policies that dissociate citizenship from financial service access (e.g., microfinance programs, inclusive banking programs) may decrease reliance on informal networks. Besides, the work done to promote the awareness of financial literacy and the development of community-based saving systems can help to develop more stable and resilient support systems for such a vulnerable group.

4·10 Community Perception of Stateless Individuals

The experience of stateless people in their community of origin significantly informs their social relations, access to resources, and quality of life in general. Statelessness is commonly, and sadly, intertwined with illegitimacy, lawlessness, or lack of contribution to society, which then results in stigmatization and exclusion in society. Such negative prejudgments impact people's self-esteem and their ability to become reintegrated into the community, thus ensuring the perpetration of the exclusion and marginalization process. Through the analysis of societal attitudes towards stateless people, the following table reveals how stigma and negative stereotypes further alienate and exclude stateless people.

Table-10 : Community Perception of Stateless Individuals

Perception	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Viewed as criminals/illegitimate	14	47.0
Seen as burden on society	10	33.0
Neutral perception	6	20.0
Total	**30**	**100.0**

Source : Field Survey, 2024.

As shown by the data in table above, 47% of respondents are viewed as criminals or illegal aliens in their own neighborhoods. Additionally, 33% of respondents reported being viewed as burdens on society. However, only 20% of respondents indicated an independent perception from their community. These results point to the pervasive social stigma of statelessness, which in turn intensifies statelessness and exclusion. The solution to these problems involves community-based awareness activities aimed at countering both stereotypes and fostering a sense of empathy for stateless people.

Further, providing platforms for stateless persons to share their stories and fight for their rights is a way to change the stereotypes in the society and therefore promote greater inclusion. Collaborative efforts between government agencies, civil society organizations, and local communities are essential to dismantle the stigma and create a supportive environment for those affected by statelessness.

4·11 Impact on Housing and Infrastructure

Access to proper housing and basic asphalting and plumbing represent basic human rights that have a direct impact on quality of life. Nevertheless, for landless communities or people without citizenship, these basics are still beyond reach. Lacking both de facto land ownership and legal/national identity, these people are generally denied access to government-funded infrastructure services, including sanitation, electricity, and housing upgrades. As a result, they are forced to rely on unsafe or informal systems, which pose significant risks to their health, safety, and overall well-being. The following table shows the challenges faced by landless individuals in accessing housing and infrastructure, illustrating the precariousness of their living conditions:

Table-11 : Challenges faced on Housing and Infrastructure

Challenge Faced	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sanitation services (shared/none)	18	60.0
No formal electricity connection	9	30.0
Unsafe housing structures	3	10.0
Total	**30**	**100.0**

Source : Field Survey, 2024.

Data in the table above reveal that 60% of respondents lack proper sanitation services, relying on shared or inadequate facilities. Furthermore, 30% of respondents reported having no formal electricity connections, underscoring the energy deprivation faced by these communities. Only 10% of respondents indicated living in unsafe housing structures, but this reflects the severity of risks faced by these individuals. The results illustrate the systemic failure to include landless and stateless people in housing and infrastructure building. These problems call for specific policy measures, i.e., the identification of informal settlements and their incorporation in

urban planning schemes. Investments in appropriately sized affordable housing, sanitation systems, and tailored energy infrastructure for marginalized populations can build these gaps. Moreover, providing legal status and citizenship to these persons would allow them to benefit from government schemes and services, thus promoting wider inclusion and better living conditions.

4·12 Coping Mechanisms and Resilience

Despite facing systemic challenges such as landlessness and statelessness, these communities demonstrate remarkable resilience and creativity in coping with their hardships. The lack of legal recognition, land ownership, and entitlement to government support forces them to explore alternative strategies for survival and livelihood. These adaptive mechanisms not only highlight their ability to persevere under difficult circumstances but also reveal the deep-rooted systemic vulnerabilities that perpetuate their exclusion. The following table categorizes these coping strategies and provides an overview of how landless communities navigate systemic exclusion and maintain their livelihoods amidst precarious living conditions:

Table-12: Coping Mechanisms and Resilience

Coping Mechanism	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Collective community efforts	12	40.0
Seeking support from NGOs	10	33.0
Relocating to avoid eviction	8	27.0
Total	**30**	**100.0**

Source : Field Survey, 2024.

As can be seen from the above table, 40% of respondents find their response relying on collective communal activities. Support from NGOs is 33% of the listed coping mechanisms, which highlights the important role NGOs play in filling in the gaps left by the state. Eviction as the reason for relocation was stated by 27% of respondents, highlighting the precariousness of these populations. These results highlight the ingenuity and adaptation of landless populations in the event of structural exclusion. Nonetheless, the use of coping mechanisms by itself is not advisable and unsustainable. The welfare issues they face can only be responded to by

government-led action, specifically secure housing initiatives, tenure-reform measures, and inclusion policies aimed at diminishing reliance on illicit systems and NGOs. Identifying and supporting collective community action and linking these communities to formal systems will strengthen their resilience and promote long-term stability.

5. Major Findings

- » Janajati (47%) and Dalit (27%) respondents face significant denial of citizenship, reflecting systemic exclusion and marginalization of these ethnic groups. The "Other" category (23%) further highlights the broader impact on marginalized communities.

- » Women (77%) are disproportionately denied citizenship compared to men (23%), primarily due to patriarchal norms, legal barriers, and dependency on male family members for documentation.

- » A majority (60%) cannot open bank accounts, significantly limiting their access to formal savings and financial services. Additionally, 33% are denied loans, forcing them to rely on informal, high-interest lenders.

- » 37% of children are unable to sit for exams despite being enrolled, while 30% are denied school admission outright due to lack of ID. Another 33% drop out of school, perpetuating cycles of poverty and exclusion.

- » Statelessness causes severe mental health challenges, with 40% experiencing anxiety about their uncertain future, 33% facing social stigma, and 27% reporting stress or depression.

- » Citizenship denial prevents 60% of respondents from voting, while 27% are excluded from community-level committees, and 13% are unable to contest for political office, erasing their political voice.

- » 50% of respondents live under a constant threat of eviction due to their lack of legal status. Additionally, 27% reported being evicted without notice, and 23% were displaced without receiving any compensation.

- » The most significant barrier reported by 40% of respondents is the lack of required documents like birth certificates.

Bureaucratic delays (27%) and family or spousal disapproval (20%) further restrict citizenship access.

➤ A majority (60%) of respondent's lack access to proper sanitation facilities, while 30% have no formal electricity connection. Unsafe housing structures reported by 10% further exacerbate their vulnerable living conditions.

➤ Due to systemic exclusion, 50% depend on financial support from relatives, 33% turn to informal loans with high interest rates, and 17% rely on community savings groups, which are unstable and risky.

➤ Social stigma is widespread, with 47% being viewed as criminals or illegitimate and 33% seen as burdens on society. Only 20% reported neutral or non-discriminatory perceptions from their community.

➤ To adapt to systemic exclusion, 40% rely on collective community efforts, 33% seek support from NGOs, and 27% relocate to avoid eviction. These strategies, however, remain unsustainable without systemic change.

6. Conclusion

The results of the study of landless households in urban Nepal are found to show some degree of overlap between the topic raised in the literature review and the specific characteristics of citizenship denial as it applies to the Nepali reality. Along with the plank of Janowitz's (1980) concerning the interplay between rights and obligations, the research also shows that the absence of official citizenship creates a barrier against a counteracting civic duty, which further contributes to Dalit 27% and Janajati 47% marginalization. McKeever's (2007) analyses of structural disadvantage and poverty itself as hurdles to entry are echoed in the results, especially in the cyclical impoverishment resulting from lack of education, employment, and state social welfare. Lack of access for women in the nature of citizenship access, as determined by patriarchal norms and gendered laws, fits well with McKeever's claim that state recognition lies at the heart of the achievement of equitable citizenship. These similarities point to how systemic impediments to becoming a citizen reinforce socio-economic marginalization worldwide, as has been the case for stigmatized groups in Northern Ireland and other transitional states.

On the other hand, the paper also raises some special features of the citizenship denial in Nepal that are not clearly discussed in related literature. The high overlap between land ownership and legal personhood in Nepal produces a special case of marginalization where the lack of land tenure directly excludes landless people from the entitlements of citizenship. This double marginalization, by way of landlessness and by virtue of lack of legal personality, is compounded by the historical caste system discrimination and by deep-rooted socio-cultural inequalities that disproportionately impact Dalits and women. There is a particular requirement for contextualized approaches, i.e., legal reforms, participatory urban strategies, and acknowledgment of informal areas. Through a synthesis of theoretical claims and empirical evidence, the paper highlights the need to equip minority groups for empowerment through institutional reform and equitable access to citizenship and socio-economic participation.

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Motivating Factors for International Migration: A Case Study of Nepalese Students Living Overseas

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Abstract

Nepal has one of the highest rates of student outflow abroad in search of better education and employment opportunities. However, this emerging phenomenon also causes much concern about the so-called 'brain drain' and its implications in the country. This study explores the motivating factor for the out-migration of Nepalese students to other countries. I selected six participants living in different foreign countries through purposive sampling and conducted in-depth telephone interviews to elicit their personal experiences. The results indicate that students are motivated not only by push factors such as scarcity of opportunities in Nepal and political disturbances and by an obsolete education system in the country but also by pull factors such as advanced education systems, more predictable employment, and improved quality of life abroad. This study concludes that while migrating abroad gives students opportunities to grow personally and professionally, it also contributes to Nepal's loss of skilled individuals. Therefore, this study suggests that improving domestic education, providing long-term job opportunities, and promoting good governance are crucial for Nepal to retain its human capital and encourage students to return home after studying abroad.

Keywords

Students Outmigration, Brain-drain, Push-pull factors, Nepal.

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Motivating Factors for International Migration: A Case Study of Nepalese Students Living Overseas

1. Introduction

Student movement between the home and host country and its dimensions has become an area of major interest for both countries of origin and destination. As an example, the host nation gains via international students on an economic angle, while the country of origin, like Nepal, has to bear migration of its intellectual individuals, called "brain drain" (Jong & Fonseca, 2020). This event gives a two-sided meaning. Nations with advanced development are making profits and having talents; however, nations with underdevelopment are facing the outcome of the economy and social aspect. More and more students from Nepal are exploring study abroad opportunities and are typical of the trend globally, which is mostly oriented toward destinations like Australia, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Canada (Ghimire, 2019).

In today's world, international student mobility is obviously a principal avenue connecting high-skilled immigration with other nations (Suter & Jandl, 2006). Nevertheless, it seems that the factors that drive student migration are not adequately explained, with the factors such as good educational standards and the lack of higher earnings cited as the main determinants (Brezis & Souri, 2011). Moreover, it is revealed that the dream of better living situations and being awarded universally recognized degrees are the main factors for students or prospective students seeking an international education (Chacko, 2020). Studying abroad, as Costello (2015) observes, involves not only classroom education but also experiencing cultural differences and living in a host country.

Students from developing countries like Nepal often dream of going abroad to build a better life and secure the future they have always hoped for. In addition to academic qualifications, students enjoy an invaluable work opportunity and financial sustainability during their study abroad (Tran et al., 2020). This is how student migration is not only a tool for individual development but also a

contributing factor to global socio-economic dynamics. At a base level, student migration involves moving from one place to another as either a means of temporary or permanent carrying out of educational or occupational activities, often steered by factors such as escaping political turmoil or improving lifestyle standards (Goldin & Reinert, 2007). The trend of students pursuing higher education in global universities is also strong in Nepal, which, for instance, is reflected by the threefold increase in the number of NOC applicants in the current year as compared to the prior years (Ghimire, 2016). This means that educational migration is truly on the rise.

A good example of this is that 112,593 Nepalese students received "No Objection Certificates" (NOCs) from the government in 2023/24, which is a necessary document for pursuing studies abroad (Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology, 2024). There is no doubt that the large-scale exodus of competent population from developing to developed nations like Nepal has been a determinant factor and felt accordingly. Brooks and Waters (2011) contend that brain drain is the main pitfall for developing economies, rendering the local economy weak without the necessary human resource to improve and develop it. Amongst such students, some may eventually come back, while others may still remain overseas, accentuating this evolution.

The culminating out-migration of students from Nepal, however, is a wake-up call to correct the base causes of migration and cultivate an agreeable atmosphere for the homecoming of students. This trend has profound consequences, leading to a gap of skilled professionals and a roadblock of economic advancement in Nepal. In this context, the purpose of this study is to explores the motivating factor for the out-migration of Nepalese students to other countries. Moreover, it attempts to explore the factors underlying the increasing outflow of Nepalese students to foreign education. It aims to give a broad perspective of this trend in its impact on students and Nepal generally while trying to understand their decisions and experiences.

2.   Review of Anthropological Perspectives on Migration

As a complex social phenomenon, migration has always fascinated the anthropologist who, in this process, can study it from cultural, social, and interdisciplinary viewpoints. The engagement of anthropology with migration changed dramatically as it moved from early localized works to recent global, transnational, and

intersectional analyses. The discipline now focuses on the processes and contexts of migration and the far-reaching effects thereof while drawing on insights from other fields such as sociology, political science, and economics (Brettell 2016).

Anthropological studies on migration are generally classified into three categories. In the first, they focus on the image of immigrants as constructed by host societies and the immigrants' adaptation to this construction. The second examines the process of migration itself, involving both individual and collective experiences of migrants. The third category deals with the broader contexts of migration, including legal, cultural, and political aspects that touch upon border constructions, estranged connections, and sociocultural networks (Brettell, 2016; Brettell & Hollifield, 2023).

The broader theoretical influences shaped the movement of migration studies in anthropology. In its early years, the discipline was largely an investigation of small, face-to-face communities located in non-Western cultures. Yet since the 1970s it has been increasingly used to study patterns of large-scale migration, employing at times diverse theoretical frameworks, for example, world-systems theory to dissect economic and political forces involved in migration processes through historical instances such as the Atlantic slave trade (Kearney 1986). Meanwhile anthropologists have examined the impacts of rural-urban migration and movements from developing regions into industrialized centers (Castles et al., 2014).

In the 1990s, the focus of anthropology shifted to cultural and social aspects of migration, again largely influenced by postcolonial and transnational perspectives. The shift thus opened up space for the consideration of migration in flows and relationships that make up the world, as well as questions about ethnic versus civic identities, belonging, and sociocultural dynamics operating between newcomers and indigenous people (Foner 2003; Reed-Danahay & Brettell 2008). Foner's work on historical and contemporary immigration into North America provides a comparative framework for examining immigrant experiences versus their host societies' expectations. Likewise, Reed-Danahay and Brettell's ethnographic case studies at two ends exhibit what cultural and political engagement entails for immigrants in Europe versus the United States.

Anthropologists point out the interdisciplinary nature of migration research. Brettell and Hollifield (2023) discuss how

theories of migration are enriched by the contributions of culture and make important cultural perspectives become relevant in the discussions. Castles, de Haas, and Miller (2014) make an essential part of globalization to frame migration with its deep political, economic, and cultural impacts. On the other hand, works such as Rosenblum and Tichenor (2012) extend the disciplinary scope of international migration to include anthropological as well as sociopolitical viewpoints.

Beyond these theoretical contributions, anthropological research on migration often focuses on particular cases or regions. For instance, White (1995) studied migration of Turks to Germany and considered issues related to cultural adaptation and integration. An online resource that provides detailed information on topics related to migration as well as world regions and specific case studies is the Migration Information Source.

Anthropology's broad approach to understanding migration through the use of both empirical analysis and theoretical understandings underscores its continuing relevance for analyzing one of humanity's most enduring forms of social change. Through collaborations with disciplines such as economics, geography, and cultural studies, anthropology will further our collective understanding of the many facets of human migration in an increasingly interconnected world.

3.   Study Site and Methodology

This study focused on individuals who were originally residents of Kathmandu, Nepal, and are now living in various foreign countries. These participants were purposefully selected because their experiences provide valuable insights into the motivations, challenges, and factors driving the migration of Nepali students abroad. An exploratory research design within the qualitative framework was adopted to investigate this relatively underexplored phenomenon. This approach allowed for a deeper understanding of participants' subjective experiences and the broader social and economic influences on their decisions to migrate. The study targeted a universe of students from the Kathmandu Valley who had moved abroad for education and employment opportunities.   From this population, a purposive sampling method was employed to select six participants, ensuring diverse and meaningful contributions to the research. Data were collected through in-depth telephone interviews

using open-ended questions, which encouraged participants to share their personal narratives and reflect on their motivations and attitudes. The data were analyzed qualitatively through thematic analysis, and systematic coding to identify recurring themes and patterns. Ethical considerations were rigorously maintained throughout the study, including the use of pseudonyms to ensure participant confidentiality and anonymity, as well as obtaining informed consent to respect their autonomy.

4.   Data Presentation and Interpretation

Lee's theory of migration (1966) is a seminal theory about human mobility. Lee's definition of migration includes two factors, push factors that induce people to depart from their home of origin and pull factors that induce them to go to a new location. Migration occurs when the interaction between these factors, along with intervening obstacles and personal circumstances, motivates individuals to move.

The education system in Nepal has long been criticized for not adequately preparing students for the competitive nature of the modern world. Outdated curricula, limited access to modern educational resources, and a lack of alignment with job market demands have created frustration among the nation's youth. Apart from the education, the socio-economic factors, including the corruption, nepotism and the job market stagnation, worsen the poor condition. These broader problems have left students feeling incarcerated, their dreams limited by the inefficiencies of the household.

On the other hand, countries such as Australia, United States, Canada, and United Kingdom have developed high-level education, professional development and strong socio-economic frameworks. These pull factors together with the push factors in Nepal have resulted in a growing number of students moving out in the name of better prospects. Aaryana (pseudonym), a 22-year-old student from Kathmandu and now living in Australia, exemplifies this phenomenon. Her lived experience provides a compelling description of how poor institutional frameworks in Nepal make it an imperative for Nepalese students to study and look for jobs far away from home. She describes it as follows:

> After finishing high school in Kathmandu, I dreamed of a career in healthcare administration. But Nepal's outdated

education system, with rote learning, delayed exams, and endless bureaucracy, left me feeling stuck. Waiting months for paper and lab data depleted my motivation, and even my helpful parents started to lose hopes in the system. A friend who studied in Australia introduced me to their practical and efficient education system. Programs such as Vocational Education and Training (VET), modular semesters and financial backups such as Centrelink seemed like the right options to me. The prospect of a stable future through flexible home loan policies under the LMI scheme also stood out.

Leaving Nepal wasn't easy, but staying meant struggling in a system that didn't work. I opted to pursue a world in which recombination translates into real chances and real progress.

Aaryana's story shows the deep frustrations that many Nepali students carry in their home country's educational context. In her case the push factors are comprehensible and complex. First, the reliance on outdated curricula and rote memorization reflects a lack of innovation in Nepal's education system. This method does not prepare students with the real-world skills needed in the current employment market, and are not prepared for workplace difficulties. Second, due to academic process inefficiencies (including repeated exam delays and bureaucratic roadblocks in document verification), students face more obstacles. These inefficiencies are not merely inconveniences; they represent systemic failures that hinder students' ability to achieve their goals in a timely and effective manner.

The pull factors that drove Aaryana to go to Australia are equally powerful. The VET system provides a clear representation in the education structure of Nepal on the one hand, by focusing on practical, job-related programmes, and preparing students for work in real-time on the other. The structured semester system further adds predictability and efficiency, enabling students to plan their academic journeys with confidence. Additionally, Australia strong social security (e.g., Centrelink) has been used to mitigate the financial problems that often come with studying abroad. The accessibility of flexible housing and loan facilities, as demonstrated by the LMI scheme, then comforts students about their capacity to lead a stable life in their new country.

Similarly, globalization is a key framework for understanding migration. According to Giddens (1990) globalization is the increasing degree of world interdependency which involves the local and global.

Robertson (1992) highlights globalization as the "thinning of the world" and growing sensitivity to a global system. Globalization provides Nepalese students opportunities to pursue international education owing to the improvements in communication/ transportation technologies. De Haas (2000) highlights globalization's role in creating a global labor market, where Nepali students can explore education and career opportunities. Like Aaryana, another participant, 26-year-old Sirjan (pseudonym) from the USA reveals:

As I began my computer science studies in Nepal, I was brimming with hope and excitement to work with the latest technology. But that excitement quickly faded. The courses were outdated, practical training was nonexistent, and there was no access to modern tools or industry exposure. It felt like we were stuck in the past, unprepared for the global job market. It got worse watching my friends abroad, working on the next level stuff doing projects and interning. I was stuck memorizing theories with no real-world application. That's when I started exploring opportunities abroad, and the U.S. stood out. The adaptability of community colleges, inexpensive supplementary courses and the opportunity to work part-time while attending have been a source of optimism for me. The supportive system, with on-campus housing and resources for international students, made the transition feel possible. Leaving Nepal wasn't easy, but staying meant staying stuck. Moving to the U.S. was my chance to grow and learn in an environment that values innovation and practical skills.

The personal experience of spending time in Nepal, as recounted by Sirjan, clarifies the great constraints of the educational system in Nepal and the push factors that encourage students such as him to leave Nepal in search of chances abroad and outside the country. The outdated module, poor practical training and inadequate industry engagement made him feel insecure for a career in the global domain. On the other hand, the pull factors of the U.S.-flexibility, innovation, and financial opportunities-provided him with the tools and confidence to pursue his dreams.

Sirjan's story points out the critical importance of urgent systemic change in Nepal's education system to stop the hemorrhaging of the country's gifted population. Nepal's labor market offers the imbued challenges to its educated youth, and there exists the embedded corruption, nepotism and lack of meritocratic

hiring practices that can set limits on professional prospects. Such problems can quite frequently leave people feeling disenfranchised when their competences and efforts do not map back to an impactful career. For most, the escape from Nepal is predicated on the promise of objectivity, security and possibility in the exterior world. Moreover, another participant, Sonam (pseudonym), a 25-year-old from UK, shares his experience:

> When I graduated, I was eager to start my career, but reality hit hard. Jobs seemed to require connections, not just qualifications. Despite my efforts, I saw others get ahead through influence, not merit. Interviews felt like a formality, with decisions already made, leaving me disheartened and frustrated by a system stacked against me. That's when I began exploring options abroad and discovered the UK. Its structured education system, globally recognized universities, and fair job market stood out. I was attracted by the prospect of merit-based and a fair opportunity and a skill-based system. By learning about social security options such as pensions and employer benefits, I felt assured that I could secure my future there. Leaving wasn't easy, but staying meant constant frustration. Moving to the UK was my chance to live in a system where effort and talent truly mattered.

Sonam's story is representative for many young Nepali professionals. His experience demonstrates the structural deficiencies of the Nepalese job market, which are fueled by the presence of corruption and nepotism and leads to a job setting that discourages hard work and credentials. These push factors, including arbitrary hiring practices and a lack of meritocracy, leave individuals like Sonam feeling excluded and disheartened. On the other hand, the inducements of the United Kingdom-systematic teaching, clear job market and strong social security system-differ sharply with his situation in Nepal. According to Sonam's account, the dream of fairness and chance in the US can induce young professionals to take their own country as a migrant destination. His movement wasn't an unplanned flight, but an intentional move to a system that wanted his talent and work. Similarly, another participant, Suresh (pseudonym), a 25-year-old now living in Canada, expresses his experience as:

> I always wanted a job where I could solve practical problems, but in Nepal, that felt impossible. The education system focuses on theory, with little emphasis on practical skills or job market

readiness. No matter how much I studied, I wasn't getting the kind of experience that employers are looking for. Financial stability was another concern-no structured pensions or safety nets made the future feel uncertain. That's when I looked abroad and found Canada. Its education system emphasizes practical, industry-relevant skills, and programs seemed tailored for real-world success. Their pension programs and financial security mechanisms of reassurance, along with a variety of housing options and friendly communities within which they could move, produced a sense of security and ease of move. Leaving Nepal wasn't easy, but staying meant staying stuck. Moving to Canada was my chance to chase my dreams and build a stable, fulfilling life.

Suresh's story also highlights the systemic barriers in Nepal that drive capable young people to look for jobs overseas. The focus on theoretical education, absence of practical training, and lack of financial safety nets constrain people to imagine a secure future in the country. There are these push factors which confine young professionals such as Suresh in a system that is not in line with their goals. Conversely, Canada's causal factors are definite and motivating. Its focus on applied, real-world, career-ready courses creates a clear route toward career readiness, and combined with the practical introduction of structured pension offers lifelong financial peace of mind. Secondly, the availability of a variety and inclusive range of housing choices enables the seamless transfer for students from abroad, allowing them to feel part of the new setting.

Suresh's displacement demonstrates the transformative role that can be played by nations that are committed to investing in education, financial security, and inclusivity. His decision to leave Nepal was not made lightly but was driven by a desire to achieve his ambitions in a system that supported growth and security. Furthermore, another participant, Sarita (pseudonym), a 23-year-old woman living in the United Kingdom, shares her experiences as:

Growing up in Nepal, I dreamed of a career where hard work and skills were rewarded. However, after graduation I found out that the job market does not choose talent and experience but instead considers the existing network (relationship). Interviews felt like formalities, and the outdated education system left me unprepared for real-world challenges. On the other hand, it was a disheartening experience to witness the

fruits of my efforts in a system which did not provide equitable access. Exploring options abroad, the UK stood out. Its universities emphasized practical skills, hands-on training, and industry connections-everything I lacked in Nepal. The open labor market and a merit-based recruitment mechanism instilled in me a hope that eventually hard work will be rewarded. The UK's social security and the well-regulated housing market enhanced the attractiveness, providing security and backing for a new beginning.

Sarita's story highlights the systemic challenges in Nepal's education and employment sectors that push skilled individuals to seek opportunities elsewhere. The absence of meritocracy, traditional academic institutions and poor career advancement prospects leads to a wide sense of being underappreciated and dissatisfied. These push factors are exacerbated by the absence of transparent hiring practices and practical training, making it difficult for talented individuals to build fulfilling careers within the country. Sarita's migration highlighted the difference between the systems in Nepal and in the UK. The decision on his part to permanently withdraw was due to the ambition to realize his full potential in a setting that prioritizes hard work and merit. The story is a reminder of the pressing need for systemic change in Nepal to fully understand the drivers of brain drain and establish a reasonable appetizing and supportive context for its citizenry. Like other participants, Aayousi (pseudonym), a 24-year-old living in Australia, shares her story as:

> In Kathmandu, I always felt education should be about preparing for real-world challenges, not just passing exams. Yet Nepal's rigid system stifled creativity and ignored individuality. My interest in technical education was brushed aside, and practical courses were outdated, leaving me feeling unprepared and uninspired. Discovering Australia's education system was a turning point. It focused on a working skill, hands-on learning, and programme specific to the expectations of the individual. For the first time ever, I experienced an engagement where my goals were actually given weight. The financial support structures, social safety nets, and accessible student housing made the idea of moving there even more appealing. It was a hard decision to exit Nepal, but remaining would have resulted in compromising my future. Australia made the offer to learn in an environment that celebrates innovation, aspiration, and skill.

Aayousi's account sheds light on the rigid and outdated nature of Nepal's education system, which often prioritizes uniformity over individuality. Her frustration with the lack of creativity and practical learning opportunities reflects a broader issue that affects many students in the country. The push factors in her case-limited scope for technical education, outdated curricula, and a lack of alignment with job market demands-are emblematic of a system that fails to nurture diverse talents. However, the attractors of Australia's education system supplied the condition that enabled Aayousi to flourish. The integration of technical and vocational education at all levels, coupled with a focus on life-wide learning and real-world applications, stood in stark contrast to the rigidity she experienced in Nepal. The specialized programs allowed her to pursue her interests, while the financial infrastructure and supportive housing options eased her transition.

Aayousi's movement highlights the transforming role of an education system in promoting innovation and uniqueness. Her narrative serves to highlight the current great necessity of the Nepalese system of education to be revamped in order to become suitable to multifarious aptitudes and prepare learners to face the challenges of today's employment market. Without such changes, the country risks losing more young minds like Aayousi, who leave not just to escape limitations but to realize their full potential in environments that embrace their aspirations.

5. Major Findings

- Education in Nepal is traditionally done by means of a not updated curriculum and memorizing that does not prepare the students to the real-world problem.

- Lack of access to experiential training, industry experience, and contemporary tools leads to a major hole between what is taught and what is required in the job market.

- Socio-economic problems such as corruption, nepotism and corruption of merit are still discouraging professionals, and young professionals, to fill positions in Nepal.

- Driving forces of aspiring people out of the country are unfavourable conditions at the moment of examination (impractical, postponed and/or failed examinations), bureaucratic obstacles, and lack of financial resources.

⤷ Host nations such as Australia, United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom attract Nepalese students by providing practical orientation in education, formalized system, and strong social support.

⤷ Open hiring processes and a merit-based job market exist in these nations that offer the equity and growth potential unavailable in Nepal.

⤷ Blend of push factors in Nepal and pull factors abroad highlights a compelling requirement for structural changes for the retention of Nepal's youth and to stem the brain drain.

6. Conclusion

Systemic problems in the areas of education and employment have produced a situation in Nepal where aspiration is often frustrated. Outmoded education materials, the absence of applied experiences, and insufficient job prospects bring atrophy to the youth, compelling so many to seek employment abroad, where they can find greater opportunity. These forces are augmented by socio-economic constraints such as corruption, cronyism and lack of effective official bureaucracy. For students and professionals, choosing to depart is not just escapism, but an attempt to find systems that recognize hard work, merit, and development-whether that be Australia's vocational education orientation, whose system is now all too relevant, the UK's system-wide transparency in the job market, Canada's system-wide focus on real-world skills, or the U.S.'s system-wide openness to novel academic structures.

The repeated stories of Aaryana, Sirjan, Sonam, Suresh, Sarita and Aayousi indicate that there is an immediate need for such changes in Nepal. Solving these systemic deficiencies- updating the system of education, encouraging on-the-job training, and providing a merit-based job market- can help narrow the expression between intent and opportunity. Investment in young people and in enabling education and employment through dedicated frameworks will help decrease the loss of highly skilled citizens and stop the talent they bring in order to construct a more sustainable and fair future for Nepal.

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Capital Use among Farmer Households: A Study of Cotton Belt of Rural Punjab

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Abstract

The present paper analysed the ownership and utilisation of farm machinery in agriculture. The tractor contributed the highest value of ₹146665, followed by the electric tubewell (₹72865), trolley (₹26933), and combine (₹21058). The ownership of capital assets and the size of farm holdings had a positive association. Around 70 per cent of the farmer households had owned tractors. Only 18.11 per cent of the tractor owners used tractors for commercial purposes. In contrast, the proportion was 23.26 per cent for the rotavator, 95.83 per cent for the reaper and 100.00 per cent for the combine harvester. The tractor was utilised for 352 hours only over the year by all the sampled farmer households, which was much below the minimum 1000 hours of productive use in agriculture. Rotavator was utilised for personal farming by the medium and large farmer households, and the small and semi-medium farmer households made commercial use of it. However, reaper and combine were owned for commercial purposes by the farmer households.

Keywords

Fixed capital, Tractor, Commercial, Agriculture, Farmer households.

JEL Codes: E22, Q1, D24, R2

Capital Use among Farmer Households: A Study of Cotton Belt of Rural Punjab

1. Introduction

The term capital refers to all non-land and non-human inputs of production used in agriculture. Capital is used in two forms: fixed capital inputs and working capital inputs (Sen, 1970). Fixed capital inputs include submersible pumps, diesel engines, tractors, combines, reapers, straw combines, power threshers, power tillers, sprayers and dusters (manual and powered), tractor-drawn equipment (ploughs, harrows, cultivators, seed drills, etc.), hand tools and garden tools, sprinklers and drip irrigation equipment, and other agricultural equipment (stubble shavers, water tankers, land levellers, forage harvesting equipment, manure spreaders, etc.). Working capital inputs include seeds, chemical fertilisers, insecticides, pesticides, herbicides, manure, diesel, electricity, etc. (Sen, 1970; Singh, 2015).

According to experts, the status of mechanisation has been a barometer for the rural economy of Punjab, which is measured by the growth of mechanically power-operated farm equipment over traditional human and animal power-operated equipment (Gulati & Juneja, 2020). Farm mechanisation helps in increasing production, productivity, and profitability by reducing the time taken in various farm operations, bringing precision, reducing input loss, and increasing efficiency in input use (Gulati et al., 2017).

According to Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare (2023), the adoption of mechanisation by the farmers depends on various factors such as socioeconomic conditions, geographical conditions, crops grown, irrigation facilities, etc. The farm mechanisation levels assessed by Indian Council of Agricultural Research for major cereals, pulses, oilseeds, millets and cash crops indicates that the seedbed preparation operation is highly mechanised in rice and wheat crops as compared to other crops. However, mechanisation level for sowing operation is the highest for wheat crop (65 per cent). The mechanisation levels in planting operation for sugarcane and rice crops are 20 and 30 per cent, respectively. In case of harvesting

and threshing, the mechanisation levels in rice and wheat crops are more than 60 per cent and very less in cotton crop.

Punjab is a highly mechanised state in agriculture. During 2018-19, Punjab had an average farm power availability of 5.68 kW/ha, which was 2.8 times higher than the national average (Government of Punjab, 2023). It is estimated that one tractor in the state of Punjab is available for every 8.7 hectares of cultivable land; it is much higher as compared to the national average of one tractor per 62 hectares. The average use of tractors is less than 40 per cent of the 1000 hours required for economic viability (Government of Punjab, 2018). The Punjab state transport department shows that ten lakh farmers (33 per cent among them were small farmer) in Punjab bought 20000 new tractors every year, on average since 2016. The cost of a tractor starts from ₹6 lakh and going up to ₹12 lakh. The numbers of tractors bought were 19210 in 2016; 20327 in 2017; 19700 in 2018 and 13645 till September, 2020 (Hindustan Times, 2020). Punjab Agricultural University principal economist Sukhpal Singh said that of the one lakh small farmers who owned tractors, the maximum were under debt or were the ones who had committed suicide. Smaller farmers faced unfavourable market terms and lower profit. He also added that to prevent their suicides, co-operative societies must provide tractors to at least half of the state's villages. (Hindustan Times, 2020)

The adoption of new agriculture technology resulted in large increases in the use of current and capital inputs (Singh & Toor, 2005). However, farm mechanisation in Punjab has reached saturation point, and overcapitalisation in farm mechanisation and its underutilisation leads to higher production costs and lower net income for farmers, thereby making it economically unviable (Pathak, 2015; Gulati et al., 2017). Currently, Punjab faces various challenges related to farm mechanisation, including high per hectare investment costs, under-capacity utilisation of farm equipments, limited availability of suitable farm machinery for small farms, higher fixed farm costs, and limited mechanisation of horticultural crops (Government of Punjab, 2023). These problems must be addressed to ensure the competitiveness and profitability of agriculture in Punjab. The cotton belt of rural Punjab is an area confronted with the similar problems along with lower productivity and crop failures.

2. Data Sources and Methodology

Both primary and secondary data has been used in the present study. Secondary data has been collected from various journals, books, magazines, reports, dissertations, theses, web-sites, etc. Primary data has been collected through a well-structured schedule from selected farmer households using a multi-stage stratified random sampling technique for the period 2016-17. Firstly, four districts, Mansa, Bathinda, Sri Mukatsar Sahib, and Fazilka, have been selected purposely out of 9 districts of the cotton belt of rural Punjab. Secondly, all 23 developmental blocks of the selected districts have been chosen for the sample. Thirdly, one village from each block has been picked up for the study. Fourthly, out of the total number of the farmer households of different categories found in each selected village, 10 percent of the farmer households from each category and of each village were randomly selected. In this way, 520 sampled farmer households of different farm-size categories consisting of 118 marginal, 126 small, 134 semi-medium, 115 medium, and 27 large have been selected for the survey purpose. Finally, descriptive statistical tools such as averages, percentages, etc., have been used to analyse the results of the present study.

3. Results and Discussion

In this paper, an attempt has been made to study the ownership pattern of major capital assets, commercial-use of the farm machinery, and utilisation of tractor by the sampled farmer households in the cotton belt of rural Punjab.

3·1 Ownership Pattern of Major Capital Assets among Sampled Farmer Households

Land, livestock, and farm machinery and equipment are the main productive assets for the farmers. Land is an important livelihood asset for households. Land ownership acts as collateral for accessing credit. It can be reused multiple times, offering enhanced economic returns to the households. Animal husbandry, dairying, and fisheries activities play an important role in the national economy and the country's socio-economic development. The extent of ownership of farm machinery and equipment like tractor, trolley, harrow, cultivator, sealer, wheat drill, cotton drill, crah, leveller, farm generator, rotavator, reaper, combine, farm building, etc., has a major impact on productivity and profitability of agricultural

activities (NABARD, 2018). Table-1 shows the value of the major capital assets among the sampled farmer households in the cotton belt of rural Punjab. The data revealed that among the major capital assets, the tractor contributed the highest value of ₹146665, followed by the electric tubewell (₹72865), trolley (₹26933), and combine (₹21058). The proportionate value of the capital assets was 50.01, 24.84, 9.18, and 7.18 per cent, respectively. The other farm machinery and equipment contributed marginal shares in the value of total capital assets, ranging from 0.30 to 1.70 per cent. Across the different farm-size categories, the absolute value of all the capital assets increased as the farm-size increased, except for the farm generator and cotton drill, wherein the small and semi-medium farmer households interchanged their position.

Table-1 : Per Household Average Value of Major Capital Assets among Farmer Households (Mean Value in ₹)

Capital Assets	Marginal	Small	Semi-medium	Medium	Large	All Sampled Farmer Households
Tractor	19831 (33.78)	51873 (44.63)	150299 (55.10)	278261 (49.42)	564815 (51.45)	146665 (50.01)
Trolley	3686 (6.28)	13373 (11.50)	25485 (9.34)	52217 (9.27)	91296 (8.32)	26933 (9.18)
Harrow	453 (0.77)	1270 (1.09)	2511 (0.92)	6478 (1.15)	9815 (0.89)	3000 (1.02)
Cultivator	907 (1.54)	1929 (1.66)	4466 (1.64)	8926 (1.59)	14296 (1.30)	4540 (1.55)
Sealar	148 (0.25)	397 (0.34)	433 (0.16)	1704 (0.30)	4898 (0.45)	873 (0.30)
Wheat Drill	479 (0.82)	754 (0.65)	2739 (1.00)	8000 (1.42)	13407 (1.22)	3463 (1.18)
Cotton Drill	85 (0.14)	385 (0.33)	149 (0.05)	2687 (0.48)	5185 (0.47)	1014 (0.35)
Leveller/ Computer Crah	110 (0.19)	404 (0.35)	1153 (0.42)	12479 (2.22)	10630 (0.97)	3732 (1.27)
Electric Tubewell	32966 (56.15)	43373 (37.31)	50000 (18.33)	130957 (23.26)	250926 (22.86)	72865 (24.84)
Rotavator	—	238 (0.20)	1657 (0.61)	8452 (1.50)	22037 (2.01)	3498 (1.19)

Reaper	—	1746 (1.50)	2463 (0.90)	11478 (2.04)	26852 (2.45)	4990 (1.70)
Combine	—	—	31343 (11.49)	39565 (7.03)	81481 (7.42)	21058 (7.18)
Farm Generator	42 (0.07)	500 (0.43)	60 (0.02)	1800 (0.32)	2111 (0.19)	654 (0.22)
Total Capital Assets	**58707 (100.00)**	**116242 (100.00)**	**272758 (100.00)**	**563004 (100.00)**	**1097749 (100.00)**	**293285 (100.00)**

Source : Field Survey, 2016-17.

Note : Figures given in parentheses represent percentages.

Among the marginal farmer households, electric tubewell contributed the highest share of 56.15 per cent, followed by tractor (33.78 per cent), trolley (6.28 per cent), and cultivator (1.54 per cent), and so on. However, among all other farm-size categories, tractor contributed the highest share of 44.63, 55.10, 49.42, and 51.45 per cent among the small, semi-medium, medium, and large farmer households, respectively. Prahladachar (1987); Singh et al. (2016) and Kaur (2017) also found with the increase in the size of landholdings, the value of productive assets owned by the farmer households increased. The field survey recognised that the large farmer households had owned all types of farm machinery and equipment required in the cultivation.

3·2 Number of Sampled Farmer Households Owning Major Capital Assets

The number and proportion of the sampled farmer households owning major capital assets are explained in Table 2. Out of the total 520 farmer households, 488 (93.85 per cent) had been equipped with electric tubewell on their farms. As many as 359 (69.04 per cent) sampled farmer households owned a tractor. The proportion of farmer households who owned cultivator, trolley, harrow, wheat drill, sealer, cotton drill, rotavator, leveler/computer crah, reaper, farm generator, and combine were 57.69, 50.00, 40.00, 29.62, 16.73, 12.12, 8.27, 6.92, 4.62, 4.23, and 2.12 per cent, respectively. All the medium and large farm-size categories had owned tractors, whereas this proportion was 82.84, 61.11, and 24.58 per cent among the semi-medium, small, and marginal farmer households, respectively. The data revealed that the ownership of capital assets and the size of farm holdings had a positive association.

It was noticed that still there were farmer households in the study area who depended upon either diesel engines or other farmers' electric tubewells on a payment basis for irrigating their lands. The proportion of farmer households, who installed electric tubewell, was 78.81 and 94.44 per cent among the marginal and small farmer households, respectively. The field survey pointed out that only the large, medium, and some semi-medium farmer households had installed submersible pumps in their farms, while others had old tubewells. The results of the study were in line with the study of Singh and Toor (2005), which stated that the Punjab peasantry, especially the marginal and small farmers, could not afford to invest in farm machinery from their savings for transforming traditional farming into capital-intensive scientific farming. Due to low access to capital and investment, the marginal and small farmers could not get their fair share of the cake (Sekhon et al., 2009). NCEUS (2008) also supported that the number of productive assets, particularly mechanical equipment, implements, and tractors, was deficient among the smaller holdings. The small and marginal farmers, thus, had to rent such equipment, which added to their cost of cultivation.

Table-2 : Number of Farmer Households having Major Capital Assets

Capital Assets	Marginal	Small	Semi-medium	Medium	Large	All Sampled Farmer Households
Tractor	29 (24.58)	77 (61.11)	111 (82.84)	115 (100.00)	27 (100.00)	359 (69.04)
Trolley	12 (10.17)	41 (32.54)	74 (55.22)	106 (92.17)	27 (100.00)	260 (50.00)
Harrow	8 (6.78)	29 (23.02)	49 (36.57)	95 (82.61)	27 (100.00)	208 (40.00)
Cultivator	21 (17.80)	51 (40.48)	89 (66.42)	112 (97.39)	27 (100.00)	300 (57.69)
Sealar	4 (3.39)	11 (8.73)	13 (9.70)	42 (36.52)	17 (62.96)	87 (16.73)
Wheat Drill	6 (5.08)	14 (11.11)	39 (29.10)	74 (64.35)	21 (77.78)	154 (29.62)
Cotton Drill	2 (1.69)	6 (4.76)	3 (2.24)	40 (34.78)	12 (44.44)	63 (12.12)

Leveller/ Computer Crah	2 (1.69)	5 (3.97)	8 (5.97)	9 (7.83)	12 (44.44)	36 (6.92)
Electric Tubewell	93 (78.81)	119 (94.44)	134 (100.00)	115 (100.00)	27 (100.00)	488 (93.85)
Farm Generator	1 (0.85)	4 (3.17)	1 (0.75)	13 (11.30)	3 (11.11)	22 (4.23)
Rotavator	—	1 (0.79)	9 (6.72)	21 (18.26)	12 (44.44)	43 (8.27)
Reaper	—	3 (2.38)	4 (2.99)	12 (10.43)	5 (18.52)	24 (4.62)
Combine	—	—	4 (2.99)	5 (4.35)	2 (7.41)	11 (2.12)
Total Households	**118 (100.00)**	**126 (100.00)**	**134 (100.00)**	**115 (100.00)**	**27 (100.00)**	**520 (100.00)**

Source : Field Survey, 2016-17.

Note : Figures given in parentheses represent percentages.

Overcapitalisation and underutilisation of capital assets in the state's agriculture sector, excessive use of pesticides and fertilisers, and decreasing farm-size hit the profits negatively, especially that of small and marginal farmers (Gandhi,1997). According to Dandekar and Bhattacharya (2017), farming practices, including cash renting of land, labour costs, tractors, deep tubewells, fuel, seeds, harvesters, combines, chemical fertilisers, insecticides, and weedicides, have increased the cost of production. Punjab farming was highly capital intensive with the highest tractor density, having 68 tractors per 1000 net sown area (Pathak, 2015).

3·3 Utilisation of Major Capital Assets for Commercial-Use among Sampled Farmer households

The number and proportion of the farmer households using their owned farm machinery for commercial purposes are given in Table-3 on next page. The data indicated that only 18.11 per cent of the tractor owners used tractors for commercial purpose. In contrast, this proportion was 23.26 per cent for the rotavator, 95.83 per cent for reaper and 100.00 per cent for the combine harvester. The commercial use of tractors was done by 31.03 per cent of the tractor-owning marginal farmer households, followed by 22.52, 18.52, 18.18, and 10.43 per cent of the semi-medium, large, small, and medium farmer households, respectively.

Table-3 : Commercial-Use of Major Capital Assets among Farmer Households

Capital Assets		Marginal	Small	Semi-medium	Medium	Large	All Sampled Farmer Household
Tractor	Commer-cial Use	9 (31.03)	14 (18.18)	25 (22.52)	12 (10.43)	5 (18.52)	65 (18.11)
	Total Use	29 (100.00)	77 (100.00)	111 (100.00)	115 (100.00)	27 (100.00)	359 (100.00)
Rotavator	Commer-cial Use	—	1 (100.00)	8 (88.89)	1 (4.76)	0 (0.00)	10 (23.26)
	Total Use	—	1 (100.00)	9 (100.00)	21 (100.00)	12 (100.00)	43 (100.00)
Reaper	Commer-cial Use	—	3 (100.00)	4 (100.00)	11 (91.67)	5 (100.00)	23 (95.83)
	Total Use	—	3 (100.00)	4 (100.00)	12 (100.00)	5 (100.00)	24 (100.00)
Combine	Commer-cial Use	—	—	4 (100.00)	5 (100.00)	2 (100.00)	11 (100.00)
	Total Use	—	—	4 (100.00)	5 (100.00)	2 (100.00)	11 (100.00)

Source : Field Survey, 2016-17.

Note : Figures given in parentheses represent percentages.

As far as the rotavator was concerned, none of the large farmer households utilised it for commercial purposes. Rotavator was basically utilised for personal farming by the medium and large farmer households, whereas the small and semi-medium farmer households made commercial use of it. However, reaper and combine were owned for commercial purposes by the farmer households.

3·4   Utilisation of Tractor among Sampled Farmer households

Tractors are generally considered economically viable if they run for about 1000 hours per year; however, the studies on farm mechanisation revealed that the utilisation is only about 50-60 per cent of this norm, indicating an overcapitalisation of farms (Gulati, 2019). Pathak (2015) stated that the average use of tractors per annum in the State was hardly 450 hours, much below the minimum 1000 hours of productive use in agriculture. Table 4 explains the type of tractor owned and its utilisation by tractor-owner farmer households. The data highlighted that only 36 per cent of the

tractor-owning farmer households purchased new tractors, while 64 per cent had purchased second-hand tractors in the cotton belt of rural Punjab.

Table-4 : Ownership and Utilisation of Tractor among Tractor-Owning Sampled Farmer Households

Capital Assets		Marginal	Small	Semi-medium	Medium	Large	All Sampled Farmer Household
Tractor	New	—	2 (2.60)	25 (22.52)	77 (66.96)	25 (92.59)	129 (35.93)
	Old/Second-hand	29 (100.00)	75 (97.40)	86 (77.48)	38 (33.04)	2 (7.41)	230 (64.07)
	Total	29 (100.00)	77 (100.00)	111 (100.00)	115 (100.00)	27 (100.00)	359 (100.00)
Average Utilisation of Tractor (in Hours Per Annum)		72.68	212.05	351.75	645.84	976.93	352.07

Source : Field Survey, 2016-17.

Note : Figures given in parentheses represent percentages.

As far as the ownership of new tractors was concerned, the proportion of farmer households increased as the size of the farm increased, which was 2.60, 22.52, 66.96, and 92.59 per cent among small, semi-medium, medium, and large farmer households, respectively. The proportion of farmer households purchasing old/second-hand tractors decreased with an increase in the size of farm holdings. The results highlighted that none of the households from the marginal farmer category had purchased new tractors because of their low income levels. Whereas, 97.40 and 77.48 per cent of farmer households purchased old/second-hand tractors in the case of small and semi-medium farmer households, respectively. The data also pointed out that, on average, the tractor was utilised for 352.07 hours only over the year by all the sampled farmer households, which was much below the minimum 1000 hours of productive use in agriculture. The results were as per the findings of Pathak (2015) that every third farming household in the State's cotton belt owned a tractor, but its underutilisation had resulted in increased cost of production and lower profitability. In the case of marginal farmer households, the utilisation of tractor was only for 72.68 hours in a year. The use of tractors was the highest (976.93 hours) by the large

farmers, followed by medium (645.84 hours), semi-medium (351.75 hours), and small farmer (212.05 hours) households. It was recognised in the field survey that utilisation of farm machinery and equipment increased as the size of the farm increased, except for the cotton drill and sealer, wherein the utilisation was higher among the small farmer households than the semi-medium farmer households. It was because of the higher area under cotton among small farm-size categories compared to the semi-medium farmer households. Thus, the data indicated that it was only the tractor, rotavator, reaper, and combine harvester that had been used commercially by the sampled farmer households, whereas rest of the farm machinery and equipment was used for personal farming only and a large proportion of the farmer households owned second-hand tractors.

4. Conclusion

In a nutshell, the tractor was utilised for 352 hours only over the year by all the sampled farming households, which was much below the minimum 1000 hours of productive use in agriculture. The ownership of capital assets and the size of farm holdings had a positive association. As the size of the farm increased, both the number and the proportion of the sampled farmer households owning farm machinery and equipment increased. Around 70 per cent of the farmer households had owned tractors. The data indicated that only 18.11 per cent of the tractor owners used tractors for commercial purposes. In contrast, the proportion was 23.26 per cent for the rotavator, 95.83 per cent for the reaper and 100.00 per cent for the combine harvester. Rotavator was utilised for personal farming by the medium and large farmer households, and the small and semi-medium farmer households made commercial use of it. However, reaper and combine were owned for commercial purposes by the farmer households. As far as the ownership of new tractors was concerned, the proportion of farmer households increased as the farm size increased. On the other hand, the proportion of farmer households owning second-hand tractors decreased with the increased farm size. Thus, the study revealed the problems of overcapitalisation and underutilisation of capital assets in the agriculture sector of the region. Therefore, there is a pressing need to improve the level of farm mechanisation in the state, especially in the cotton belt area of rural Punjab, in a manner that enhances the economies of scale and benefits farmers across all categories.

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Gendered Struggles in Higher Education: Socioeconomic and Cultural Dynamics in Rural Punjab

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Abstract

Access to higher education remains a significant challenge for rural youth in Punjab, with financial constraints, cultural norms, and gender disparities creating substantial barriers. Despite progress in primary and secondary education, rural areas continue to lag, especially in the case of higher education opportunities for girls. The study has been conducted to examine socioeconomic barriers in the way of rural youth in higher education in the State of Punjab, with a special focus on access to higher education opportunities for rural girls. It also highlights the attitude of parents toward the education of rural girls. This mixed-methods study was conducted in two colleges in Batala, Gurdaspur District, Punjab, with a sample of 180 students (90 boys and 90 girls). Structured questionnaires were used for collecting quantitative data on socioeconomic status, academic performance, and family support. Qualitative data were gathered through interviews with parents, teachers, and community members to explore cultural and gender-specific challenges. Secondary data from national surveys and studies were also incorporated for comparative analysis. The study finds that socioeconomic and gender disparities significantly limit access to higher education for rural youth in Punjab. While girls outperform boys academically, cultural norms and financial constraints hinder their educational prospects. Addressing these barriers requires targeted financial support, infrastructural development, and community-based awareness programs to promote gender equality in education.

Keywords

Higher Education, Rural Youth, Gender Disparities, Socioeconomic Barriers, Cultural Norms, Punjab.

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Gendered Struggles in Higher Education: Socioeconomic and Cultural Dynamics in Rural Punjab

1. Introduction

Access to education plays a crucial role in socioeconomic development and is often viewed as a means to break the cycle of poverty. However, educational inequality remains a pressing issue in India, especially in rural areas, where youth face multiple barriers to pursuing higher education. Despite India's progress in literacy rates and education policies, rural regions continue to be disadvantaged, with limited access to quality institutions, poor infrastructure, and a lack of financial resources. Rural youth, especially girls, face significant challenges when seeking higher education. These challenges are compounded by traditional cultural attitudes, which often prioritize early marriage for girls over academic achievement.

Punjab, once celebrated for its agricultural and economic development, has seen a slowdown in educational progression, especially among rural youth. While urban centers in the state offer better educational opportunities, rural areas lag due to a lack of infrastructure, limited financial resources, and entrenched gender disparities. A report by the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) in 2017 highlighted that 30% of India's rural population remains illiterate, and access to higher education for rural girls is particularly constrained by sociocultural norms that prioritize their roles as wives and mothers over their academic and professional development.

In Punjab, the literacy rate among women in rural areas is 67.43%, compared to 81.48% in urban areas, according to the 2011 Census of India. This gap reflects the ongoing challenges rural girls face in gaining access to higher education, despite their demonstrated academic potential. While various initiatives have been launched to address these disparities, including the 'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao' scheme, aimed at promoting girl child education, the effectiveness of these programs is hindered by deep-seated cultural attitudes that continue to privilege boys' education over girls.

This study aims to explore, the barriers to higher education for rural youth in Punjab, with particular emphasis on gender disparities. By incorporating primary data collected from two colleges in Batala, along with insights from parents, teachers, and community members, this research provides a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities that shape educational outcomes for rural youth in Punjab. Additionally, this study draws on data from other regions in India and international contexts to offer a comparative analysis of the issue.

2. Objectives

1. To examine the socioeconomic barriers that rural youth face in accessing higher education in Punjab.
2. To assess the gender-specific challenges, focusing on the additional hurdles faced by rural girls.
3. To investigate parental attitudes towards education and how these influence girls' access to higher education.
4. To analyze financial constraints as a limiting factor for rural students, particularly girls, in pursuing higher education.
5. To offer policy recommendations for addressing the socioeconomic and gender-based barriers to higher education in rural Punjab.

3. Methodology

This research adopts a mixed-methods approach, utilizing both quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques. The study was conducted in two colleges located in Batala, Gurdaspur District: Baring Union Christian College (a co-educational institution) and R.R. Bawa D.A.V. College for Girls. Primary data were collected from a sample of 180 students, evenly divided between boys and girls, to explore the specific challenges rural youth face in accessing higher education. In addition, interviews with 40 teachers and hostel wardens, along with a sub-sample of parents and community members from the surrounding villages, were conducted to understand the broader cultural and social context that influences educational outcomes.

3·1 Sample Population

Students : 90 boys and 90 girls.

Teachers : 40 teachers, including hostel wardens, from both colleges.

Parents and Community Members : A sub-sample of parents and panchayat members from villages surrounding Batala, where the majority of the student respondents reside.

3·2 Sample Profile

The following table shows the details regarding the division of the sample based on gender for both colleges:

Table-1 : Description of Sample by Gender

Respondents	Baring Union Christian College	R. R. Bawa DAV College	Total
Male	90	—	90
%	100.0	—	100.0
Female	30	60	90
%	33.3	66.6	100.0
Total	**120**	**60**	**180**
%	**66.7**	**33.3**	**100.0**

As R.R.Bawa D.A.V. College is a Girls' College, all the male respondents were taken from Baring Union Christian College. Among 90 girls, 60 were from D.A.V. College and the remaining 30 from B.U.C. College. This has given a chance to see how far the experiences, problems and attitudes of the girls in co-educational system vary from those studying in an exclusively girls' college.

3·3 Data Collection Methods

3·3·1 Quantitative Data

Structured questionnaires were administered to the students to collect data on their socioeconomic backgrounds, academic performance, family support, and access to educational resources. The questionnaires also included sections on parental attitudes towards education, particularly for girls.

3·3·2 Qualitative Data

In-depth interviews and focus group discussions were conducted with parents, teachers, and community leaders. These discussions provided deeper insights into cultural attitudes towards education, the role of gender in shaping educational opportunities,

and the specific challenges in the way of the rural girls. Qualitative data were used to contextualize and support the quantitative findings, offering a more holistic understanding of the barriers to higher education in rural Punjab.

4.   Data Presentation and Analysis

4·1   Socioeconomic Barriers to Higher Education

Socioeconomic constraints remain one of the most significant barriers, in the way of rural youth in higher education in the state of Punjab. The primary data collected for the study reveal that a large proportion of students come from low-income families, with financial hardships directly affecting their ability to pursue higher education. Table 1 given below provides an overview of the income distribution among the respondents' families.

Table-2 : Family Income of Respondents (Annual Income in ₹)

Income Bracket	Male (%)	Female (%)	Total (%)
₹3,00,000 and more	15.6	13.3	14.5
₹2,00,000 - ₹3,00,000	11.1	11.1	11.1
₹50,000 - ₹2,00,000	31.1	24.5	27.8
₹20,000 - ₹50,000	20.0	26.7	23.3
Less than ₹20,000	22.2	24.4	23.3

The data show that 23.3% of the students belong to families earning less than ₹20,000 per year. The inability to cover educational costs, including tuition, books, and transportation, is a significant obstacle. Students from such families often rely on scholarships, part-time jobs, or loans to continue their studies. This finding is consistent with national data from the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) 2020, which indicated that in rural India, over 60% of students in the age group of 14-18 are engaged in some form of part-time work to support their families, thus impacting their academic performance.

In a broader context, a study by Tilak (2002) found that higher education has become increasingly privatized in India, making it less affordable for low-income families, especially in rural areas. According to Tilak, the shift towards a fee-based system in higher education has exacerbated existing inequalities, making it difficult for students from economically weaker sections to pursue advanced degrees.

4·2   Gender Disparities in Academic Performance

Despite the financial hardships, girls consistently outperformed boys in academic performance, as shown in Table 2. This is a noteworthy finding, as it challenges the traditional notion that boys are more capable or deserving of education than girls. However, societal and cultural barriers prevent many girls from fully realizing their academic potential.

Table-3 : Gender-wise Academic Record of the Respondents

Respondents	Academic Record					Total
	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor	
Male	17	44	22	4	3	90
%	18.9	48.9	24.4	4.4	3.4	100
Female	45	25	20	—	—	90
%	50	27.8	22.2	—	—	100
Total	62	69	42	4	3	180
%	34.4	38.3	23.3	2.2	1.7	100.0

The data reveal that 50% of female students had an excellent academic record compared to 18.9% of male students. Despite better academic performance, girls face significant challenges in accessing higher education due to societal expectations. Many parents still prioritize boys' education, believing that girls will eventually "belong to another family" after marriage. This attitude is reflected in other rural parts of India as well. According to a UNICEF (2020) report on education in rural India, 40% of rural girls drop out of school before completing secondary education due to early marriage and family pressures.

Interviews with parents and community members in Punjab echoed these sentiments, with many expressing concerns that highly educated girls might struggle to find suitable marriage partners. The cultural emphasis on marriage as the ultimate goal for girls creates a significant barrier to their continued education. Similar findings have been reported in other regions, such as Rajasthan, where studies have shown that girls are often forced to drop out of school to be married off early, despite demonstrating strong academic potential.

4·3 Parental Attitudes towards the Education of Girls and their Marriage

Cultural norms and parental attitudes are critical factors influencing the educational opportunities available to rural youth, especially girls. The following table highlights the difference in parental priorities when it comes to spending on education versus marriage for their children.

Table-4 : Parental Preferences for Spending on Education vs. Marriage

Spending Priority	Father (%)	Mother (%)	Total (%)
Marriage of children	5.0	10.6	7.8
Family functions	0.6	2.8	1.7
Education of children	92.2	83.3	87.8
Clothes or other expenses	1.6	2.2	1.9

The table shows that 92.2% of fathers prioritize education for their children, whereas 83.3% of mothers do so. Mothers are more likely to prioritize marriage, particularly for daughters. These findings align with other research on gender roles in rural India. A study by Desai and Andrist (2010) found that in many rural families, girls' education is seen as secondary to their roles as wives and mothers. This deeply ingrained cultural belief that girls' primary responsibility is to the family, rather than to their education or career, continues to limit their educational opportunities.

Furthermore, the focus group discussions with community elders revealed a general reluctance to allow girls to travel long distances for education. Safety concerns and the fear of "ruining a girl's reputation" were frequently cited as reasons for keeping girls close to home, further limiting their access to higher education.

4·4 Access to Educational Resources

Access to educational resources, such as private study spaces, is another important factor affecting academic performance. As shown in Table-5 on next page, 60.6% of respondents had access to a separate study room, and 39.4% did not have one.

The lack of private study spaces can hinder students' ability to concentrate and succeed academically, particularly during exams. Girls were slightly more likely than boys to have a separate study space, possibly because they spend more time at home and are

expected to study there rather than in public spaces such as libraries. This finding corresponds with a study by Jha and Parvati (2019), which found that rural girls are more likely to study at home due to cultural restrictions that limit their mobility.

Table-5 : Availability of Separate Study Room at Home

Respondents	Yes (%)	No (%)
Male	57.8	42.2
Female	63.4	36.6
Total	**60.6**	**39.4**

In addition to a lack of study spaces, many students reported limited access to technological resources such as computers and the Internet, which are increasingly essential for higher education. The Digital Divide remains a significant barrier in rural India, with only 9% of rural households having internet access, compared to 66% in urban areas, according to a 2020 report by the Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI). This digital divide disproportionately affects girls, who are often discouraged from using technology due to fears of exposure to "inappropriate content" or interactions with boys online.

5. Discussions and Analysis

5·1 Socioeconomic Barriers

The financial constraints which rural families face in Punjab are consistent with broader national trends. The NSSO (2017) data revealed that nearly 40% of rural households across India live below the poverty line, which severely limits their ability to invest in their children's education. In Punjab, the increasing privatization of higher education has exacerbated the situation, which has led to rising tuition fees and a greater financial burden on families. Many families in rural Punjab rely on agriculture as their primary source of income, which cannot be considered a stable source due to fluctuating market prices and climate-related risks. This instability makes it difficult for families to plan for long-term educational expenses.

The findings from this study also support the work of Tilak (2002), who argued that the commercialization of higher education in India has marginalized students from economically weaker sections, particularly those in rural areas. This trend has led to a widening gap

between urban and rural students, with urban students having greater access to private institutions and better educational resources.

5·2 Gender Disparities

The gender disparities revealed by this study are consistent with national and global trends. Research by King and Hill (1993) found that in the developing countries of the world, girls face greater barriers to education than boys, particularly in rural areas. These barriers are often rooted in cultural norms that prioritize boys' education and view girls' education as less important. In India, gender disparities in education are particularly pronounced in rural areas, where traditional gender roles remain strong.

The academic performance of girls in this study challenges traditional notions. Despite facing greater barriers, girls consistently outperformed boys academically, suggesting that when given the opportunity, girls can produce excellent results in education. This finding aligns with the work of Sen (1999), who argued that educating girls is one of the most effective ways to promote social and economic development in rural areas. According to Sen educating girls not only improves their life outcomes but also has a positive impact on their families and communities.

5·3 Cultural Norms and Parental Attitudes

The cultural norms and parental attitudes revealed in this study highlight the deeply ingrained gender biases that limit girls' access to higher education. While fathers were generally supportive of their children's education, mothers were more likely to prioritize marriage, reflecting traditional gender roles. This finding supports the work of Desai and Andrist (2010), who found that in many rural families, girls' education is seen as secondary to their roles as wives and mothers.

The reluctance of many parents to allow their daughters to travel long distances for education, is another significant barrier in the way of rural girls, going in for higher education. In rural Punjab, as in many parts of India, safety concerns and fears of "ruining a girl's reputation" often prevent girls from pursuing higher education. This cultural emphasis on protecting girls from perceived dangers is a significant barrier to their educational attainment and reinforces traditional gender roles.

6. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations can be made to address the barriers to higher education for rural youth in Punjab:

1. **Financial Support Programs :** The government and private organizations should expand scholarships and financial aid programs for rural students, particularly girls. These programs should cover not only tuition fees but also transportation, books, and other necessary expenses. Special scholarships targeting girls could help offset the cultural barriers that prioritize boys' education.

2. **Infrastructural Development in Rural Areas :** The government should invest in the development of higher education infrastructure in rural areas, including the establishment of more colleges and universities. Improved transportation networks are also needed to allow students, particularly girls, to commute safely to educational institutions. Ensuring that girls can travel safely is critical to encouraging their continued participation in education.

3. **Community Awareness Campaigns :** Awareness programs aimed at changing cultural attitudes towards girls' education should be implemented at the community level. These campaigns should involve both men and women, focusing on the long-term benefits of educating girls for the family and society. Educating parents about the economic and social advantages of having an educated daughter may help shift cultural norms.

4. **Digital Inclusion for Rural Students :** The government and private sector should work together to bridge the digital divide in rural India by providing affordable internet access and technological resources to rural households. Girls should be encouraged to use technology as part of their education, and any fears or misconceptions about the dangers of digital technology should be addressed through community outreach.

5. **Gender-Sensitive Policies in Education :** Schools and colleges should implement policies that promote gender equality, including safe spaces for girls to engage in extracurricular activities, leadership opportunities, and mentorship programs. These policies should aim to build girls' confidence and provide them with the support they need to succeed in higher education.

7. Conclusion

This study has highlighted the significant barriers to higher education faced by rural youth in Punjab with a particular focus on gender disparities. Socioeconomic constraints, cultural norms, and parental attitudes all contribute to the disparities in educational access, despite the academic potential of rural students. While boys and girls face similar financial barriers, girls are further hindered by traditional gender roles that prioritize marriage over education.

Addressing these barriers will require a multifaceted approach that includes financial support, infrastructural development, and cultural change. By implementing the recommendations outlined in this paper, Punjab can improve access to higher education for its rural youth, particularly girls, and ensure that they have the opportunity to fulfill their academic potential. Ultimately, promoting gender equality in education will not only benefit individual students but also contribute to the broader social and economic development of rural communities in Punjab.

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The Comparative Study of Personality Characteristics of National Wrestling Player Hailing from Public Sector and Defence Organizations

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Abstract

The present study was comparative in nature, in which difference in selected personality dimensions between male Wrestling player employed in various public sector and defence services in India were assessed. 50 male national Wrestling players (Ave. age 24.33 yrs.) employed in various public sector undertakings as well as 50 male national Wrestling players (Ave. age 25.97 yrs.) employed in various defence organizations of India were selected as sample. The Hindi version of Eysenck's PEN Inventory prepared by Menon et al (1978) was used to assess personality of selected subjects. Results reveals no statistically significant difference in psychoticism, extraversion and L-dimension of personality between male Wrestling players employed in public and defence sector but male Wrestling players employed in defence sector were found to be emotionally more stable i.e. low neurotic as compared to male Wrestling players employed in public services at .01 level of statistical significance. It was concluded that male national Wrestling players employed in defence sector were emotionally far more stable as compared to male national Wrestling players employed in defence sector.

Keywords

Personality characteristics, Wrestling player, Public sector and Defence organisations.

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The Comparative Study of Personality Characteristics of National Wrestling Player Hailing from Public Sector and Defence Organizations

1. Introduction

Personality can be defined as a person's pattern of internal experience and social interaction that arises from the action of that individual's major psychological subsystems. Major psychological sub systems involve emotion, cognition, and the self, among others. The three basic dimensions defined by Eysenck (1973, 1977) refer to definite personality types i.e. introvert, extrovert, neurotic and psychotic. However, the term "type" as applied by Eysenck stands clearly for a dimension along a scale with a low end and a high end for putting people at various points between the two extremes. While the high end on the first dimension introversion-extroversion, includes the highly extrovert recognized as sociable, outgoing, impulsive, optimistic and jolly people, the lower and typifies the highly introvert recognized as quiet, introspective, reserved, reflective, disciplined and well-ordered people. Eysenck believed that purely extrovert or purely introvert people found and he, therefore, preferred to use a dimension, i.e. a continuum ranging from introversions to extroversion Instead of naming types as introverts and extroverts. The second major dimension suggested by Eysenck involves emotional instability at the lower end and emotional stability at the upper end-describing people as neurotic and not neurotic. Thus, at its lower end are the persons who are moody, touchy, anxious or restless and at the upper end are persons who are stable, calm, carefree, even-tempered and dependable. The third dimension is psychoticism. The people high on this dimension tend to be solitary, insensitive, egocentric impersonal, impulsive and opposed to accepted social norms while those scoring low are found to be more empathic and less adventurous and bold.

The researchers in the past have shown the importance of certain psychological characteristics that is needed to perform better in the field of sports (Kamlesh, 1984). The association of personality

dimension have also been studied by the sports psychologists and they found positive relationship between personality and sports performance. In this context Eysenck's personality dimensions i.e. psychoticism, extraversion, neuroticism have been studied in the context of various sports, type and nature of sports, level of participation etc. but personality characteristics of male Indian national Wrestling players employed in various public and defence sector were not studied so far. Since mental training and fitness regime is entirely different in public and defence sector, it is interesting to know whether it has any bearing upon personality make-up of Wrestling players.

2. Objective of this Study

While scanning the research literature related to field of Wrestling, the investigator found that quite a few studies namely Sharma (1999), Gemser E. et al (2004), Spencer (2004), but no such study of comparative nature on personality characteristics Indian male national Wrestling players have been done in which it has been assessed on the basis of nature of employment i.e. public or defence sector. Hence, the present study was conducted to assess the personality characteristics of Indian male national Wrestling players employed in public sector and defence services.

3. Methodology

The investigator formulated following methodological steps to conduct the study:

Sample : 50 male national Wrestling players (Ave. age 24.33 yrs.) employed in various public sector undertakings as well as 50 male national Wrestling players (Ave. age 25.97 yrs.) were selected as sample for the present study. The sample for the present study was collected from All India Wrestling Tournaments organized in India where these selected male national Wrestling players represented their organizations. The selection of sample was based on random sampling method.

Tools : For the purpose of tapping extraversion, neuroticism and psychoticism dimensions of personality, Hindi version of Eysenck's PEN inventory developed by Menon (1979) has been preferred.

Procedure : Hindi version of Eysenck's Personality inventory prepared by Menon (1978) was administered to all 100 selected subjects in a laboratory like condition as per their convenience and

availability with prior permission obtained from their coach and management. Scoring of data have been carried out according to authors manual, and independent sample 't' test was used to compare personality characteristics of selected subjects belonging to two pre-defined study groups.

4.   Results and Discussion

The results and statistical analysis are presented in the following table:

Table-1 : Comparison of Personality Dimensions between Male Wrestling Players Employed in Public Sector and Defence Services

Variables	Public Sector Male Wrestling Players (N=50)		Defence Organizations Male Wrestling Players (N=50)		t	Level of Significance
	M	S.D.	M	S.D.		
Psychoticism	7.40	3.81	7.20	3.36	0.28	NS
Extraversion	10.94	2.52	11.68	3.38	1.24	NS
Neuroticism	8.30	2.72	5.94	1.92	5.01	0.01
L-score	8.10	2.46	7.50	2.70	1.16	NS

NS - Not Significant

Based on the root of statistical entries, it was found that personality dimensions i.e. psychoticism, extraversion and L-score did not differ significantly between selected national male Wrestling players employed in public sector and defence service. The only significant difference was found in neuroticism dimension of personality where subjects employed in defence services showed more magnitude of emotional stability (less neuroticism) as compared to subjects employed in private sector undertakings. The reported t=5.01, which is statistically significant at .01 level, also confirms the above finding.

5.   Conclusion

On the basis of results of the present study it can be concluded that strict disciplinary regime along with mental and physical training associated with defence services may be one of the reasons that male national Wrestling players employed in these services

have shown more magnitude of emotional stability as compared to male Wrestling players employed in public sector undertakings.

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