

ISSN No: 2773-7918

A Peer Reviewed

EDUCATIONAL JOURNAL

Year: December, 2025

Volume: 4

Issue: II



Research Management Cell

Sanothimi Campus, Sanothimi, Bhaktapur

Phone No : 01-6630998

EDUCATIONAL JOURNAL

Year: December, 2025

Volume:4

Issue:II

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EDUCATIONAL JOURNAL

Publisher	Research Management Cell Tribhuvan University, Sanothimi Campus, Sanothimi, Bhaktapur
Publication Year	December, 2025
Volume	IV
Issue	II
ISSN (Print)	2091-0061
ISSN (Online)	
Copyright	Publisher

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Editorial

In the contemporary academic landscape, the pursuit of knowledge has become increasingly systematic and rigorous, with scholars across diverse disciplines engaging in structured inquiry and empirical investigation. Research, functioning both as a methodological framework and an epistemological tool, plays a central role in the expansion and advancement of human knowledge and understanding. Through sustained and critical intellectual engagement, researchers not only extend existing theoretical paradigms but also interrogate and, where necessary, challenge established assumptions, thereby contributing to the emergence of new theoretical perspectives and practical applications. This ongoing process underscores research as a disciplined and methodical endeavor dedicated to the generation, validation, and dissemination of knowledge. Furthermore, scholarly research extends beyond individual academic achievement, serving as a cornerstone for collective intellectual development, societal advancement, and evidence-based policy formulation. Accordingly, research should be regarded not merely as an academic activity but as a vital mechanism for promoting innovation, critical thinking, and informed decision-making within an increasingly complex global environment.

In the course of sustained intellectual practice, university professors have engaged in a wide range of scholarly inquiries and research activities, drawing systematically on their disciplinary expertise and accumulated academic experience. In recent years, the Research Management Cell of Sanothimi Campus has accorded high priority to the publication of *The Educational Journal*, with the objective of coherently compiling scholars' ideas, reflections, empirical investigations, and research contributions, thereby fostering and enriching academic discourse.

This issue of the journal comprises eleven research-based articles—nine in English and two in Nepali—that examine authors' scholarly knowledge and professional experiences across a range of disciplines. All submissions underwent a rigorous peer-review process conducted by subject specialists and were published only after incorporating the required revisions and enhancements. The present issue has been made possible through the valuable contributions of the authors, the diligent efforts of the peer reviewers, and the consistent support of the campus administration, staff, and individuals involved in technical and editorial assistance. The editorial board gratefully acknowledges and extends sincere appreciation to all who contributed to the successful publication of this issue.

Editorial team

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Plants, Rituals, and Cultural Heritage: Indigenous Knowledge Systems of the Jirel Community in Dolakha District

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Abstract

Nepalese indigenous communities have long integrated plant in ritual and ceremonial purposes reflecting deep-rooted traditions and belief systems. Hence, this study was conducted to explore the plants use in cultural and religious performs of the Jirel tribe of Dolakha district, Bagmati province, Nepal. This study employed ethnographic case study method under qualitative research design. The study employed purposive sampling strategy and identified five key informants possessing in-depth ethnobiological knowledge. Data collection was conducted using semi-structured and open-ended questionnaires and field observation. The data was analyzed by using qualitative thematic approach. The findings indicate that twelve species were identified used by the Jirels in their birth rites and five species in wedding rites. Jirel worships showed strong bonding with the plants resource utilization, have socio-ecological value, symbolic meanings and spiritual values. The research has triggered the need for conservation of such indigenous knowledge by establishing knowledge transfer systems in the offsprings.

Keywords: *Culture, Dolakha, indigenous knowledge, Jirel, plant resources*

Introduction

Nepal is characterized by a rich cultural heritage, comprising various ethnic groups, languages, and traditions. Nepal is home to a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, and multi-lingual society. According to the National Population and Housing Census (NPHC), (2021), Nepal recognizes 142 castes, (Central Bureau of Statistics: CBS, 2021). Additionally, the National Foundation for Development of Indigenous Nationalities (NFDIN) classifies 59 indigenous groups, among which the Jirel community is recognized as a disadvantaged indigenous group (NFDIN, 2019). Nepalese communities have long integrated plant species into their daily lives for medicinal, spiritual, and ceremonial purposes. Various rites and rituals rely on specific plants, reflecting deep-rooted traditions and belief systems.

According to Martin (2010), knowledge contributes to cultural-ecological systems, fostering local pride and reinforcing community-environment relationships essential for conservation. Moreover, traditional plant use not only reflects cultural values. Documenting such knowledge is vital for preserving indigenous cultures and ensuring the sustainable use of plants which hold immense cultural and ritualistic importance. Various ethnic communities in Nepal use specific plants or plant parts in religious and social contexts, sometimes venerating them as sacred entities. The selection and use of plants vary among communities, influenced by religious, ethnic, and cultural differences (Kunwar et al., 2021). However, much of this knowledge remains undocumented, posing a risk of its gradual loss. Conducting detailed studies on Nepal's indigenous communities is, therefore, essential for preserving their traditional wisdom and understanding their unique plant-based practices.

The Jirel population in Nepal was 5,774 (CBS, 2011) but by 2021, this number had increased to 6,031 (CBS, 2021). The majority of Jirels reside in Dolakha, Of the total Jirel population, 4,494 individuals reside in Dolakha (CBS, 2021). Historically, the Jirels are indigenous to the Dolakha district (Sidky, 2002). Jirels have their own language known as Jirel Bhasa which belongs to Tibetan language family, specifically within the Tibeto-Burman group. (Hamill et al., 2000). They possess unique traditions, cultural practices, and belief systems, which are deeply connected with their use of plant species for various purposes. However, this traditional knowledge is under threat due to lack of proper documentation, conservation efforts (Kunwar et al., 2021). The gradual loss of this knowledge poses a significant challenge to cultural preservation and biodiversity conservation.

Very few studies have focused on the Jirel community (eg. Lohani, 2011; Karki et al., 2023) but there is seen the gap in researches of uses of plant species in culture and religion. This gap in research raises concerns about the potential loss of knowledge, which remains undocumented and at risk of extinction. Historically, the Jirels are indigenous to the Dolakha district (Sidky, 2002). They possess unique traditions, cultural practices, and belief systems, which are deeply intertwined with their use of plant species for various purposes. However, this traditional knowledge is under threat due to lack of proper documentation, conservation efforts (Kunwar et al., 2021). These cultural heritages promote sustainable use of medicinal plants for future generations. Therefore, this study aims to explore, document, and analyze the traditional practices of using plant resources in their culture and religious practices.

Methodology

This study employs ethnographic case study method under qualitative research design to explore the knowledge of the Jirel community of Dolakha district, Nepal on the use of plant resources in their religious and cultural rituals. This study adopts a qualitative research design, which is well-suited for investigating indigenous knowledge systems, cultural beliefs, and traditional practices (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Data collection was conducted using semi-structured and open-ended questionnaires and field observation. This study employed purposive sampling strategy (Patton, 2015), identifying five key informants possessing in-depth ethnobiological knowledge including Dharmi and Lama practitioners, respected elders, and recognized experts. Initial contact was established with two Jirel community journalists who served as local liaisons. These key informants provided essential demographic information about the municipality's administrative wards, educational institutions, and traditional knowledge holders. Their assistance proved invaluable in identifying potential participants, including Dharmi and Laama. The study was conducted in Jiri Municipality, where the Jirel (call themselves Jiripa)

population is concentrated, use their own language and performed their customs, rituals and are the aboriginal inhabitants of Jiri and Jugu area (Joshua Project, 2024).

Data were collected through semi-structured interview using open-ended questionnaires and direct observations were conducted to document real-time application of plants and rituals (Angrosino, 2007). Field notes were maintained to record observations. Field visit was made during Falgun of 2080 to Magh (2081). The data was analyzed by using qualitative thematic approach. This research adhered to ethical guidelines for conducting studies with indigenous communities (Smith, 2012). Participants were informed about the study's objectives, and informed consent was obtained before interviews and recordings. Anonymity and confidentiality were maintained throughout the study, ensuring cultural sensitivity and respect for indigenous knowledge systems. There was not any kind of physical or mental or emotional harm to the participants. There was no threat to their environment, culture, tradition, knowledge and practice.

Findings and Discussion

The Jirel community exhibits a distinctive synthesis of religious traditions, incorporating elements of both Buddhism and Hinduism. While Buddhism serves as a foundational belief system, Hindu rites and rituals are also widely practiced. Rituals and ceremonies in the Jirel community are conducted by Dhamis (traditional ritual specialist found in various Indigenous and ethnic communities of Nepal), Lamas (Buddhist ritual priest or religious practitioner found among Himalayan communities in Nepal), and Brahmins (members of a traditional priestly group historically associated with Hindu religious learning and ritual responsibilities), each playing a specific role in spiritual and ceremonial practices. The Jirel Dhamis are also known as Phombos, hold a significant position in the community. Lama and Phombo used to conduct rituals and rites together in the past, but now they work separately; Phombos are responsible for healing the living, while Lamas oversee rites for the deceased. Throughout various stages of life, the Jirel people observe numerous rites and rituals. This study focuses on three major rites: birth rites, marriage rites, and death rites. Other ceremonial practices are beyond the scope of this research. The detailed descriptions of these rites are categorized into the following three themes:

Birth Rites

Birth marks the beginning of an individual's life cycle, and in the Jirel community, it is accompanied by distinct customs. According to them, a rooster is sacrificed upon the birth of a son, whereas a hen is sacrificed for a daughter though they claim they do not discriminate between a son and a daughter. They celebrate the birth of both equally. After seven days, the naming ceremony, known as Nwaran, is performed. During this ritual, seven different types of plants, collectively referred to as Sahsing are burned. Burning these plants purifies and protects the baby. In certain regions, twelve different plants may be used instead.

Artemisia dubia is a commonly used plant that is used for making something holy or pure. It is used to sprinkle water and is burned. Other species such as *Eurya acuminata* (Jhigane), *Juniperus indica* (Dhupi), *Pinus roxburghii* (Sallo), *Rhus succedanea* (Bhalayo), *Santalum album* (Chandan), *Inula cappa* (Gaitihare), etc. are used in the preparation of Sahsing (a bundle of selected plants burned during rituals). These species produce a sweet aroma when burned, which is believed to purify the atmosphere and repel the negative energies. The Chhyang (a fermented beverage made from grains) and alcohol prepared by fermentation of Kodo (*Eleusine corcana*) was found to be compulsory for almost all rituals and rites that takes place in Jirel tribes. Collectively, twelve species were identified used by the Jirels in their birth rites.

Wedding Rites

Marriage is a significant institution in Jirel society, establishing a bond between two individuals and their families. The wedding ceremony is primarily conducted under the guidance of Phombo. Under Phombo's guidance, they complete the wedding in four stages: Sauni (maternal aunt performs segments of the ceremony that involve nurturing or welcoming transitions), Theki-Chardaam [ceremonial system in which ritual offerings (ritual drink) are prepared in the Theki (wooden vessel) and presented to ancestors, household deities, or community elders], Soli Dalo (ritual gift basket traditionally made of bamboo or local materials, used in Jirel ceremonies to carry items offered during rituals), and Kanyadaan (gifting of daughter: bride's parents formally give their daughter to the groom during the marriage ceremony). For every stage, fermented millet (*Eleusine coracana*) drink (Kodoko Jaand) is mandatory. Mustard (*Brassica campestris*) oil is an essential element in the Theki-Chardaam and Soli Dalo ceremonies. Additionally, the cultural significance of Nigalo (*Himalayacalamus asper*), use Tokari (baskets made from *Himalayacalamus asper*) to carry all the essential materials for each of the four stages. They used crafted bamboo baskets to carry food items, mustard oil, alcohol made from millet, etc. Jirel Phombo sprinkle water with the leaves and shoot of pati (*Artemisia dubia*). The result revealed *Oroxylum indicum* as a holy flower that is believed to bring blessings. Their culture is tied closely to nature. Collectively, five species were identified to be used during wedding rites.

Death Rites

Death rites are conducted by Lamas and hold profound significance in ensuring a peaceful transition for the deceased. Within the Jirel community, improper funeral procedures are believed to result in the wandering of the deceased's spirit. According to a Lama, while burning the dead body, they must use Sahsing. It is important for purification. Following cremation, the ashes are buried at the same location, and a grave is constructed using stones. Upon completing the funeral, participants consume Chhyang, a traditional rice or millet-based alcoholic beverage. Additionally, water is sprinkled using Pati (*Artemisia dubia*) for purification, and Sahsing is burned in the deceased's home to cleanse the environment.

A significant post-funeral ceremony, known as Ghewa, is conducted within 45 days of death. During this ritual, the Jirel Lama summons the spirit of the deceased to possess a relative and relay message a process called Sensingq. A special structure called Chhorten (Stupa) or Mane (prayer wheel wall) is constructed on the grave, containing a Jong of Srikhand (*Santalum album*). Chhorten and Mane are central landmarks in Jirel villages, representing faith, identity, and community cohesion. Three days before the conclusion of Ghewa, a specialized ritual known as Charmane (ritual place or small shrine associated with ancestral spirits and protective deities) takes place, during which Charmana of newly harvested grains are fermented to prepare Chhyang. Another ritual, Chhyang Pidharnu (gently pouring or flicking droplets of Chhyang toward the sacred direction, altar, or ritual site), is performed using *Artemisia dubia*.

The study revealed nine different plant species are used mostly in death rites. They place thorns at a two-way junction and at the homes of mourners to keep the spirit away. They believe that the thorns must be placed in this manner; otherwise, those who attended the funeral may fall ill. Similar to birth rites and wedding rites, *Artemisia dubia* is used for purification and to ward off negative energies. It is used to sprinkle water and is burned along with *Juniperus indica*, *Pinus roxburghi*, *Santalum album*, etc. as incense. *Oryza sativa* is another species with great ritual significance. Rice flour and roasted wheat flour (Satu) is used to prepare Tormas. After Sensing,

one Pathi (a unit of local measurement), one Mana and one Muthi of rice is offered as an essential part of death rites. Not only millet but other plants like wheat, corn, rice, etc. are used to prepare Chhyang and alcoholic beverages.

Jirel Worships

The traditional customs of the Jirel community differ from those of other Buddhist groups. Jirel people worship their Kul Devta (ancestral deities) and venerate the spirits of their ancestors. Different subgroups within the Jirel community have distinct Kul Devtas. Various religious ceremonies, such as Lha Puja, Chen Puja, Chyomu Puja, Nangy Laha Puja, and Cheramjo Puja, were observed (but not described here in detail). While most of these rituals are conducted by Phombos, Lha Puja is exclusively performed by a group of worshippers known as Naksung (worshippers who are believed to call the spirits during Lha Puja). Aesthetically, red flowers, particularly Rhododendrons (*Rhododendron* spp.), are used to decorate the walls during these ceremonies. A unique ritual practice involves the creation of intricate structures from cooked rice, known as Torma. They used to use Tatela (*Oroxylum indicum*) flowers in Chyomu Puja because they believe it is the purest flower. Additionally, Chhyang Pidharnu is performed using fermented millet (*Eleusine coracana*) or rice (*Oryza sativa*), along with Titepati (*Artemisia dubia*).

Chhyomu Puja is one of the most important ceremonies that occurs in Jirel community. It is worshipping of their Kul Devta. During the puja, they use different plant species for different purposes such as *Artemisia dubia* for sprinkling water for purification, *Oroxylum indicum* for decoration and offering etc. The observation of videos showed use of rice to make Torma. Tormas are special structures made from cooked rice which is cut into pieces and distributed to everyone as Prasad (table 1).

Table 1

Plant Species Used in Chhyomu Puja

S.N	Scientific Name	Local Name	Family	Use
1	<i>Artemisia dubia</i> Wall. ex Besser	Titepati	Asteraceae	Sprinkling water for purification.
2	<i>Gaultheria fragrantissima</i> Wall.	Machhino	Ericaceae	Burning.
3	<i>Himalayacalamus asper</i> Stapleton	Nigalo	Poaceae	Making a special structure or a stand on which worshipping is done, and boundary.
4	<i>Juniperus indica</i> Bertol.	Dhupi	Cupressaceae	Burning
5	<i>Musa paradisiaca</i> L.	Kera	Musaceae	Keeping the offerings on it. Making stands on four corners.
6	<i>Oroxylum indicum</i> (L.) Kurz	Champaka/ Tatelo	Bignoniaceae	Decoration and offering.
7	<i>Oryza sativa</i> L.	Chamal	Poaceae	Making Tormas, offering.
8	<i>Eleusine coracana</i> (L.) Gaertn.	Kodo	Poaceae	Preparing fermented alcohol.
9	<i>Pinus roxburghii</i> Sarg.	Sallo	Pinaceae	Making a special structure on which worshipping is done.
10	<i>Rhododendron arboreum</i> Sm.	Lali Gurans	Ericaceae	Offering.

11	<i>Inula cappa</i> (Buch.-Ham. ex D. Don) DC.	Gaitihare	Asteraceae	Burning
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Lha Puja is also a type of Kul Puja that takes place in another caste group of Jirels. The interviews, FGDs and observation of videos show a variety of plant species are actively used in this ceremony. The use of these plants shows deep connection of the community and plant species. The varieties of plants species used during this occasion are listed in table 2.

Table 2

Plant Species Used in Lha Puja

S.N	Scientific Name	Local Name	Family	Use
1	<i>Artemisia dubia</i> Wall. ex Besser	Titepati	Asteraceae	Sprinkling water for purification.
2	<i>Gaultheria fragrantissima</i> Wall.	Machhino	Ericaceae	Burning.
3	<i>Himalayacalamus asper</i> Stapleton	Nigalo	Poaceae	Making basketlike structure on the wall on which rhododendron is decorated.
4	<i>Juniperus indica</i> Bertol.	Dhupi	Cupressaceae	Burning.
5	<i>Musa spp</i> L.	Kera	Musaceae	Keeping in four corners of the boundary.
6	<i>Oroxylum indicum</i> (L.) Kurz	Champaka/Tatelo	Bignoniaceae	Decoration and offering.
7	<i>Oryza sativa</i> L.	Chamal	Poaceae	Making <i>Tormas</i> .
8	<i>Eleusine corcana</i> (L.) Gaertn.	Kodo	Poaceae	Preparing fermented alcohol.
9	<i>Pinus roxburghii</i> Sarg.	Sallo	Pinaceae	Making a special structure on which worshipping is done.
10	<i>Rhododendron arboreum</i>	Lali Gurans	Ericaceae	Decoration of walls.

During this ceremony, *Artemisia dubia*, as in other ceremonies, is used to sprinkle water on people and houses for purification. *Himalayacalamus asper* is used to make basketlike frames on the wall on which red flowers such as rhododendron is kept as decoration. Burning the sticks of *Juniperus indica*, *Gaultheria fragrantissima*, etc. to produce aromatic smoke for purification is one of the recurring features of Jirel rituals. Similarly, Torma, Chhyang, alcoholic beverages, etc. are also an essential part of Kul Puja.

Bhoot Manchaune is a special ritual in which Phombos pronounce chants to make the spirits believed to cause illness or disturbance go away. Plants play a significant role in this ritual also. The plants used for Bhoot Manchhaune ritual are Nigalo (*Himalayacalamus asper* Stapleton) for making boundaries, Kera (*Musa paradisiaca* L.) keeping in four corners of the boundary, and Ukhu (*Saccharum officinarum* Lindl.) keeping in four corners of the boundary.

Poldak khane, Poldak is an item that is made from flour of roasted wheat (*Triticum aestivum* L.), mixed with Chhyang. This item is served while planting millets. The Chhyang and

alcohol prepared by fermentation of Kodo (*Eleusine corcana*) was found to be compulsory for almost all rituals and rites. People often get tired because of working continuously for too long. Drinking these products might have been made compulsory to reduce the aches and pain as both of these products act as mild sedative.

Discussion

Plants hold significant cultural and religious importance within the community. The Jirel people have a long-standing tradition of incorporating plant species into religious ceremonies reflecting their deep ecological knowledge and cultural heritage. The Jirel community uses plants for various purposes based on their belief system. Plants are used in rituals that are conducted throughout the lifecycle of a person, i.e. from birth to funeral. They have used plants for various purposes such as purification, protection, decoration, etc. Some plants were found to be used in a single ceremony while some were used for multiple rites and rituals. The plants used in different rites are written in this section under different themes. The practices of the Jirel community offer deep insight into the intersection of culture, spirituality, and environmental knowledge. The usage of various plant species in ceremonial contexts reflects both functional and symbolic roles that plants play in indigenous religious systems. This can be theoretically framed through ethnoecology, symbolic interactionism, and functionalism, while empirical studies on the Jirel and similar Himalayan communities offer comparative support.

From a symbolic interactionist perspective (Blumer, 1969), the Jirel people's use of specific plant species like *Artemisia dubia* (Titepati) or *Oroxylum indicum* reflects the symbolic meanings ascribed to flora within their cultural worldview (Devkota, 2023). These plants are not merely botanical resources but carry sacred connotations used for purification, blessing, and as conduits of spiritual interaction. The act of sprinkling *Titepati* or burning Sahsing bundles aligns with Durkheim's (1912) theory of sacred and profane, which posits that ritual objects are assigned a sacred status that elevates them from their ordinary function.

Functionalist theories in anthropology (e.g., Malinowski, 1944) also help explain the ritualistic use of plant species. These rites and associated botanical elements maintain social order, provide psychological comfort, and ensure continuity of tradition in Jirel society. For instance, the use of *Eleusine coracana* to prepare *Chhyang* in both birth and marriage rites supports the theory that rituals reinforce social cohesion through shared participation and symbolic consumption.

The use of alcohol as a ritual medium aligns well with the theory of ritual economy, which examines how economic resources (like grain or alcohol) are transformed into spiritual capital through religious ceremonies. In many Himalayan traditions, including among the Jirel people, *Chhyang* or fermented millet alcohol is not just consumed but is symbolically offered to deities, ancestors, and spirits (Devkota, 2023). Kunwar et al. (2006) emphasized that alcohol is seen as a carrier of prayers, bridging the human and spiritual realms. Its vapor is believed to transport intentions, blessings, and gratitude, making it a vital component of nearly every life-cycle ritual.

Similarly, Torma hand-crafted offerings made primarily from *Oryza sativa* (rice) serves as both an aesthetic and symbolic offering. From a structuralist perspective, food and its transformation through cooking and artistic shaping reflects the human ability to mediate nature and culture. The act of offering *Torma* is a transformation of the natural (rice) into the cultural (a sacred object), reinforcing values of generosity, community, and spiritual reciprocity.

In the Jirel tradition, as in Tibetan Buddhism and Bon rituals, *Tormas* are also seen as

materialized prayers embodiments of gratitude, meant to appease spirits or gods and ensure blessings. Shrestha and Dhillion (2003) describe the distribution of *Torma* as Prasad blessed food shared among participants to reinforce communal ties and the sacredness of the ritual event. This fits into Durkheim's (1912) idea of ritual as a means to reaffirm social cohesion and collective belief. From an ethnoecological perspective (Toledo, 2002), the Jirel's use of specific plants like *Juniperus indica*, *Santalum album*, and *Pinus roxburghii* as incense for atmospheric purification reflects a deep-rooted ecological knowledge system (Devkota, 2023). These practices illustrate the cultural encoding of ecological information, such as the aromatic properties of resins and essential oils that are effective in fumigation and sanitation, possibly also having antiseptic properties (Devkota & Acharya, 2025).

Plants are the most important part of human life. Plants are not just important for humans' basic needs but also for medicines, rites, rituals and culture. Many communities around the world use plants in religious ceremonies, purification rituals, and festivals (Bista, 1991). Jirel people use plants like *Artemisia dubia*, *Brassica campestris* etc. during wedding. When the plant is dipped and sprinkled on a person, the person is believed to be purified. Its ritual importance was mentioned by elders and seen during wedding preparations (Shrestha & Dhillion, 2003).

Empirical studies on the Jirel community have documented their complex ritual systems and their reliance on local biodiversity. Rai and Chaudhary (1998) detail various ritualistic uses of flora in Himalayan communities, including the Jirel, highlighting how specific plants are tied to religious and social functions. For example, *Artemisia dubia* is widely used in the Himalayas for cleansing and protection rituals due to its pungent aroma and antimicrobial properties (Manandhar, 2002; Devkota, 2023). The preparation and communal sharing of *Chhyang* a fermented beverage made from *Eleusine coracana* align with the broader Himalayan tradition where millet alcohol is a symbol of hospitality and spiritual communion (Stevens, 1993; Devkota, 2023). Similarly, the use of *Brassica campestris* oil in marriage rites aligns with practices in other Indo-Himalayan groups, where natural oils are associated with purification and beautification. The use of *Oroxylum indicum* as a "holy flower" corresponds to its documented role in spiritual offerings in Nepalese Buddhism and animism (Kunwar & Bussmann, 2008; Devkota, 2023). Its ornamental and medicinal properties reinforce its role as a plant that brings blessings and aesthetic value.

In death rites, the offering of *Oryza sativa* (rice) and *Torma* (ritual dough sculptures) reveals a shared cultural script with Tibetan Buddhist practices, where rice symbolizes sustenance and spiritual wealth (Samuel, 1993). The measurements used (Pathi, Mana, Muthi) indicate ritual precision and the embeddedness of traditional metrology in sacred acts. Kunwar et al. (2006) document that in Nepalese ethnobotany, *Chhyang* made from *Eleusine coracana* is commonly used across various indigenous communities as a libation or offering to spirits. It's deeply interwoven into cultural rituals, believed to carry the spiritual essence of participants. Shrestha and Dhillion (2003) highlight how ritual food structures like *Tormas* are not just offerings but carry symbolic messages of abundance, fertility, and gratitude. In rituals, particularly those linked to life stages and seasonal cycles, they embody the bond between the material world and spiritual domain. This rich intersection of ritual, ecology, and symbolism in the Jirel community illustrates the deep entwinement of biodiversity and cultural identity, offering an important example of how traditional ecological knowledge sustains cultural heritage.

Conclusion

The research showed that Jirel people have a tradition of using the plant species in rituals and ceremonies. They utilize different plant species in various rites and rituals such as Nwaran/naming ceremony, marriage ceremony, funeral, Ghewa, and traditional pujas such as *Lha Puja*, *Chen Puja*, *Chyomu Puja*, etc. Dhamis and Lamas are responsible for conducting these rituals. There is rich intersection of ritual, ecology and conservation of the plant in the Jirel community which illustrates the deep entwinement of biodiversity and cultural identity, offering an important example of how traditional ecological knowledge sustains cultural heritage.

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ELT and Entrepreneurship: Motivating Learners to Create Their Own Opportunities

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Abstract

This article began as a conversation and experience-sharing session with students. It aims to motivate students toward entrepreneurship and leadership in the 21st century. English is commonly used in business, education, diplomatic communication, and bilateral exchanges between organizations such as universities and public affairs. At the same time, it functions as a 'global lingua franca' for people traveling all over the world. In non-native countries like Nepal, English enjoys its superiority through scholarships, high prestige, and good incomes. In recent days, when ELT learners in universities in Nepal feel as if they do not get better jobs after receiving their degree certificates, this article can support them in finding their own path. Instead of hunting for jobs in the market, this article motivates young ELT learners to create their own business using the English language and ELT skills. Using an experiential and self-expressive style as a methodology, this article suggests that ELT learners have passion, a dream, and dedication in their learning and performance. The more they create zeal within themselves, the better opportunities they can get in the markets because of the English language and ELT skills.

Keywords: *ELT, Entrepreneurship, Leadership, Opportunity, Passion, Zeal*

Introduction

"Should English language learners be the leaders or job seekers?" I (Principal Author) asked this question to my students of M.Ed. III semester who were pursuing degree in English Language Teaching in Nepal. Pressing their lips they answered – "We don't know. It depends upon the situation, needs and capacity."

After listening their answers, again I asked, *"Who makes the situation? Who creates need and which level of capacity is required?"*

Out of twelve students, three students opined, ELT learners should create situations, needs and develop their capacities themselves. Four students argued, it was the government's

responsibility to create jobs and make the placement for youths in suitable positions. However, three of them blamed for national circumstances and two others remained silent.

I wonder!

I said, *"It is the ELT learners and teachers who should know themselves and create their space on their own. If they identify themselves, they can create their space and become entrepreneurs and leaders. Otherwise, they just become job hunters in the global markets and live as others in the community."*

"This is just a philosophy. Giving lectures and living a real life are two different things. Except teaching what can we do? We must seek the jobs, either for public service or in teaching profession or in any other fields of their interest. So, entrepreneurship after learning English language teaching is not possible." One of the students openly objected to the concept. Others laughed at my idea.

I remained silent for a while. And, addressing the class, I said, *"We can do. For this, we must have a zeal. We must recognize ourselves. It is like a story of an eagle."*

"What is the story, sir?" Even though they were the students of Master's level, they became excited to listen to the story.

Addressing their curiosity, I started the story as;

There was a farmer. His only hen was incubating her eggs for hatching. One day, the farmer was going to the field. There on the road, he found an egg similar to his hen's egg. He brought the egg home and put that egg in the nest under the hen for grooming. After some days, the chickens came out of the nest. They were very beautiful. Among them, one of them was a little different; unlike chicken, its mobility was very weak, it did not have feathers and short beak.

Gradually, they grew together. The mother hen was taking care of them all equally. The different one learned to eat the worms and grains together with other chicken. One day, he saw the birds were flying in the sky. The eagle was soaring in the sky calmly and gliding effortlessly. The chicken saw its wings, colour, and beak, and found similar to the eagle. He liked to fly like the eagle and went to the boundary corner of the courtyard and tried to leap up but to save from injury, the mother hen shouted at its chicken and stopped to do.

After that, he never tried it again. Instead of gliding in the sky, he limited himself into the coop and enjoyed his company with the chicken. Shortening his expected age thirty to fifty years, the king of the sky lived for one and half year and died for a roast! (Source: Social Media, Facebook)

After listening the story, the students inhale long. Robbing their two palms with relish and excitement, one of them spoke, *"We understood, sir! How have you applied this in your life? Would you mind sharing your experiences?"*

This last statement led me to discuss this issue with my colleague/corresponding-author, who supported me to search the literature and prepare the framework of this article. Finally, we decided to develop this article here.

Those who do not see a future in ELT can find opportunities everywhere. In today's global context, competent and passionate ELT learners do not need to chase money- rather, money will follow them. To achieve success, they must first be able to dream. Pursuing their dreams requires

them to change their attitude, aptitude, and actions. This article aims to serve as a stepping stone to help them advance in their careers. While it may not provide a '*guru mantra*' or a '*Rambana*' (complete solution), we believe it can function as a valuable supporting tool.

Statement of Problem

We think this text has significance in encouraging students to be self-directed. People in society may be of two types: one group shows ignorance and sleep, while another group pretends to be sleeping and tries to prove that they are willfully ignorant. We cannot wake up the people who are willfully pretending to be sleeping, but we can do it for the really ignorant people. In the 21st century, English is the language of the economy, research, media, politics, and social communication (Hosni, 2015, p. 299). Thus, learning English has top priority for job seekers, academic degree holders, institutional leaders, and international business leaders.

After receiving Bachelor's and Master's degrees, many students like to join the public service commission. Some students join teaching jobs. Some are found unemployed and are running here and there in search of employment. And, some students go abroad for better job opportunities. Rarely do English language learners think about ELT and entrepreneurship. That is why, here, our problem statement focuses on empowering English language graduates by bridging the unemployment gap through entrepreneurship and specialized career options. Their dynamic and innovative ideas would support the economy and the education sector simultaneously.

Purpose of the Study

Despite holding Bachelor's and Master's degrees in English language teaching, many young people are still eager to go abroad for better income opportunities. They perceive limited career prospects in Nepal, often blaming the country, criticizing its leaders, and condemning the public service system. In this context, as educators and ELT leaders, we believe it is our responsibility to inspire young ELT learners, practitioners, and teachers to explore a wider and more viable field of entrepreneurship, rather than restricting themselves to a narrow range of career paths. Therefore, the purpose of this article is to encourage English language graduates to pursue innovation and entrepreneurship.

Research Question

To address this issue, a central question was designed as; 'How English language can be used for entrepreneurial ventures and make students self-dependent, creating innovative educational businesses?'

Methodology

This is a type of self-expressive and motivational article in which the issue is raised from a classroom discussion. The phenomenon is presented like a self-narration. More than primary data, secondary sources of information are used as literature. Studying a lot of literature, the principal author's lived experience is used in the final section preceding the conclusion. To maintain the reliability and trustworthiness, very recent events are focused on. This is a qualitative type of writing, so, replacing the topic result and discussion, the phenomenon is discussed directly under the title, 'Lived Experience in ELT and Entrepreneurship'.

Findings and Discussion

English Language in Nepal

In countries like Nepal, where the English language is taught as a foreign language-whose scope is very wide and the ELT learners have lots of opportunities. According to Kandel (2019), "The status of English in Nepal has changed in the last seven decades. Adopted first as a 'foreign' language, English, in recent years, has become an indispensable part of life for the Nepalese people" (p.2). These days, this language is used as an additional language in many educational and economic areas in Nepal. Citing (Bhattraï, 2006; Khadka, 2022) pens, "English occupies a significant position in the total education system in Nepal" (p. 24).

In teaching, from Montessori teachers to university professors, except in Nepali and some other mother tongues led subjects, English language is mandatory. It is used in business, advertising, banking, industries, diplomacy, and international relations too. Many of the scholarships are available at home and abroad, for English language learners. The studies have shown, even the earnings of the ELT learners and leaders have higher than others. In this regard, Khadka (2022) writes, people having better English proficiency have better job opportunities in Nepal (pp. 21-22).

Its attraction is also increasing day by day. In most of the private schools, the medium of instruction is English. Many parents feel proud of teaching their children in English medium schools. Rather the parents do not wear good clothes and eat sweet things, they are willing to send their children in the English medium private schools. In an article Khadka (2022) states, "Nepali parents are induced with the English language, even if there are government-funded schools nearby them that deliver free education at the school level, they prefer private schools. It shows the power and popularity of English in Nepali schools" (p. 23). Addressing education system of Nepal, he further adds, English language in higher education in Nepal has become an obligatory phenomenon. And, Nepali educational and social system has given the uttermost prestige for English language in most of the academic institutions in Nepal (p. 24).

Similarly, in a study conducted in three districts—Kathmandu, Bhaktapur, and Lalitpur, out of 100 head teachers of public and private schools, Khatri (2016) found, the students and the parents in the private schools in Nepal expect their head teachers to speak English language and look smarter than other teachers. This shows the expectations of the English language in parents and students.

Addressing the current issue and demand of the English language in Nepal, Khadka (2022) mentions, "Besides, all local universities, and many international universities' affiliated colleges have been established in Nepal for bachelor and master levels that demand exclusive use of the English language" (p. 27). This also shows the scope of the English language for ELT learners in Nepal. For this, first they must know themselves and broaden their knowledge in the English language and its four skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

English Language and Economy in the Global Context

EU Business news (13 May 2025) writes, English is the language of leadership and global opportunity. In the world educational market, English language is practiced in the classroom. Because of the command over the English language, the university graduates having specialization in English can get better jobs and earn better than their non-English counterparts (Khadka, 2022).

EU Business news (13 May 2025) quotes, "If you want to succeed on the global stage, you need to know English. It is the language that connects world leaders, fuels international business, and unlocks global career opportunities." Similarly, quoting Bangladesh, Cameroon, and Rwanda, Pinon and Haydon (2010) assert that the average salary gap between English language professionals and non-English language professionals is twenty percent, where English-speaking professionals are very few. Use of English language is growing day by day. So, recognizing the value of the English language, the government of Bangladesh and Cameroon have increased the investment in English language learning.

According to Kandel (2019), the English language spread all over the world because of the dominant growth of the United States in the economy and military power in the twentieth century. It was the colonial language in the past. Now, it has become a popular lingua franca. In his understanding, English has acquired a narcotic power in many parts of the world. In the post-colonial situation, this language has replaced the colonial representations. The people of the colonized countries take it as a language of prestige and power.

"It has given a new identity, local values, hybrid representation, multiple norms of literary styles, different linguistic and sociolinguistic strategies" (Kandel, 2019, p. 4). Furthermore, highlighting the importance of the English language in the global context, Rao (2019) asserts, "English, being the first world language, is said to be the first global lingua franca and it is the most widely used language in the world in international trade, diplomacy, mass entertainment, international telecommunications and scientific publications as well as publishing newspapers and other books (p. 66)." Highlighting the English language and its global market Rao further writes, more than fifty-four countries use the English language as an official language and the language of instruction in higher education. In order to meet the needs of the people across the world, this language is serving as a global lingua franca.

In the global context, the English language learners are also growing day by day. Many research studies have shown that the number of English language learners are drastically increasing in Canadian, Australian, and the United Kingdom's urban areas. In a study, conducted by McGee et al. (2015), it was found that from 1994 to 2010, the total number of all students grew by 4.4 percent, but the English language learners increased by 64 percent.

In research on English language skills and global entrepreneurship in Saudi Arabia, Ahmad and Khan (2023) found that students who feel a lack of skills to express their ideas smoothly in English language, they would not be able to succeed in business deals. From the students' opinion collection, further, they found that 98.5 percent of students showed strong agreement for English oral communication skills for effective business and entrepreneurship. "The respondents are aware of the importance of having the ability to say clearly what is on their minds and participate in business dealings as English opens wider opportunities for them to become successful entrepreneurs" (Ahmad & Khan, 2023, p. 201). In this regard, studying the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2014-15), Khadka (2022) also writes, "Due to the English language expansion, the employment of interpreters and translators are expected to grow 29 percent from 2014 to 2024 as compared to other occupations" (p. 24). Relating this to the Nepalese context, Khadka further adds, after Nepal's membership of the World Trade Organization (WTO), various organizations like the World Bank, the United Nations Organizations, the USAID, and many more multinational companies. Those companies are using the Nepalese people who are competent in the English language. Along with the English language, their additional skills to perform the job are given after the job placement. Their job is prestigious, and the salary is attractive.

English for Entrepreneurship Purpose

The English language is a global lingua franca in the 21st century. "It is the master key for all the knowledge being disseminated in most parts of the world" (Khadka, 2022, p. 24). From education to business, hospitals, industries, sports, research, and diplomatic communication, it is used very commonly. From a research study in ELT and leadership, Khatri (2023) found that for all the international and inter-university correspondence, the university leaders use the English language for communication. While attending the international conferences, the English language teachers join the conferences under the leadership of political leaders, public officers, or the NGO's and INGO's leaders, but after reaching there, while presenting the reports, opinions, and national issues, leadership automatically shifts to the English language teachers (ELT leaders). Jenkins (2013) and Khadka (2022) argue that English language is not only an educational tool but also a requirement for excellent jobs in most parts of the world. Also, it is the medium of communication and sharing for international programs. It shows the importance of the English language and the scope of English language learners.

Plenty of opportunities are there for ELT learners in the global market. With the rapid growth of globalization and expansion of the English language, hundreds and thousands of opportunities are emerging. In this situation, the globalized economy requires employees who have English language proficiency. Along with statistics and technology, the English language is occupying a vast area of the economy in the 21st century.

Global research, tutorial facilities, cross-cultural business and diplomatic communication, English language is necessary. It has become an imperial language. According to Kachru (1990), the English language provides its speakers the 'linguistic power' (p.1). Because of its global use, many of the languages are on the verge of extinction. In AI Hosni's words, "This can be interpreted as a new form of colonialism in which cultural and economic imperialism takes place through exploiting the unprecedented linguistic power of the English language" (AI Hosni, 2015, p. 301). In this competitive world, "English is both 'replacing' as well as 'displacing' other languages...it is also the instrument for social upward mobility and power" (Basu, 2013, p.186).

In this sense, if the ELT learners make them unemployed or low-paid employees in the market, it is their own fault. If they do not attempt, they will never get better opportunities. Opportunities are not like *prasad* (holy meal) that is offered in beautiful and expensive plates. To grab the opportunities, the ELT learners should first change their mindset. They must have self-awareness and the willingness to jump from one position to another. Giving the example of Bangladesh, Cameroon, Nigeria, Pakistan, and Rwanda, Pinon and Haydon (2010) state, in forty-two companies of those countries, they found the employees were hired only those who were competent in the English language.

A comfort zone does not allow anyone to take risks and move ahead. Time and again, the leader should fall and get up again. The English language itself is a product (object) for English language learners, which they are to be able to sell in the market and make a profit to enjoy their lives. Developing innovative ideas, they must venture into a new business of communication through the English language. Otherwise, they will become a punctured truck full of tires; having hundreds of tires on its cargo area, if a truck is punctured on the way, it cannot run or move. Those hundreds of tires become useless for that truck. None of the tires can replace a single.

The same can be the situation for English language learners. Having an English subject in their university degree and receiving a certificate of graduation and post-graduation, if they

become unemployed or low-paid workers in the market, they become shameless people. They become useless citizens in the global market. So, the English language learners should know themselves first and move ahead in the global market. Hundreds of opportunities are available in countries like Nepal, where English is used as a foreign language. Similarly, thousands of opportunities are available in countries like India, Singapore, Malaysia, and Pakistan, where English is used as an official language. And, millions of opportunities are there in countries like the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand, where it is used as a native as well as official language. Therefore, English can be used in various contexts depending on our choice. We can reshape the language and use it for our purposes and challenge the dominant discourse of English. Pinon and Haydon (2010) concede, "English is also the language of opposition and protest" (p. 193).

Thus, English language learners become leaders in the global market. They can be smart people in the world and remain busy in the knowledge economy. EU Business news (13 May 2025) focuses on and writes, the English language is a leader's language. It creates leaders for global business, communication, and entrepreneurship.

Giving very interesting examples from Mexico, Francis and Ryan (1998) write that, in non-native countries, speaking the English language is taken as a prestige. While having conversations, if the young professionals switch the code from their native language to the English language, that is taken as the prestige (P??). People give value and appreciate the way of speaking. And, Chauhan (2008) quotes, speaking the English language is taken as a source of prestige and power in countries like India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, and Bhutan, especially the countries which were colonized for a long time before World War II.

Lived Experience in ELT and Entrepreneurship

Once I (Principal author) passed school level, though I was very weak in English, my father motivated me to join a major in English Education. For two years, I could not understand what I was studying. English was too tough for me to pass. But once I passed 10+2, I joined the teaching job. From here, my entrepreneurship began.

While studying Bachelor, I was teaching in a school. At the same time, I was taking some tuition classes for school-level children as well as 10+2 failed students. To study the Master's level, I came to Kirtipur. It was a completely new experience for me. Everyone was new there in the university. But luckily, I got a part-time job for translation. I had to translate English texts into Nepali and vice-a-versa.

After Master's Degree, I again joined a teaching job. Along with a teaching job, I joined the M.Phil. in Education Leadership. Twenty-five friends were there in my class. Except me, all the friends were matured and from different fields. I was earning five thousand per month. One day, I asked one of my friends how much he earned a month. He answered, one lakh! I got shocked!

I had never thought that people earned more than twenty thousand rupees at that time. That time, a secondary teacher's salary was around twelve thousand. Then I asked to other friends. Some of the friends were earning three-four lakhs that time. That friends' group changed my paradigm. And, I thought I could also earn some more money than a general salary man. Instead of public schools' job, I started searching a private job. I got a friends' group who were running a private school. I joined the group and started running the school.

Once I started leading the private school, I earned almost three times better money than a common salary man i.e. a teacher. Along with teaching and leading a school, I worked as a field researcher in different organizations. I started interpreting the qualitative data as well.

When I got succeeded in TU service commission, I almost quit my private job. Morally and legally, I could not lead a private school any longer being a leader. I handed over my post to others. It made me financially weak. When my income was growing, my expenditure was also increasing simultaneously. But, when my income became less, my expenditure could not decrease. So, I started facing the same problem of financing the life.

I thought about an ELT and entrepreneurship! I made contact to Nepali guardians who were living abroad with their siblings. I started taking online ELT classes to the children who were living in Japan. I have been doing this job till date. It has easily recovered my expenses.

Personally, I have been enjoying my life because of ELT. Day by day, its scope is increasing. I hope it will never decline. I remember Khadka (2022) who states, the horizon of the English language in Nepal is expanding day by day. Similarly, Pinon and Haydon (2010) believe, people having English language skills are progressing more quickly in the companies. And, English language is beneficial for companies' growth in the 21st century.

For further understanding, interested students can read the biography of Jack Ma, a Chinese English language teacher and entrepreneur. He is also an English and international business lecturer. Similarly, students can read the life story of the author of Harry Potter, J. K. Rowling. He was also an English language teacher in Portugal. And, Philip Pound is the founder of EFL magazine in Japan. For in depth study, students can find hundreds of ELT entrepreneurs in this global context.

Conclusion

English itself is a valuable asset for ELT learners of English. They can also sell their language proficiency in the market for survival. It is a source of prestige and power in the 21st century. It is the strongest global lingua franca for human communication, business, and diplomatic dealings. Every year, English language learners are growing not only in non-native countries but also in native countries like the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia. It is also known as the language of leadership. Because of the English language and its proficiency, leadership can shift from others to English language teachers at any time. And the income ratio of English language experts is also not lower than anyone else in the companies. For this, thinking positively, growing progressively, and investing their passion consistently, the ELT learners should recognize themselves. Until and unless they recognize themselves, they cannot progress in their lives. Instead of seeking mercy from others, EL learners should lead themselves into the global job market and stand confidently. Those EFL students who are confident in the English language can enjoy their lives wherever they go in the world.

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Utilization of Antenatal Care Service in Tamang Community, Nepal

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Abstract

This study investigates the utilization of antenatal care (ANC) services among Tamang women in Helambu Rural Municipality, Sindhupalchok District, Nepal. Using a descriptive and quantitative research design, data were collected from 168 married women aged 15–49 years who had at least one child under five years of age through structured interviews. Main purpose of this study is to identify the antenatal care situation as well as to examine the relationship between educational status and antenatal care services of Tamang women. Findings revealed that 85.1% of respondents received ANC services during pregnancy, while 14.9% did not. The majority (53.8%) obtained services from government hospitals, and 68.5% were assisted by doctors or nurses. However, only 16.1% of women met the World Health Organization's recommended four or more ANC visits. Educational status of both women and their husbands significantly influenced ANC utilization, with higher education levels associated with greater use of antenatal care services. Economic hardship (48%) and lack of awareness (40%) were major barriers to service uptake. The study concludes that enhancing health education, addressing socio-economic barriers, and improving accessibility to maternal care facilities are vital to increase ANC utilization among the Tamang community.

Keywords: *Antenatal care, maternal health, Tamang education, utilization*

Introduction

Reproductive rights were first recognized as human rights in 1968, and the strategy of Health for All through Primary Health Care was launched with the Declaration of the Alma-Ata International Conference on Health (1998), emphasizing primary health care as the key to achieving global health equity (WHO, 2010). Reproductive rights were later strengthened at the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD, 1994), which declared that all individuals have the right to decide freely and responsibly on the number and spacing of their children and to have access to the information, education, and means necessary to achieve that right (UN, 2015).

Complications related to pregnancy and childbirth remain leading causes of mortality among women of reproductive age in developing countries. The lifetime risk of dying from pregnancy-related causes is 1 in 20 in developing regions compared to 1 in 1,000 in developed nations (ICPD, 1994). Factors such as early marriage, low education, poverty, and limited access to health care contribute significantly to maternal morbidity and mortality. Safer motherhood has thus been recognized globally as an essential strategy to reduce maternal deaths (UNFPA, 2017). Antenatal care (ANC) is a key component of maternal and newborn health services, designed to monitor pregnancy, prevent complications, and promote healthy outcomes for mothers and infants (WHO, 2016). Globally, access to ANC has improved, yet significant disparities persist across regions, socioeconomic groups, and marginalized populations (UNICEF, 2023). Ensuring equitable utilization of ANC services is therefore essential to reduce maternal and neonatal morbidity and mortality and support progress toward international health targets, including the Sustainable Development Goals (WHO, 2022).

Nepal is suffering from various reproductive health complications or problems, low level of practice of antenatal care is the major problem of maternal morbidity and mortality. The major responsible cause for such problems is lack of education, poor access of health services, water sanitation facilities, low per capita income and gender discrimination. The level of contraceptive prevalence is 57 percent only and the unmet need is about 21 percent (NDHS, 2022). Poor maternal care during pregnancy and delivery are responsible for high maternal mortality. Data revealed that 94 percent of women received ANC from a skilled provider for the most recent live birth or stillbirth in the 2 years preceding the survey, while 3% did not receive any ANC services (NDHS, 2022).

In its (2025) report improving education outcomes for girls and young women, the world Bank outlines its commitment to improving learning outcomes for girls and young women globally - a context that underlines the Bank's view that female education is a building block for broader empowerment and maternal health service utilization (World Bank, 2025). Studies in South Asia show that higher education among women is associated with delayed marriage, fewer children, and increased utilization of maternal health services (MoHP,2023/2024). In Nepal, adult female literacy remains low compared to neighboring countries, influencing women's reproductive health-seeking behavior (World Bank, 2018). The maternal health care services that a mother receives during her pregnancy and at the time of delivery are important for the wellbeing of the mother and the child. Overall, 94% of women received ANC from a skilled provider for their most recent birth. Doctors were the primary service providers (55%), followed by nurses/auxiliary nurse midwives (39%) (NDHS,2022). A study conducted in indigenous Chepang community showed that the utilization of ANC services was 76.9 percent, indicating that at least one visit was made. However, the utilization for those who attended complete set of four or more visits was 43 percent. More than a half didn't know about the government schemes of ANC services and around 13 percent were never respected on their decision by their husband to seek health care (Bartaula et. al, 2025). Among women who did not receive any ANC, 71% mentioned that they did not feel the need to go for ANC services. Women under age 35 (95%) are slightly more likely to receive ANC from a skilled provider than those age 35-49 (91%). The proportion of women receiving ANC from a skilled provider increased from 86% in 2016 to 94% in 2022 (NDHS,2022).

Empirical research highlights the success of maternal health initiatives like Nepal's Aama and Newborn Programme, which integrates safe motherhood education, incentives for ANC visits,

and institutional deliveries (Karki, 2017). Despite these improvements, cultural norms and economic constraints continue to limit service utilization among indigenous and rural populations.

This study focuses on the Tamang community in Helambu Rural Municipality of Sindhupalchok District, where socio-economic challenges, low literacy rates, and limited access to health services persist. Published ethnographic and community studies of Helambu (Hyolmo/Tamang) communities show that women generally have knowledge and positive perceptions toward antenatal and maternal health services and utilization is lower or fewer than recommended visits because this community is socially indigenous and has low socio-economic status. The main aim of this study is to identify the level of knowledge and utilization of antenatal care practices and to examine the relationship between educational status and antenatal care services of Tamang women in Helambu rural municipality of Sindhupalchok district. This study is limited to child bearing married women aged 15-49 years having at least one child under five years of age. The findings are expected to provide evidence for local and national health policymakers to improve maternal health programs in marginalized communities. Historically in Nepal, maternal and child health was regarded primarily as a medical issue, and as a result, it was addressed almost entirely within the mandate of the Ministry of Health. Most of the women do not have knowledge about what it means and why they should adopt these services. In that community there is insufficient research about the situation of antenatal care services and practices.

Methods

The study was based on descriptive and quantitative research design. The study was carried out method of quantitative in nature. The qualitative technique also used for interpretation. This study was conducted in Helambu rural municipality ward no. 4 of Sindhupalchok district. This ward number consists Majority of Tamang caste. Out of the total number of 419 households of this ward, there are 362 Tamang houses, which have been selected. The study had been conducted with the Tamang women ranging from 15-49 years of age and who have at least one child under 5 years of age. I had chosen this district and Helambu - 4 as purposively by non-probability sampling procedure. There were 672 total number of married women at the age group (15-49) having at least a child of under 5 years of age in that ward. Among the total married women in the study area, only 168 married women were selected by simple random sampling process using lottery method for sample size.

The source of data for this study is based on the primary data and this was obtained by using direct interview among married women of reproductive age having at least one child below five years of age in the above-mentioned community. For the purpose of research, interview schedule was constructed as the major tools of data collection. The interview schedule was administered for pre testing among the married women at Temal of Kavrepalanchowk district having Tamang community. To make schedule simple, reliable, socially acceptable, pretest was maintained among only 17 married women of total sample size. After that the interview schedule was modified and finalized as per required.

Data analysis focused on descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, and cross-tabulations to identify relationships between ANC utilization and socio-demographic variables.

Ethical considerations were maintained throughout the study. Respondents were informed about the purpose of the research, participation was voluntary, and confidentiality of personal information was ensured.

Results and Discussion

Age of Respondent First Pregnancy Aged

Conception before age of 20 is risky to both women and infant. Various studies also prove that first conception after age of 35 is also risky to both mother and her infant. Table 1 shows the distribution of respondents by age at their first conception in the concerned field.

Table 1: *Percentage Distribution of Respondents by Age at First Conception*

Age	Number	Percent
15-19	33	19.6
20-24	84	50.0
25-29	47	28.0
30-34	04	02.4
35 & above	00	00.0
Total	168	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Above table shows that the highest percent of respondents (50 %) reported that they had their first conception at the age group 20-24 years. Others 28 percent respondents reported that they had first conception at the age group 25-29. Similarly, there were 19.6 percent respondents who had first conception's age of 15-19 which is low. Some respondents as 2.4 percent had their first conception at age group 30-34 years respectively.

Utilization of Antenatal Care Services

In this survey, 168 married women in age group 15-49 who had at least one child were eligible respondents and individual questionnaire was asked about the utilization of antenatal care services.

Table 2: *Percentage Distribution of Respondents by Utilization of Antenatal Care Services*

Antenatal Care	Number	Percent
Yes	143	85.1
No	25	14.9
Total	168	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The table 2 presents that 85.1 percent respondents had received antenatal service during their pregnancy period. Similarly, 14.9 percent had not received antenatal care during their pregnancy period at all.

Utilization of Antenatal Care (ANC) by Age of Respondents

The utilization of ANC by age of respondents tabulated in Table 3 shows that the highest 38.1 percent respondents who received anti- natal care are of age group 30-34 years, 23.2 percent who received anti-natal care are of age group 20-24, 22.6 percent who received

anti-natal care are of age group 35 and above, 11.3 percent who received this service are of age group 25-29 years and only 4.8 percent who received anti-natal service are of age group 15-19 years respectively.

Table 3: *Percentage Distribution of Respondents According to Utilization of ANC by Age*

Age group	Utilization of ANC					
	Yes		No		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
15-19	8	100.0	0	0.0	8	4.8
20-24	34	87.2	5	12.8	39	23.2
25-29	17	89.5	2	10.5	19	11.3
30-34	53	82.8	11	17.2	64	38.1
35& above	31	81.6	7	18.4	38	22.6
Total	143	85.1	25	14.9	168	100

Mostly younger respondents were associated with better antenatal checkup. This study shows that 100 percent of respondents for the age group 15-19 had utilization of ANC service. Mostly respondents as 89.5 percent of age group 25-29 and 87.2 percent of age group 20-24 years had utilized the ANC services. Similarly, the highest 18.4 percent respondents who did not received anti natal service are of age group 35 and above years, followed by 17.2 percent of age group 30-34 years, 12.8 percent of age group 20-24 years and 10.5 percent of respondents had not received anti-natal care are of age group 25-29 years respectively.

ANC Service Provider

According to the respondents, 68.5 percent respondents got ANC service from doctor and nurse whereas 31.5 percent got the services from H.A., AHW and MCHW.

Table 4: *Percentage Distribution of Respondents by ANC Service Providers*

Service Provider	Number	Percent
Doctor and Nurse	98	68.5
H.A., AHW and MCHW	45	31.5
Total	143	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Frequencies of ANC Visit

According to world health organization's standard, a mother should visit health center for health checkup at least four times per birth. Frequency of antenatal visit often shows the carefulness of mother towards her reproductive health. Table 6 shows the frequency of ANC visit of respondents in the study area.

Table 5: *Percentage Distribution of Respondents by Frequency of ANC Visit for Last Birth Preceding the Survey*

Frequency of ANC Visit	Number	Percent
One	51	35.7
Two	41	28.7
Three	28	19.5
Four and above	23	16.1
Total	143	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2025

According to the table 5, the utilization of ANC among Tamang community, the highest 35.7 percent respondents had visited ANC 1 time, 28.7 percent had visited 2 times, 19.5 percent had visited 3 times and 16.1 percent had visited 4 times and above during the pregnancy period.

Reasons for Not Taking ANC

The main reasons for not taking ANC services were poor economic condition, lack of knowledge about the services and others which is presented in the following table 6 as follows;

Table 6: *Percentage Distribution of Respondents by Causes of not Taking ANC Service*

Causes	Number	Percent
Poor economic condition	12	48.0
Lack of Knowledge	10	40.0
Not stated	3	12.0
Total	25	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The table 6 presents that 48.0 percent respondents did not receive ANC service because of poor economic condition, 40 percent respondents did not receive any ANC service because of lack of knowledge about ANC service in the case of 12.0 percent respondents, they did not have ANC services not stated of the Tamang Community.

Utilization of Antenatal Care by Education

Education is an important factor which motivates people in several ways. Study has shown the positive relationship between education and utilization of ANC. It has found that, with the increased of level of education, the level of utilization of antenatal services goes up. It can be easily understood from the Table 7 as follows.

Table 7: Percentage Distribution of Respondents on Utilization of ANC by Education

Education	Utilization of ANC					
	Yes		No		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Literate	101	87.1	15	12.9	116	100
Illiterate	42	80.7	10	19.3	52	100
Level of education						
Basic	76	85.4	13	14.6	89	100
Secondary/ SLC	21	91.3	2	8.7	23	100
Intermediate	4	100	0	0	4	100
Total	101	87.1	15	12.9	116	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 7 shows that among the total literates, 87.1 percent respondents had utilized antenatal service and only 12.9 percent literate had not utilized anti-natal services, 80.7 percent illiterate had utilized anti -natal care services and 19.3 percent had not utilized this service.

Above data also shows the utilization of ANC care by level of education. It gave the result that 100 percent respondents with intermediate level of education had used of ANC care facilities. Similarly, 91.3 percent women with secondary and SLC level of education and 85.4 percent women with basic education had utilized the ANC services.

Table 8: Percentage Distribution of Respondents on Utilization of ANC by Husband's Education

Husband's Education	Utilization of ANC					
	Yes		No		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Literate	119	90.2	13	9.8	132	100
Illiterate	29	80.5	7	19.5	36	100
Level of Education						
Basic	82	89.1	10	10.9	92	100
Secondary / SLC	21	91.3	2	8.7	23	100
Intermediate	9	90	1	10.0	10	100
Bachelor and above	7	100	0	0.0	7	100
Total	119	90.2	13	9.8	132	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

According to Table 8, the hundred (100) percent respondents utilized ANC services whose husbands had bachelor or above level of education. The coverage of ANC services was 91.3 percent, 90.0 percent, and 89.1 percent to the respondents whose husbands had education of secondary, intermediate, and basic level respectively. It is concluded that higher the education level of respondents and their husbands higher the utilization of ANC services.

Discussion

The study indicates that while a majority of women (85.1%) accessed antenatal care (ANC) Services during pregnancy, a notable minority (14.9%) did not, reflecting persistent gaps in service uptake. Among those who sought care, most relied on government facilities - 53.8% used government hospitals and 42.7% visited health posts - demonstrating the central role of the public health system in rural maternal care. However, only 16.1% of all respondents completed the WHO-recommended four or more ANC visits, highlighting insufficient continuity of care despite initial service contact.

Education emerged as a significant determinant of ANC utilization. Literate women (87.1%) were more likely to seek ANC services than illiterate women (80.7%), suggesting that education enhances health knowledge, autonomy, and care-seeking behavior. Being a male dominant society, it was found that the husband's education had also some effects on women's utilization of these facilities. The data indicated that wives of educated husbands had utilized better coverage of ANC services than wives of uneducated husbands.

The education of husbands also showed significant influence, with 100% of women whose husbands had bachelor's degrees or higher utilizing ANC services. Economic constraints (48%) and lack of knowledge (40%) were the primary reasons for non-utilization, consistent with previous findings from UNFPA (2017) and MoHP (2023/24). Younger women (15–19 years) exhibited full participation in ANC visits, while older women (35 years and above) demonstrated lower engagement, suggesting a generational improvement in awareness.

These findings are consistent with national trends from NDHS (2022), which show higher ANC Utilization among women with greater education, better economic status, and improved geographic access. Nevertheless, within the Tamang community, deep-rooted social norms, limited resources, and cultural barriers continue to restrict optimal ANC use. To address these gaps, public health initiatives must prioritize community based, culturally sensitive strategies that incorporate local belief, engage men and elders, and strengthen awareness and affordability of maternal health services.

Conclusion

This study concludes that while a majority of Tamang women in Helambu Rural Municipality utilize ANC services, the frequency and adequacy of utilization remain insufficient. Educational attainment of both women and their husbands significantly affect ANC utilization, confirming education as a fundamental driver of health behavior and maternal well-being. Economic hardship and lack of awareness remain critical barriers. To address these issues, policymakers should focus on women's education, male engagement in maternal health, and expanding accessible health services in rural and indigenous areas. It would help the researcher, policy makers and programme planner, NGOs, and government in developing appropriate policy and programme.

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Differentials in Ever Use of Contraceptive Methods among the Danuwar Community of Lalitpur, Nepal

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Abstract

Nepal is yet to experience much disparity between the indigenous people of Nepal, which is even although national development is shifting to family planning. The primary research is to identify the demographic and socio-economic factors with respect to the ever-use of the contraception method. This research demonstrates the differences in the use of contraceptive methods in the ever-use amongst Danuwar women of Godawari Municipality-8 (Dukuchap), Lalitpur. A cross-sectional survey of 289 women carried out in 2025 was conducted to assess the relationship between the use of contraception in the past and the variables, including age, education, employment, knowledge, son preference, income, migration, and intentions to have children. 78.3 percent of the women had ever used contraception. The use of contraceptives rose with age (58.8% 15-24 years, 76.3% in 25-34 years, and 85.3% in 35-49 years; $\chi^2=5.92$; $p=0.052$). Knowledge of modern methods had a very high association with the use (83.8% vs. 15.4; $\chi^2=32.86$; $p=0.001$). Son preference ($\chi^2=9.06$, $p=0.003$), perceived government policy support ($\chi^2=7.60$, $p=0.006$), and fertility intentions ($\chi^2=6.89$, $p=0.009$) were significantly predicted. The impact of income was nearly strong. The study is important to the current body of knowledge in that the author offers community-level evidence that, despite an effect of socio-economic status on contraceptive use, awareness, gender norms, fertility intentions, and policy support are dominant influences in influencing contraceptive use among an understudied indigenous population in Nepal. The use of contraception mostly depends on awareness, age, gender norms, fertility intentions, and even support through policies. Culturally sensitive gender-responsive interventions are needed to aid in the realization of FP 2030 and SDG 3.7 goals in marginalized communities.

Keywords: *Contraceptive use, Danuwar, son preference, policy support, fertility intentions*

Introduction

Contraceptive usage is a critical component of reproductive health that enables women and couples to make prudent decisions on the timing and interval of childbirth and to identify the degree of fertility, maternal health, and socio-economic growth (Cleland et al., 2019; United Nations, 2023). The family planning process is not a recent one in Nepal, and the process of

formalizing the family planning services in the nation started with the establishment of the Family Planning Association of Nepal in 1959 (Ministry of Health and Population [MoHP], 2023).

Even though a lot has been done to make the services associated with the ways of using contraceptives more accessible, the significant disparities in accessibility between the caste, ethnic, geographic, and socio-economic groups still persist. Cultural beliefs are also one of the main factors influencing the inequalities, as well as patriarchal structures and unequal access to reproductive health services (Shrestha and Ghimire, 2021; Pandey et al., 2022). According to the estimates provided in the Nepal Demographic and Health Survey 2022 (NDHS), forty-three percent of married women are currently using a modern birth control method, which could be sterilization, intrauterine devices (IUDs), implants, injectables, oral pills, condoms, and emergency contraception. Nevertheless, 24 percent of the women still do not have a satisfied family planning need (MoHP, New ERA, and ICF, 2022).

These national statistics hide a lot of sub-national differences, as among the indigenous people, there is an increased level of low access to information and services. The peri-urban and rural regions, where the lack of awareness and economic status are not the only factors influencing the reproductive behaviour, but also ingrained cultural beliefs, the preference for sons, and the impossibility to make independent decisions among women (Gurung, 2020; Subedi and Upreti, 2021). The family-wide discourse about the birth control decisions of several native communities is generally prevalent, with the husbands and other family members becoming the primary decision-makers regarding the topic of birth control (Tamang et al., 2022). Young and newly married women are also excluded from family planning services due to the taboos on the social discussion of contraception (Karki & Maharjan, 2019). These barriers, in particular, indicate the need to have culturally sensitive interventions that would make the national family planning commitments, such as the National Family Planning Costed Implementation Plan and FP2030 targets, applicable to the community realities (Government of Nepal, 2024; FP2030, 2023).

It is concluded that this existing literature, age, education, parity, employment, income, and ideational determinants would include gender norms, fertility preference, and migration exposure in determining the determinants of contraceptive use (Pokharel et al., 2021; KC et al., 2024; Dawadi et al., 2024). Young women and those who do not have a long-lasting marriage prefer waiting to use contraceptives later due to the social pressure to have a young child (Khan et al., 2020). One of the main barriers that do not go away in the patriarchal society is the son preference, where couples fail to exercise birth control until they have the desired number of sons (Acharya et al., 2019). More so, migration and urban exposure can re-determine the attitude of reproduction by introducing new norms and expanding the availability of health information (Chhetri, 2023). This study incarceration both adoption and discontinuation during the life course, as opposed to current use, and thus offers a more in-depth picture of contraceptive behaviour in Danuwar women. The demographic, socio-economic, and ideational determinants of ever use of contraception in indigenous women in Lalitpur are of particular concern to the study to fill the evidence gap on the indigenous population and to inform culturally sensitive reproductive health interventions that would meet the SDG 3.7 and FP2030 commitments in Nepal.

Methods

The study design was a descriptive quantitative design that is applicable in cases where the objectives are to measure the characteristics of the population and determine statistical associations between the variables. A community-based field survey of the Danuwar community in Godawari Municipality-8, Lalitpur, which is an indigenous group

underrepresented in studies on reproductive health, was conducted in 2025 and also exhibits certain socio-cultural activities of its own. Sampling procedure and respondents: A census that was utilised in the area of study was employed to choose 289 women aged 15-49 years. The women who were to be part of the study were aged 15-49 years; they should have at least six months of staying in the area of study and should have given their informed consent to participate. The women were not counted in case they had a severe illness that prevented them from participating, or when they were mere visitors or temporary residents who could not qualify according to the residence requirement. Variable measurement: The first outcome variable, which is ever use contraceptive methods is indicates whether a respondent has ever used any form of modern or traditional method at any instance of life. The answers were given code 1=ever used and 0=never used. Data collection instruments and methods: A questionnaire schedule was used in order to gather data through the assistance of an interview. Demographic, socio-economic, and ideational variables such as age, education, employment, religion, household income, son preference, experience of migration, and knowledge regarding family planning methods were also questions in the instrument. Other ethical principles that were accomplished included informed consent, voluntary participation, privacy and confidentiality. Data analysis: The descriptive statistics were used to summarise the characteristics of respondents. Bivariate analysis was conducted through the Pearson chi-square test to check the relationship between explanatory variables and the ever use of contraception. The level of statistical significance was determined at the level of 95 per cent confidence ($p < 0.05$). The result of such an analysis allowed the study to quantify the strength and orientation of relations between demographic and socio-economic that was a sound empirical background to understand the actions of fertility and family planning.

Results and Discussion

This study established Pearson chi-square tests on bivariate relationships between ever using contraception and selected demographic, socio-economic and ideational variables. The disparities in usage were determined by factors of age, employment, knowledge, IEC exposure, education, son preference, religion, policy support, disaster exposure, migration, income, and fertility intentions.

Age group: The percentage of women using contraceptives rose gradually with age, with 58.8 per cent among the women aged 15-24 to 76.3 percent among women aged 25-34 and 85.3 percent among women aged 35-49. This trend indicates that the longer the marriage duration and reproductive experience older women have, the more likely they are to have used contraception, which indicates a significant association between age and ever use.

Table 1
Age-wise distribution of ever used any contraceptive methods

Age Group	No		Yes		Total	
	%	n	%	n	%	n
15-24	41.2	13	58.8	18	10.6	31
25-34	23.7	32	76.3	104	47.2	136
35-49	14.7	18	85.3	104	42.2	122
Total	21.7	63	78.3	226	100.0	289

Pearson Chi2=5.9213, df=2, p=0.052

Employed: There was no significant difference between the use of contraceptives by employed and non-employed women (76.9 vs. 78.4%), and no significant relationship was found between contraception and employment. This shows that there is no employment status that affects contraceptive behaviour (Table 2).

Table 2
Distribution of employed ever used any contraceptive methods

Employed	No		Yes		Total	
	%	n	%	N	%	n
No	21.6	57	78.4	208	91.9	266
Yes	23.1	5	76.9	18	8.1	23
Total	21.7	63	78.3	226	100.0	289

Pearson Chi1=0. 0.0149, df=1, p= 0.903

Aware of modern contraceptives: There was a very strong statistically significant relationship between knowledge of modern contraceptive methods and use: 83.8 per cent of the knowledgeable women had ever used contraception, whereas only 15.4 per cent of the unaware women did. The very important chi-square value proves awareness to be one of the most powerful factors of contraceptive behaviour (Table 3).

Table 3
Distribution of awareness of modern contraceptive methods ever used

Aware of modern contraceptives	No		Yes		Total	
	%	n	%	n	%	n
No	84.6	20	15.4	4	8.1	23
Yes	16.2	43	83.8	223	91.9	266
Total	21.7	63	78.3	226	100.0	289

Pearson Chi1=32.8620, df=1, p= 0.000

Participated in workshops: It indicates that there was an increase in contraceptive use, which was not statistically significant, between Women exposed to workshops (82.6% vs. 72.5%). This implies that there is no significant or consistent effect of being involved in awareness programs in terms of using contraceptives (Table 4).

Table 4

Distribution of participants in workshops ever used any contraceptive methods.

Participated in workshops	No		Yes		Total	
	%	N	%	n	%	n
No	27.5	34	72.5	90		
Yes	17.4	29	82.6	136		
Total	21.7	63	78.3	226	100.0	289

Pearson Chi1=2.3852, df=1, p= 0.122

Education: Table 5 indicates that education did not display any significant difference in the use of contraceptives among educated women and illiterate women: 78.3 per cent and 75.0 per cent, respectively. The chi-square value ($p = 0.873$) is non-significant, which means that education is not significantly affecting the use of contraceptives in this society.

Table 5

The distribution of education has never used any contraceptive methods

Education	No		Yes		Total	
	%	N	%	N	%	n
No	25.0	2	75.0	5	2.5	7
Yes	21.7	61	78.3	221	97.5	282
Total	21.7	63	78.3	226	100.0	289

Pearson Chi1= 0.0256, df=1, p= 0.

Preference for sons: Table 6 states that women have a statistically significant relationship between son preference and use of contraceptive methods at one time or another. Of the respondents who did not show a preference for sons, 89.7 percent said that they were using contraceptives, compared with 69.9 percent who preferred sons. The chi-square ($\chi^2 = 9.0635$; 2=1; $p=0.003$) value shows that the correlation between birth control and gender preference is very strong.

Table 6

Distribution of preference for sons ever used any contraceptive methods

Preference for sons	No		Yes		Total	
	%	n	%	n	%	n
No	10.3	13	89.7	110	42.2	122
Yes	30.1	50	69.9	117	57.8	167
Total	21.7	63	78.3	226	100.0	289

Pearson Chi1=9.0635, df=1, p= 0.003

Religion influence: Table 7 shows that the Contraceptive use was marginally higher in women with no religious impact (80.6% vs.74.1%), but the variation was not statistically significant ($p=0.341$). This shows that religion has no significant influence on birth control.

Table 7

Distribution of religion influence ever used any contraceptive methods

Religion influence	No		Yes		Total	
	%	N	%	n	%	n
No	19.4	36	80.6	149	64.0	185
Yes	25.9	27	74.1	77	36.0	104
Total	21.7	63	78.3	226	100.0	289

Pearson Chi1=0.9058, df=1, p= 0.341

Government policy: Table 8 reveals that the use of contraceptives was significantly higher among those women who felt that the government policies were supportive (82.8% vs. 60.6%). The important chi-square value (0.006) demonstrates that the government outreach, services, and subsidies have a strong association and, therefore, positively impact the contraceptive uptake.

Table 8

Distribution of government ever used any contraceptive methods

Government policy	No		Yes		Total	
	%	n	%	n	%	n
No	39.4	23	60.6	36	20.5	59
Yes	17.2	39	82.8	190	79.5	230
Total	21.7	63	78.3	226	100.0	289

Pearson Chi1=7.6045, df=1, p= 0.006

Natural disasters: Table 9 indicates that 81.4 per cent of women residing in disaster-free zones practised contraceptive use, in contrast to only 72.9 per cent of women who had been through the misfortune. Although the rate of contraceptive use among women who had gone through disasters was slightly lower, the chi-square test ($\chi^2=1.5841$; df =1; p=0.208) concludes that the relationship is not statistically significant.

Table 9

Distribution of natural disasters ever used any contraceptive methods

Natural disasters	No		Yes		Total	
	%	n	%	n	%	n
No	18.6	34	81.4	149	63.4	183
Yes	27.1	29	72.9	77	36.6	106
Total	21.7	63	78.3	226	100.0	289

Pearson Chi1=1.5841, df=1, p= 0.208

Migration and impact: Table 10 shows that among women who were respondents and believed that migration directly affected family size, 65.1 percent stated using contraceptives, while the percentage among women who thought that migration had no impact at all was 85.8 percent. The chi-square test ($\chi^2=18.1585$; df=1; p=0.000) indicates that the views on migration and contraceptive practices are interrelated.

Table 10
Distribution of migration and its impact on family size

Migration an impact	No		Yes		Total	
	%	n	%	n	%	n
Don't know	80.0	7	20.0	2	3.1	9
No	14.2	29	85.8	174	70.2	203
Yes	34.9	27	65.1	50	26.7	77
Total	21.7	63	78.3	226	100.0	289

Pearson Chi1=18.1585, df=1, p= 0.000

External migration: Table 11 reveals that 80.0 percent of women living in non-migrant households claimed the use of contraceptives, in contrast to 62.5 percent of women whose households had moved outside of the country. Despite the lower percentage of women using contraceptives in families with migration exposure, the chi-square value ($\chi^2 = 2.5939$; df=1; p =0.107) indicates that the connection is not significant from a statistical point of view.

Table 11
Distribution of external migration has ever used any contraceptive methods

External migration	No		Yes		Total	
	%	n	%	n	%	n
No	20.0	52	80.0	208	90.1	260
Yes	37.5	11	62.5	18	9.9	29
Total	21.7	63	78.3	226	100.0	289

Pearson Chi1=2.5939, df=1, p=0.107

Family's monthly income: Table 12 shows a trend of increasing contraceptive use with an increase in income, where 84.6 per cent of women in the households earning above NPR 15,001 were users of contraceptives compared to just 72.3 per cent in the households with less income. The chi-square test ($\chi^2=3.591$; df=1; p=0.058) underlines the existence of a nearly significant relationship, thereby implying economic status as one of the factors affecting the access and use of family planning services.

Table 12
The distribution of family's monthly income has never used any contraceptive.

Family's monthly income	No		Yes		Total	
	%	n	%	n	%	n
<15001	27.7	41	72.3	108	51.6	149
>15001	15.4	22	84.6	118	48.4	140
Total	21.7	63	78.3	226	100.0	289

Pearson Chi1=3.591, df=1, p= 0.058

Income sufficient: Table 13 denotes findings; it is evident that 80.3 percent of respondents who replied that their family income was not sufficient had used contraceptives, as compared to 63.2 percent among those with sufficient income. While contraceptive use appears to be higher in economically constrained families, the chi-square test ($\chi^2 =2.8882$; df=1; p =0.089) shows that the association is not statistically significant.

Table 13

Distribution of income sufficient for ever using any contraceptive method

Income sufficient	No		Yes		Total	
	%	n	%	N	%	n
No	19.7	50	80.3	205	88.2	255
Yes	36.8	13	63.2	22	11.8	34
Total	21.7	63	78.3	226	100.0	289

Pearson Chi1=2.8882, df=1, p=0.089

Plans to have a child: Table 14 shows that out of the women who never planned to have any more children, 82.7 per cent utilised contraceptive protection, while 61.8 per cent of women who intended to have a child still utilised contraceptive protection. The value of chi-square ($\chi^2 = 6.8941$; df = 1; p = 0.009) shows that fertility intention significantly influences the use of contraceptives.

Table 14

The distribution of plans to have a child has ever used any contraceptive methods.

Employed	No		Yes		Total	
	%	n	%	n	%	n
15-24	17.3	39	82.7	188	78.9	228
25-34	38.2	23	61.8	38	21.1	61
Total	21.7	63	78.3	226	100.0	289

Pearson Chi1=6.8941, df=1, p=0.009

This study establishes that the age, knowledge, gender norms, fertility intentions and the perceived policy support exert the strongest effect. These were not influenced much by socio-economic factors like work, religion, and education, and this shows that structural empowerment is not the sole determinant of reproductive decisions. Preference for sons and lack of autonomy continued to be the significant obstacles, and reproductive intentions and migration also influenced the choices. Only a weak positive impact was indicated on the income. The results indicate that successful family planning interventions with vulnerable populations need not only to offer various services but also to address marginalized communities culturally competently, empowering gender roles, and providing powerful and enduring policy advocacy.

Discussion

This study shows that demographic, socio-economic and ideational variables that determine the ever-use of contraceptive methods among women study community. This high positive correlation between age and contraceptive use concurred with a wide body of demographic literature that contraceptive uptake is positively correlated with marital duration, parity and increased exposure to reproductive health services (Khan et al., 2020; MoHP et al., 2022). The young women also report a low uptake, which is always attributed to the early childbearing expectations, less autonomy and lower bargaining power within the households, and has also been observed in South Asian contexts (Upadhyay & Karasek, 2019).

The awareness of contemporary methods of contraception became one of the most powerful predictors of ever use, which is aligned with evidence in the rest of the world, where awareness and the right information have proven to play a major role in improving the adoption of family planning (Cleland et al., 2019; Poudel & Subedi, 2022). Participation in workshops had a positive trend but was not statistically significant- probably due to the limited coverage

or quality of IECs activities among indigenous communities. The IEC is not enough, but should be culturally adapted and supported by the availability of services (Pokharel et al., 2021).

The preference for sons was significantly inversely correlated with contraceptive use, which once again confirms the role of patriarchal norms and gendered fertility standards in Nepal. The study is constantly documented with delayed access to contraceptives until the families reach their preferred goal of sons (Acharya et al., 2019; Dawadi et al., 2024). This cultural determinant is still a significant obstacle on the path to achieving equal reproductive decisions.

It was also revealed that the government policy support was effective in relation to contraceptive use, and this suggests the role of service availability, subsidies and community outreach. The Nepal FP (202-2030) initiatives demonstrate that contraceptives among the disadvantaged groups can be boosted by a significant margin by involving the local health facilities, providing free contraceptives, and mobilising communities (Government of Nepal, 2024; FP2030, 2023). This observation implies that empowering the local health system and confidence in government initiatives are essential in native communities.

The factors of socio-economic education, employment, income, and perceived income adequacy were not important predictors, reflecting findings that structural empowerment is not necessarily associated with reproductive autonomy in culturally inflexible environments (Shrestha 7Ghimire, 2021; Subedi &Upreti, 2021). This low-income effect correlates with the literature that indicates that even poor families resort to contraception under the influence of economic factors and the number of children they want to have (Sedgh et al., 2016).

The perception of migration was also strongly correlated with the use of contraceptives, which indicates that the migration of households changes the preferences for fertility, exposure to new norms, and decision-making processes. This is consistent with the literature that has shown that migration is changing reproductive intentions by altering economic ambitions and exposure to urban living (Chhetri, 2023; Gubhaju, 2019).

The findings in general do support the idea that information, gender norms, fertility intentions and policy environment are more decisive factors than socio-economic status alone. In the case of indigenous and marginalised people, effective family planning programs should go further than providing the service to the community to consider cultural norms, reinforce the role of community outreach and encourage gender-equitable decision-making. Interventions designed to suit the needs of the people, with the inclusion of accurate information, respectful interaction with the community norms and provision of accessible services, are the key to enhancing contraceptive behaviour and progressive achievement of FP2030 and SDG 3.7 targets in Nepal.

Conclusion

This paper has revealed that the factors that have significant effects on the use of contraceptives are age, awareness of modern methods, fertility intentions, gender perceptions and the perceived government support. Women who had ever used a method were significantly older and were more likely to be well acquainted with modern contraceptives, which underpins the importance of exposure during the life course and the strength of information. Preference for sons and their de-meriting gender roles are major challenges, and socio-economic factors such as education, employment and religion did not contribute much. These findings make it clear that it is not structural resources that induce contraceptive behaviour of the marginalised groups, but rather ideational and cultural processes that should be in the limelight. It is therefore necessary to improve the culturally sensitive and gender-responsive approaches to improve reproductive autonomy and meet the FP2030 and SDG 3.7 objectives in Nepal.

Recommendations

The culturally sensitive awareness activities, gender-transformative to curb son preference, and enhanced service delivery by the community are necessary to enhance the use of contraceptives within the indigenous populations. The constant government funding and targeted outreach can also improve equitable access. These approaches taken collectively facilitate informed reproductive decision-making and support the national and international agendas on family planning.

Author contributions

Bijaya Mani Devkota and Pradeep Kumar Bohara contributed to the study's conception, data extraction, data analysis, and drafted the manuscript. The manuscript was critically revised by Bijaya Mani Devkota to ensure its quality and accuracy. Both authors agreed to submit the article in its current form.

Research approval

This research, titled “Differentials in Ever Use of Contraceptive Methods among the Danuwar Community of Lalitpur, Nepal”, was conducted under the Faculty Research Grant (FRG-80/81-H&S-07) for the fiscal year 2080/81. The study was supported by the University Grants Commission (UGC), and the research process was conducted in accordance with its guidelines.

Data availability statement

The data used in this study were duly authorized by the University Grants Commission (UGC). The dataset will be made available upon reasonable request through the UGC after the publication of this report.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest related to this study.

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Teaching Chemical Reactions Through Local Practices: A Contextual Approach for School Education

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Abstract

This study explores the integration of local knowledge into the teaching of chemical reactions in school education. The research aims to explore local knowledge related to chemical reactions and incorporate it into science classroom practices. It was based on the qualitative method with an interpretative phenomenological design. The unstructured interviews with three science teachers of Kathmandu Valley, who have more than 15 years of teaching experience in science teaching, were involved in the interview as participants. The interviews were transcribed, coded, and themes were constructed through the categorization of codes. Thematic analysis is employed to identify key insights and patterns. The findings reveal that integrating local practices enhances science education through culturally relevant teaching methods and fostering deeper student engagement.

Keywords: *Local knowledge, contextualized learning, chemical reactions, science education*

Introduction

Teaching science is related to the students' daily lives that is essential for meaningful learning. Chemical reactions are fundamental concepts in science, yet many students struggle to understand them due to the abstract nature of the subject. Integrating local practices, such as traditional fermentation methods, metal extraction, and food preservation, can provide relatable examples that enhance students' comprehension. The contextualization of science education aligns with the constructivist learning approach, which emphasizes learning through experience and interaction with the environment (Vygotsky, 1978). In various communities, traditional knowledge has played a critical role in explaining natural phenomena, including chemical reactions, in ways that align with students' lived experiences. However, conventional science curricula often overlook these practices, making science seem detached from students' cultural and social realities (Carlone & Johnson, 2015). This study explores how local practices can be used in teaching chemical reactions and develops a framework that merges these practices with scientific explanations. Integrating local knowledge into chemical reactions education can create a more inclusive and meaningful learning experience (El Yazidi & Rijal, 2024).

Science education research presents chemical reactions as abstract concepts disconnected from students' everyday experiences. These concepts also resonate with my fifteen years of teaching experience in science education, from school to higher education. This disconnection creates learning challenges, particularly for students from diverse cultural backgrounds who engage with chemical processes in their daily lives through traditional practices such as food fermentation, herbal medicine preparation, and metal extraction (Timilsena, 2022). Conventional science curricula rarely incorporate these culturally significant practices, leading to a gap between students' lived experiences and scientific explanations (Aikenhead & Michell, 2011). Despite the recognized importance of contextual learning, limited research has been conducted on integrating local knowledge into the teaching of chemical reactions. Existing studies focus primarily on Indigenous knowledge in broader science education but rarely address its application to specific scientific concepts like chemical reactions (Snively & Corsiglia, 2001). Furthermore, teachers often lack pedagogical strategies and institutional support to integrate local knowledge effectively, reinforcing a Western approach to science education (Jegede & Aikenhead, 1999).

This study addresses this gap by investigating what local knowledge can be involved in teaching chemical reactions at the secondary level and how local knowledge can be meaningfully integrated into chemical reactions education at the secondary level. By exploring traditional practices that involve chemical changes, examining students' conceptual development, and analyzing teachers' experiences with a contextualized pedagogical framework, this research aims to develop strategies that bridge the gap between scientific inquiry and cultural knowledge. The findings will provide educators, policymakers, and curriculum developers with insights to enhance science education in culturally diverse contexts.

Objectives

The study has the following objectives:

1. To explore local knowledge in teaching chemical reactions at the secondary level.
2. To incorporate science teachers' local knowledge in teaching chemical reactions into science classroom practices.

Research Questions

Based on the research objectives, the study has the following research questions:

1. What local knowledge can be involved in teaching chemical reactions?
2. How do teachers integrate local knowledge to teach chemical reactions in science classroom practices?
3. How do science teachers face challenges while incorporating local knowledge to teach chemical reactions in science classroom practices?

Literature Review

The review is based on the role of context learning in science education, local knowledge, chemical reactions, and challenges and opportunities in integrating local knowledge. Contextual learning theory suggests students learn more effectively when concepts are taught in familiar and meaningful contexts (Brown, 2009). Research has shown that incorporating local knowledge in science education enhances students' engagement and comprehension (Aikenhead & Michell, 2011). Studies have also highlighted the significance of culturally responsive teaching in improving learning outcomes for diverse student populations (Gay, 2018). Indigenous and local knowledge systems include rich insights into chemical processes, such as fermentation in food processing, metal extraction from ores, and herbal medicine preparation (Semali & Kincheloe, 1999). These practices provide practical illustrations of chemical reactions that can be used in classroom instruction. For example, traditional soap-making techniques involve saponification, a chemical reaction between fats and alkaline substances, which serves as an excellent educational tool for understanding reaction mechanisms. Despite the benefits, challenges exist in integrating local knowledge with scientific curricula. Teachers often lack adequate resources and training to bridge traditional practices with formal scientific explanations (Snively & Corsiglia, 2001). Additionally, some educators perceive local knowledge as less valid than scientific principles, creating resistance to integration (Jegade & Aikenhead, 1999). However, successful integration models have been reported in various contexts, demonstrating that culturally inclusive approaches can enhance student learning (McKinley, 2005).

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative research approach using Interpretative Phenomenology. This design helps explore how participants experience and interpret the integration of local practices in science education. The semi-structured interviews were conducted with three science teachers to understand the integration of local knowledge within science education. This approach allows for an in-depth exploration of their experiences and perspectives, enabling a richer dialogue about the challenges of such integration in the curriculum. This methodology aims to triangulate qualitative data with existing educational frameworks, providing a clearer picture of current practices and potential areas for development in science teaching. Thematic analysis was used to identify key patterns and insights from the qualitative data. Additionally, integrating contextualized local knowledge into chemical reactions was emerged as the pedagogical output.

Findings and Discussion

The findings and discussion are based on themes like local knowledge involved in the chemical reaction, Local Knowledge Practices in Classroom Teaching, and Challenges in Using Local Practices in Teaching Chemical Reactions.

Local knowledge involved in Chemical Reactions

This study explored that how local knowledge is deeply involved in chemical reactions through everyday practices from the interviews of three local science teachers of Kathmandu Valley. They had more than 15 years of experience in science teaching. The participants shared that people can naturally use (soil circle) *Matoko dalla* to understand physical changes like wood burning and chemical changes, such as the rusting of iron (*khiya lagnu*), and cooking rice and vegetables. My study shows how processes like *dahi jamaune* (making curd), *mahi banaune* (making buttermilk), and fermenting food to make *Aila* reveal a rich tradition of understanding fermentation. They also explore using *ash* as a cleaning agent, purifying water with *phitikiri*, preserving food with salt and acids, and producing lime from limestone and local *choona*, which involve essential chemical reactions. In my study, I identified that practices like baking, frying, burning food, and soap-making from ash and animal fat demonstrate a strong local knowledge of chemical changes passed down through generations. Regarding this theme, one of the science teachers, T₁, shared his views as follows:

The unit chemical reaction consists of a physical and chemical change. Many local wisdoms can be used to teach chemical reactions, such as Matoko dalla, paper, metal wire, ice, etc., which can be used for physical change. Similarly, burning wood, burning paper, burning matchsticks, etc., can be used for chemical change.

The views of T₁ explore how lessons on physical and chemical changes can be enriched by incorporating local knowledge. For physical changes, examples like *Matoko dalla*, paper tearing, bending metal wire, and melting ice illustrate the concept without altering substances chemically (Acharya, 2020). For chemical changes, practices such as burning wood paper and lighting matchsticks show how new substances are formed, aligning well with local experiences (Pant, 2018). It highlights that connecting these familiar activities with classroom science helps students relate better to abstract concepts and enhances their understanding of chemical reactions. It emphasizes that valuing indigenous knowledge not only makes science more accessible but also preserves essential cultural practices. Similarly, the participants T₃ extended the supportive views as follows:

The chemical reaction can be connected with rusting of iron (khiya lagnu), cooking rice and vegetables, dahi jamaune, mahi banaune, using phitikiri (Alum) for water purification, using ash as a cleaning agent, preserving food by using salt and acid, etc.

Chemical reactions are deeply connected to many daily activities. For instance, the rusting of iron (*khiya lagnu*) is a chemical process where iron reacts with oxygen and moisture to form iron oxide (Brady & Senese, 2009). Similarly, cooking rice and vegetables causes irreversible chemical changes that alter their texture and flavour. At the same time, fermentation processes like making curd (*dahi jamaune*) and alcohol (*mahi banaune*) involve the transformation of sugars by bacteria or yeast into new substances (Brown et al., 2017). Water purification using alum (*phitikiri*) is another chemical reaction where the alum causes impurities to clump together and settle out of the water. These examples show that chemical changes are essential for food preparation, water purification, and household cleaning. Regarding the local knowledge that can be involved in teaching and learning chemical reactions. The teacher T₂ expresses the following view:

The teaching of chemical reactions can be connected with many local practices such as baking, frying and burning food, lime production from limestone and local

choona, soap making from ash and animal fat, fermentation of food, and making Aila.

The participant highlights that teaching chemical reactions can be made more meaningful by linking them to local practices such as baking, frying, burning food, and producing lime from limestone and local choona. These everyday examples help students see chemistry as part of their daily lives rather than an abstract concept (Taber, 2011). Activities like soap making from ash and animal fat and fermenting food or brewing Aila involve observable chemical transformations, which can deepen students' conceptual understanding (Abrahams & Millar, 2008). The participant's view supports the argument that culturally relevant examples can increase student engagement and comprehension. Integrating local practices into science education fosters contextual learning and promotes the appreciation of indigenous knowledge systems alongside scientific concepts.

In summary, it deeply explores local knowledge involved in teaching chemical reactions (Acharya, 2020). Daily practices such as using a traditional soil ball (Matoko dalla), burning wood, iron rusting, and cooking illustrate fundamental physical and chemical changes. Conventional fermentation methods, for example, making dahi (yoghurt), mahi (fermented milk), and Aila (distilled liquor), demonstrate an indigenous understanding of underlying chemical processes. Likewise, familiar community practices such as soap-making, purifying water with alum, and preserving food with salt or acid are a rich base of local chemistry knowledge. Integrating these culturally familiar examples into chemistry lessons can enhance student engagement and understanding while helping to preserve indigenous knowledge (Pant, 2018). Therefore, local knowledge can be connected to science teaching and learning that ensures meaningful learning engagement.

Local Knowledge Practices in the Classroom Teaching

In my study, participants integrate local knowledge practices to make science concepts more relatable and engaging for students. They use locally available materials like soil spheres (matoko dallo), paper, metal wire, and ice to demonstrate physical changes, emphasizing their reversible nature through interactive activities. To explain chemical changes, they allow students to observe the burning of wood and paper, the rusting of iron (*khiya lagnu*), and traditional practices like dahi jamaune (*curdling*) and mahi banaune (*obtained cream from curd*), connecting these to scientific processes such as combustion, hydrolysis, and fermentation. Contextualizing lessons with familiar activities like making soap from ash and animal fat and producing lime from limestone helps students understand endothermic and exothermic reactions. This approach deepens students' understanding of physical and chemical changes and enhances classroom interaction by connecting scientific theories with everyday experiences. Regarding the local knowledge practices in classroom teaching, participant T₃ shared his views as follows:

I use soil spheres (Matoko dalla), paper, metal wire, ice, etc., to teach physical change as the local materials. By allowing students to demonstrate the breakdown of the soil sphere (matoko dallo) in two or three parts and again fused in a single form., Classroom interaction followed by physical change is a reversible change with the same intrinsic characteristic of each fragment of the soil sphere. Similarly, the role of a metal wire can be demonstrated, and the role of a long wire can be opened. Similarly, I provide the paper to students and allow them to make a sphere, break it into small pieces, and then reverse it into its previous form. Finally,

students concluded that the physical change is a temporary change during which no new substance is formed. Similarly, students demonstrate ice melting and make an inference from the observation. I allow students to demonstrate that burning wood, paper, matchsticks, etc., can be converted into ash as a new substance that cannot be reversed into its previous form. The students concluded that chemical change is a permanent change during which a new substance is formed, which is an irreversible change from observation. They further discuss it as combustion chemical reactions and conclude from the observation and experimentation. I facilitate the students as a facilitator.

The participants' views on integrating local knowledge and materials into classroom teaching help students connect scientific concepts with everyday experiences (Aikenhead & Michell, 2011). Using familiar items such as soil spheres (matoko dallo), metal wires, paper, and ice, students engage in hands-on demonstrations illustrating reversible and irreversible physical changes. Activities like observing combustion, rusting, fermentation, and soap-making contextualize chemical reactions within students' cultural practices, making learning more meaningful (Semali & Kincheloe, 1999). This approach supports a culturally responsive pedagogy where students' prior knowledge and community experiences are valued alongside formal scientific knowledge. Ultimately, connecting local practices to scientific inquiry not only improves conceptual understanding but also promotes active classroom participation and critical thinking. Similarly, another participant, T₁, supports local knowledge practices in teaching chemical reactions and expresses his views as follows:

In classroom teaching, I teach that chemical reactions can be connected with the demonstration rusting of iron (khiya lagnu); iron is exposed to air containing oxygen to form iron oxide as rust coats the surface of the iron tag. Many local activities students have experience with cooking rice and vegetables, dahi jamaune, and mahi banaune, using phitikiri (Alum) for water purification, using ash as a cleaning agent, preserving food using salt and acid, etc. These are discussed as hydrolysis, fermentation, coagulation, and emulsification reactions. It also enhances classroom interaction.

The view of participants highlights the classroom teaching, and he connects chemical reactions to students' everyday experiences by demonstrating local practices such as the rusting of iron (khiya lagnu), where iron reacts with oxygen to form iron oxide (Aikenhead & Michell, 2011). Students also relate their home experiences, like cooking rice, making dahi and mahi, purifying water with phitikiri, and cleaning with ash, to scientific processes such as hydrolysis, fermentation, coagulation, and emulsification. Integrating these local activities into science lessons makes abstract concepts more concrete and meaningful for learners (Semali & Kincheloe, 1999). This culturally grounded approach strengthens students' understanding of chemical reactions and promotes active classroom interaction and critical discussion. Valuing students' lived experiences fosters a more inclusive and engaging science learning environment. Concerning the local knowledge practices, one of the participants, T₂, shared his views below:

I contextualized the teaching of chemical reactions with many local practices such as baking, frying and burning food, lime production from limestone and local choona, soap making from ash and animal fat, fermentation of food, and making Aila. Students experienced the endothermic and exothermic reactions from baking and frying and the reaction of choona with water to form lime. Made soap from the

reaction between animal fat and ash, they contextualize the fermentation reaction from the traditional process of making Aila (local rakshi).

Participants contextualized chemical reactions through familiar local practices such as baking, frying, burning food, lime production from limestone and choona, soap making from ash and animal fat, and fermenting food and Aila (Aikenhead & Michell, 2011). These activities allowed students to experience endothermic and exothermic reactions, such as heat absorption during baking and heat release during frying, making abstract scientific concepts more concrete. Demonstrating the reaction of choona with water to form lime and the traditional method of soap-making helped students visualize chemical transformations in culturally meaningful ways. By linking the fermentation process of Aila production to scientific principles, students could connect traditional knowledge with modern scientific understanding (Semali & Kincheloe, 1999). This approach enhanced student engagement, encouraged critical thinking, and validated local knowledge as a powerful tool for science education.

In summary, participants in the study integrated local knowledge practices, such as using soil spheres, metal wires, ice, and traditional food processes, to teach physical and chemical changes, making science concepts more relatable and meaningful for students. By contextualizing lessons with familiar activities like burning wood, rusting iron, soap making, and fermenting food, students experienced and understood scientific processes such as combustion, hydrolysis, fermentation, and endothermic and exothermic reactions (Aikenhead & Michell, 2011; Semali & Kincheloe, 1999). This culturally responsive approach strengthened students' conceptual understanding and enhanced classroom interaction, critical thinking, and appreciation for local knowledge in science education.

Challenges in Using Local Practices in Teaching Chemical Reaction

Teaching chemical reactions through local practices presents several challenges. In my study, many teachers expressed that they are less willing to incorporate local knowledge due to the pressure of completing a packed syllabus within a limited time. They also share that bridging the gap between students' modern experiences and traditional knowledge is difficult, especially with little support from school administrations, parents, and a system still dominated by Western scientific thought. Without stronger encouragement and structural changes, valuable indigenous knowledge risks being ignored, disappointing students with a deeper connection to their cultural tradition. Regarding the challenges faced by science teachers while integrating local knowledge in teaching chemical reactions, participant T₃ expresses his view as follows:

I have noticed that many teachers, including myself, show less willingness to integrate local practices into classroom teaching. One major reason is that using local knowledge often makes it more time-consuming and challenging to finish the already packed course syllabus. I struggle to balance the expectations of completing the curriculum and taking the extra time needed to explain local traditions. Sometimes, I struggle because many students, especially those from urban areas, do not easily understand or connect with traditional practices.

Integrating local practices into teaching chemical reactions is often difficult because teachers face pressure to complete a tightly packed curriculum, leaving little space for deeper exploration of traditional knowledge (Aikenhead, 2006). Many students, especially from urban backgrounds, struggle to relate to indigenous practices, making it challenging for teachers to bridge the gap between cultural traditions and modern experiences. Additionally, the lack of school

programs, such as guest lectures or mentorships by community elders, further weakens opportunities to connect classroom science with local wisdom (Semali & Kincheloe, 1999). The dominance of Western scientific paradigms in formal education marginalizes local knowledge systems, leaving teachers who attempt integration feeling isolated and unsupported. Without systemic reforms that equally value scientific and indigenous knowledge, students risk losing connection with important cultural traditions and a broader understanding of science rooted in their communities. In the line of challenges faced by teachers, participant T₁ shared the following views.

It becomes a challenge for me to bridge the gap between their modern experiences and the local knowledge I try to share. I also feel that our schools do not encourage sharing traditional practices through programs like guest lectures or mentorship initiatives. There is no strong culture of inviting elders or community experts to guide students, which makes me feel unsupported. I often wish that school administrations would provide more encouragement and resources for integrating local practices into teaching. However, I experience very little support from school leadership and parents when introducing indigenous knowledge. Sometimes, parents only value the formal, textbook-driven education system.

Bridging the gap between students' modern experiences and local knowledge is a significant challenge, as many students are disconnected from traditional practices due to urbanization and global influences (Aikenhead & Michell, 2011). Schools often lack the infrastructure and culture necessary to support the integration of Indigenous knowledge, with few programs or initiatives like guest lectures or mentorships from community elders to encourage such learning. This lack of institutional support makes teachers feel isolated and unsupported when attempting to incorporate local practices into the curriculum (Semali & Kincheloe, 1999). Additionally, the predominance of formal, textbook-driven education in many schools, often backed by parents who prioritize Western educational models, further discourages recognizing indigenous knowledge. Without greater backing from school administrations and families, incorporating local knowledge into teaching remains a marginalized effort, ultimately hindering students' connection to their cultural knowledge. Similarly, concerning the further problem faced by a science teacher while incorporating local knowledge in teaching chemical reactions, participant T₁ input his views as follows:

I feel frustrated because our formal education system is still heavily colonized by Western scientific thought. This dominance leaves little space for local knowledge, such as Eastern philosophy and traditional practices, to be respected or even mentioned. I sometimes feel isolated and misunderstood when I attempt to bring local practices into my classroom. It saddens me to realize that valuable local wisdom is being marginalized in favour of imported ideas. Without systemic changes, our students will continue to miss out on the richness of their heritage. Integrating local practices is about teaching tradition and restoring balance and pride in who we are.

The dominance of Western scientific paradigms in the formal education system continues to marginalize local knowledge systems, such as Eastern philosophy and traditional practices, leaving little room for their inclusion (Aikenhead, 2006). This systemic bias towards Western thought makes it challenging for teachers to incorporate indigenous knowledge, often leading to isolation and frustration when attempting to bring these practices into the classroom (Semali & Kincheloe, 1999). As a result, valuable local wisdom is overlooked in favour of imported ideas,

depriving students of the opportunity to connect with their cultural heritage and local traditions. Without systemic changes that value indigenous knowledge alongside formal science education, students will continue to miss the richness of their cultural identity and the broader scope of knowledge (McKinley, 2012). Integrating local practices into teaching is about preserving tradition, restoring balance, and fostering pride in one's heritage, offering students a more holistic education.

Conclusion

This study highlights the critical importance of integrating local knowledge into teaching chemical reactions, emphasizing that educational approaches should not solely rely on conventional scientific principles but also incorporate the experiences and understandings of local communities. This study focused on the rich connection between local knowledge and chemical reactions in everyday practices, as explored through interviews with science teachers in Kathmandu Valley. It revealed that local practices such as cooking, rusting of iron (khiya lagnu), and fermentation techniques like making curd (dahi jamaune) and buttermilk (mahi banaune) exemplify an Indigenous understanding of chemical processes. These practices offer valuable insights into physical and chemical changes, such as oxidation, fermentation, and combustion, which can be connected to scientific principles in the classroom. Moreover, integrating local knowledge helps contextualize complex scientific concepts, making them more relatable for students, especially in rural and culturally rich settings. The study also highlights that local knowledge practices such as soap-making, water purification, and lime production illustrate chemical reactions and preserve important cultural traditions. These practices allow students to engage in hands-on learning and experience chemical changes in their everyday lives. Educators can bridge the gap between students' cultural traditions and the formal science education system by incorporating such practices into the curriculum. However, the study also reveals essential challenges, including the dominance of Western scientific paradigms, limited institutional support, and the disconnect between urban students and traditional knowledge. Despite these challenges, integrating local practices in chemical reaction teaching offers a promising pathway to a more inclusive and holistic education system that values formal science and indigenous knowledge. Therefore, integrating local knowledge in science education enriches students' understanding of chemical reactions and fosters cultural pride and a deeper connection to their culture.

Implications

The findings from this study have significant implications for science education, especially in contexts where local knowledge can be a powerful tool for enhancing students' understanding of chemical reactions. First, educators should recognize and embrace the potential of local knowledge to make abstract scientific concepts more concrete and relatable for students. Incorporating familiar practices such as cooking, rusting, and fermentation into chemistry lessons helps students connect classroom learning with their experiences. Second, schools and educational institutions should foster an environment that encourages local knowledge sharing through programs like guest lectures, mentorships, and community engagement. It would help bridge the gap between students' modern experiences and cultural heritage, creating a more inclusive learning environment. Third, science curricula should be adapted to include local practices, ensuring students' cultural backgrounds are integrated into their education. Fourth, teacher training programs should provide educators with the tools and resources to incorporate local knowledge into their teaching, emphasizing the importance of cultural relevance in science education. Fifth, policymakers should recognize the value of indigenous knowledge systems and work to create

educational reforms supporting local practices in the formal curriculum. Sixth, families and communities need to be encouraged to support the integration of local knowledge into science education, valuing both modern and traditional forms of learning. Seventh, further research should explore the challenges and opportunities of integrating local knowledge in science classrooms across different regions, ensuring that the perspectives of both urban and rural educators are considered. Eighth, there is a need for greater collaboration between schools, local communities, and cultural experts to develop resources that highlight the chemical processes inherent in everyday practices. Ninth, integrating local knowledge into science education promotes critical thinking by encouraging students to question and understand the world from scientific and cultural perspectives. Finally, encouraging local knowledge to teach chemical reactions enriches the curriculum and empowers students to appreciate the value of their cultural heritage while acquiring scientific knowledge.

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Appendix-I

Unstructured Interview Guideline

1. Can you share any traditional/local practices in your community that involve processes like changes in substances or reactions (fermentation, burning, metalwork, etc.)? *(Explores locally rooted chemical reaction examples.)*
2. Have you ever used or seen traditional examples or practices while teaching or learning about chemical reactions in science classes? *(Examines existing connections or gaps.)*
3. How do students respond when science topics like chemical reactions are linked to local knowledge they already know from everyday life or cultural practices? *(Investigates student engagement and cultural relevance.)*
4. Can you share an example where you think scientific and traditional/local explanations about a process (like cooking, rusting, or fermentation) complement each other? *(Looks at the intersection of cultural and scientific understanding.)*
5. What kinds of knowledge do you think are essential for students to learn about chemical reactions besides what is found in textbooks? *(Invites reflection on broader sources of knowledge.)*
6. How do you think including local practices in science lessons might change how students learn or understand chemistry? *(Explores the impact of contextualization.)*
7. What role do community elders or knowledge holders play in preserving and explaining traditional practices that involve chemical changes?
(Focuses on the role of local knowledge holders.)

8. Have you seen or imagined any local materials or examples that could be used as teaching aids in explaining chemical reactions?

(Encourages ideas for curriculum innovation.)

9. What challenges do you face or imagine when trying to integrate local knowledge into teaching scientific concepts like chemical reactions? *(Identifies barriers and teacher/student perspectives.)*

10. What support or changes would you like to see (from schools, curriculum, training, etc.) to include better local knowledge in teaching chemical reactions?

(Invites practical recommendations from participants.)

Empowering the Educators: Understanding Professional Challenges and Resilience among Nepali Mathematics Teachers

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Abstract

Mathematics teachers in Nepal face complex professional problems in the context of limited resources, the variability in learner readiness, technological gaps and rising expectations in terms of teaching quality. This research seeks to understand major problems that secondary-level mathematics teachers are facing in their field professionally and classroom related and also to investigate the actions and coping mechanisms they use in order to remain effective in their work. Adopting a qualitative descriptive design, the study collected data from five teachers of mathematics at the secondary level in different districts using an open-ended online questionnaire. The responses were thematically analyzed by an approach of inductive coding. The results showed four major themes, namely: (1) pedagogical and classroom problems, which were weak foundational knowledge among students, irregular attendance, large class sizes, and low integration of ICT; (2) institutional and policy-related constraints, which included lack of school management support, lack of adequate teaching materials, and curriculum pressure; (3) emotional and motivational struggles, which manifested in loss of confidence, high stress levels, and undervaluation; and (4) strategies to build resilience, which included constant self-study, peer collaboration, use of local teaching aids, student counselling, and positive teacher-student relationships. The study concludes that strengthening teacher resilience in Nepal requires concerted efforts of policy makers, school leaders and training institutions in ensuring that teachers have access to regular training, ICT facilities, mentoring systems and supportive policies which empower teachers professionally.

Keywords: *Classroom difficulties, professional challenges, teacher resilience, teacher motivation*

Introduction

Mathematics plays a central role in the school curriculum because it helps to underpin logical thinking, problem solving and analytical thinking and it has a significant impact on the academic routes of students and their future participation in science, technology, engineering and mathematical (STEM) subjects. In Nepal, mathematics teaching at a secondary level is of particular importance as it affects the performance of the students at crucial examinations as well

as the opportunities for the study of further. Despite this importance, mathematics teaching and learning in the Nepali secondary schools is still affected by the persistent structural, pedagogical and psycho-social concerns limiting instructional quality, student achievement and the well-being of teachers.

Existing research suggests that working conditions of mathematics teachers in Nepal are often challenging in the classroom and the institution. Commonly reported issues are lack of teaching and learning resources, lack of preparedness on the part of students, erratic attendance as well as lack of access to digital tools and access to adequate internet connectivity, limiting meaningful classroom instruction (Khanal et al., 2022). These difficulties were further compounded during the period of the Covid-19 pandemic where many teachers did not have access to adequate training and support to deliver mathematics through online or technology mediated methods (Khanal et al., 2022). In addition to constraints in resources, math teachers often deal with a wide range of learner readiness levels developing in the same classroom, needing to repeatedly remediating foundational concepts and often struggling to balance covering the curriculum with teaching conceptual understanding.

Alongside pedagogical barriers, teachers' roles have become enlarged to include emotional and humanistic. Mathematics teachers are increasingly experiencing the pressure of motivating learners, handling the anxiety related to mathematics, emotional support, etc., which brings additional relational and affective demands on teaching (Khadka et al., 2025). These expectations along with heavy workloads and pressures in relation to exams are contributing to occupational stress and reduced psychological well-being. Research done in Nepal shows that many of the secondary teachers are stressed due to the intensity of workload, lack of recognition, poor remuneration and lack of institutional support (Dhungana et al., 2025). Teacher well-being is also influenced by school leadership practices, organizational climate and socio-cultural expectations with unsupportive environments often contributing to emotional exhaustion. (Devkota, 2025). Similar patterns are reflected in international research where the occupational stress of mathematics teachers is associated with working conditions, performance expectations and a lack of support systems (Antony & Girija, 2025).

At the same time, literature means to highlight the strength and coping ability of teachers. Resilience (sometimes used synonymously with emotional regulation, adaptive coping, professional commitment and collegial support) is important for supporting teachers to maintain motivation and instructional success in the face of constraints (Ramakrishna & Singh, 2022). Studies further suggest, peer collaboration, reflective practice and emotional coping strategies can be used to buffer professional anxiety and stress in mathematics teaching (Simkhada et al., 2025). Other factors such as school climate, collaboration, availability of resources and recognition are also associated to motivation and job satisfaction of teachers and unsupportive environments could undermine the morale and the professional confidence of the teachers (Mainali & Belbase, 2023). Self-efficacy of teachers is also crucial as confident teachers are most likely to try new ways of teaching and also having curriculum overload and limited resources to implement the teaching can also limit such innovation in real life. Even in instances where teachers appreciate student-centered approaches such as project-based learning, because of a lack of materials, training and administrative support, they may revert to teacher-centered approaches (Bohara, 2024).

Although these research works provide useful information on teacher stress, instructional challenges and resilience, there is an important gap in this respect: research works on secondary-level mathematics teachers in Nepal are scarce using qualitative, teacher generated narratives,

which reflect the lived experiences in a variety of geographical settings. Much of the existing research is either survey-based or generalized across degrees, so there is little room to understand how mathematics teachers interpret their challenges and how these impact upon their professional identity and emotional well-being and what types of day-to-day strategies they use to remain resilient to them.

Therefore, this study is designed to examine the issues of professional and classroom related challenges, faced by the teachers in mathematics, at secondary educational level, in the context of Nepal and to investigate the coping procedures and resilience mechanisms they adopt in order to maintain their motivation and efficiency. By foregrounding the voices of the teachers from different districts and teaching contexts, the purpose of this study is to give context-specific evidence that can feed into policy, school leadership practices, teacher education and professional development efforts to strengthen mathematics teaching and teacher resilience in Nepal.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are as follows:

- To explore the major professional and classroom-related challenges faced by secondary-level mathematics teachers in Nepal.
- To examine the coping mechanisms and resilience strategies used by mathematics teachers to sustain their motivation and effectiveness amid these challenges.

Methodology

This research employed a qualitative descriptive research design in order to identify the challenges and resilience strategies of the professional challenges of secondary-level mathematics teachers working in different provinces and districts of Nepal. A qualitative approach was considered appropriate as the aim of this study was to understand the lived experiences of the teachers, personal reflections and the meanings they give to their professional realities. Rather than measuring variables or testing predefined hypotheses, the focus on the above allowed for rich and contextualized narratives to be developed that capture the way teachers interpret, respond to and cope with the complexities of their work. Teachers' voices were used as the main source of data, to carry out a detailed study of both the professional challenges faced by teachers and their resilience practices in diverse teaching contexts.

The participants were five secondary-level mathematics teachers who were employed in public schools of different provinces and districts and were representing hilly, rural and semi-urban settings. All of the participants were male, aged between 34 and 52 years, and had experience in teaching between 2 and 27 years. The teachers were drawn from different districts such as Sindhupalchok, Sunsari, Dolakha, Gorkha and Saptari, thus representing different geographical and institutional contexts. In order to ensure confidentiality, all participants were given pseudonyms. Teacher 1 (Sajan Khatri), aged 34, was from Sindhupalchok District, Bagmati Province and had nine years of teaching experience in which he had around 50 students in his class. Teacher 2 (Deepak Adhikari), aged 42, was from Sunsari District, Koshi Province with two years of teaching experience in secondary levels with a class size of 70 or so. Teacher 3 (Kamal Bhandari), who was 43 years old and had an experience of twenty-one years, was a teacher from Kalinchowk Rural Municipality, Dolakha District, Bagmati Province who had a class of 37 students. Teacher 4 (Rabin Gurung) aged 38 years from Gorkha Municipality, Gorkha District, Gandaki Province had seventeen years of experience and taught about 26 students. Teacher 5

(Mohan Chaudhary), aged 52, from Saptari District, Madhesh Province, was a twenty seven years experienced teacher, who was teaching around 60 students. Four teachers had a Master's degree in the field of Education (M.Ed.) and 1 had a Bachelor's degree (Studying M. Ed) in the field of Education (B.Ed.). Also, one teacher is studying M. Phil (Blended mode) in mathematics education at Tribhuvan University of Nepal. With the exception of one participant, all had attended previous professional training or workshops that were related to mathematics instruction. Purposive sampling was used to invite participants who could give detailed and reflective accounts about their professional experiences. Variation in teaching experience, the size of class, the context of school and geographical location led to a thorough understanding of the reality of mathematics teaching at the secondary level, in different regions.

Data was collected using an online open-ended questionnaire created using the Google Forms. The link to the questionnaire was shared with the participants so that they could respond in a private setting and at their own convenience. This method was especially appropriate because of geographical dispersion of the participants, and the requirement of collecting reflective, narrative responses. The questionnaire had two sections. The first section involved collection of demographic and professional background information including age, academic qualifications, teaching experience, class size, district or municipality and participation in professional training. The second section was open-ended questions that were aimed at eliciting detailed narratives about classroom challenges, student learning issues, instructional practices, institutional support, emotional and motivational experiences, stress management strategies, resilience practices, professional development needs and suggestions to build teacher resilience. All the responses were collated and organized teacher-wise for easy systematic analysis.

Data analysis process in this research was inductive thematic analysis. The analysis started with repeated close readings of the responses in order to gain a familiarity with the data and start to identify emerging patterns. Meaningful chunks of text pertinent to the research purposes were coded with descriptive labels such as weak foundational knowledge, irregular attendance, limitations of ICT, emotional strain, lack of recognition along with self-directed coping. These codes were then grouped into larger categories that included student related challenges, resource and institutional constraints, emotional and motivational pressures, and resilience strategies. Through additional synthesis, these categories were grouped into larger themes which reflected both the professional challenges teachers faced and the strategies which they used to sustain their motivation and effectiveness. Interpretation involved cross-case comparison and relating the findings to relevant literature while maintaining the authenticity of the voices of the teachers by selected representative quotations.

Ethical considerations were followed in all stages of the research process. Participation was voluntary and informed consent was assumed by completing and returning the questionnaire. Participants were informed about the academic nature of the study and confidentiality was assured at all times. Real names were only used for internal organization of responses, and pseudonyms were used in reporting. Identifiable information, e.g. school names, was removed to ensure participant's privacy. The findings were presented in a respectful way, taking into consideration the dignity and the professional identity of all participants.

Result and Discussion

This section contains the major findings of the study, which are grouped under the two objectives of the research. The analysis is directly based on the narratives of five teachers of

mathematics at the secondary level from different districts of Nepal. Their narratives indicate the extent of the difficulties they face and the personal and professional capabilities they are able to muster to stay resilient. The themes summarized below reflect common patterns while also recognizing the unique perspectives of each of the teachers.

Theme 1: Professional Challenges Faced by Mathematics Teachers

The professional issues that the participants reported were multi-dimensional and interrelated and influenced by structural constraints. These challenges can be classified into student related factors, resource and institutional limitations and pressures of curriculum and workload.

Student-Related Challenges

All five teachers identified students' weak foundational knowledge as the most persistent challenge in secondary-level mathematics classrooms. Many students progressed to higher grades without mastering essential basic concepts, which compelled teachers to repeatedly revisit prior content. One teacher noted that this lack of foundational understanding resulted in a "significant consumption of teaching time due to constant repetition," leaving insufficient time to complete the prescribed syllabus.

Irregular attendance of students was another major problem, especially in rural and semi-urban schools. One teacher explained that students "often remain absent on alternating days" that required him to counsel students and contact parents; tasks that went beyond routine instructional responsibilities. Another teacher stressed that such absenteeism affected completion of the curriculum and interfered with continuity of learning in the classroom.

Teachers also indicated wide differences in the learning levels of students in the same class. Some students caught on to mathematical ideas quickly and others required frequent repetition and one on one attention. This diversity made it difficult to create and implement lessons that were appropriate and accessible to all learners.

Resource and Infrastructure Constraints

A major systemic challenge that was found by almost all participants was a lack of appropriate teaching materials, digital tools, and technological support. Four teachers explicitly reported about difficulties in integrating ICT due to lack of hardware, unreliable or poor internet connection and inadequate ICT training. One teacher explained that technology integration has been an especially tricky area to work in due to inconsistent access to digital devices, the poor availability of internet and student's limited exposure to using digital tools for learning.

Teachers working in districts e.g. Dolakha, Sindhupalchok and Gorkha complained of acute shortage of instructional materials which limited activity-based and interactive teaching. Large class sizes - with some classes of around 37 and others of 70 students - further reduced time to provide individual guidance and added to classroom management challenges.

Curriculum Demands, Examination Pressure, and Institutional Practices

Heavy curriculum demands and examination-oriented expectations were identified as major challenges by teachers. They said sometimes the completion of syllabus and preparation of students for examinations took priority over development of conceptual understanding. One teacher said "we are forced to be on exam preparation even when students are not ready" which shows how the expectations of examinations affect what is done in the classroom.

Teachers also characterized institutional practices as difficult, especially low levels of administrative support and little involvement in decision-making. As one participant explained, "decisions are made without teachers ask about it, because there is a separation between a school direction and the classroom realities." In addition, the lack of instructional materials and limited technological support limited the ability of teachers to implement effective teaching strategies.

Emotional and Motivational Pressures

Teachers reported on strain/emotions primarily in terms of classroom expectations and instructional responsibility, and not in terms of general dissatisfaction with the profession. Several participants did show frustration with sustained effort not resulting in anticipated learning outcomes, especially in mathematics classes where the students did not have the foundation for understanding. One teacher remarked that the "efforts of mathematics teachers are often not fully recognized" when examination results did not follow on from classroom work.

Teachers also talked about challenges of keeping motivation up when dealing with large classes, lack of resources, and performance demands related to teaching mathematics. One participant said that "taking care of stress and daily responsibilities is hard at times during exams" while another participant said that there was pressure to achieve results in spite of limitations such as large class size and ineffective instructional support. These types of experiences did not suggest disengagement from teaching but instead spoke to the emotional requirements of constant motivation under challenging teaching circumstances.

Theme 2: Resilience Practices

Despite these difficulties the teachers were stalwart in their work. They relied on personal qualities, adaptive pedagogy, social support and intrinsic motivation to support their professional commitment.

Personal Strengths and Qualities

Participants relied heavily on inner strength such as patience, emotional balance, adaptability and positive mindset. One teacher put these traits as what is needed to be resilient in the face of repeated difficulties. Another stressed the importance of coordination skills and the skill to present complex mathematical concepts in simple and easy to understand ways.

Empathy and facilitative approach towards teaching were also important characteristics. One teacher explained that he viewed his role as facilitating and encouraging and not just transmitting of content and had a student-centered and emotionally supportive orientation to teaching mathematics.

Pedagogical Strategies and Innovations

Teachers shared their experiences of adopting a variety of pedagogical strategies for addressing the limitations of resources and diverse learner needs. A number of the participants shared examples of how they used locally available materials such as paper shapes and simple measuring tools when digital devices were not available. Others focused on the use of group work, peer teaching, and language support to help students in understanding mathematical word problems.

Participants also reported adapting their instructional approaches, by going back to the basics, using real-life examples, and encouraging students to ask questions. Such flexibility was

believed to be necessary for handling mixed ability classrooms and to encourage conceptual understanding and confidence of students in terms of mathematics.

Emotional Coping and Stress Management

Educational practitioners engaged in different strategies to cope with stress and have emotional balance. Strategies that were frequently mentioned included time management, reflection on the teaching practice, and informal conversations with colleagues. According to one of the teachers, it was easy to take the challenges and proud to be a teacher that would make him overcome the obstacles. The other one was getting at the problems in a student-like manner once more, with an intention of getting into the depths of the issues they represented, which not only made him clearer in his thinking, but also more emotionally stable.

Motivational Sources

Relational and intrinsic sources of motivation were also a primary factor in maintaining the dedication of teachers. Student achievement and progress were often mentioned by the participants as their major driving factors. A teacher emphasized that the performance of the weaker students was improving which motivated him to keep on teaching with enthusiasm.

Teachers also defined teaching as service and duty. There were also some who were inspired by the educational videos, motivational quotes, and relevant material related to the subject matter, which suggests that personal learning and professional motivation are closely associated with each other.

Collaboration, Relationships, and Community Support

Good relationships with the students, others and the administrators played a significant role in resilience. According to teachers, supportive teachers helped with emotional support, exchange of strategies and lessened personal isolation. A good relationship with students accelerated the rapport in the classroom and strengthened their purpose.

Though the administration support was different in different schools, one teacher valued management committees that had frequent dialogue and were supportive. Such support was found to be a significant source of professional satisfaction and resilience when it was present.

Recommendations as Expressions of Empowerment

Recommendations by teachers to policymakers and education leaders were based on their understanding of the systemic challenges, as well as their hopes of bettering the situation. They demanded easier access to ICT resources, more frequent and needs-oriented professional learning, sufficient teaching resources, more effective systems to guarantee attendance among students, and better appreciation of the role of mathematics teachers. These suggestions may be viewed as the manifestation of agency and ambition indicating that teachers are ready to make their contribution to the reform of education in case of sufficient support.

In summary the findings show that mathematics teachers at the secondary level in Nepal are facing significant challenges, namely, problems associated with student preparedness, resource constraints and systemic pressures arising from curriculum and policy. These challenges can often deter teachers from being motivated, wreak havoc on their emotional health, and prevent them from being able to deliver conceptually rich instruction. At the same time, the teachers show great resilience that is based on personal strengths, adaptive teaching practice, collaborative relationships and deep intrinsic motivation that is associated with student success and professional

service. The findings suggest the need for positive policies, sustainable professional development and improved working conditions to value and build on teacher resilience and the quality of mathematics teaching in Nepal.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to know the professional challenges of the Nepalese secondary level mathematics teachers and the resilience strategies they invest in to cope with the challenges. Five of the teachers described their experiences using the stories that reveal a complicated game of structural, pedagogical, emotional and institutional aspects that shaped their work. Together with the already existing literature, the results may be considered to demonstrate how the teachers struggle to preserve their professional identity and performance in teaching despite the never-ending challenges.

The first aim of this study was to determine the classroom and profession problems encountered by teachers. Consistent with previous studies (Khanal et al., 2022; Khadka et al., 2025), the lack of basic knowledge among students was found to be one of the greatest barriers. All participants said that they spent a lot of instructional time re-teaching basic concepts at the cost of advancing through the curriculum. This finding is consistent with research that shows the learning gap at earlier grades makes it more difficult to teach at the secondary level. In addition, irregular attendance of students also further interrupted the continuity of the lessons, which made a delay in completing the syllabus which was also the concern of Dhungana et al. (2025).

The other significant challenge was classroom heterogeneity. Like Mainali and Belbase (2023), teachers detailed large discrepancies in the level of ability of students. This heterogeneity implied modification of lesson plans, reduces the rate of instruction and re-instruction, which added the strain between the expectation and what students were supposed to know and what they actually had to know.

The issues related to resources were also elevated. The teachers frequently complained about the insufficient teaching resources, poor ICT and the inaccessibility to digital tools - all of them were corroborated by Bohara (2024) and Khanal et al. (2022). The restricted ICT training restricted the functionality of utilizing interactive or activity based pedagogy that continued to maintain the use of traditional teaching methods. These results correlate with the rest of the evidence available in the global scientific community regarding the high level of impact of technological preparedness on the quality of instruction.

Institutional and policy constraints also impacted on teacher motivation. Participants expressed low levels of administrative support, inflexible curriculum requirements, and low levels of professional autonomy. Devkota (2025) stresses on the role of leadership & school culture on how teachers feel, which is consistent with the pressures described in this study. Teachers felt an obligation to cover the curriculum without having the necessary resources - an inconsistency also noted by Simkhada et al. (2025).

Emotionally, these issues created a lot of strain. Teachers shared feelings of stress, low confidence and undervaluation, which is consistent with literature on teacher burnout (Ramakrishna & Singh, 2022; Antony & Girija, 2025). One of the teacher quotes is "the contribution of maths teachers is valueless", expressive of the emotional burden of working in settings where there is a lack of recognition but high expectations.

Despite these barriers, results in relation to the second objective indicated a great resilience among the teachers. Participants used intrinsic motivation, professional identity, and adaptive strategies to help maintain their work. Numerous emphasized the pleasure in seeing the students making progress, which is also popular with resilience frameworks (Ramakrishna and Singh, 2022) and the relational focus of Simkhada et al. (2025).

Personal qualities, such as patience, adaptability and reflective practice also were supportive of resilience. These attributes are consistent with other studies conducted around the world that examine links between teacher resilience and emotions and problem-solving skills. Professional learning as self-study and motivational content further reinforced their confidence which was in line with Adhikari's (2020) views about continuous learning.

Collaborative relations with colleagues, administrators and parents, gave emotional support and practical problem-solving, which can be seen as the social dimension of resilience according to Aykan and Dursun (2025). Teachers' active role in managing and parents showed that they wanted to find solutions despite constraints.

Teachers also suggested improvements such as ICT training, more teaching resources, supportive policies and better school environments. These suggestions are their way of saying that they would like to have more professional agency, and are in line with literature on resilience focused on transformational action.

Overall, the findings suggest that resilience doesn't mean that there is no adversity but it is the ability of people to function in a state of constraint. Teachers' commitment, flexibility and collaboratively offer models of important spaces for constructing resilience amongst mathematics teachers in Nepal.

Conclusion

This study helps to identify the complexities of secondary-level mathematics teaching in different school contexts. The results indicate that the mathematics teachers are faced with linked problems: the deficient foundation knowledge of the pupils, irregular attendance, limited availability of instructional and technological resources, the curricular requirements and the constrained institutional support. Together, these factors shape practices in the everyday classroom and place a lot of instructional and emotional demands on teachers.

Despite such difficulties, the study shows that teachers are active in developing resilience by intrinsic motivation, professional commitment, adaptive teaching practices, and collaborative relationships. Patience, flexibility, reflective practice and relationship-building were found to be prominent features of teacher resilience. Motivation was closely associated with the progress of students and a strong sense of professional responsibility while peer support, administrative cooperation, parental involvement and self-directed learning played important roles in sustaining teachers' engagement.

Overall, the findings indicate that for improving mathematics education, there are policies and practices that can be implemented to acknowledge the lived experiences of teachers, which reduces barriers to teaching, and a strengthening of supportive conditions within the school. Enhancing access to resources, relevant professional development and collaboration and response school leadership can play a role in both teacher well-being and greater student learning outcomes. By bringing the voices of teachers to the foreground, this study provides important lessons for

future efforts designed to build teacher resilience in teaching mathematics and improve the effectiveness of mathematics teaching in different educational contexts.

Implications and Recommendations

Implications

The findings have a number of implications for mathematics education and teacher support. Teacher well-being should be identified as a key element of instructional quality with schools implementing emotional and professional support mechanisms for mathematics teachers. Persistent gaps in students' basic mathematical knowledge point to the need for greater numbers of early grade numeracy interventions and systematic remediation. Limited access to ICT facilities and instructional resources in schools indicate the need to improve school infrastructure for interactive and student-centered approach to teaching mathematics. The study also highlights teacher resilience to be supported and enhanced by collaborative school cultures, supportive school leadership and professional relationships. Finally, curriculum implementation, professional development and school improvement efforts have been less aligned with realities in the classroom due to the absence of incorporating teachers lived experiences.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, a couple of small recommendations are offered. Increased focus on building a strong base of mathematical understanding in earlier grades may result in less instructional pressure at the secondary level. The access to basic instructional and technological resources can help more effective mathematics teaching practices. Opportunities for need-based professional learning, peer collaboration, and supportive school leadership may be additional factors for building teacher resiliency and motivation. Finally, curriculum implementation should offer flexibility to respond to mixed-ability classrooms and reinforcement of the main concepts.

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Hidden Politics behind the Gen-Z Movement (2025, September) in Nepal

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Abstract

The September 2025 large-scale youth uprising in Nepal is often referred to as the "Gen-Z protests." The uprising began when the government shut down most social media sites, but it soon expanded beyond its original purpose to reflect broader complaints that had been simmering among younger people. Widespread corruption in political institutions, the public display of privilege enjoyed by wealthy families, now known as "nepo kids," high rates of youth unemployment, and government restrictions on online freedoms that had become linked to generations and upward mobility were among the many issues that caused public outrage. These criticisms, though well-known and powerfully framed, were only the beginning of a more complex political endeavor. Below them was a system of clandestine politics that shaped the direction and outcome of the movement. These included conflicts over control of cyber narratives and information systems; institutional weaknesses that permitted temporary constitutional or legal wrangling; pressures from Nepal's geopolitical context; and calculated actions by political elites to delegitimize, scapegoat, or co-opt opposition. Since caste, class, gender, and geography all had an impact on who joined and whose concerns were given priority, the unequal patterns of participation within the movement itself were equally significant. This article examines these hidden political dynamics and situates them within a larger comparative framework of youth mobilizations in South Asia to ascertain whether the Gen-Z protests will persist as intermittent disruptions or evolve into more lasting and transformative forms of democratic participation.

Keywords: *Digital activism, geopolitical influence, hidden politics, youth mobilization*

Introduction

Youth mobilization has been a recurrent subject in South Asian politics in the 2020s, addressing both shifting sites of contention and systemic grievances. Often referred to as the "Gen-Z movement," the September 2025 riots in Nepal were among the bloodiest youth upheavals in recent history. The immediate cause was the government's decision to ban 26 social

media platforms, which was widely viewed as a blatant assault on online freedom of speech and livelihoods although being supposedly justified as a regulatory measure (Time, 2025).

The prohibition represented greater generational exclusion from political policymaking in addition to limiting young people's communication and creative outlets. Within days, large-scale demonstrations swept through city squares, accompanied by reports of numerous arrests, injuries, and fatalities (The Guardian, 2025).

The protests couldn't be explained by a dispute over internet restriction. Commentators noted that the protests were sparked by deeper structural grievances, such as high rates of youth unemployment, a stagnant economy, general perceptions of corruption, and the visibility of elite privilege by so-called "nepo kids" who displayed their wealth and political connections (Al Jazeera, 2025). The complaints represented a deeper, more widespread disenchantment with basic governance failures rather than just generational dissatisfaction. However, interpreting the protests as a youth-only campaign against internet censorship or corruption runs the risk of underestimating the deeper political processes at play (Phys.org, 2025). These deep politics, which included disinformation operations, institutional weakness, state repression, elite co-optation strategies, and global geopolitical demands, tended to influence the revolution's course and possible conclusion

Problem Statement

Although the Gen-Z uprising's scope and ferocity have garnered international attention, there hasn't been much careful analysis of its underlying dynamics. The majority of contemporary narratives emphasized its salience—social media restriction, large-scale protests, and intergenerational complaints—while omitting the lesser-known political forces that shaped its course. The issue is twofold: first, youth mobilization in Nepal is usually viewed as episodic, appearing during crises but disappearing without having any institutional influence; second, the elite politics and power dynamics that underpin these mobilizations are rarely thoroughly studied. Without exploring these hidden politics, criticisms of the Gen-Z movement run the risk of reducing it to a passing fad rather than a possible area for systemic change. The gap between the apparent concerns and the underlying, covert processes of power that both restrict and facilitate young political mobilization in Nepal is the nexus problem that the article is interested in.

Objectives of the Study

This study has three main research objectives.

- To identify and examine the apparent sparked the Gen-Z demonstrations and inspired large numbers of young people in Nepal.
- To reveal the covert political dynamics that influenced the movement's trajectory beyond its stated goals, such as elite politics, institutional realignments, disinformation, co-optation, and global geopolitical influences.
- 3. To put the Nepali example in a comparative framework and learn from youth movements in South Asia and around the world in order to pinpoint ways to turn sporadic protest into sustained democratic engagement.

Review of Literature

Research on youth rebellions in the Global South has become more pressing in the twenty-first century as a result of demographic shifts, technological advancements, and governance difficulties that have sparked waves of activism. In order to understand the emergence of youth protest movements, scholars have identified three interconnected spaces: technologically enabled repertoires of dispute, structural grievances, and political opportunity structures that are conditioned by institutional vulnerability and elite weakness (Phys.org, 2025).

The oldest explanation for youth upheaval is probably structural issues. Collective action has frequently been sparked by economic uncertainty, ongoing unemployment, and growing inequality throughout South Asia and abroad. Instead of a demographic dividend, researchers have referred to Nepal's situation as a "demographic frustration" because the country's youth bulge has overtaken the growth of jobs (World Bank, 2023). The most similar structural dynamics were those that drove the 2022 protests in Sri Lanka, where high inflation and shortages of essentials inspired young people from all socioeconomic backgrounds (Al Jazeera, 2022). Anger at unemployment and being excluded from decision-making were major motivators for Bangladeshi students' 2024 demonstrations against the authoritarian government (The Diplomat, 2024). Based on a comparative study, mobilization is facilitated by organizational infrastructure and cultural framing, and structural grievances by themselves are insufficient to explain it.

A key component of modern youth revolutions is the internet, which is changing how complaints are expressed, solidarity is formed, and collective identities are created. According to Tufekci (2017), these actions are referred to as "networked protests," wherein digital infrastructures facilitate swift coordination at the expense of organizational depth. The government of Nepal banned 26 social media sites in September 2025, which was not only an instigating episode but also a sign of disregard for generational identity. The prohibition was perceived as both an exclusion of the generation and a form of persecution by Gen-Z, whose political and cultural presence is inextricably linked to online space.

Similar dynamics are revealed by comparative scholarship: in Sri Lanka (2022), *GoHomeGota* mobilized outrage into public action; in Hong Kong (2019), encrypted messaging apps and memes created a common repertoire of protest strategies (Reuters, 2022). Thus, digital media is a contentious area of state authority as well as a mobilizing infrastructure whether teenage demands and online activism can be turned into continuing political clashes depends on political opportunity structures such as elite divisions, the fragility of the party system, and institutional vulnerability. According to McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly (2001), social movements are more likely to succeed when the ruling elites are split up internally or when institutional crises open up new avenues for opponents.

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movements are more likely to succeed when the ruling elites are split up internally or when institutional crises open up new avenues for opponents.

These same issues characterized Nepal's politics in 2025: corruption scandals, dwindling major party legitimacy, and repeated collapses of coalition administrations meant to bring stability. From virtual resistance to massive street protests, they gave young mobilization a fertile basis. Comparative examples are presented to illustrate this point: in Sri Lanka, party-hopping during the crisis cleared the way for protestors to seek regime change; in Bangladesh, the weakness of the opposition party paradoxically allowed young activists to become more visible as an independent force.

However, few reports highlight what can be called the "hidden politics" of young revolutions, even while a large portion of the literature focuses on grievances, online networks, and political possibility. Among these are asymmetrical inclusions and exclusions by caste, class, gender, and area; disinformation; transnational geopolitics; and high-stratum tactics of scapegoating and co-optation. Studies on the Arab Spring (Bayat, 2017) and Hong Kong (Veg, 2020) indicate that these less obvious, more covert dynamics that lie behind surface issues must be taken into account when attempting to explain why protests were successful. According to first accounts of the 2025 protests in Nepal, elites are working to depoliticize young people who are being influenced by outside forces while also creating opportunities for prominent leaders to be incorporated into traditional party apparatuses. The necessity of a multi-layered analytical framework that takes into account both the obvious and obscure facets of mobilization is highlighted by these developments.

Methodology

The qualitative, interpretive methodology used in this study is suitable for exposing the Gen-Z movement's latent as well as visible characteristics. The majority of the analysis is based on secondary sources, including news reports, critical opinion articles, and local studies that provide detailed assessments of the events and their broader political contexts. Thematic examination of discursive framing elements such as slogans, narratives, and online campaigns demonstrates how the concerns were presented and contested. The Nepali example is also positioned among similar youth revolutions in South Asia using comparative analysis to find parallels and differences. The approach is exploratory and prioritizes mapping dynamics over theory testing. By combining information from multiple sources, the study seeks to provide both descriptive accuracy and interpretive depth. Although the lack of fieldwork or primary interviews restricts the ability to see insider perspectives, the technique provides a strong foundation for understanding the basic political processes of the uprisings. The model establishes the foundation for further studies that will develop the analysis using empirical field data.

Framework for Analysis

The Gen-Z movement in Nepal is examined in this article using a three-layered analytical approach:

Complaints: At the surface level, movements focus on certain issues, including stopping corruption, protecting online liberties, or generating jobs. These complaints give many people the moral and political impetus they need to succeed. Deeper resentments regarding institutional corruption, elite privilege, and unemployment were sparked in Nepal by the social media ban. Grievances must be integrated into mobilization infrastructures; they are necessary but insufficient on their own.

Organizing Facilities: The technological and organizational infrastructures that facilitate group activity are referred to as the second order. These infrastructures for Nepal's Gen-Z comprised international solidarity movements, student unions, informal urban youth groups, and online networks (before they were banned). The density of digital connections and the vulnerability of traditional organizational gatekeepers were both reflected in the mobilization rate. However, networked mobilization produces breadth rather than depth, as comparative scholarship indicates—movements can grow rapidly but have difficulty institutionalizing. This was true during the protests in Nepal, where a large number of people participated but the leadership groups were erratic and divisive.

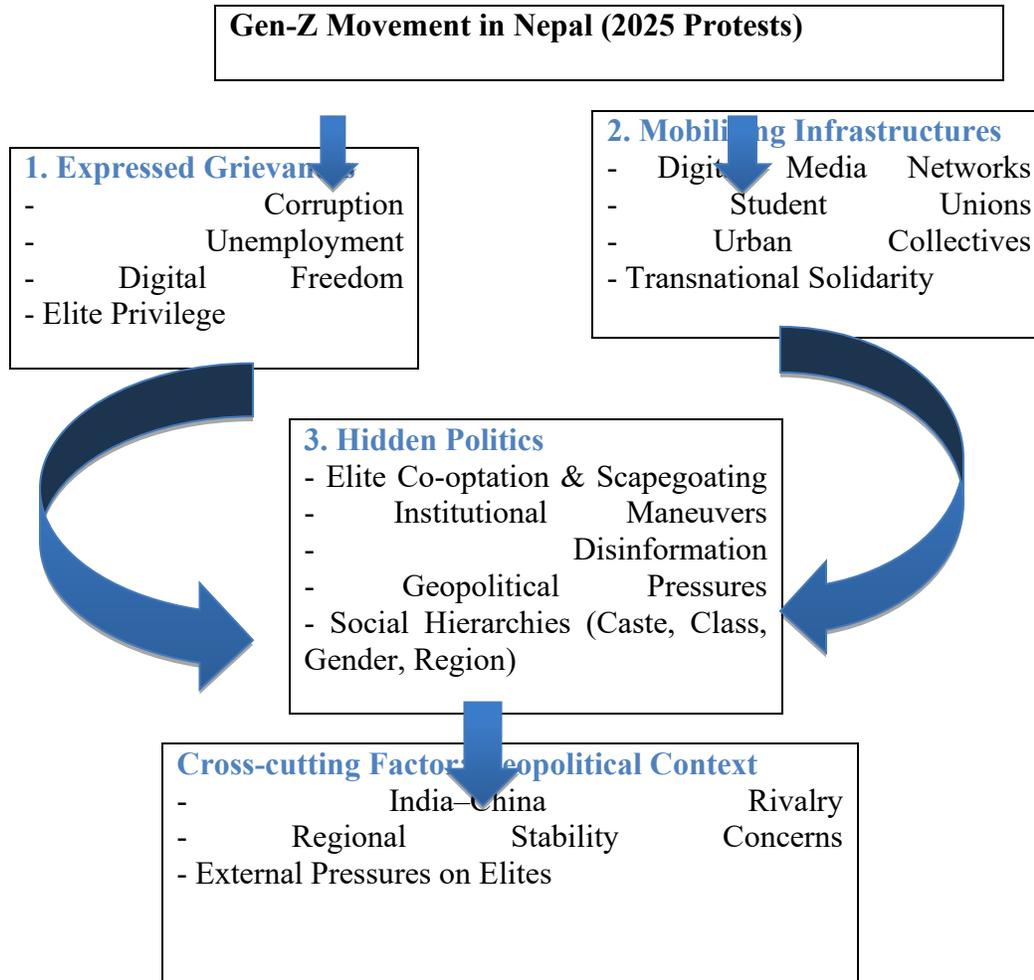
Covert Politics: The field of hidden politics is the third and primary subject of this research. These entail high-level strategies—like enlisting protest leaders, making symbolic compromises, or using scapegoating rhetoric to undermine protests. They also cover institutional strategies such as disbanding parliament, imposing emergency powers, or using legal measures to disband mobilization. Importantly, covert politics also exist in the geopolitical arena: Nepal's location between China and India creates external factors that affect the choices made by the elite and the outcomes of protests. Due to their shared desire for stability, Nepali elites were unable to fully support or repress the young movement due to the unstated preferences of each neighbor. Lastly, internal social hierarchies are a component of hidden politics. Youth activism in Nepal, which is not a monolith, is mediated by caste, class, gender, and regional divisions that influence representation and involvement.

Contribution: By integrating all three levels, this method provides a more comprehensive analysis than either one that only concentrates on evident problems or digital mobilization. Framed grievances explain why people protested, mobilizing infrastructures explain how they organized and spread, and hidden politics explains the movement's pathways, boundaries, and effects. The paradigm in Figure 1 also facilitates comparisons: Nepal demonstrates how elite influence and geopolitics shape outcomes, whereas Bangladesh and Sri Lanka demonstrate how Gen-Z mobilization overthrows regimes.

Research Techniques

Instead of using primary field research, the study predominantly uses secondary sources and takes a qualitative and interpretative approach. Three complimentary approaches are used in the study to address the Gen-Z protests in Nepal. In order to recreate the chronology of events, identify the main complaints, and examine the government's response, think-tank reports and news accounts are first content-analyzed. In order to trace how demonstrators articulated problems around corruption, digital liberty, and generational identity, as well as how these ideas traveled across networks, thematic analysis of online communications, including hash tags, slogans, and viral internet campaigns, is carried out. Third, a comparative regional analysis places the Nepalese experience in the context of other youth revolutions in South Asia, such as those in Bangladesh (2024) and Sri Lanka (2022), highlighting both local contexts—such as Nepal's geopolitical priorities—and common trends, such as first-digit mobilization and anti-corruption discourse. The research investigates the politics concealed in the protests, such as elite co-optation, institutional strategies, and the involvement of outside players, using this synthesis of the available data. This approach can offer a scholarly, interpretive view of the movement, linking observed events to a more comprehensive theoretical and geopolitical perspective, even when no preliminary fieldwork is carried out.

Figure 1
Conceptual Framework of Gen-Z Movement in Nepal



Note: The conceptual framework illustrates the three-layer analysis of the Gen-Z Movement in Nepal (2025). With geopolitics as a cross-cutting issue that affects the underlying layer, it symbolizes expressed frustrations, mobilizing infrastructures, and underlying politics.

Findings and Discussion

Hidden Politics and Visible Drivers

Both overt and covert political forces propelled the Gen-Z demonstrations in Nepal in 2025. Online restriction was one of the more obvious causes, and the government's ban on 26 social media platforms served as an immediate spur for mobilization (Al Jazeera, 2025). Another factor was economic instability, which infuriated young people due to significant youth unemployment and restricted prospects (Phys.org, 2025). As social media discussions about "nepo kids" revealed deeper systemic corruption and unequal access to resources, elite

entitlement sentiment intensified grievances and sparked widespread public indignation (Time, 2025).

As disinformation tactics and online hash tag wars shaped public opinion and attempted to undermine student movement, information politics also played a decisive role (Phys.org, 2025). In order to incorporate mobilization into preexisting power dynamics, mainstream political parties tried to either reframe demands in exchange for concessions or co-opt protest leadership (Time, 2025). Beneath these public grievances, the movement was steered by a vibrant array of clandestine political forces. Since governments imposed social media bans as a regulatory measure and simultaneously portrayed protesters as being led by foreign elements, elite scapegoating and signaling were seen as necessary in order to demand coercive action (The Guardian, 2025). The use of caretaker appointments, constitutional short cuts, and abrupt bureaucratic interventions to control the crisis and avoid implementing practical reform were all examples of institutional maneuvering that exacerbated elite survival efforts (Financial Times, 2025).

The movement's potential was also limited by geopolitical factors, as elites were urged by Nepal's location between China and India to put peace and order ahead of radical change (Phys.org, 2025). In conclusion, social exclusions structured participation and representation: rural and marginalized representatives were mostly absent, while urban, caste-preferred youth commanded center stage and media attention (Al Jazeera, 2025). These overt and covert dynamics collectively show the multifaceted complexity of Gen-Z demonstrations and how the extent and boundaries of youth mobilization are shaped by the intersection of structural grievances with elite maneuvering, institutional frameworks, and geopolitical restrictions.

Comparative lessons, policy responses, and strategic outcomes

The Gen-Z demonstrations in Nepal demonstrated the advantages and disadvantages of youth-focused mobilization, among other strategic results. Co-optation, in which major political parties incorporated the vigor of youth movements into their agendas by taking on conspicuous leadership roles or partially endorsing parts of the demands, was one of the most noticeable outcomes (Time, 2025). Stricter cyber regulations and tougher security crackdowns were implemented in the interim as a form of repression, demonstrating the state's determination to regain control over public and digital areas (The Guardian, 2025). A revolutionary divide between the youth and the political class is still possible, but it is unlikely to occur until structural rural-urban divisions and social exclusions are addressed. This suggests that profound inequality limits the capacity for transformation (Phys.org, 2025).

Numerous policy proposals have been put forth to address these problems. Youth voices can be firmly ingrained in the decision-making process by establishing youth councils with representative participation. Enhancing anti-nepotism through more transparent laws might lessen complaints of elite favoritism, and regulating digital governance to find a balance between regulation and fundamental rights can suffocate seeds of future unrest. Long-term political awareness and involvement can be increased by supporting autonomous youth organizations and offering civic education. Lastly, for accountability and legitimacy within the state apparatus, it is critical to conduct unbiased investigations into violent protest-related incidents (Al Jazeera, 2025).

The contrasting experience of South Asia highlights how contingent young mobilization is. As shown in Bangladesh (2024) and Sri Lanka (2022), digital-first mobilizations have the

potential to overthrow governments rapidly, but they rarely result in long-lasting transformation unless they are supported by institutional frameworks that channel demands into long-term policy change (Phys.org, 2025). This lesson is reinforced by Nepal's experience: although the Gen-Z movement was successful in mobilizing widespread political participation and making their claims heard, its long-term effects hinge on policymakers' capacity to pursue inclusive, accountable, and structural change that addresses the underlying as well as the immediate causes of youth grievances.

Unique Features of Nepal in the Gen-Z Movement

The Gen-Z of 2025, a mix of national structural, cultural, and geopolitical factors influenced the demonstrations in Nepal. Nepal's uprising took place against a backdrop of low party credibility, unbroken coalition cabinets, and protracted political instability after several decades of post-monarchy transition, in contrast to the majority of earlier South Asian youth uprisings. Because conventional institutions had the authority or integrity to put an end to protests, this produced a political climate in which young activism could quickly spiral out of control.

Elite privilege salience and the "nepo kids" frame, which has become a meme framing mechanism, are two further distinctive features of Nepalis. In Nepal, the growing intergenerational prominence of privileged classes in business and politics sparked outrage, linking personal resentment to more widespread institutional unfairness. In other countries, youth protests are more likely to concentrate on issues like economic instability or corruption (Time, 2025).

Third, Nepal is unique due to its geopolitical location. Because Nepal is sandwiched between China and India, its elites are constantly scrutinized by the outside world, and both countries strongly favor stability. The parameters of youth-led change were determined by this particular triadic demand, which also limited state replies and encouraged quick institutional responses (such as caretaker designations) (Phys.org, 2025). Fourth, how the intersection of caste, regional, and urban-rural divisions affected visibility and involvement.

While rural and marginalized youth were underrepresented, urban, educated, and caste-privileged youth from throughout the country dominated protest narratives and media coverage. A recurring feature of Nepali social structures, this unequal representation influences the mobilization process as well as the outcomes of policy (Al Jazeera, 2025). Last but not least, Nepal's revolution demonstrated digital-cultural hybridity: physical protests were extremely localized, organized through unofficial networks, student organizations, and local community associations, even while online mobilization, viral memes, and hashtags were at the forefront. The distinctive adaptation of Nepali youth to limited institutional support and dispersed physical landscape is the combination of digital-first strategies and collaborative action on the ground.

Prolonged political unpredictability, elite prominence, geopolitical tensions, deeply ingrained social stratification, and hybridized digital-offline protest are all Nepali quirks that set the 2025 Gen-Z movement apart from similar regional movements and influence its scope and strategic impact.

Conclusion

The 2025 Gen-Z movement in Nepal demonstrated how long-standing systemic governance shortcomings and elite networks have restricted the political influence and participation of young people. Soft underlying political issues shaped its trajectory in addition to overt manifestations of discontent, such as internet restrictions, economic marginalization, and perceptions of elite privilege. Among these was the selective appropriation of protest leaders, intentional placement, targeted disinformation efforts against specific groups, elite scapegoating, and outside pressures brought on by Nepal's geopolitical location between China and India. Together, these elements restrict the range of reform alternatives and control the level and ferocity of mobilization. Whether it ignites a moment of revolutionary democratic change or fades away as another cyclical episode of protest, its long-term significance will depend on how youth activism, institutional response, and the capacity of internal and external forces to establish inclusive, accountable, and sustainable political change interact.

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Exploring Entrepreneurship in Academic Writing: Language Teachers' Experiences and Emerging Opportunities at Tribhuvan University

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Abstract

This article focuses on exploring entrepreneurship in language teaching and academic writing. The study primarily aims to identify potential areas for entrepreneurship in language education, with reference to academic writing. A descriptive survey design was employed for data collection, using a qualitative approach with an emphasis on observation. The study examines university teachers' involvement and engagement in relation to their professional practices. Most teachers are engaged primarily in traditional teaching-learning activities, while only a few participate in entrepreneurial endeavors. Although teachers hold academic degrees, these qualifications tend to be theoretical rather than practical or entrepreneurial in nature. There is a growing demand for entrepreneurship in language education, such as teaching, content creation, translation, transcription, academic writing, and creative arts. However, due to a lack of supportive entrepreneurial policies, many teachers are compelled to teach merely for survival. Consequently, they often express dissatisfaction with their degrees, as these have not contributed meaningfully to their livelihoods. Nonetheless, the study reveals significant potential for these skills in the global market. The implication of this article is to emphasize the need for market driven courses and academic writing opportunities in both English and Nepali language education.

Keywords: *Academic Writing, Professional Development, Market-Driven Education, Educational Policy*

Introduction

All government plans are theoretically related to employment for the people. The Government of Nepal has recently made public the Sixteenth Plan. In this plan, the government has set a long-term vision to achieve the national goal of a prosperous Nepal and happy Nepalis by 2100 BS (2081, p. 3). Under the long-term goals 1.2 and 1.3, human capital formation and the full utilization of potential are identified as key components for achieving specialized, high, and sustainable production and productivity (p. 12). It has estimated that Nepal's economic growth rate will reach 10.5 percent by 2100. The initial targets are the share of the formal sector in employment and the labor force participation rate. If these are implemented, the development and expansion of entrepreneurship in Nepal will also be significant. All these issues are linked to entrepreneurship. Without entrepreneurship, there is little chance of building human capital and increasing production and productivity. It is considered a broad concept. Its relationship is linked to various aspects of the market. To be an entrepreneur, an individual or entrepreneur invests capital and undertakes an activity motivated by the aim of

earning profit by taking risks. The main purpose of this activity is to earn money and live an entrepreneurial life.

The concept of entrepreneurship is considered a direct influence of neoliberalism with the development of postmodernism; neoliberal beliefs have influenced every sector of the world. Such various concepts also seem to have reframed language learning as a form of entrepreneurial development (Costa et al., 2021, p. 139–140). Among these various developments, entrepreneurial culture has been given special priority, which has developed a culture that encourages the concept of innovation, self-reliance, and competitive ability. Similarly, Foucault (2008) discussed human capital and presented the skills, abilities, and qualities of an individual as capital. Therefore, there has been a push for the management of this type of capital in individuals. The skills and abilities that a person possesses determine their value in the global market. Among them, the production, consumption, and consumer trends of language have begun to be discussed as a new trend in language learning.

Academic writing can play a long-term and stable role in language teaching if it is integrated with entrepreneurial opportunities. Because academic writing contributes to the development of professionalism among university teachers. Academic writing is a product of many considerations; audience, purpose, organization, style, flow, and presentation (Swales and Feak, 2012). Activities that engage readers in linking their writing practices with their personal identities and in exploring their writing attitudes, behaviors, strengths, and areas for improvement. (Richards and Miller, 2005). Aspects such as profit, risk, and continuity are interdependently associated with the concept of entrepreneurship.

Every aspect of society can be viewed in relation to entrepreneurship and activities can be carried out accordingly. Sharma and Phyak (2017) have discussed the liberation of language from its traditional role by linking language and society with entrepreneurship. They also discussed how language can be mobilized for profit, arguing that the ethnolinguistic identity of society can be repurposed as a flexible economic resource. This means that their conclusion seems to be that language can be developed as a source of entrepreneurship.

While formulating a policy for language education, the policy set by the state should be linked. Neoliberalism plays a key role in policy-making regarding language education (Phyak and Sharma, 2020, p. 4). The social, educational, and national status of the language as a government, legal, administrative, and contact language must also be studied. Also, which language do native speakers use as their primary language in their daily lives? There is a serious issue between their primary language, their own private language, and the language of the medium of instruction. All of these issues are directly linked to neoliberalism.

Neoliberalism links everything to the market. It emphasizes the need to promote free markets and free trade to eliminate poverty (Harvey, 2005). Things like the market value of a language, the market value of language teaching, or the service received by its consumers and clients all encompass the economic aspect. Therefore, it seems essential to study the concept of entrepreneurship in language teaching as well.

In the present context, neoliberalism has also begun to have an indirect impact on the use, learning, and enthusiasm for language. This means that the dominant power of everything lies in capital. Due to this capitalist power, all subjects such as language, society, politics, religion, music, art, etc. become ineffective before the influence of capital. And because of this situation, people also seek the potential for capital and direct benefits in education (Phyak and Sharma, 2020). With economic benefits at the center, neoliberalism sees public service delivery, identity, language, and other aspects of society as objects of entrepreneurship.

Recent studies have also found that the dominance of neoliberalism seen globally is interfering in aspects such as world politics, world languages, world trade, world consciousness, and world development. It is widely accepted that this situation is being interfered with, sometimes in the form of language, sometimes in the form of trade and politics, and that neoliberalism in particular is intervening worldwide through language (Block et al., 2012; Park, 2010).

The issue of language teaching is also becoming an issue of ideological debate. Many scholars and researchers have begun to form the view that education should be linked to locality and local skills, arts, and culture should be globalized. So, the neoliberalism is directly influencing all of these (De Costa, 2016).

Language has played crucial role in global world. Fairclough (1996) emphasized that language plays a crucial role in creating, sustaining, and transforming power relations in society. He aimed to raise awareness of how language can contribute to domination, asserting that such awareness is essential for liberation and identity formation (p. 3).

Therefore, this study attempts to show the relationship between language and entrepreneurship. In this context, the term entrepreneurship was first used by Emmanuel (2010). The term is used to refer to a person's ability and willingness to create something new. Entrepreneurship is linked to investment potential, entrepreneurship development based on it, and effective management for social benefit or creation. Similarly, Timmons (2011) presents entrepreneurship as a complex process and states that the decisions made in it are also complex. Public sentiment in favor of businesses in a dynamic and globally uncertain environment also requires a social and technological environment. Resources are considered the fourth element among the means of production, land, labor, capital, and equipment. However, research on entrepreneurship is not lacking. In recent times, there has been a discussion of the different experiences of economic mobility worldwide (Cummings et al., 2014; Kuratko, 2013). As a result, the issues of open opportunity and creation in entrepreneurship began to be debated. Its ideological theme is that entrepreneurship should examine opportunities for different individuals, identify sources of opportunity, and provide opportunities to individuals. With the passage of time, there is a growing discussion that attention should be paid to the development of business skills in a sustainable manner by creating entrepreneurship (Kuratko, 2013).

The discussion of entrepreneurship in education started much later. It is stated that the discourse on entrepreneurship in education began to gain prominence after the European Commission (2011) emphasized that education is the most effective means to integrate entrepreneurship with lifelong learning and practical experience. In recent times, the nuances of an individual's abilities, as well as language learning and entrepreneurial competence, have been identified as determinants of a learner's personal and professional life, based on the figures found in the European Union (European Commission, 2016a, 2018b). The fundamental achievement of entrepreneurial education is to create an environment that fosters knowledge, understanding, and responsibility regarding the concept and practice of entrepreneurship. Its goals include developing individuals' entrepreneurial skills, building their confidence and capability, and increasing their motivation to lead an entrepreneurial life. It aims to cultivate an entrepreneurial vision, inspire students to pursue entrepreneurial careers, adopt business innovation processes, and appreciate entrepreneurial potential. Additionally, it focuses on developing technical approaches to business, encouraging relationships and networking, and promoting self-employment, institutional development, and a strong sense of belonging (Hannon et al., 2006).

Then, entrepreneurial education shapes the individual's life by creating entrepreneurial habits and developing a culture of coordination and collaboration. Youth entrepreneurship has

an impact on the culture of living. Students who are influenced by such an entrepreneurial culture come from diverse backgrounds. They are drawn to entrepreneurship and carry out various entrepreneurial activities in society. Opportunities for economic gain are created on every page of the education they receive. Their minds are also filled with entrepreneurship. The approach of seeking profit in every rupee is developed and students believe in the entrepreneurship of education. Entrepreneurship education is indispensable in the global market as it makes the lives of students easier, makes them self-reliant, and provides opportunities for self-employment. It provides students with opportunities for job creation and self-employment.

There does not seem to be any practical implementation of entrepreneurial curriculum in language education and academic writing. The curriculum is also all theoretical in nature. Teaching activities remain theoretical and teacher-centered. It seems that the employment prospects are decreasing as students have only memorized traditional education. Alternatives have been sought to transform education by combining curriculum, textbooks, materials, and the speaking and writing skills of teachers and students with entrepreneurship. To fill this gap, experiences have been collected and discussed with professors of language education (English and Nepali), and the practice, possibilities, and challenges of entrepreneurship in language education and academic writing have also been projected. University teachers are engaging in academic writing for career development and other professional goals. Most teachers enjoy writing and view it as a way to enhance their professional growth. However, they often lack confidence in achieving self-sustainability and pursuing entrepreneurship in the field of language teaching.

This study is limited to exploring the experiences of teachers engaged in academic writing within language education, particularly in relation to entrepreneurship. Their goals and motivations revolve around living an entrepreneurial life through self-employment as they embark on entrepreneurial ventures. The study also considers feedback from colleagues and curriculum developers in related subjects. The responses provided by the teachers were analyzed under four main themes: experiences and practices, entrepreneurship, and linguistic markets. The article presented here is also relevant for formulating policies aimed at creating market opportunities for teachers by integrating university education with entrepreneurship. Additionally, it contributes to identifying global markets for languages by raising awareness among relevant teachers and stakeholders.

Literature Review

It is necessary to discuss the basic concepts of entrepreneurship and academic writing as they relate to language teaching. In this context, Samuel and Rahman (2010) states that the education was in a large sum of education. Resources and information on the entrepreneurial domain, as well as the quality of entrepreneurial education, involve the evolution, conceptual understanding, and practical implementation of entrepreneurial knowledge.

In the policy and program, Amgai (2081 BS) has explored entrepreneurial students in universities in Nepal. He has also raised the issue of launching a program called Business Startup for 1,000 youth across the country in the policies and programs announced by the government for 2081-2082, and that the program will also make the future of the youth self-employment program and entrepreneurship plan brighter. He also mentioned that through a new scheme called Professional Entrepreneurship, the University Grants Commission is trying to make students entrepreneurs by providing grants in various installments. He has shown that the entrepreneurship of the University Statement Program, which is mentioned in all 30 young people in Nepal, making at least 30 young people engaged in the interpretative project. Also, the University Grants Commission commissioned to grant the student in various installments

and making a student efforts to grant a pleasant instalment among various instalments. Helvetas Nepal (2077) has presented topics such as self-employment, training, curriculum development, etc. It has expected that at least 95 percent of the participants will pass the skill test, making it mandatory to undergo skill testing and certification. Presenting the preparation of the employment placement plan, it has also been mentioned that employment opportunities will be ensured for successful trainees in the training.

The training provider aims to provide the missing skills and training that some curricula cannot cover and to make the trainees successful. Costa et al. (2023) present entrepreneurship as a rapidly evolving trend of neoliberalism. In answering the question, "Why linguistic entrepreneurship?", they present linguistic entrepreneurship as a moral basis for providing value to an individual in the global marketplace on the basis of language. Based on various facts, it has been discussed how entrepreneurship energizes institutional activities in any formal and informal educational context. Also, how linguistic entrepreneurship can contribute to the construction of neoliberalism, along with sociolinguistics, experimental linguistics, and language policy and research, in a different and innovative way. The study, which has made the topic of study "How can the thematic aspects of neoliberalism and the relevance of language learning be linked to linguistic learning?", mentions this. Fiat (2001) has presented the theoretical aspects of entrepreneurship education. It has been discussed that knowledge about its theoretical aspects is also necessary to understand how to prepare students for the future. This is considered the successful aspect of entrepreneurship. This type of education helps students utilize their resources in the field of production. This ensures their livelihood, satisfaction, and prosperity.

Similarly, Barber (n.d.) has mentioned five reasons for teaching entrepreneurship. It has been stated that even though entrepreneurship is available in higher education, we should teach entrepreneurship. He has presented five reasons why we should teach entrepreneurship: to ensure the future, self-employment skills are necessary, students should have opportunities such as creativity and innovation, students should learn problem-solving skills, and their level of intelligence, which can influence entrepreneurship, Students need to learn about socioeconomic status and similar factors, and become students who can change the world.

Therefore, entrepreneurial education is also needed to provide value to students and develop future innovators, creators, producers, and critical thinkers. Similarly, Dalmau (2020) explores how neoliberal language policies promote the idea of linguistic entrepreneurship. This study adopts a qualitative approach using interviews and case studies, incorporating narratives, audio logs, and video/audio-recorded observations gathered from a market-oriented Catalan university. The research investigates how native and non-native accents are perceived within the context of English language marketization. It offers insights into how neoliberal governance shapes language practices by enforcing profiling mechanisms on lecturers, rooted in a view of education as a corporatized process aimed at producing future workers. Nepal (2025) has highlighted the possibilities of entrepreneurship in Nepali language teaching by implementing theoretical knowledge in daily life. He has explored the potential of developing speaking, writing, teaching, and publishing skills through language teaching with entrepreneurial perspectives.

The literature presented above helps in identifying the need for entrepreneurial education, selecting study methods, building a study base, identifying data sources, and analyzing data in relation to language teaching and academic writing among university teachers.

Theoretical Framework

This study draws on three interrelated theoretical perspectives to understand entrepreneurship in linguistic education and academic writing.

Neoliberal Language Policy and Linguistic Entrepreneurship

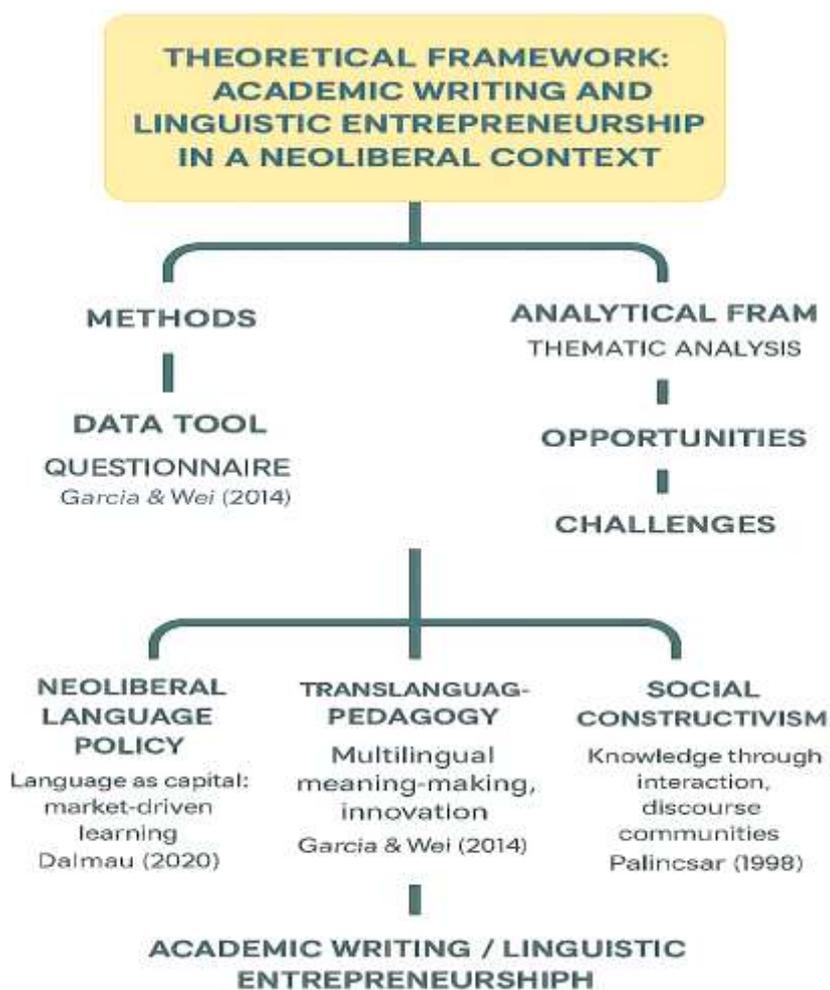
Neoliberal ideologies position language as marketable capital, encouraging individuals to invest in language learning for economic gain. Educators and learners, thus, act as linguistic entrepreneurs responding to market demands (Dalmau, 2020).

Translanguaging Pedagogy

Translanguaging allows multilingual learners to draw from their entire linguistic repertoire, challenging monolingual norms and fostering adaptability—key traits in linguistic entrepreneurship (García & Wei, 2014).

Social Constructivism in Academic Writing

Academic writing is shaped through social interaction and cultural context. From a social constructivist view, writers actively co-construct knowledge within discourse communities, reflecting innovation and critical engagement (Palincsar, 1998).



Methodology

A qualitative research design was employed, and data were collected using semi-structured questionnaire from seven experts selected through purposive expert sampling. Seven participants were chosen from different campuses within the Kathmandu Valley, representing Constituent, Community, and Institutional campuses. Coding was carried out based on the study's objectives, and the analysis was conducted using thematic analysis derived from the percentage of responses. The discussion focused on the theme of entrepreneurship in education, particularly in relation to language teaching and academic writing. Grammar and language accuracy were further refined with the support of ChatGPT-4.0 and Copilot.

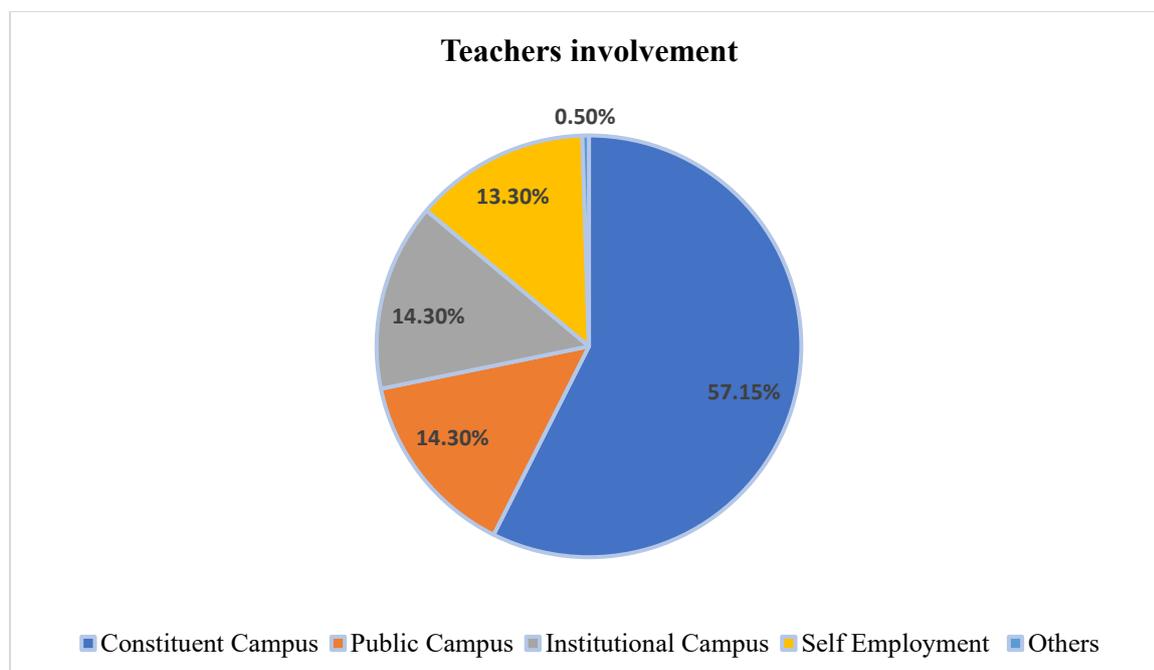
Entrepreneurship is closely connected to the market value of education, emphasizing not only the knowledge itself but also the commodification of effort and skills. This study primarily focuses on how entrepreneurship impacts language teaching and academic writing. A key aspect explored is how Tribhuvan University has developed platforms that promote entrepreneurship within language education, aiming to empower rightful stakeholders and ensure their satisfaction. Understanding these dynamics is central to this research, shedding light on the intersection between educational innovation and market-driven approaches in the academic field.

Results and Discussion

This study explores key aspects of entrepreneurship in the fields of language teaching and academic writing. Participants shared their experiences and practices, and their responses were systematically categorized according to relevant themes and the study's objectives.

Teachers' involvement

This study focuses on the involvement of teachers. If they are directly engaged in campuses, entrepreneurship, and other areas, it becomes easier to identify their sentiments regarding these activities. The responses of the participants are presented below according to thematic categories:



The data in the above chart presents the involvement status of the participant teachers. According to the responses, 57.15% of teachers are involved in constituent campuses of

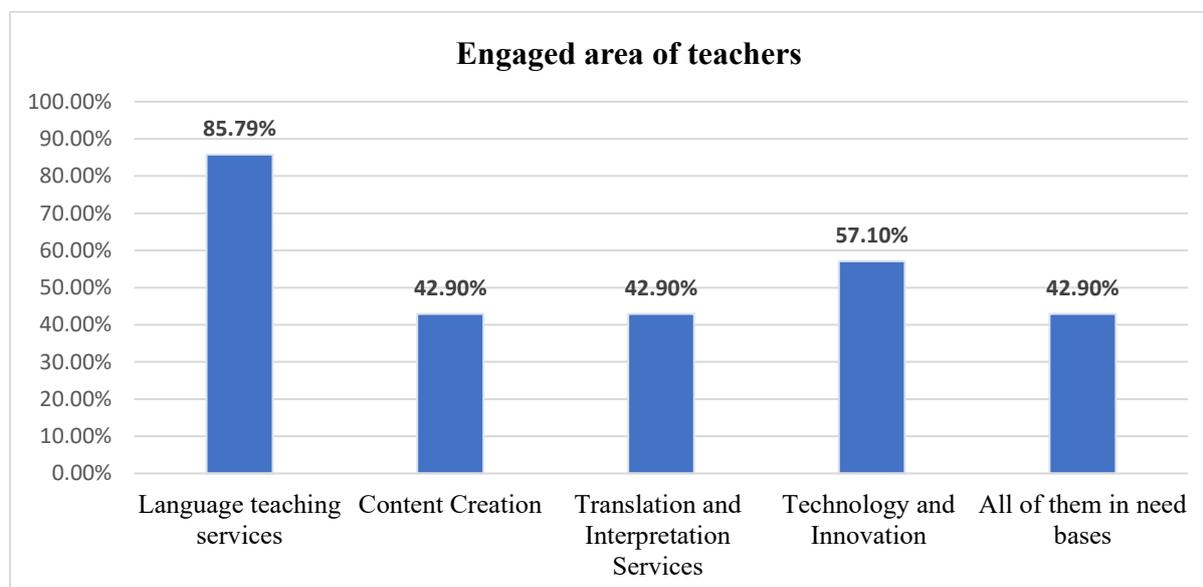
Tribhuvan University (TU), 14.30% are involved in public campuses, another 14.30% in institutional (private) campuses, 13.30% are engaged in self-employment, and only 0.5% are involved in other sectors.

This data clearly shows that the majority of teachers are associated with constituent campuses of TU, indicating a strong institutional affiliation. In contrast, only a small portion (0.5%) of teacher are working in other sectors outside the education system. Notably, 13.30% of teachers are engaged in self-employment, which suggests a moderate level of interest in entrepreneurial activities among university teachers.

This trend indicates that while most teachers remain within traditional academic institutions, a small yet significant proportion are exploring alternative income sources and entrepreneurial ventures. This could reflect a growing awareness of the importance of self-reliance, innovation, and economic diversification among educators.

Entrepreneurial engagement in the field of language teaching

This theme highlights the engagement of participant teachers in the field of language teaching. It focuses on their regular involvement from an entrepreneurial perspective, emphasizing the significance and value of their active participation in this area. Which is given below:

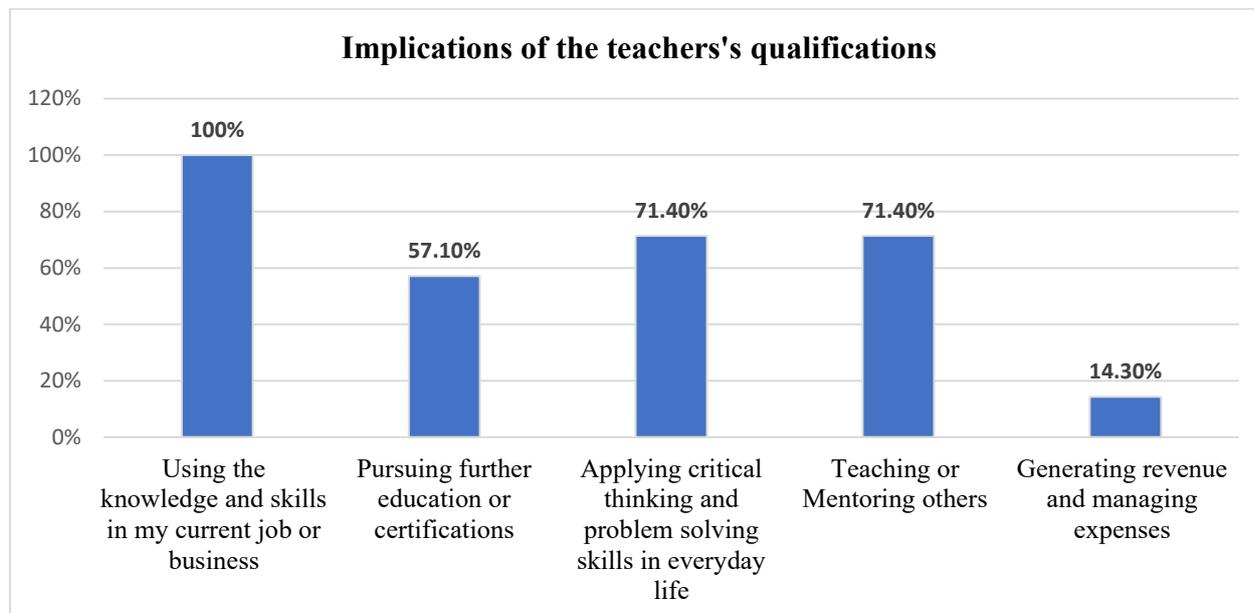


The data in the above graph presents the areas of engagement of the participant teachers. According to the responses, 85.79% of teachers are engaged in regular language teaching services, 42.90% are involved in content creation in various fields, another 42.90% are engaged in translation and interpretation services, 57.10% are involved in technology and innovation, and 42.90% are engaged in all of these areas as per their needs.

The data indicates that while the majority of teachers (85.79%) are primarily engaged in regular language teaching, many are also involved in content creation (42.90%), translation and interpretation (42.90%), and technology and innovation (57.10%). Notably, 42.90% participate in all these areas based on need, showing that teachers are diversifying their roles and contributing beyond traditional teaching, reflecting adaptability and a growing inclination toward professional multitasking. Overall, this theme reflects a multifaceted professional identity among teachers, where language teaching is central but supplemented by other entrepreneurial and innovative activities.

Implications of education acquired from the university

This theme explores the implications of the education acquired by the teachers. It focuses on the implications of the education of the teachers which was acquired from the university. Here is presented the responses given by teachers:

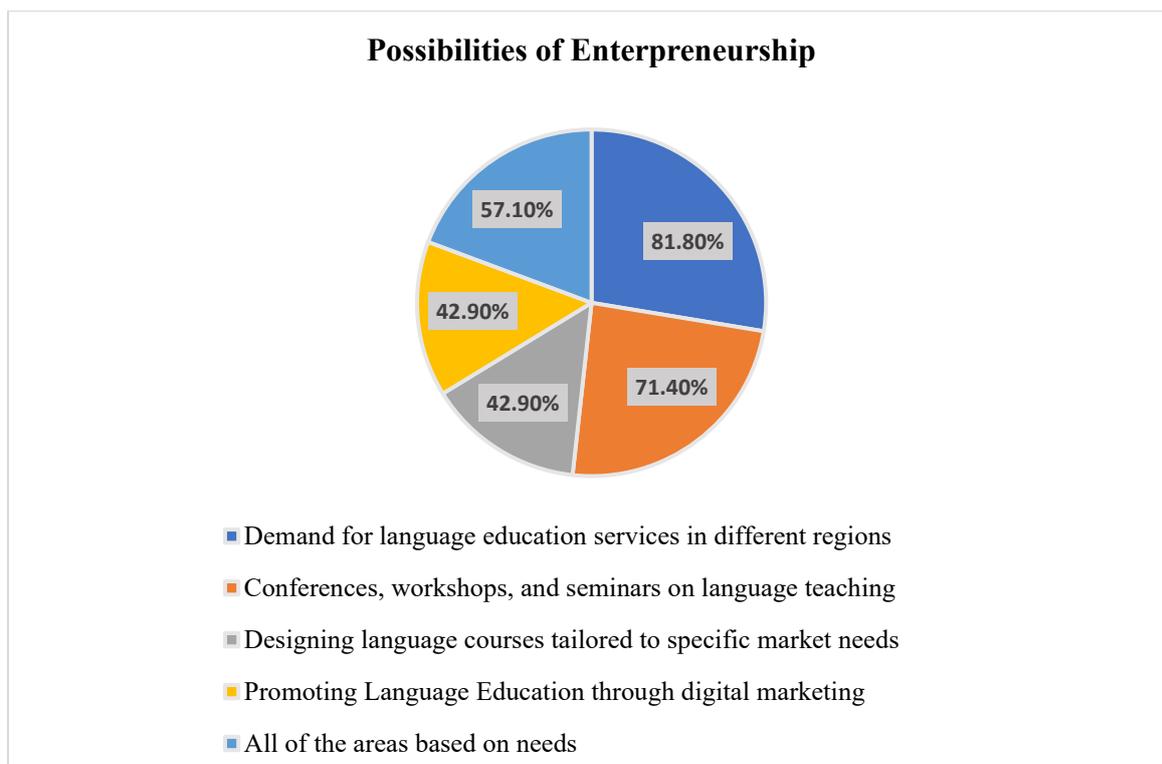


The data in the above graph shows the implications of education acquired from the university by the participant teachers. According to the responses, 100% of teachers are applying their knowledge and skills in their current jobs or businesses, 57.10% are implementing their education by pursuing further education or certifications, 71.40% apply critical thinking and problem-solving skills in everyday life, 71.40% use their education in teaching and mentoring others, and 14.30% implement their education by generating revenue and managing expenses.

This data reveals that all participant teachers actively use the knowledge and skills gained from university education in their professional roles. A significant portion continue to enhance their qualifications through further studies, while many also apply critical thinking and problem-solving in daily situations. The strong involvement in teaching and mentoring highlights their role in knowledge transfer, whereas a smaller group applies their education to financial management, indicating diverse practical uses of their academic background. Overall, the findings suggest that university education has a broad and meaningful impact on both professional and personal aspects of the teachers' lives.

Possibilities of entrepreneurship in language education in nepal

This theme explores the clear possibilities of entrepreneurship in education in Nepal. It focuses on the introduction of new and practical ideas that innovate education. Entrepreneurship in language education in Nepal holds significant potential due to the growing demand for language skills in both local and global markets. By combining language expertise with entrepreneurial skills, teachers can contribute to educational development while creating sustainable income sources. This emerging field encourages creativity, flexibility, and adaptability in meeting diverse learner needs. The participant teachers in this study have responded based on their experiences, which are presented below.

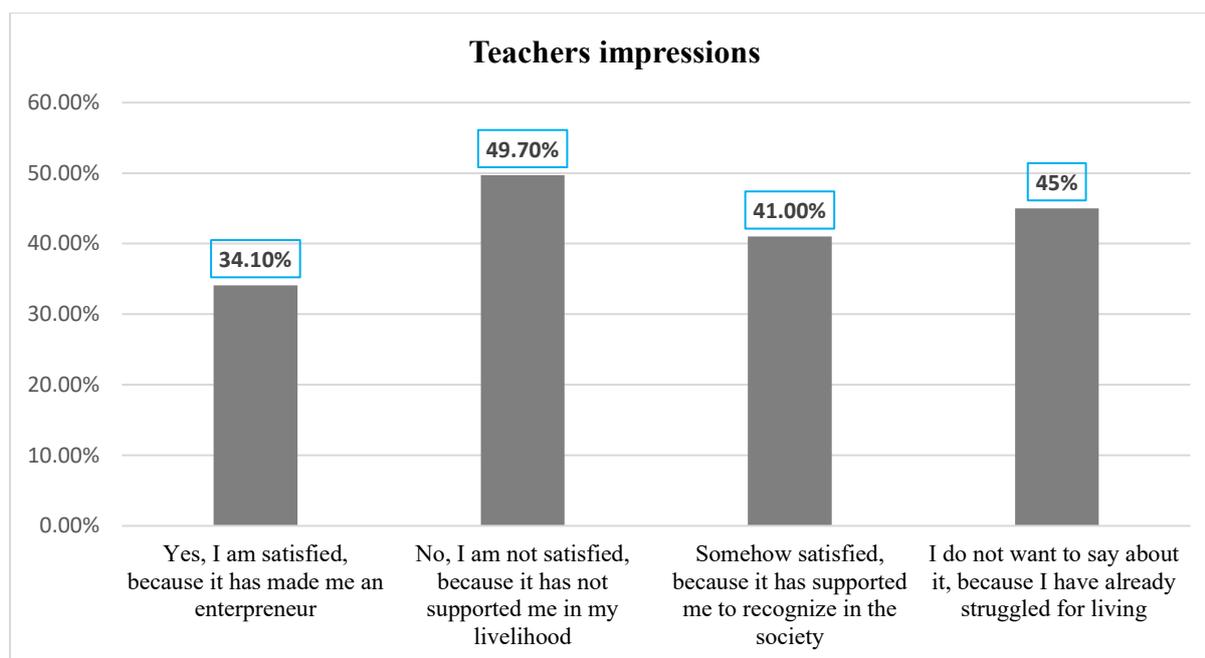


This pie chart presents data on the possibilities of entrepreneurship in language education in Nepal, based on the experiences of the participant teachers. According to their responses, 81.80% identified a strong demand for language education services across different regions. Additionally, 71.40% highlighted opportunities in organizing conferences, workshops, and seminars on language teaching. About 42.90% of teachers saw potential in designing language courses tailored to specific market needs, while an equal percentage recognized the value of promoting language education through digital marketing. Moreover, 57.10% of teachers acknowledged the possibility of engaging in all these areas depending on community needs. These findings reveal diverse entrepreneurial opportunities in language education, emphasizing the importance of adapting services to market demands and utilizing both traditional and digital platforms to expand reach.

The data indicates strong entrepreneurial potential in Nepal's language education sector, driven largely by widespread demand across various regions. Teachers recognize that beyond traditional teaching, there are valuable opportunities to engage learners through conferences, workshops, and customized courses that meet specific market needs. The emphasis on digital marketing highlights the growing importance of technology in expanding educational outreach. Overall, this data suggests that language educators can diversify their roles and create sustainable ventures by responding flexibly to community needs and leveraging multiple platforms to deliver language education services.

Satisfaction of the teachers

This theme explores the satisfaction of teachers with the degrees awarded by Tribhuvan University (TU). It also focuses on the impact of the education degree in the job market. Additionally, it presents the reasons for satisfaction and the impressions of the participant teachers. The responses of the participants are presented below:



This graph presents data regarding the satisfaction levels of participant teachers with the educational degrees awarded by the university. It also highlights the perceived impact of their degrees on their livelihoods. According to the responses, 34.1% of teachers reported satisfaction, stating that their education has helped them become entrepreneurs. Additionally, 49.7% expressed dissatisfaction, noting that their education has not supported their livelihood. About 41% of teachers reported partial satisfaction, as their education has helped them gain recognition in society. Moreover, 45% of teachers chose not to respond, citing that they are still struggling to secure a stable living.

The data reveals a mixed level of satisfaction among teachers regarding their university education. While a portion of teachers (34.1%) credit their degree with enabling entrepreneurial success, a larger group (49.7%) feels that their education has not translated into economic stability. The partial satisfaction expressed by 41% suggests that although the degree has social value, it lacks sufficient economic impact. The significant percentage of non-respondents (45%) struggling with livelihood further emphasizes the need for educational reforms that align university degrees with practical and market-relevant skills. This highlights a gap between academic qualifications and real-world opportunities in Nepal's current educational landscape.

Conclusion and Implication

This study highlights the status of entrepreneurship in the field of language education in Nepal. Teachers from constituent campuses are primarily engaged in traditional teaching methods and academic writing. While teachers from public and institutional campuses show a willingness to develop their academic identity, the possibilities of entrepreneurship within different campus environments remain largely unexplored. Only a few teachers are actively involved in entrepreneurial activities, while the majority are engaged in conventional teaching and learning processes. Most teachers rely on their current jobs or businesses for support, but these generate limited revenue. Although there is a high demand for language education in both local and global markets, university degrees have not effectively prepared graduates to capitalize on these opportunities. The education system continues to award degrees without equipping learners with the practical and market-relevant skills needed for real-world success.

This study reveals a significant gap between academic qualifications and practical application, underscoring the need to align higher education with the demands of today's job

market. Therefore, the implication of this article is to highlight the importance of entrepreneurship in language teaching, with a particular emphasis on market-driven courses and academic writing in both English and Nepali language education.

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Acknowledgement

I express my sincere gratitude to the University Grants Commission, Nepal, for providing me with the fellowship to pursue my PhD research on the topic of Academic Writing.

Impact of ICT on Teacher Professional Development: A Mixed-Method Study in the Context of Kathmandu District, Nepal

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Abstract

This study investigates how information and Communication Technology (ICT) is shaping Teacher Professional Development (TPD) in Kathmandu District. Based on a mixed-methods research design, the research has targeted school-teachers at the secondary level in the Kathmandu district and has used the UNESCO ICT Competency Framework as the foundation for analysis of teacher responses. The Data were collected from 50 teachers working across different types of schools, combining qualitative interviews with descriptive survey analysis. This approach thus helps to capture how access to ICT influences teachers' opportunities for professional development and learning, pedagogical innovation with best practices, and the type of institutional support they receive. Many teachers have had some form of ICT training; they are still in the process of integrating digital tools into locally relevant teaching practices in the classroom for teaching and learning process. This study also points out that retaining trained teachers remains an issue, reflecting deeper disparities in infrastructure, training opportunities, and participation between public and private schools. The findings points to a need for more decentralized and context-sensitive forms of support. Effective ICT-based TPD requires stronger institutional commitment and a clearer national-level policy framework. The findings shows that, pragmatic recommendations which may help address the existing gaps and inform education planners on the design of more inclusive and ICT-responsive teacher development strategies, with particular reference to the developing educational context in Kathmandu District Nepal.

Keywords: *ICT, Competency Framework, Teacher Professional Development (TPD), Public vs. Private Schools,*

Introduction

In the education field in Nepal, digitalization of the world has opened up new landscapes and redefined challenges for delivery education and teaching learning activities. The approaches for teaching and learning processes have been completely revolutionized by the ICT (UNESCO, 2020). Agreed with UNESCO 2020 that, in the diversified geographical

and social settings of Nepal, ICT Integration in Education is very imperative, while we have some policies like SSDP 2026-2023 and National Educational Policy 2019. The intention of such policies is certainly to enhance ICT-integrated teaching and learning but it's about time we also really consider how ICT does actually contribute TPD in a practical setting. The Professional Development includes systematic and continuous education and training to enhance the instructional capability of teachers, their subject knowledge, and pedagogical effectiveness. According to Desimone, (2009), with the increased usage of ICT, professional development options are increasing from face-to-face workshops to online training, virtual peer collaboration, access to open educational resources, and digital LMS. Indeed, all these tools potentially decentralize TPD, making it more accessible, needs-based, and continuous. According to Davis, Preston & Sahin (2009), various factors influence the success of ICT-based TPD: digital infrastructure, readiness of teachers, institutional support, and attitude towards socio-cultural factors. In Nepal, where many teachers work in resource-limited settings, using ICT for professional development is at the same time a requirement and a challenge.

The Government of Nepal considered using ICT in Education vital since the early 2000s, especially through the ICT in Education Master Plan (2013-2017). Within these strategies, it is expected that the teachers will be digitally competent, have equitable access to learning resources and technology, and infuse ICT into the curriculum and teaching. Despite this policy exertion, the practice at the provincial and district levels is very uneven. It is important to highlight the digital gap between urban and rural regions, but it also exists among teachers themselves. While some teachers in Kathmandu have access to devices, training, and high-speed internet, many struggle with basic digital literacy, more so older or contract teachers. The lack of a universal framework for continuous ICT-based TPD leads to irregular or one-time training that does not produce a long-term impact. Recent studies have pointed out that, post-training support and follow-up mechanism or even peer collaboration to teachers are almost non-existent (Pant, 2021; Bhattarai, 2023). This study is therefore an attempt to contribute to empirical evidence on the impact of ICT on teacher professional development in Nepal, particularly focusing on the Kathmandu district which has higher incidence of digitally connected schools nationwide.

The study are in agreement with international frameworks such as UNESCO's ICT Competency Framework for Teachers which emphasizes three levels of development vital for Education 3.0; Technology Literacy, knowledge deepening and public dragging to become a global digital citizen (UNESCO, 2018). To this end, the research aims to find out where Nepali teachers place themselves between these levels for generating some understanding of its digital pedagogical maturity status in the context.

Literature Review

At the same time, in numerous countries globally, integrating Information and Communication Technology (ICT) into educational implementation, not least in teachers' professional development processes is high on the agenda. One of the most valuable tools that ICT has is being able to help teachers become lifelong learners in a flexible, adaptable, and cost-effective way (UNESCO, 2020). Many international frameworks, including the UNESCO ICT Competency Framework for Teachers (ICT-CFT), recognise and target 3 interconnected hierarchical levels of ICT as: (1) Technology Literacy, (2) Deepening the knowledge, and Creation of Knowledge. This method could provide a firm foundation for investigating and inform professional development initiatives aimed at integrating ICT in various situations (UNESCO, 2018). The South Asian context is characterized by grossly unequal infrastructure and pedagogical preparedness to harness the full potential of ICT towards capacity building

within TPD. Only a few studies from India and Bangladesh particularly underline how different models of blended learning, peer-mentoring by colleagues, and contextualized digital resources may enhance teacher engagement with ICT. Similarly, Davis, Preston, and Sahin (2009) found that the impact of ICT on teacher growth is amplified when professional learning is sustained, collaborative, and closely tied to classroom practice.

Different documents of the related policy, such as the ICT in Education Master Plan (2013-2017) and the School Sector Development Plan (2016-2023), have fixed the agenda for integrating Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in education, including teacher capacity building, through government-led initiatives in Nepal. The studies have highlighted that there is a gap between policy intentions and actual implementation within schools, particularly at public schools (Pant, 2020). The majority of ICT training covers tool familiarity, such as MS Office and Zoom, rather than pedagogical integration (Dahal & Shrestha, 2021). On top of that, the TPD modules in the NCED lack continuous digital learning or contextually relevant digital content creation.

Recent studies by Bhattarai (2023) and Adhikari (2022) further highlight that although Kathmandu district is relatively better in terms of ICT infrastructure, there is still existing inequality between institutional and community schools. Teachers themselves usually lack confidence or contextual support to turn these digital skills into much-needed pedagogical practices. Theoretical viewpoints like ZPD by Vygotsky and the TPACK framework further require scaffolded and situated learning experiences that are usually lacking in the top-down ICT training model of Nepal (Shulman, 1987; Koehler & Mishra, 2009). It aims to add to this increasing literature by providing empirical evidence from Kathmandu district through the lenses of teachers' lived experiences related to ICT-based TPD.

Methodology

In this study, the mixed-method approach was used to explore how Information and Communication Technology (ICT) influences teacher professional development in Nepal specially in the Kathmandu District. In this study, the researcher used qualitative design, and used minor quantitative component to give additional contextual which is support the reliability of the findings. This mixture helped produce a more smooth-edged understanding of the situation rather than relying on a single method. The research was focused in secondary-level schools in the Kathmandu district of Nepal, including 50 secondary-level teachers was selected as respondent. The participated and their responses offered a realistic picture of how ICT is being used or sometimes not used in their professional growth activities. Both primary and secondary data sources was used. Semi-structured interviews and open-ended questionnaires was made and provided them for data collection for explain their experiences in their own languages, whereas a short, structured questionnaire offered simple descriptive data on ICT access, training participation, and availability of digital tools. Participants were selected by considering a few important variables such as school type, gender, teaching experience, and exposure to ICT. This ensured that the study included teachers with different backgrounds and working conditions. The data collection process was focused on five broad themes: teachers' access to ICT resources, their involvement in ICT-related training, the influence of ICT on teaching practices, institutional support and constraints, and teachers' general perceptions of ICT in their professional development. All interviews were recorded in Nepali language and later translated into English and transcribed. The translations were done carefully so that the original meaning and tone were unspoiled. The thematic analysis followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) framework, which helped the researcher for organize the data into meaningful categories and highlight recurring ideas across participants.

Findings and Discussion

The findings of total 50 secondary-level teachers (respondent) from the study area shows that several important insights regarding the integration and influence of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) on teacher professional development (TPD). The findings were structured into five major thematic areas: (1) *Teachers' Access to ICT tools and digital resources*, (2) *their participation in ICT-focused professional development activities*, (3) *changes observed in teaching practices and pedagogical approaches after use of ICT*, (4) *challenges that affect ICT integration*, and (5) *teachers' perceptions and their recommendations for improving ICT-supported TPD*.

Availability of ICT Tools and Resources

A majority of respondents (76%) say that they regularly use smartphones, and 58% respondent says that, about the availability of a personal computer (either desktop or laptop) in their school or at home. The minority number of the respondents (42%) says that, the internet connectivity is relatively better than in rural areas, and 52% of teachers still reported unstable internet connectivity as a frequent issue. Teachers from private schools were more likely to express their views on access to higher-end digital devices and uninterrupted Wi-Fi, while community school teachers often shared devices and had irregular power supply. Many teachers reported using Google Meet, Zoom, YouTube, and E-Pustakalaya for instructional planning and professional learning. Only 24% had prior experience using Learning Management Systems such as Moodle, Google Classroom, Microsoft Teams, and Zoom. These statistics reflect a moderately enabling digital environment, showing that while access exists, concerns remain in terms of usage.

Participation in ICT-Based TPD

Nearly all teachers (92%) had participated in at least one ICT-related training or workshop in the last three years. Training programs were conducted by government agencies, e.g., National Centre for Educational Development NCED; international NGOs, e.g., UNESCO and British Council; and private EdTech organizations. However, the duration and quality of training were very uneven. A minority of respondents (38%) reported receiving follow-up support and refresher training. The majority of the teachers (66%) said that, The MS Office, Zoom, and YouTube but never received in-depth training on how to integrate these tools into teaching learning activities in their lessons appropriately (Dahal & Shrestha, 2021). Teachers also quoted dissatisfaction with one-off training events that lacked continuity and classroom application. One teacher from a public school mentioned: *"We are called for ICT training, but it's often just about basic computer use. Real classroom strategies using ICT are not covered at all, even in every training"*.

Changes in Teaching Practices and Pedagogy

In the face of ongoing infrastructural limitations, 61% of the teachers say that they use at least one form of ICT tool in their regular teaching and learning activities. Teachers in private schools tended to integrate digital videos, PowerPoint slides, and online quiz platforms to make lessons more interactive (UNESCO, 2018). Some community school teachers (10%) also made efforts to incorporate digital resources, often relying on materials downloaded from different learning platform like; Google, YouTube, E-Pustakalaya, particularly for subjects such as science, English, and Computer. More than half of the respondents indicated that ICT use had increased their motivation to innovate, experiment, and reflect on their teaching methods. A notable proportion of teachers (39%) continued to rely primarily on the traditional Board Marker/chalk-and-talk approach. Their unwillingness stemmed mainly from a lack of confidence in using digital tools and concerns about potential technical difficulties during

lessons. Majority number (90%) teachers agreed that ICT enhances student engagement, especially within blended learning settings that became more common after the COVID-19 pandemic. As one female English teacher shared, *"After COVID-19, I started recording lessons on my phone and sharing them through WhatsApp. It was not perfect, but it helped me stay connected with my students."*

Institutional and Systemic Barriers

In this study, a series of different barriers to effective ICT-based teacher professional development were identified. (1) Private and public schools are experiencing a wide digital gap, with few devices, untrained ICT personnel and unreliable internet in the latter. (2) Administrative support is less-than-stellar; only 30% of teachers said that they had staff to help with ICT or even a school-level digital strategy. (3) Most schools have no clear guidance or motivation for teachers to follow ICT training Nepal (Shulman, 1987; Koehler & Mishra, 2009). The uncompromising format of the government's teacher training model and insufficient budget for ICT in community schools are also compounding. Some teachers also expressed concern about the additional burden due to a lack of familiarity with digital platforms. *"Occasionally, I avoid online assignments because I do not know how to assess them properly,"* said a senior teacher from a public school.

Teacher Perceptions and Recommendations

Teachers perceived ICT as having the potential to support their professional development (UNESCO, 2020). But, they are calling for more practice-oriented, subject-related, and context-sensitive ICT training. The majority of respondents recommend that the training should be conducted in the Nepali language, demonstrations are to be provided and allocation of time for practical work is necessary. Delegated interventions, on-site capacity building and blended learning models were preferred over centralized, very generic programs. Some teachers also asked for a 'reward', such as a certificate, to encourage participation. *"We want to use technology, but we need step-by-step guidance and support from our school management,"* summarized view of one mathematics teacher.

Discussions

Findings from this study suggest that ICT has made a moderate though significant contribution to the TPD of secondary school teachers in Kathmandu. While many teachers indicated that they participate in exposure to different types of ICT training and reported having a positive attitude towards digital technology, their involvement, skill development, and pedagogical shift seem to vary greatly. These results reinforce the earlier assertions by Dahal and Shrestha (2021) that ICT integration in Nepal's teacher development is potentially promising, but problems exist in terms of implementation. Although this more urban district has better access to certain ICTs than its rural counterparts, it still faces infrastructural issues of both access and availability. Private school teachers used resources such as a strong internet connection and computer labs dedicated to their use, while community teachers worked with devices they shared between each other, or with the lack of stable connectivity. This 'digital divide' within schools reflected inequalities at the national level, a point made clear in the Digital Nepal Framework (MoCIT, 2019), where access to hardware and connectivity was identified as a critical challenge for equitable uptake of ICT.

The data show that the pattern of ICT-based TPD is one of compliance rather than impact. Even if 92% of the respondents in Kathmandu have participated in basic ICT training, that is still lacking benefits due to the lack of follow-up support and mentorship on classroom pedagogy. This is in line with the criticism of Pant (2020), who argues that most TPD programmes in Nepal adopt "a one-size-fits-all approach" and do not cater to differentiated

needs surrounding teacher readiness and subject knowledge. A study such as Davis et al. (2009) have highlighted internationally that it is best to teach teachers which occurs over time, in context and as part of the fabric of daily teaching. In the case of Nepal, there is a policy-practice 'gap' in translating this principle into practice. An important finding presented in the article is minimal pedagogical change, even when exposed to ICT use. Although 61% of the teachers indicated using technology in classrooms, it was primarily confined to a superficial level where use of new technologies is limited to showing PowerPoint slides and playing YouTube videos and not delving further into digital pedagogy or learner centred practices. This is consistent with the claim of Unwin et al. (2010) that ICT use in education can often tend to be conservative rather than progressive. The UNESCO ICT-CFT spectrum provides the context for this study, with most teacher faculties engaging at the phase of technology literacy than in re-designing and adding to the curriculum or creating new knowledge (UNESCO, 2018). Only a small proportion of teachers reached more advanced levels of "knowledge deepening" or "knowledge creation," demonstrating the demand for clear, targeted career paths and structured ICT Continue to learn opportunities.

The second concern is an institution and ecosystem which surrounding the ICT based TPD. Community school teachers repeatedly reported no school-level digital plans, no access to technical assistance and limited program leader support. The results indicate that ICT usage in teacher professional development (TPD) in Nepal is restricted by systemic problems, such as lack of infrastructure, poor governance practices and misalignment between teacher training and the school resources (Adhikari, 2022). Teachers stressed the necessity of peer-mediated, socially interactive opportunities for learning, which echo Vygotsky's (1978) belief that professional development takes place through interaction with more skilled peers. There is a specific need for tools facilitating peer sharing, co-creation and provision of locally appropriate digital resources. Teachers were willing to use ICT but need continued motivation, support, and avenues for encouragement through provision of structured incentives like digital literacy allowances, certification-motivated career progression and local content in service delivery (Yodi, 2005). These recommendations are consistent with South Asian evidence, which suggests that a hybrid TPD model (combining face-to-face mentorship and online facilities) is recommended to address low ICT confidence (Sinha & Kaur, 2020). On the policy side, for example, Nepal's SSDP (2016–2023) as well as the ICT Master Plan (2013–2017) articulate grand visions of how to transform education digitally. There's still a fractional approach to dissemination and implementing training into classroom practice. This echoes calls for a second-generation ICT in Education Master Plan that privileged digital inclusion, teacher agency and structured pedagogical support (Bhattarai, 2023).

Conclusion

This study investigates the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) remains an increasingly crucial aspect of TPD, especially in the Kathmandu district of Nepal. Its potential for change and development remains mostly confined to pedagogical, human, and institutional constraints. Grounded in the UNESCO Framework for ICT Competencies for Teachers, results clearly unveil that the majority of the teachers mostly work at the Technology Literacy stage, where the use of ICT remains mostly confined to basic use and function, rather than transformative pedagogical change. Development at the level of Knowledge Deepening and Knowledge Creation remains irregular and mostly dependent upon the supportive context and the human agency of the teachers. Though the use and accessibility of ICT infrastructural resources and training programs remain far better, this development proves that technology alone remains inconclusive and insufficient to support professional development. The experiences and perceptions of the teachers explain that teachers' confidence, continuous mentoring, peer collaboration, and institutional support largely help to harness their potential

to integrate ICT into their reflective and learner-focused practices. In this case, the use of ICT-enabled TPD in the context of the Kathmandu district remains mostly focused upon compliance rather than results and impacts, mostly characterized by lackluster workshops with mostly sporadic and insignificant follow-through and connectivity to the class. This remains mostly hampered and limits the growing potential of the teachers to witness and experience their development and professionalization through the use and adoption of ICT, mostly deeply rooted and entrenched along the levels and stages of the UNESCO framework. The huge gaps that mostly separate both the government and community schools further confirm the institutional systemically embedded and constructed inequities that shape and mould the professional development and trajectories along the path of the teachers. Teachers belonging to the community schools mostly face structural barriers and constraints that mostly confine their development along the stages and levels defined and constructed along the UNESCO framework, though their motivations to harness and tap into the use and adoption and potential applications of the use and adoption of ICT-enabled TPD practices, activities, and processes mostly remain strong and motivated.

Recommendation

Training should be in form of blended on-line/ contact-programmes formatted on mobile-friendly platforms to engage teachers across different demographic groups. The TPD materials should be developed with the subject specific and classroom context in mind so that they can be accessible in Nepali or other local languages for better usability and understanding. Develop teacher school-based or virtual communities of practice with teachers as facilitators that will collaborate, exchange best practices and links to mentorship, co-create ICT resources etc. Structured Follow-Up and Mentorship and offer regular coaching, helpline support and on-demand micro-courses to keep upgrading the skills of your workforce. Motivate teachers to use the ICT platforms more frequently by providing a digital skill certification, professional recognition and small monetary rewards. Develop digital strategies & hire ICT co-ordinator in schools for TPD Plan the institution of TPD as part of SIP. There is a need for re-examining national education policies to accommodate dynamism in the demands of ICT-supported teacher development and linking TPD objectives to pan-digital transformation strategies.

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धार्मिक चिन्तनमा कुलको ईश्वरीय स्वरूप

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लेखसार

विभिन्न धर्ममा ईश्वरको स्वरूपमा विविधता र समानता रहेको छ । विभिन्न धर्ममा निर्माण भएको विविधता र समानताका मौलिकताहरूका आधारमा कुलको ईश्वरीस्वरूप निर्धारण गर्नु पर्नेमा हालसम्म सो विषयमा अध्ययन भएको पाइँदैन । यो अध्ययनमा विभिन्न धर्मका धार्मिक चिन्तनका आधारमा कुलको नैतिक, धार्मिक एवम् आध्यात्मिक स्वरूपको अवस्था पहिचान गर्ने उद्देश्य रहेको छ । प्रस्तुत अध्ययनमा विभिन्न धर्ममा मानिसहरूको ईश्वरप्रति अभिव्यक्त भावना, ईश्वर आगमनको मान्यता, आत्माको अस्तित्व एवम् भावी जीवनको आशा वा भाँती, सत् असत् तOEवको अस्तित्वका कारण, उत्तरदायित्व र मुक्तिको आधारलाई सैद्धान्तिक आधारका रूपमा लिइएको छ । प्रस्तुत सैद्धान्तिक आधारबाट गरिएको यो अध्ययनमा हिन्दू धर्मको धार्मिक मान्यतामा वर्णित कुल पनि एक ईश्वरीय स्वरूप हो भन्ने प्रमाणित भएको छ । यसले विभिन्न धर्ममा वर्णित धर्महरू किन, कहाँ र कसरी उत्पन्न भएका हुन तथा कुन कारणले धर्महरूमा विविधता रहेका छन् भन्ने बारेमा अध्ययन गर्न पनि सहयोग गर्ने छ ।

विशेष शब्दकुञ्जी : ईश्वर, कुल, धर्म, स्वरूप ।

विषय परिचय

विभिन्न विद्वानहरूका मतका आधारमा धार्मिक चिन्तनको स्वरूपमा मतान्तर रहेको छ । विद्वानहरूका मतान्तरका आधारमा हिन्दू धर्ममा पनि कुलको पहिचानका बारेमा द्विविधा रहेको छ । हिन्दू धर्ममा कुललाई समग्रवंशज र धार्मिक मान्यताका आधारमा हेर्ने गरिएको पाइन्छ । वंशजगत आधार भिन्न धार्मिक आधारमा कुलको अध्ययनमा समय, स्थान एवम् आवश्यकता अनुसार कुनै विशेष परिस्थितिलाई जोड दिने गरिएको छ । धर्म र ईश्वरको पहिचानको आधारमा हिन्दू धर्ममा ईश्वरको स्वरूप कुलको नैतिक, धार्मिक एवम् आध्यात्मिक रूपको पहिचान नभएको अवस्था विद्यमान रहेको छ । यो अध्ययन कुलको नैतिक, धार्मिक एवम् आध्यात्मिक रूपको पहिचानसँग केन्द्रित रहेको छ ।

समस्याकथन

विद्वानहरूका मतान्तरका आधारमा हिन्दू धर्ममा कुलको पहिचानका बारेमा द्विविधा रहेको छ । धर्म मानव जीवनको सत्य र सुन्दरताको चरम आदर्शको संगम हो । धर्मको स्थापना र सुधार गर्न प्रत्येक धर्मका संतहरूले आफ्ना अनुयायीहरूलाई नैतिक, धार्मिक एवम् आध्यात्मिक आदर्श प्रदान गरेको अवस्था छ । उनीहरूका नैतिक, धार्मिक एवम् आध्यात्मिक आदर्शले विभिन्न धर्मको नामाकरण र तOEवको

निर्माण गरेको छ। धर्मका नामाकरण र तOEवका सँगै धार्मिक शक्तिको स्वरूपमा ईश्वरको कल्पना गरिएको छ। जस्तै: हिन्दू धर्मले ईश्वरलाई सर्वव्यापकता, आत्माको अमरता तथा आत्मा एवम् परमात्माको अन्तरङ्ग सम्बन्धलाई पर्दशित गर्दै वर्णाश्रम व्यवस्थाद्वारा सामाजिक सुचारुता तर्फ महOEव दिने तOEवका रूपमा मानेको छ। बौद्ध धर्मले ईश्वरलाई धर्मको सार, नैतिक साधनाद्वारा शान्तिपूर्वक आत्मा विकासमा निहित हुने शक्तिसम्पन्न तOEवका रूपमा मानेको छ। जैन धर्मले ईश्वरलाई अहिंसा, देह दमन एवम् तपस्याद्वारा आत्माको उन्नति एवम् पूर्णताको प्रतिपादन गर्न सक्ने तOEवका रूपमा मानेको छ। जोरोस्टर धर्मले ईश्वरलाई सहायताद्वारा असत्य शक्तिलाई विनास गरी जीवन सुख एवम् समृद्ध बनाउन उपदेश प्रदान गर्ने तOEवका रूपमा मानेको छ। कन्फ्युसियस धर्मले ईश्वरलाई आदर्श सामाजिक एवम् राजनीतिक व्यवहारको धर्म स्थापित गर्ने शक्तितOEवका रूपमा मानेको छ। शिन्तो धर्मले ईश्वरलाई प्रकृतिको उपासना, राष्ट्रप्रेम एवम् पवित्र आचरणको पाठ पढाउने तOEवका रूपमा मानेको छ। यहूदी धर्मले ईश्वरलाई परमेश्वरको आज्ञा पूर्ण पालना गर्न उपदेश दिने तOEवका रूपमा मानेको छ। क्रिश्चियन धर्मले ईश्वरलाई आत्माद्वारा परमात्माप्रति अगाध प्रेम स्थापित गर्ने उद्देश्य निर्माता मानेको छ। इस्लाम धर्मले ईश्वरलाई समस्त विश्वको शहंशाहा अल्लाहाप्रति निष्काम भावले आत्मत्यक्त एवम् शरणागति प्रदान गर्ने शक्तितOEवका रूपमा मानेको छ।

विभिन्न धर्ममा ईश्वरको सन्देश मानी विभिन्न धर्मको सन्देश सामान्य व्यक्तिमा पुऱ्याइएको छ। धर्मले निर्धारण गरेको नैतिक, धार्मिक एवम् आध्यात्मिक स्वरूपले ईश्वरको स्वरूप निर्धारण हुने गरेको छ। यो अध्ययन विभिन्न धार्मिक चिन्तनको आधारमा कुलको नैतिक, धार्मिक एवम् आध्यात्मिक स्वरूपको अवस्था कस्तो रहेको छ भन्ने समस्यामा केन्द्रित रहेको छ।

उद्देश्य

विभिन्न धर्मका धार्मिक चिन्तनका आधारमा कुलको नैतिक, धार्मिक एवम् आध्यात्मिक स्वरूपको अवस्था पहिचान गर्नु नै यो अध्ययनको उद्देश्य हो।

अध्ययनको औचित्य

यस अध्ययनमा विभिन्न धार्मिक चिन्तनका आधारमा धर्ममा ईश्वरको स्वरूप कुल निर्माण प्रक्रियामा मानिसहरूको ईश्वरप्रति अभिव्यक्त भावना, ईश्वरको आगमनको मान्यता, आत्माको अस्तित्व एवम् भावि जीवनको आशा वा भाँती, सत् असत् तOEवको अस्तित्वका कारण, उत्तरदायित्व र मुक्तिको आधारलाई सैद्धान्तिक आधार बनाई अध्ययन गरिएको छ। यी सैद्धान्तिक आधारले यस अध्ययनलाई व्यवस्थित र स्तरीय तुल्याउन समेत सहयोग पऱ्याएका छन्। प्रस्तुत सैद्धान्तिक आधारमा अध्ययनलाई व्यवस्थित र स्तरीय बनाई व्याख्या तथा विश्लेषण गरि निष्कर्ष निकालिएको हुँदा अध्ययनको औचित्य रहेको छ।

सामग्री सङ्कलन विधि

समस्या कथनमा उल्लेख गरिएको समस्याको प्रमाणिक समाधानका लागि दुई प्रकृतिका सामग्रीको सङ्कलन गरिएको छ। पहिलो प्रकृतिका धार्मिक सामग्रीलाई प्राथमिक सामग्रीका रूपमा लिइएको छ र विभिन्न विद्वान्हरूका विचारलाई द्वितीयक सामग्रीका रूपमा लिई अध्ययन गरिएको छ। आवश्यक सामग्री पुस्तकालय विधिबाट सङ्कलन गरिएको छ।

सामग्री विश्लेषण विधि र सैद्धान्तिक आधार

सामग्री विश्लेषण सैद्धान्तिक आधारका लागि विभिन्न विद्वान्हरूद्वारा धर्म अध्ययनसम्बन्धी निर्माण गरेका सिद्धान्तहरूलाई आधार मानिएको छ । धर्ममा ईश्वरको स्वरूप निर्माण प्रक्रिया र परिवर्तनमा धार्मिक आस्थाको नैतिक, धार्मिक एवम् आध्यात्मिक स्वरूपको अवस्था कस्तो रहेको छ भन्ने कुराले निर्धारण गर्दछ । यस धर्तीमा धर्म मानव सभ्यतासँगै आएकोले मानव सभ्यताको क्रमसँगै धर्मका स्वरूपहरू बन्दै आएको पुरातत्वविद्हरूको भनाइ छ । धर्मका इतिहासका अध्ययताहरूले मानव सभ्यताको पूर्वपाषाण कालमा मानिसको चेतनाको स्तर धर्मसम्म आइपुग्ने खालको थिएन भनेका छन् (टोकारेव, अज्ञात, पृ. ५११) । यसमा धर्मको सिद्धान्त र परिवर्तनको आधार प्रस्तुत भएको छ । विवेकानन्दको भनाइमा धर्म अनुभूतिको वस्तु हो (विवेकानन्द, १९८२, पृ. १३७) । यसले ईश्वरप्रति अभिव्यक्त भावनालाई उजागर गरेको छ । राधाकृष्णले धर्मबाट आत्माको मुक्तिको खोजी हुनु पर्ने बताएका छन् (राधाकृष्ण, १९२०, पृ. ५) । यसमा आत्माको अस्तित्व एवम् भावि जीवनको आशा वा भाँती प्रस्तुत भएको छ । योगानन्दका अनुसार धर्म शब्दको अर्थ कानुन हुन्छ (योगानन्द, २००६, पृ. ५४४) । यसले सत् असत् तत्त्वको अस्तित्वको कारण खोजी गरेको छ । गुप्तले धर्मको सिद्धान्तको निर्माण वा परिवर्तनका आधारहरूलाई देशकाल, परिस्थिति, धर्ममा भिन्नता मान्नु र मानव स्वभाव मुख्य कारक तत्त्वको रूपमा रहेको बताएका छन् । उनले धर्मलाई केही न केही सुन्दरताको समग्रतामा हेरिनु पर्दछ भनेका छन् (गुप्त, २०००, पृ. १९) । यसमा उत्तरदायित्व र मुक्तिको आधारलाई प्रस्तुत गर्न खोजिएको छ । यस प्रकार विश्वका सम्पूर्ण धर्मको अध्ययन हितकारी हुने गरेको छ । ब्यासका अनुसार आफ्नो धर्मको अध्ययनले हामीलाई ताजगी एवम् शान्ति प्रदान गर्दछ भने अर्काको धर्मको अध्ययनले हामीलाई सत्य, सहिष्णुता र समभाव दिने गर्दछ (ब्यास, १९९६, पृ. ५) । यसमा धार्मिक चिन्तनको छाया देखिन्छ । यसै कारणले प्रत्येक धर्मको उत्पादक वा प्रवर्तकको आचार, विचार, उपदेश वा सिद्धान्तमा विविधता हुने गरेको छ । मानिसको चेतना फरक-फरक हुन्छ । अतः ईश्वरका प्रति उसको दृष्टिकोण पनि भिन्न-भिन्न रहन्छ । यही रूचि विभिन्नताका कारण धर्ममा भिन्नता आउने र नयाँ धर्मको उत्पादन हुने गर्दछ । यसबाट मानव स्वभाव र मान्यताका आधारमा धर्म र ईश्वरको अध्ययन गर्न सकिने आधार निर्माण भएको छ । यो अध्ययन विभिन्न धार्मिक चिन्तनका आधारमा धर्ममा ईश्वरको स्वरूप कुल निर्माण प्रक्रियामा मानिसहरूको ईश्वरप्रति अभिव्यक्त भावना, ईश्वरको आगमनको मान्यता, आत्माको अस्तित्व एवम् भावि जीवनको आशा वा भाँती, सत् असत् तत्त्वको अस्तित्वका कारण, उत्तरदायित्व र मुक्तिको आधारलाई सैद्धान्तिक आधार बनाई व्याख्यात्मक विधि पद्धति र ढाँचाको प्रयोगबाट गरिएको छ ।

सीमाङ्कन

प्रस्तुत अध्ययनको मुख्यउद्देश्य धार्मिक चिन्तनका आधारमा कुलको नैतिक, धार्मिक एवम् आध्यात्मिक स्वरूपको अवस्था कस्तो रहेको छ त्यसको मात्र विश्लेषण गर्नु यसको सीमा रहेको छ ।

नतिजा तथा विश्लेषण (धर्ममा ईश्वरका स्वरूप निर्माण प्रक्रिया)

धर्ममा ईश्वरका स्वरूप निर्माण प्रक्रिया संस्थापक, संस्थापकको विशिष्ट लक्षण, सिद्धान्त, स्थान र जात-जातिका नामाकरणका आधारमा धर्मको निर्माण भइ ईश्वरीय स्वरूपको पहिचानमा आएको छ । जोरोस्टर वा कन्फ्युसियस धर्म संस्थापकको नामको आधारमा, जैन, बौद्ध एवम् क्रिश्चियन धर्म संस्थापकको विशिष्ट लक्षणको आधारमा, ताओ, शिन्तो, इस्लाम धर्म सिद्धान्तको आधारमा, हिन्दू धर्म स्थानको आधारमा र यहूदी धर्म जातिको आधारमा निर्माण भएको अवस्था छ । फरक-फरक धर्ममा ईश्वरको नाम, स्वरूप, गुण एवम् कार्य फरक-फरक मानिएको छ । फरक-फरक धर्ममा ईश्वरानुभूतिको

पहिचान पनि फरक-फरक रहेको छ । फरक-फरक धर्ममा ईश्वरानुभूतिको पहिचान फरक रहे तापनि ईश्वरलाई परमसत्ता सम्पन्न, अतीन्द्रिय, संसारका निर्माता र उपासनागर्दा प्राप्त गर्न सकिने जस्ता लक्षणहरू सबै धर्ममा रहेको छ । ईश्वरलाई परमसत्ताको रूपमा मानव शक्तिको स्वरूप भन्दा कयौँगुणा बढी, सर्वशक्तिमान एवम् सर्वगुण सम्पन्न मानिएको छ । ईश्वरलाई नयन, वाणी एवम् इन्द्रिय भन्दा फरक अनुभूति अथवा अतीन्द्रिय शक्तिद्वारा साक्षात्कार गर्न सकिने मानिएको छ । ईश्वरलाई संसारका निर्माता, संरक्षक एवम् दुर्जनको नाश गर्ने र संसारको कल्याण गर्ने मानिएको छ (सापकोटा, २०७२, पृ. २९) । ईश्वर उपास्य देव हुन् र ईश्वरको उपासना गर्नु पर्दछ, भन्ने कुरा सबै धर्ममा समान रूपमा रहेको छ ।

धर्ममा ईश्वरको स्वरूप निर्माणको आधार परमसत्ता सम्पन्न, अतीन्द्रिय, संसारका निर्माता र उपासनागर्दा प्राप्त गर्न सकिने जस्ता समान र असमान लक्षणहरूको पहिचानबाट, संख्याको आधारमा एकल र अनेक पहिचानबाट, स्वरूपको आधारमा सगुण, निर्गुण, साकार, निराकार, सदेह, देहविहिन रहस्यात्मक पहिचानबाट, शक्तिको आधारमा सर्वशक्तिमान, सीमित शक्ति सम्पन्न, स्वच्छाकृत, अन्य सत्ताको कारणको पहिचानबाट, उत्तरदायित्वको आधारमा आफ्नो कार्यमा पूर्ण स्वच्छन्द, अनुत्तरदायी, स्वयम्को प्रति नैतिक उत्तरदायी, जगत्को प्रति उत्तरदायी पहिचानबाट र जीवनसँगको सम्बन्धको आधारमा जीवको निर्माता निर्मितिक, पिता, पुत्र, स्वामी, सेवक, राजा, देह, अङ्ग आदिको सम्बन्धको आधारमा गरिएको छ ।

धर्ममा ईश्वरीय भावना

धर्ममा ईश्वरीय भावनाको निर्माण हरेक धर्ममा अतीन्द्रिय ज्ञानको आधारमा धर्मको मूल तत्त्वको रूपमा एक चरम सत्ताको अस्थित्वको स्वीकारसँग गाँसिएको छ (सापकोटा, २०७२, पृ. १४) । यस दृष्टिले प्रायः सबै धर्महरू समान रहेको अवस्था छ तर पनि अतीन्द्रिय ज्ञानको स्वरूपको विषयमा प्रत्येक धर्ममा भिन्नता छ । हिन्दू धर्ममा परमात्माको स्वरूप एवम् सङ्ख्याको बारेमा विभिन्न मान्यताको समन्वय भएको छ । यसमा बहुदेववाद, एकदेववाद, सर्वदेवमयवाद आदि विभिन्न मत देखिएको छ । परमात्माको स्वरूपलाई निर्गुण एवम् सगुण दुई रूपको मानिएको छ । निर्गुणलाई ब्रह्मको नामद्वारा उपासना प्रार्थना गरी पुकारिन्छ । सगुणको भगवान मानी उपासना वा प्रार्थना गरिन्छ । जैन वा बौद्ध धर्ममा प्रारम्भमा ईश्वरको अस्तित्वको बारेमा चर्चा गरिएको छैन किनकि यसमा मूल संस्थापकलाई यस विषयको आवश्यकता महशुस नभएको अवस्था छ । महावीरका अनुसार तीर्थकारको मार्गको अनुसरण गर्नेलाई परम सत्यको प्राप्त हुन्छ तथा बुद्धका अनुसार आध्यात्मिक अनुभव एवम् नैतिक जीवनसँग परमात्मा एवम् परम सत्यको ज्ञान प्राप्त हुन्छ । जैन धर्ममा यसको लागि अहिंसा र तपस्यालाई प्रधानता दिइएको छ । बौद्ध धर्ममा अष्टांग मार्गको अनुसरण गर्नु पर्ने कुरा बताइएको छ तथापि कालान्तरमा दुवै धर्ममा आफ्ना मूल संस्थापकको पूजा हुन थाले पछि उनलाई नै ईश्वर मानिएको छ । कन्फ्युशियस धर्म एक ईश्वरवाद एवम् नैतिक सिद्धान्तका आधारमा रचना गरिएको छ । यसमा ईश्वरको अस्तित्वलाई धेरै महत्त्व दिइएको छैन । मानवमा जति उपयोगी श्रेष्ठ भावनाको विकाश हुन सक्छ त्यति उसबाट सिद्धि, सद्गुण एवम् सदाचारको पालना हुन सक्दछ यसर्थ यसलाई एक परम तत्त्व स्वीकार गरिएको छ । आफ्नो गुण स्वरूपमा यो सर्वोपरी शासक हो अथवा निर्गुण स्वरूपमा आकाश बताइएको छ ।

ताओ धर्ममा एक अमूर्त, निराकार, गुह्य एवम् व्यापक तत्त्वको उपासनाको उपदेश दिइएको छ । त्यस परम तत्त्वको ताओको नामद्वारा पुकारा गरिएको छ । उसको प्राप्ति निवृत्तिमार्गद्वारा ध्यान गर्नाले हुन सक्छ । जोरोस्टर धर्ममा एक मात्र विश्व शान्तिको कामना गरिएको छ, जसलाई अहुरमजद भनेर

पुकारा गरिन्छ । अग्रमर्यादा नामक आशुरी शक्तिको अस्तित्व पनि यस धर्मले मानेको छ तर यो उच्च तOEवका रूपमा छैन । मानव मात्रले अहुरमजदको उपासना गर्न सुभाइएको छ । अहुरमजद अन्तर्गत नै उसको विभूतिका रूपमा धेरै देवता समावेश गरिएको छ ।

यहुदी, किश्चियन र इस्लाम एक ईश्वरवादी रहेको अवस्था छ । यहुदीले जेहोवाद, किश्चियनले परमकृपालु पिता र इस्लामले अल्लाहाको नामद्वारा ईश्वरको प्राथना गरेको अवस्था छ । विचारधारा एक ईश्वरवादी हुँदाहुँदै पनि यी तीन धर्ममा ईश्वरको स्वरूप वा उसप्रति भावनात्मक विभेद रहेको छ । यहुदी धर्ममा परमशक्तिमान एवम् न्यायप्रिय ईश्वरको आज्ञा अनिवार्य रूपमा मान्नु पर्ने बताइएको छ । किश्चियन धर्ममा ईश्वरको नियमको प्रेमपूर्ण पालना गर्नु पर्ने बताइएको छ । यदि मनुष्यले ईश्वरको नियमको पालना नगरे जीसस स्वयम् कष्ट सहन गरी व्यक्तिको पाप पखाल्दछन् भनिएको छ । ईश्वरले आत्मामा प्रेम उत्पन्न गर्दछन् र ईश्वरको साम्राज्यको विस्तार गर्दछन् भनिएको छ । इस्लाममा एक अल्लाहलाई मान्दै हजरत मोहम्मदको जो अल्लाहको पैगम्बर हो उसको उपदेशको अनुशरण गर्दै अल्लाहको मेहरबानीको मजहबको प्राप्तिको विधान छ ।

हिन्दू धर्म अन्तर्गत कुल पूजामा परमात्माको स्वरूप एवम् सङ्ख्याको बारेमा विभिन्न मान्यताको समन्वय भएको छ । यसमा बहुदेववाद, एकदेववाद, सर्वदेवमयवाद आदि विभिन्न मत मिसिएको देखिएको छ । परमात्माको स्वरूपलाई निर्गुण एवम् सगुण दुई रूपको मानिएको छ । निर्गुणलाई कुलको नामद्वारा उपासना प्राथना गरी पुकारिन्छ । सगुण अन्तर्गत विश्व ब्रह्माण्डका शक्तिलाई भगवान मानी उपासना वा प्रार्थना गरिन्छ ।

ईश्वर आगमनको मान्यता

ईश्वर आगमनको मान्यतामा केही धर्मले ईश्वरलाई पूर्णतः निर्गुण निराकार, अव्यक्त मानेको छ तर केही धर्मले सगुण र केही धर्मले दुबै मानेको छ । जुन धर्मका अनुयायी सगुण ईश्वरको सत्तामा विश्वास राख्दछन् तिनीहरूले ईश्वर स्वयम् मानवताको उद्धारको हेतु अवतरित हुन्छन् भन्ने मान्यता राखेको पाइन्छ । यिनीहरूमा पनि अवतारको स्वरूपमा मतभेद छ (सापकोटा, २०७२, पृ. १५) । हिन्दू धर्मको उपनिषदमा तOEवज्ञान, जगत्को अनित्य पदार्थ एवम् समस्त जीवात्मालाई नित्य ब्रह्म मानिएको छ । लोकप्रचलित हिन्दू धर्ममा अनेकौँ देवी देवता, ब्रह्मा, विष्णु, शिवका अनेक अवतारको मान्यता रहेको छ । गीतामा अवतारवाद एवम् विभूतिवादको अत्यन्त सुन्दर वर्णन गरिएको छ । जैन र बौद्ध धर्ममा प्रारम्भमा ईश्वरलाई स्वीकार गरिएको छैन तर पछि महावीर एवम् बुद्धलाई अवतारी पुरुषका रूपमा मानिएको छ । दुबैमा यसभन्दा पहिला २३ अन्य अवतारको मान्यता पनि स्वीकार गरिएको छ ।

इस्लाम धर्ममा अल्लाहालाई असीमतOEव मानिएको छ, परन्तु यसमा पनि अवतारको मान्यता स्वीकार गरिएको छ । पैगम्बर मोहम्मदको अलवा अन्य पैगम्बरहरूलाई अवतारी पुरुष वा ईश्वरीय दूत मानिएको छ । किश्चियन धर्ममा जीससलाई अपूर्व अवतारी पुरुष मानिएको छ । जीसस ईश्वरका पुत्र हुन् अथवा उनका चरित्र मानवीय हुँदा हुँदै पनि ईश्वरीय छन् भन्ने मान्यता रहेको छ । शीन्तो धर्ममा राजालाई सूर्य देवताका पुत्र मानिएको छ । यस प्रकार केही धर्ममा आफ्नो धर्म संस्थापकलाई ईश्वरको रूपमा र केहीमा ईश्वरको अवतारको रूपमा मानिएको छ । प्रायः सबैमा आविर्भाव अलौकिक गाथामा प्रचलित देखिन्छ । लोकप्रचलित हिन्दू धर्ममा अनेकौँ देवी देवता, ब्रह्मा, विष्णु, शिवका अनेक अवतारको मान्यता दिइएको छ जसमा कुल पनि यसै अन्तर्गत पर्दछन् ।

आत्माको अस्तित्व एवम् भावी जीवनको आशा वा भाँती

आत्माको अस्तित्व एवम् भावी जीवनको आशा वा भाँतीले धार्मिक प्रवृत्ति एवम् तत्त्वज्ञानको प्रारम्भमा नै मानवको मृत्युको विषयमा चिन्तन गर्न प्रेरित गरेको छ । मृत्युको विचार गर्दा स्वभाविक विचार उत्पन्न हुन्छ कि के मृत्यु नै जीवनको अन्त्य हो ? मृत्युको पछि कुन स्थिति हुन्छ ? आत्माको अस्तित्व छ वा छैन ? मृत्युको पछाडि आत्मा रहन्छ, रहँदैन ? यस प्रकारको विचार सबै धर्मले गरेको छ । मृत्यु पश्चात् आत्माको अस्तित्व स्वीकारलाई दुई प्रकारले हेरिएको छ । एउटा धर्म जुन मृत्युको पश्चात् कर्मको आधारमा पुनर्जन्मको सिद्धान्त स्वीकार गर्दछ, अर्को धर्म एक जन्मको सिद्धान्त मात्र मान्दछ (सापकोटा, २०७२, पृ. १५) । यस प्रकार जीवन अर्थात् मृत्युको प्रश्नमा मृत्युपश्चात्को जीवनको वर्णन एवम् आवश्यकताका विषयमा विभिन्न धर्ममा विभिन्न अभिप्राय दृष्टिगत हुन्छ यसर्थ सबै धर्मले स्वर्ग अथवा नरकको अस्तित्व र आत्माद्वारा कर्मानुसार तिनको प्राप्तिलाई स्वीकार गरेको छ ।

हिन्दू धर्मको मान्यतानुसार शुभकर्मद्वारा स्वर्ग एवम् अशुभकर्मद्वारा नरकको प्राप्ति हुन्छ । पुण्य अथवा पापको क्षय भएपछि आत्माले पुनः जन्म लिनु पर्दछ, यसप्रकार कर्म बन्धनद्वारा भवचक्र चलिरहन्छ । निष्काम कर्म, ज्ञान, भक्ति एवम् उपासनाद्वारा मोक्षप्राप्त भई पुनः जन्म नहुने कुरा उल्लेख छ । आत्माले दिव्य एवम् नैसर्गिक स्वरूप प्राप्त गरी परमात्मासँग उसको तादात्म्य वा मिलन हुने गर्दछ । बौद्ध धर्मले पनि कर्म एवम् पुनर्जन्मको सिद्धान्त हिन्दू धर्मले जस्तै मान्दछ । यसले तृष्णालाई कर्मको मूल मान्दछ । तृष्णाको त्याग गर्नाले निर्वाणको प्राप्ति हुन्छ । निर्वाण सर्व विकार रहित पूर्णताको स्थिति हो । प्रायः यही मत जैन धर्ममा पनि मिल्दछ । कन्फ्युसियस धर्ममा सदाचारलाई महत्त्व दिइएको छ । यसमा स्वर्ग वा नरकको बारेमा विचार गरिएको छैन । महात्मा कन्फ्युसियसले वर्तमानलाई नै महत्त्व दिएको अवस्था छ । ताओ धर्ममा मोक्षको बारेमा वर्णन छ । मोक्ष हुनु भनेको ताओ परमसत्तामा मिल्नु हो ।

जोरोस्टर इस्लाम धर्ममा यो सामान्य छ कि मृत्युको उपरान्त परमात्मा आत्माको कर्मानुसार शुभ वा अशुभ फल दिन्छ । दुवैमा न्याय दिवसको वर्णन मिल्दछ । दुवैमा स्वर्गको रमणीय एवम् नरकको विभत्सताको विस्तृत वर्णन गरिएको छ । इस्लाम धर्ममा स्वर्ग वा नरकमा स्थायी रूपमा रहनु पर्ने मान्यता रहेको छ भने जोरोस्टर धर्ममा नरकदेखि मुक्तिको विधान छ । यहूदी धर्ममा स्वर्ग एवम् नरकको तथा न्याय दिवसमा विश्वास गरिएको छ । यही कुरा क्रिश्चियन धर्मले पनि स्वीकार गरेको छ । जो मानिस उत्तम छ ऊ परमपिता परमात्मासँग घनिष्ठ सम्बन्धमा रहन्छ वा उसले आनन्दलाई प्राप्त गर्दछ । जो मानिस असहज वृत्तिवाला हुन्छ ऊ परमात्माबाट छुटेर नाना प्रकारका कष्ट उठाउँदछ । मानिस जस्तो बीज रोप्दछ, उस्तै फल पाउँदछ । जीससका अनुसार पापको फल मृत्यु र परमात्माको कृपा अमर जीवन प्राप्ति हो ।

हिन्दू धर्मले शुभकर्मद्वारा स्वर्ग एवम् अशुभकर्मद्वारा नरकको प्राप्ति हुने स्वीकारे जस्तै कुलको पूजाले शुभकर्म प्राप्ति हुने मान्यता रहेको छ । निष्काम कर्म, ज्ञान, भक्ति एवम् उपासनाद्वारा कुलको पूजाले पापको क्षय भई पुण्य प्राप्त गर्ने विश्वास रहेको छ ।

असत् तत्त्व (दुःखको अस्तित्व)

असत् तत्त्व (दुःखको अस्तित्व) स्वीकारका दृष्टिले प्रत्येक धर्म वा संसारमा असत् तत्त्व एवम् दुःखको अस्तित्व स्वीकार गरिएको छ । त्यसको निवारणको उपाएहरू पनि बताइएको छ । यसको स्वरूप, कारण, उत्तरदायित्व एवम् यसबाट मुक्तिको उपाएको बारेमा विभिन्न मत रहेको छ ।

(क) स्वरूप

हिन्दू धर्ममा असत् तऒवलाई अज्ञात एवम् अहंकारजन्य मानिएको छ । यो मिथ्या वा भ्रम स्वरूप हो अतः ज्ञानको प्राप्तिबाट यसको अन्त्य हुन्छ (सापकोटा, २०६२, पृ. १) । जैन धर्मका अनुसार समस्त, जड जगत दुःख स्वरूप हो (जै.वि.वि., २०१०, पृ. १०५) । बौद्ध धर्म दुःखका बारेमा अत्यधिक महऒव दिन्छ । यसका अनुसार समस्त विश्व दुःखको कारण हो । जीवन दुःख स्वरूप हो (डङ्गोल, २०६८, पृ.९५) । कन्फ्युसियस धर्मका अनुसार असत् तऒव वा दुःख धेरै मात्रामा छैन । मानिस स्वभावत उत्तम हुन्छ (गोस्वामी, २०६४, पृ. ५७६) । ताओ धर्मका अनुसार असत् तऒव संसारमा केही मात्रामा विद्यमान छ, त्यसको उपेक्षा गर्नु पर्दछ (गोस्वामी, २०६४, पृ. १६८) । जोरोस्टर धर्म आधा विश्वलाई दुःख रूप एवम् असत्को रूपमा स्वीकार गर्दछ । यसमा सत् एवम् असत् तऒवको संघर्ष प्रधान्य छ (गोस्वामी, २०६४, पृ. १६८) । क्रिश्चियन धर्मका अनुसार असत् तऒव मानव जीवनमा सर्वत्र व्याप्त भएर तऒवका रूपमा छ । मानिस प्रारम्भमा उत्तम एवम् शुद्ध रहेको मान्यता छ, पछि उसले पाप कर्म गरेकाले परिणामत दुःख स्वरूपको भागी भएको छ । (गोस्वामी, २०६४, पृ. १६८) । इस्लाम धर्मका अनुसार असत् तऒवको अस्थित्व काफिर मानिसका लागि हो (स्वामी, २०६५, पृ. ३०) । असत् तऒवको स्वरूपलाई भिन्न-भिन्न धर्ममा भिन्न-भिन्न प्रकारले लिइएको छ । कुलपूजामा असत् तऒवलाई अज्ञात एवम् अहंकारजन्य मानि सततऒवको पूजा गर्नुपर्ने मानिएको छ ।

(ख) कारण

हिन्दू धर्मका अनुसार दुःखको कारण यथार्थ ज्ञानको अभावमा देखिने भ्रम एवम् अहंकार हो (सापकोटा, २०६२, पृ. १२) । बौद्ध धर्ममा दुःखको कारण तृष्णालाई मानिएको छ । जैन धर्मका अनुसार जीवात्मा शुद्ध स्वरूप र भौतिक देह दुःख स्वरूप हो । कन्फ्युसियस धर्म नियमको आचरण नगर्दा दुःखको अस्तित्व मान्दछ । समाजमा जुन अनिष्ट तऒव छ त्यो नै दुःखको कारण हो । जोरोस्टर धर्म अहमानको वर्चस्व एवम् उसको पथको अनुसरण दुःखको कारण बताउँछ । क्रिश्चियन धर्मले इच्छा स्वतन्त्रको स्वार्थलाई दुःखको मूल कारण मान्दछ । इस्लाम धर्मको मान्यता अनुसार अल्लाहको आदेशको उल्लंघन गर्नु दुःखको कारण हो । असत् तऒवको कारणलाई भिन्न-भिन्न धर्ममा भिन्न-भिन्न प्रकारले लिइएको छ । कुलपूजा दुःखको कारण यथार्थ ज्ञानको अभावमा देखिने भ्रम एवम् अहंकार हटाउन गर्नुपर्ने मानिएको छ ।

(ग) उत्तरदायित्व

हिन्दू धर्मका अनुसार असत् तऒवको लागि कोही पनि उत्तरदायी छैनन् (सापकोटा, २०६२, पृ. १२) । अज्ञान अनादि कालदेखि रहिआएको छ, यद्यपि यसको अन्त हुन सक्दछ । यही बौद्ध धर्मको पनि मान्यता हो । जैन धर्म जडतऒवलाई दुःखको उत्तरदायी ठान्दछ । जोरोस्टर धर्मको मान्यता अनुसार अहमान जगत्मा असत् तऒवका लागि उत्तरदायी छ । कन्फ्युसियस, क्रिश्चियन, इस्लाम एवम् ताओ धर्म यसको लागि मानिसलाई उत्तरदायी मान्दछ । असत् तऒवको उत्तरदायित्वलाई भिन्न-भिन्न धर्ममा भिन्न-भिन्न प्रकारले लिइएको छ । कुलपूजा अज्ञानको अन्त गर्न गर्नुपर्ने बताइएको छ ।

(घ) मुक्ति साधन

हिन्दू धर्मका अनुसार असत्को मुक्तिका लागि कर्म, ज्ञान, भक्ति एवम् प्रवृत्तिको मार्गको प्रतिपादन गरिएको छ (सापकोटा, २०६२, पृ. १२) । बौद्ध धर्मका अनुसार बासनाको विनास नै यसको उपाए हो । यो आठ प्रकारको नैतिक नियमको पालना गर्नाले मात्र सम्भव छ । यसलाई अष्टांगिक मार्गका नामले चिनिन्छ । जैन धर्ममा तप, संयम एवम् इन्द्रिय दमन मुक्तिको साधन मानिएको छ । जोरोस्टर धर्मका अनुसार अहुरमजदको पथको अनुसरण गरेर अर्थात् उत्तम विचार, उत्तम वाणी, उत्तम कर्मद्वारा असत्को मुक्ति हुन्छ । कन्फ्युसियस धर्ममा सौजन्य, सहकार्य तथा नैतिक एवम् सामाजिक नियमको पालना यसको उपाए हो । ताओ धर्मले आफ्नोयसका लागि अब्यक्त ताओ मार्गको अनुसरणको विधान निर्धारण गरेको छ । क्रिश्चियन धर्मले परस्पर प्रेम एवम् सौहार्द समाजसेवा एवम् ईश्वर कृपालाई यसको साधन मान्दछ । इस्लाम धर्ममा अल्लाहको पैगम्बर हजरत मोहम्मदद्वारा प्रदर्शित मार्गको अनुसरण गर्नु यसको उपाय मान्दछ । असत् तत्वको मुक्तिको साधनलाई भिन्न-भिन्न धर्ममा भिन्न-भिन्न प्रकारले लिइएको छ । कुलपूजा असत्को मुक्तिका लागि कर्म, ज्ञान, भक्ति एवम् प्रवृत्तिमार्गको प्रतिपादन गर्न गर्नुपर्ने बताइएको छ ।

ईश्वरको स्वरूप कुल

विश्वमा अस्थित्वमा आएका व्यक्ति र तिनीहरूले जीवन निर्वाहको क्रममा प्रयोगमा ल्याएको समग्र शक्तिलाई ईश्वरको स्वरूप मान्दा कुललाई ईश्वरको रूपमा स्वीकार गरिएको छ । नेपाली शब्दकोशमा कुलदेवताको अर्थ परम्परादेखि मानिआएका देवता, पूख्यौली देवता (पोखरेल र अन्य, २०७२, पृ. २३९) कुलका देवता, पूखादेखि पूजा गरिएका देवता, देवाली वा गोठाधुपमा पूजा गरिने देवता (अधिकारी र भट्टराई, २०६८, पृ. १७८) मानिएको छ । इष्ट देवता र कुलदेवता दुवैलाई एकै रूपमा लिन सकिन्छ । कुलपरम्परादेखि पूजिएका देवतालाई कुलदेवता भनिएको छ । यसै विषयमा यजुर्वेदमा इष्टकाहरूको पूजाका लागि स्तोमहरूको स्थापना गर्ने गरिएको छ । स्तोमहरू यज्ञका सहायक भएर हामिलाई अभिष्ट फल सवै प्राप्त गराउछन् (लुइटेल्, २०६३, पृ. १९४) भनिएको छ ।

कुलपूजासँग सम्बन्धित अर्का देवता भैरवनाथलाई क्षेत्रपाल (लोकपाल, दिक्पाल) देवता भनिएको छ । यिनलाई शहरहरूका चार दिशाहरूमा स्थापना गरिएको छ । क्षेत्रपाल नाम अनुसार यिनले आफ्नो क्षेत्रको र त्याहाँका वासिन्दाहरूको रक्षा गर्दछन् भन्ने जनविश्वास छ । वेद र पुराणहरूमा वर्णित देवीदेवताहरूका साथ क्षेत्रपाल देवताको पूजा उपासना अनादिकालदेखि हाम्रो समाजमा प्रचलित रहिआएको छ । जसलाई विघ्नहरूका नाश गर्ने उद्धारक देवताका रूपमा मान्ने नेपाली परम्परा छ (चालिसे, २००४, पृ. ९२) । कुलपूजासँग सम्बन्धित शक्तिका पूजाका वारेमा वेद, पुराण, उपनिषद र स्मृतिशास्त्रहरूमा शक्ति शब्दको प्रयोग देवी, पराशक्ति, ईश्वरी, मूलप्रकृति आदि नामवाट निर्गुण र सगुण ब्रह्म दूवैका लागि गरिएको छ । पुराणहरूमा यिनलाई योगेश्वरी, योगनिन्द्रा, योगमाया, माहामाया, महानिन्द्रा, प्रकृति आदि नामवाट चिनाइएको छ । यस्तै शक्तितत्व ब्रह्मतत्वसँग अभिन्न छ । एउटै परमतत्वलाई निर्गुण, सगुण, निराकार, साकार, देव, देवी, ब्रह्मा, शिव, शक्ति, नारायण, नृसिंह आदि अनेक नामरूपवाट परिचित गराइएको छ ।

श्रीमद्भगवद्गीताको प्रथम अध्यायको ४४ श्लोकमा कुलधर्म लोप भएमा मानिसहरूको अनन्त कालसम्म नरकमा बास हुन्छ भनिएको छ (अज्ञात, पृ. ५३) । प्रेतकल्प गरुण पुराणमा कुलको वृद्धि र प्रकाशमानतालाई जोड दिइएको छ (भट्टराई, २०१८, पृ. २७७) । अग्निमा देवताका नाममा समिधा या आहुति समर्पण गर्ने कार्य नै देवयज्ञ हो । आपस्तम्भ वौद्धायन र गौतम धर्मसुत्रले देवताको नाम लिएर

स्वाहा शब्दको उच्चारण गर्दै अग्निमा कस्तिमा एउटा समिधा हाल्नु नै देवयज्ञ हो भनेर लेखेका छन् । धर्मसुत्रहरूमा प्रायः जसोले देव यज्ञका देवताहरूको नाम सूर्य, अग्नि, प्रजापति, सोम, वनस्पति, इन्द्र, धन्वतरी र ब्रह्मा लेखेको छ । देवयज्ञ र देवपूजा फरक फरक कार्य हुन् भन्ने कुरा स्मृतिहरूमा बताइएको छ । वैदिक युगमा देवपूजाको ठाउँमा देवयज्ञकै प्रचलन रहेको छ । मूर्ति पूजाको परम्परा व्यापक हुनु अगाडिको युगमा देवयज्ञ व्यापक रूपमा रहेको छ । मूर्ति पूजाको अत्यधिक विकाश भए पछि भने देवयज्ञको परम्परामा क्रमशः कमी आउन सुरु भएको छ । यज्ञवल्क्यले तर्पण र देवपूजा पछि मात्र देवयज्ञ गर्ने चलन रहेको उदाहरण यज्ञवल्क्य स्मृतिशास्त्रमा दिएको अवस्था छ (क्षत्री र खतिवडा, २०५४, पृ. १९३) । कुलपूजालाई देवयज्ञको रूपमा पनि स्वीकार गरिएको छ ।

मष्टा मष्ट या मष्टो एकै रूपमा प्रयोग हुने नेपाली भाषका शब्दहरू हुन् । यी तीनै शब्द नेपालको पश्चिमी खण्डका मानिसहरूले मान्ने कुलदेवताको रूपमा लिइएको छ । वृहत्त नेपाली शब्दकोषले मष्टाको अर्थ सूदुर पश्चिमाञ्चल भेगका (सेती, भेरी, कर्णली, महाकाली) खसहरूले मान्ने परम्परागत कुलदेवता भन्ने लगाएको छ । पूर्वी नेपालका केही ब्रह्माण क्षत्री जात भएका मानिसहरूले पनि कुल पूजागर्दा मष्टा देवतालाई पूजा गर्ने गरेको अवस्था छ (क्षत्री र खतिवडा, २०५४, पृ. १२०) । मष्ट देवताको उत्पत्तिका सम्बन्धमा अनेकौं किम्बदन्तीहरू स्थानिय रूपमा पाइएको अवस्था छ । यस्ता किम्बदन्तीहरू अनुसार प्राचीन युगमा राक्षसहरूको प्रकोप अत्यधिक रूपमा बढे पछि देवताहरूले नै मष्टको अवतार लिनुपरेको उल्लेख छ ।

कुलपूजामा धामिका रूपमा काम्ने मष्टको उपासना हुने सबै क्षेत्रमा धामिद्वारा मष्टो पूजा हुने गरेको छ । मष्टलाई धामिको शरीरमा आवाहन गरिन्छ । धामिको शरीरमा मष्ट आए पछि यस्ता धामिले मष्ट पूजा गर्ने, जोखाना हेर्ने, अभिर्युक्त पत्तालगाउने, रोग पत्तालगाउने र निकोपार्ने काम गरेको अवस्था छ । मष्ट पूजाको समयमा बाजा बजाउने, ढोले र भाषेको काम गर्ने, खावाको व्यवस्था हुन आवश्यक ठानिएको छ (क्षत्री र खतिवडा, २०५४, पृ. १२३) । कुलपूजाको परम्परा वेदकालीन समयदेखि नै चलिआएको अवस्था छ । वेदकालीन समयका मानिसहरूको बसोबास, रीतिरिवाजको अवस्था र अहिलेको समयका हामीहरूका बसोबास र रीतिरिवाजका बारेमा समय क्रमसगै परिवर्तन हुँदै जानुलाई सहजरूपमा लिनु पर्ने हुन्छ । वेदकालीन समाजका मानिसहरूको मुख्य बसोबासको थाकथलो जङ्गल र नदी किनाराहरू रहेका छन् भने आजका मानिसहरू भिडभाड र अस्तव्यस्त शहरी इलाकामा बसोबास गर्ने गरेको अवस्था छ । त्यस्तै वेदकालीन समयका मानिसहरू जङ्गलको छेउछाउमा बस्ने जङ्गली फलफूल तथा कन्दमूल खाएर आफ्नो जीवन निर्वाह गर्ने उनीहरूको मुख्य आवश्यकता सुरक्षित रहनु नै मानिएको छ । त्यस समयका मानिसहरूले आफूलाई सहयोग प्रदान गर्ने शक्तिलाई देव शक्ति र दुःख दिने शक्तिलाई राक्षसको रूपमा हेरेको अवस्था छ । यो सम्पूर्ण विश्व संरचनालाई शक्तिबाट सञ्चालित रहेको र संचालन गर्ने प्रकृत्याका लागि विभिन्न शक्तिहरूको आवश्यकता पर्ने ठानिएको छ ।

विश्व संरचनाका सम्पूर्ण चिजको आफ्नो-आफ्नो स्थान रहने र हरेकलाई उसको स्तर सुहाउँदो बस्ने ठाउँ, कामको व्यवस्था मिलाईएको अवस्था छ । विश्व संरचनाका सम्पूर्ण शक्तिका अधिकारीलाई खुसी गराएर शक्ति प्राप्त हुने कुराको विश्वास रहेको छ । यो संसार एउटा मेशिनका रूपमा रहेको यसलाई सञ्चालन गर्न यसका हरेक पार्टपूजाको आफ्नो-आफ्नो ठाउँमा महत्त्व रहेको मानिएको छ । देवशक्तिलाई एउटा पार्ट र मानव शक्तिलाई अर्को पार्टमा राखिएको छ । मानिसले आफुले गर्नु पर्ने काम भनेको देवशक्तिलाई आवश्यक रहने होम र पूजा गर्नु हो भने देवशक्तिले गर्नु पर्ने काम भनेको मानिसले गरेको पूजा र होमका आधारमा मानिसलाई अनिवार्य फल प्रदान गर्नु हो । एकले अर्कोलाई सहयोग गर्नुपर्ने कुराको उदाहरणको रूपमा वेदलाई लिन सकिन्छ । यउटा शक्ति बिना अर्को शक्ति अपुरो र अधुरो

रहने कुराको उदाहरणको रूपमा वेदकालीन समाजलाई लिँदा यो संसार रूपी मेशिनलाई चलाउन पूजा पाठको महत्त्व छ । पूजा पाठको त्यस मान्यतामा कुलपूजाको लागि सम्पूर्ण देव शक्ति एकै ठाउँमा भौतिक रूपमा उपस्थित हुन नसके पनि मानसिक रूपमा उनीहरूको उपस्थितिको कल्पना गरी विभिन्न देवी देवतालाई आफ्नो-आफ्नो स्थान दिने क्रममा स्तोमहरूको रचना गरिएको र उनीहरूको शक्ति र स्थान अनुरूप स्तोमहरूको रचना गरी पूजा गर्ने प्रचलन रहेको अवस्था छ ।

स्तोम पूजा शक्तिको केन्द्रीकरण र विकेन्द्रीकरण दुवैमा आधारित छ । यसले शक्तिका विभिन्न रूपमा शक्ति रहेको मानी शक्तिको विकेन्द्रीकरणलाई स्वीकार गरी त्यसलाई एक ठिक्का पारेर एकै ठाउँमा जोडेर विकेन्द्रीत शक्तिलाई केन्द्रीकरण गरेको छ । त्यसको पुष्टि यज्ञकै फलस्वरूप हामिलाई एक, तीन, पाँच, सात, नौ, एघार, तेह्र, पन्ध्र, सत्र, उन्नाइस, एककाइस, तेइस, पच्चिस, सत्ताइस, उनन्तीस, एकतीस र तेत्तीस संख्याका स्तोमहरू सहायक भएर अभिष्ट फल प्राप्त गराउने भनी मानिएको छ (लुइटेल्, २०६३, पृ. १९४) । त्यस्तै चार, आठ, बाह्र, सोह्र, चौबीस, अठ्ठाइस, बत्तीस, चवालीस र अठ्चालिस संख्याका स्तोमहरू यस यज्ञका सहायक भएर हामिलाई अभिष्ट फल सबै प्राप्त गराउने मानिएको छ (लुइटेल्, २०६३, पृ. १९४) । यसले स्तोमको संख्या ३३ र ४८ हुने कुरा प्रमाणित गरिदिएको छ ।

यजुर्वेदका अनुसार कुनै पनि स्थान, जात वा थर विशेष कुलपूजा वा इष्टपूजा फरक नहुने र कुलपूजालाई आफ्नो रक्षाका लागि गर्नु पर्ने कुरा त्रिवृत्त स्तोमद्वारा ब्रह्माको मृत्युबाट रक्षा भएको, पञ्चदश स्तोमद्वारा क्षत्रियको मृत्युबाट रक्षा भएको, सप्तदश स्तोमद्वारा वैश्यहरूको मृत्युबाट रक्षा भएको, एकविस स्तोमद्वारा वर्षा र वायुको मृत्युबाट रक्षा भएको, चतुर्विंश स्तोमद्वारा पशुको मृत्युबाट रक्षा भएको, पञ्चविंश स्तोमद्वारा गर्भमा रहेका प्राणिहरूको मृत्युबाट रक्षा भएको, त्रिणव स्तोमद्वारा प्रजाको शक्तिको रक्षा भएको, चतुष्टोम स्तोमद्वारा सवैमानिसले विचरण गर्ने गरेका दिशाहरूको रक्षा भएको, चत्वारिशत स्तोमद्वारा प्रजालाई मृत्युबाट रक्षा भएको, त्रयस्त्रिंशत स्तोमद्वारा सम्पूर्ण प्राणिलाई मृत्युबाट रक्षा भएको भन्ने पुष्टि गरेको छ ।

समग्र हिन्दू धर्मावलम्बीहरूको कुलपूजामा एउटै विधान निर्धारण गरिएको छ । त्यसैले कुलपूजालाई स्थान, जात वा थर विशेष नभई सबै स्थान, जात वा थरको एउटै विधानमा आधारित भई गर्नु पर्ने प्रष्ट छ । धामी काम्ने चलन भएका ठाउँमा गुरुद्वारा ज्ञान प्राप्त गराई एक ठाउँ र अर्को ठाउँका धामीहरूमा समझदारी विकास गरी ज्ञानको बृद्धिमा सहयोग पुग्ने वातावरणको सिर्जना गर्नु आवश्यक छ । मष्टलाई मामा भान्जा तेरो मेरो होइन देवताका रूपमा मानिएकाले मेरा मष्ट यी हुन् भन्नु भन्दा सबै मष्ट सबै थर वा जातले पुज्नु योग्य हुन् भन्ने भावना विकास गर्नु आवश्यक छ । देव शक्ति कै रूप मष्ट शक्ति हुन् त्यसैले मष्टलाई प्रेतदेवका रूपमा नभई देव शक्तिको रूपमा हेर्नु पर्ने आवश्यक छ । कुलपूजामा सम्पूर्ण देवता वा शक्तिलाई आफ्नो-आफ्नो स्थान दिई आदरभाव पूर्ण रूपले सम्मान गरिएको छ । त्यसैले अन्य पूजा भन्दा कुलपूजा विशिष्ट र उच्च श्रेणीको पूजा हो । कुलको अर्थ समग्रमा आधारित भए जस्तै कुलपूजा पनि सम्पूर्ण शक्तिको पूजा हो । यो वेदकालीन समयदेखि हालसम्म प्रचलनमा रहि आएको छ । यो नै कुलपूजाको आधार पनि हो । कुलपूजामा मष्टसँग सम्पूर्ण शक्तिको पूजा हुने हुँदा धार्मिक चिन्तनको ईश्वरीय स्वरूप कुलपूजा हो ।

कुललाई ईश्वरको स्वरूप मान्नाको मुख्य कारण हाम्रा देखापरेका, भविश्यमा देखापर्ने सबै खालका शत्रूहरूलाई कुलले रोकिदिने मानिएको छ । हामीलाई अपमानित नगरिकन चाहिएको वर प्रदान गर्ने, मार्ग दर्शन गराउने त्यसो भएपछि हामी सबै शत्रूलाई विनाश गर्नमा समर्थ हुने मानिएको छ । हामीलाई कुलले उत्तम सुख दिने मानिएको छ । कुलले प्राणीहरूका लागि विचरण गर्न योग्य पृथ्वी, प्रभामण्डललेयुक्त

अन्तरिक्ष, स्वर्गीय आनन्द प्रदाता, द्युलोक र सबैतिर व्याप्त रहेका दिशाहरूलाई रक्षा गरिदिने मानिएको छ । मनको मननशक्ति, समस्त संसारमा व्याप्त हुने गुण, नाडिहरूद्वारा शरीरमा व्याप्त प्राणवायु, समुन्द्रजस्तै गम्भीर मन र मुखबाट निस्केको वाँणी समेत कुलबाट प्राप्त भएको मानिएको छ । जल, पृथ्वी, आकाश, पाताल, दिशाहरू र देदियमान विद्युत कुलबाट प्राप्त भएको मानिएको छ । शरीरलाई बचाउने अन्न, शरीरलाई तृप्तपार्ने जल, कर्मबाट निवृत्त गर्ने रात्री, विशिष्ट व्यापारका प्रवर्तक दिनहरू, विस्तृत द्युलोक, गमन गर्न योग्य पृथ्वी र अत्यन्त शब्द निकाल्ने वायुदेवतालाई पनि कुल मानिएको छ । बाल्य आदि उमेर, जठराग्नि, प्रचुर ऐश्वर्य प्रदायक स्वर्ग, विभिन्न किसिमका मानिसहरू शोभायमान भूतल, सूर्यको रश्मिले व्याप्त अन्तरिक्षलाई कुलको रूपमा मानिएको छ । ढुङ्गामाटो, खाडल, जल, अन्नको रूपलाई कुल मानिएको छ । विचार, रूप, बुद्धि, सम्पत्ति, तेजलाई कुलको रूपमा मानिएको छ । कृषि, वर्षा र बीजबाट उत्पन्न हुने अन्नलाई कुल मानिएको छ (लुइटेल्, २०६३, पृ. १८७) । शुभकार्यका लागि, श्रेष्ठआचरणका लागि उत्तमविचारका लागि, भोकनिवारण गर्नका लागि, उत्तम कान्तिका लागि र क्रान्तिकारी परिवर्तनका लागि कुलपूजाको आवश्यक ठानिनुले कुललाई ईश्वरीय स्वरूपमा मानिएको प्रमाणित गरेको छ ।

निष्कर्ष

यो अनुसन्धान धार्मिक चिन्तनमा कुलको ईश्वरीय स्वरूपसँग सम्बद्ध विषयमा केन्द्रित रहेको छ । विभिन्न धर्मका धार्मिक चिन्तनका आधारमा कुलको नैतिक, धार्मिक एवम् आध्यात्मिक स्वरूपसँग सम्बन्धित भएर यो अनुसन्धान गरिएको छ । यसमा व्याख्यात्मक विधिको उपयोग गरिएको छ । धार्मिक चिन्तनमा गरिएको अनुसन्धान पद्धति वैज्ञानिक पद्धति हो । यसको अध्ययन बहुधर्म र बहुविधिको समायोजनका रूपमा गरिएको छ । हरेक धर्मका बीचमा विभिन्न अन्तर्विषयक पक्ष गाँसिएका छन् । सम्पूर्णधर्म एक उच्च, अनन्त एवम् दिव्यसत्ताको अनुभूति परमशक्तिको बन्दना, नयाँ कुराको लालसा, परमशक्तिमा प्रेम, नजीकपन र एकताको स्थापना गर्नमा केन्द्रित रहेका छन् । बस्तुतः सबै धर्मको सार एकै हो । विभिन्न धर्मका सिद्धान्त, आदर्श, परम्परा रीतिरिवाज आदिमा विभिन्नता हुँदाहुँदै पनि कतिपय सामान्य गुण विद्यमान रहेको अवस्था छ जसले एक सुन्दर धागोमा माला उने भै उनी सम्पूर्ण धर्मलाई एक सुन्दर मालाको रूप दिएको छ । यस अध्ययनबाट कुल पनि एक ईश्वरीय स्वरूपमा रहेकाले भातृभाव, समानता, विश्वबन्धुत्व अथवा सर्वोदयको भावना कुलबाट प्राप्त हुने मान्यता प्राप्त भएको छ । कुलपूजामा नीतिमय जीवन व्यतित गर्ने आधार, भातृभावना, समानता, विश्वबन्धुत्वको भावना रहेकोले कुल सम्पूर्ण धर्मको आदर्शको समग्र स्वरूप हो र आदर्शवादी दृष्टिकोणबाट धार्मिक चिन्तनको ईश्वरीय स्वरूप कुल हो भन्ने यसको प्राप्ति र निचोड रहेको छ ।

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बहुभाषिक कक्षाको नेपाली भाषा सिकाइ उपलब्धि

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लेखसार

प्रस्तुत अध्ययनले सामुदायिक विद्यालयका बहुभाषिक कक्षामा नेपाली भाषा सिकाइ उपलब्धिको विश्लेषणमा केन्द्रित रहेको छ । यस अध्ययनमा सामुदायिक विद्यालयका कक्षाको भाषिक परिवेश पहिचान गर्नु र उक्त विद्यार्थीहरूको भाषिक सिकाइ उपलब्धि पत्ता लगाउनु मुख्य उद्देश्य रहेको छ । यसमा परिमाणात्मक ढाँचाको अनुप्रयोग गरिएको छ । यसमा उद्देश्यपूर्ण नमुना छनोट प्रक्रियामार्फत कक्षा पाँचमा अध्ययनरत ६० जना विद्यार्थीहरूलाई सहभागीका रूपमा छनोट गरिएको छ । यस अध्ययनमा प्रश्नावली र कक्षाकोठा अवलोकनमार्फत तथ्याङ्क संकलन गरिएको छ । तथ्याङ्क सङ्कलनका लागि शब्दभण्डार, वर्णविन्यास, व्याकरण, पठनबोध, निर्देशित लेखन र स्वतन्त्र लेखनका क्षेत्रमा २५ पूर्णाङ्कको प्रश्नपत्रको प्रयोग गरिएको छ । नेपालमा बहुभाषिक शिक्षासम्बन्धी नीतिहरू निर्माण गरिए पनि प्रभावकारी कार्यान्वयन नभएको, संवैधानिक व्यवस्था र अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय प्रतिबद्धताका बावजुद पनि राज्यको उदासीनताका कारण बहुभाषिक शिक्षा कार्यक्रम अलपत्र परेको देखिन्छ । सिकाइ उपलब्धि बढाउन बहुभाषिक कक्षाकोठामा सबै भाषाहरूलाई समान महत्त्व दिनुपर्ने र मातृभाषामा आधारित शिक्षण विधिलाई प्रोत्साहन गर्नुपर्ने आवश्यकता औल्याइएको छ । यस अध्ययनमा सहभागी विद्यार्थीहरूमध्ये ३० जना नेपाली मातृभाषी र ३० जना अन्य मातृभाषी (भोजपुरी, मैथिली, ठेठी, मगर, नेवार, राई, थामी, डोटेली, हिन्दी र लामा) बोल्ने रहेका छन् । उक्त कक्षामा जम्मा ११ वटा भाषीक प्रयोक्ता विद्यार्थीहरू भएकाले सहरी क्षेत्रमा अवस्थित सामुदायिक विद्यालयहरूका कक्षाहरू बहुभाषिक रहेको पाइएको छ । यसमा बहुभाषिक कक्षाकोठामा नेपाली मातृभाषी विद्यार्थीहरूको तुलनामा नेपाली इतर मातृभाषी विद्यार्थीहरूको नेपाली भाषा सिकाइ उपलब्धि क्षमता कमजोर रहेको पाइयो । प्रारम्भिक कक्षामा मातृभाषा आधारित बहुभाषिक शिक्षा लागू गर्न सके विद्यार्थीहरूको सिकाइ उपलब्धि, सहभागिता र आत्मविश्वासमा उल्लेखनीय सुधार ल्याउन सकिने निष्कर्ष निकालिएको छ ।

प्रमुख शब्दावली : द्विभाषिक, बहुभाषिकता, बहुभाषिक कक्षा, भाषिक विविधता

अध्ययनको पृष्ठभूमि

भाषा सिक्ने क्षमता मानवको जन्मजात विशेषता हो । मान्छे जन्मेपछि हुर्कदै जाने क्रममा विभिन्न भाषिक परिवेशसँग घुलमिल हुँदै जान्छ । सर्वप्रथम बालकले आमाको काखमा मातृभाषा/ पहिलो भाषा सिक्दछ भने पछि भिन्नभाषासँग सम्पर्कशील हुँदा दोस्रो भाषा सिक्न थाल्दछ । यसरी सिकिएका भाषाहरूमध्ये कुनै बेला मातृभाषा र कुनै बेला दोस्रो भाषाको प्रयोग व्यवहार गर्दै जान्छ । वस्तुतः दुईवटा भाषाको प्रयोग व्यवहार गर्ने स्थितिलाई द्विभाषिक स्थिति वा द्विभाषिकता भनिन्छ । कतिपय भाषा प्रयोक्ताले एकाधिक भाषा सिक्ने अर्थात् धेरै भाषामा विचार विनिमय गर्ने धेय राखेका हुन्छन् । फलस्वरूप उनीहरू एकाधिक भाषाको प्रयोग व्यवहार गर्न थाल्दछन् । अधिकारी (२०७४) को अनुसार बहुभाषिकताले आपसी सम्प्रेषणका लागि

दुईभन्दा बढी भाषाको उपयोग गर्ने स्थितिलाई जनाउँछ। दुईभन्दा बढी भाषा प्रयोग व्यवहार गर्ने स्थितिलाई बहुभाषिक स्थिति वा बहुभाषिकता भनिन्छ।

नेपाल विविधताले भरिपूर्ण देश हो। वि. सं. २०७८ सालको जनगणना अनुसार नेपालमा १२४ वटा मातृभाषा प्रयोगमा रहेका छन् (राष्ट्रिय जनगणना, २०७८)। नेपालमा सार्वजनिक विद्यालयमा आधारभूत तहदेखि नै शिक्षाको माध्यम भाषा नेपाली रहँदै आएको छ। नेपालको सामाजिक भाषिक परिवेश अनुसार मातृभाषा वा बहुभाषिकतालाई शिक्षणको माध्यमका रूपमा प्रयोग गर्नु आवश्यक हुन्छ। नेपालजस्तो बहुभाषिक देशमा शिक्षा नीतिले नै राष्ट्रिय आवश्यकताहरू पूरा गर्न मातृभाषामा शिक्षा तथा बहुभाषिक शिक्षा अबलम्बन गर्नुपर्ने देखिन्छ। नेपालको सन्दर्भमा भाषाविद्हरूका विभिन्न अध्ययन अनुसार विद्यार्थीहरूको प्रारम्भिक चरणमा शिक्षा मातृभाषाका माध्यमबाट प्रदान गर्दा विद्यार्थीको सिकाइ उपलब्धि दर उच्च रहने कुरा व्यक्त गरिएको पाइन्छ (अधिकारी, २०७४)। बहुभाषिक शिक्षाले ज्ञान र अनुभवको स्थानान्तरणमा सहजीकरण गर्छ। यस क्रममा मातृभाषाका संज्ञानात्मक, भावनात्मक तथा मनोक्रियात्मक अनुभवहरूलाई अनुवाद गरी लक्ष्य भाषामा अन्तरण गर्न सकिन्छ। अधिकारी (२०७४) को अनुसार यो बहुभाषिक तथा बहुसांस्कृतिक परिवेशका लागि उपयोगीसिद्ध हुन्छ। भाषा शिक्षकले बहुभाषिक कक्षाको परिवेशलाई बोध गर्न सक्नुपर्दछ। बहुभाषिक कक्षाका समस्याहरूलाई पहिचान गरी समाधान गर्न सक्नुपर्दछ। यस किसिमका कक्षामा विविध सांस्कृतिक पृष्ठभूमि भएका बालबालिकाहरूको उपस्थिति रहेको हुन्छ। यसले संज्ञानात्मक क्षमताको संरक्षण गर्न मद्दत गर्छ। मातृभाषा सिकिसकेको सिकारुलाई अर्को भाषामा निपूर्ण बनाउन खोज्दा मातृभाषागत क्षमताहरू कमजोर हुने देखिन्छ। यसका लागि प्रारम्भिक चरणमा मातृभाषालाई प्रधान र लक्ष्य भाषालाई गौण तवरबाट प्रयोग व्यवहार गर्नुपर्दछ।

बहुभाषिकताले भाषिक विविधताको सम्मान गर्ने हुँदा यसको उपयोग प्रभावकारी बन्छ। बहुभाषिक शिक्षाले एउटै भाषा कक्षामा एकभन्दा बढी भाषाको प्रयोगलाई प्रोत्साहन गर्दछ। यसले बहुभाषिक कक्षा शिक्षणका समस्याको समाधानका रूपमा समेत भूमिका निर्वाह गर्छ। यसले सबै परिवेशमा मातृभाषाका माध्यमबाट शिक्षा व्यावहारिक नहुने स्थितिलाई सहजीकरण गर्छ (अधिकारी, २०७४)। यसरी भाषिक अधिकारको सम्मान गर्नु, शिक्षामा माध्यम र विषयका रूपमा बहुभाषिकतालाई सम्मान स्थान दिनुलाई पनि महत्त्वको रूपमा लिइन्छ। लोपोन्मुख र मातृभाषाको संरक्षण गर्नु, बहुभाषिक जनशक्तिको विकास गर्नु, समावेशी भाषा नीति अवलम्बन गर्नु आदि जस्ता कार्य गर्नुपर्ने भएकोले बहुभाषिक शिक्षाको आवश्यकता देखिन्छ। नेपालका सबै भाषाहरू लेख्य प्रयोगको दृष्टिले समृद्ध नरहेको, लिपि निर्माण गर्न कठिनाई हुने गरेको तथा गहन अनुसन्धान हुन नसकेको कारणले बहुभाषी शिक्षा कार्यन्वयन गर्न थप चुनौती देखिएको छ।

भाषा प्रयोक्ताले सम्प्रेषणका निम्ति एकभन्दा बढी भाषाहरू प्रयोग गर्छ, भने ऊ बहुभाषी भन्न पुग्छ। “नेपाल बहुजाति, बहुभाषिक, बहुधार्मिक र बहुसांस्कृतिक देश हो” (संविधान, २०७२, पृ. १)। व्यक्ति, समाज, राष्ट्रका निम्ति विविध आवश्यकता र चाहनाले बहुभाषिक समाज निर्माण हुन्छ। भाषिक प्रयोक्ता आफ्नो व्यक्तिगत कारण र भाषा नीतिका कारण द्विभाषिक र बहुभाषिक बन्ने अवस्था सिर्जना हुन्छ। यस अध्ययनमा काठमाडौँ महानगरपालिकाको सामुदायिक विद्यालय अन्तर्गत बहुभाषिक कक्षाको नेपाली भाषा सिकाइको उपलब्धिको बारेमा अध्ययन गरिएको छ।

संविधानले मातृभाषामा शिक्षा दिने अधिकार सुनिश्चित गरे पनि पाठ्यपुस्तक, तालिमप्राप्त शिक्षक र शैक्षिक सामग्रीको अभावले यसको कार्यान्वयन चुनौतीपूर्ण बनेको छ। अहिलेको परिवेशमा

अंग्रेजी शिक्षा निजी विद्यालयहरूमा शिक्षण माध्यमकै रूपमा प्रयोग भइरहेकाले यसको प्रभाव अभूतै बढेको छ । मातृभाषामा शिक्षा नपाउँदा विद्यार्थीहरू भाषिक पहिचान गुमाउने, सिकाइमा कठिनाई भोग्ने र सांस्कृतिक विच्छेदन हुने खतरा बढेको छ । यसैले नेपालमा भाषा शिक्षाको अवस्था बहुभाषिक समाजअनुसार जटिल बन्दै गएको छ र मातृभाषा शिक्षालाई सुदृढ नगरेसम्म धेरै भाषाहरू लोप हुने सम्भावना रहन्छ । बहुभाषिक शिक्षाको अवधारणा र अभ्यास बिच तालमेल मिलेको देखिँदैन । जसले गर्दा बहुभाषिक शिक्षा कार्यन्वयन प्रभावकारी बन्न सकिरहेको छैन (तामाङ र राई, सन् २०१३) । स्थानीय तथा राष्ट्रिय आवश्यकता र सन्दर्भलाई मध्यनजर गरी आफ्नो मुलुक सुहाउँदो भाषिक नीति बनाउनु पर्ने देखिन्छ । बहुभाषिक शिक्षाप्रति राज्यले अपनत्वबोध गरेको पाइँदैन । संघीय नेपाल निर्माण पछि प्रत्येक प्रदेशको भाषिक नीति के हुने भन्ने कुरो पनि विचारणीय छ । भाषिक कठिनाइहरूले गर्दा बहुभाषिक कक्षामा भाषा शिक्षण सिकाइका क्रममा भाषिक समस्याहरू हुने गरेको पाइन्छ । बहुभाषिक कक्षामा भाषा सिक्दा देखापर्ने कठिनाइका क्षेत्र पहिचान गर्नु नै यस अनुसन्धानको प्राज्ञिक समस्या रहेको छ ।

अध्ययनको उद्देश्य

यस अध्ययनमा सामुदायिक विद्यालयका कक्षाकोठाको भाषिक परिवेश पहिचान गर्नु र उक्त कक्षाकोठाको भाषिक सिकाइ उपलब्धि पत्ता लगाउनु उद्देश्य रहेको छ ।

पूर्वकार्यको पुनरावलोकन

फ्याक (२०६९) ले बहुभाषिकताको बारेमा बहुभाषिकता विनाको शिक्षाले कसरी सामाजिक न्यायलाई प्रोत्साहन गर्छ भन्नेबारे विमर्श गरिएको पाइन्छ । पराजुली (२०७२) ले बहुभाषिक शिक्षामा बहुभाषिक स्थितिको पहिचान, बहुभाषिक शिक्षाको आवश्यकता र बहुभाषिक शिक्षाको कार्यान्वयनमा देखिएका चुनौती र समधानका उपायहरू पत्ता लगाउने उद्देश्य राखी अध्ययन गरेको पाइन्छ । रिमाल (२०७४) ले भाषिक विविधताको उपयोग सम्बन्धी अभ्यासहरूको विश्लेषण, भाषिक स्थिति र बहुभाषिकताको बारेमा विश्लेषण गरिएको छ । बम (सन् २०२१) ले बहुभाषिक पाठ्यक्रमको सान्दर्भिकतामा नेपालको भाषिक अवस्था, मातृभाषामा शिक्षा र बहुभाषिक शिक्षा, नेपालमा बहुभाषिक पाठ्यक्रम निर्माणको नीतिगत व्यवस्था, नेपालमा मातृभाषामा शिक्षाका लागि भएका प्रयास र नेपालमा बहुभाषिक पाठ्यक्रम निर्माणको सान्दर्भिकता समावेश गरी लेख लेखेका छन् ।

बहुभाषिकता सम्बन्धी गरिएका कार्यहरूको समीक्षण गर्दा केही सैद्धान्तिक र प्रायोगिक कार्यहरू सम्पन्न भएका देखिन्छन् । नेपालमा यसबारे अध्ययनको दायरा फराकिलो बनिसकेको देखिँदैन । यस नवीन आयमलाई आधार मानेर भाषा सिकाइको परिवेशमा आधारित रही अनुसन्धेय कार्य नभएकाले उक्त विषयलाई प्रमुख अध्ययनको रिक्तताको स्पष्ट खाका निर्माण गरेको छ । यसले गर्दा यो लेख तयार गर्ने स्पष्ट आधार प्राप्त भएको छ ।

सैद्धान्तिक अवधारणा

बहुभाषिकता नेपालको विशिष्ट विशेषता हो । नेपालमा सहरी क्षेत्रका विद्यालयहरूका कक्षाकोठा बहुभाषिक र बहुसांस्कृतिक रहेका छन् । नेपालमा भाषाप्रयोक्ताहरू अत्याधिक धेरै भाषाहरूसँग सम्पर्कशील रहेका पाइन्छन् । नेपालमा भाषा प्रयोगमा विविधता रहेको छ (पौडेल र भट्टराई, २०७७) । प्रयोगमा रहेका भाषाहरूमा संरचनागत र शैलीगत विविधता रहेको छ । यी भाषाहरूको भौगोलिक वितरण समेत बहुआयामिक देखा पर्छ ।

नेपालमा मातृभाषाका रूपमा प्रयोगमा रहेका भाषा सङ्ख्या, प्रयोगत परिवेश, प्रयोक्ता र भाषिक जीवन्तताका बारेमा वस्तुगत तथ्याङ्क भेटिँदैन । जनगणनाको क्रममा लिइएका भाषाहरूको सङ्ख्या, प्रयोक्ता सङ्ख्या र प्रयोग परिवेशका बारेमा पनि एकरूपता पाइँदैन । नेपालका विभिन्न जातिभाषिक समुदायले परिस्थिति अनुसार विभिन्न भाषाको प्रयोग गर्दै आएका छन् । भाषा सामाजिक वस्तुमात्र नभएर शक्तिको स्रोत पनि भएकाले नेपालको एकीकरणभन्दा पहिलेदेखि नै भाषा प्रयोगको स्थितिमा परिवर्तन भएको पाइन्छ । वर्तमानमा जनगणना गर्दा समेत भाषिक तथ्याङ्कमा अनेक रूपता देखा पर्ने गरेको छ ।

नेपालमा भाषिक विविधता देखिए जस्तै विश्वमा नै भाषिक विविधता देख्न सकिन्छ । रिमाल (२०७४) ले युनेस्को (सन् २०१०) को सन्दर्भ दिँदै भनेका छन् : विश्वमा लगभग ७००० भन्दा बढी भाषाहरू बोलिन्छन् (पृ. १३) । राज्यहरूले भाषा प्रयोगको नीति तर्जुमा गर्दा एक भाषिक (जापान, कोरिया, फ्रान्स,..) तथा बहुभाषिक नीति (पपुआ न्युगिनी, भारत, फिलिपिन्स, मलेसिया, इन्डोनेसिया, पाकिस्तान आदि) अबलम्बन गर्ने गरेका देखिन्छन् । भाषाको एकभाषिक दृष्टिकोणमा एउटै भाषाले शिक्षा, सञ्चार र प्रशासनमा स्थान पाएका हुन्छन् । यस्तो नीतिमा अल्पसंख्यक वा सीमान्तकृत मानिसहरूको भाषालाई बेवास्ता गरिन्छ । उनीहरू बाध्यतावस आफ्नो अस्तित्व कायम राख्न राज्यको कामकाजी भाषा अपनाउन बाध्य पारिन्छन् । यस विपरित, बहुभाषिक दृष्टिकोणले सबै भाषाहरूको विकास र सशक्तीकरण गर्ने समान अवसर प्रदान गरेको हुन्छ ।

समाजमा दुई वा सोभन्दा बढी भाषाको प्रयोग व्यवहारबाट भाषिक कार्यसम्पादनार्थ बहुभाषिक शिक्षा आवश्यक मानिन्छ । नेपालमा फिन्ल्याण्ड सरकारको प्राविधिक सहयोगमा बहुभाषिक शैक्षिक कार्यक्रम' १५ जनवरी २००७ (१ माघ २०६३) देखि प्रारम्भ भएको पाइन्छ । बहुभाषिक शिक्षा निर्देशिका (२०६६) ले स्थानीय मातृभाषासमेत एक वा एकभन्दा बढी भाषाका माध्यमबाट दिइने शिक्षालाई बहुभाषी शिक्षा भनिएको छ (तामाङ र राई, २०१३) । बालकले आफ्नै भाषामा पढ्न पाउने अधिकारलाई सुनिश्चित गर्न बहुभाषिक शिक्षालाई राज्यले नीतिगत रूपमा अबलम्बन गर्नु पर्दछ । बहुभाषिक शिक्षालाई प्रभावकारी बनाउन विद्यालयले बहुभाषिक कक्षाको व्यवस्था गर्नु पर्दछ । बहुभाषिक कक्षा शिक्षण विद्यालयका प्रारम्भिक कक्षाहरूमा निकै महत्त्वपूर्ण मानिन्छ ।

बहुभाषिक कक्षामा विद्यार्थीहरूको भाषिक पृष्ठभूमि फरक फरक रहेको हुन्छ । उनीहरूको गृह (घरेलु) भाषा र विद्यालयको भाषा भिन्न भिन्न हुनसक्छ । काठमाडौं महानगरपालिकाका सामुदायिक विद्यालयहरूमा शिक्षणको माध्यम भाषाका रूपमा नेपाली र अङ्ग्रेजी भाषालाई प्राथमिकता दिइएको पाइन्छ । तर विद्यार्थीहरूको घरयसी कामकाजका निमित्त प्रयोग हुने नेवार, तामाङ, राई, भोजपुरी, मैथिली र शेर्पा आदि भाषा रहेका देखिन्छन् । साथै कक्षाकोठाभित्र विद्यार्थीहरू शिक्षण सिकाइमा असहज महसुस गर्ने गरेको भेटिन्छ । यसरी मातृभाषा र शिक्षाको माध्यम भाषा भिन्नभिन्नै हुँदा सिकाइ शिक्षण कार्य दुरुह बन्दै जान्छ (अधिकारी, २०७४) । यस्तो परिवेशमा विद्यालयमा घरेलु भाषाको प्रयोगमा प्रतिबन्ध लगाइदा शिक्षकहरूले पनि दवाव महसुस गर्छन् । यसरी माध्यम भाषाको मात्रै प्रयोग गर्दा सिकाइ क्षमतामा क्षयीकरण हुन थाल्छ । विद्यार्थी कक्षामा निष्क्रिय हुन्छ । यस्तो दवावपूर्ण अवस्थामा बालबालिकाले आधारभूत विद्यालयका प्रारम्भिक वर्षहरू बिताउँछन् ।

द्विभाषिक बालकहरूमा संज्ञानात्मक विकास, सामाजिकरण, भाषिक लचिलोपन राम्रो भएको अध्ययनहरूको निष्कर्ष रहेको छ । “द्विभाषिकतासम्बन्धी पछिल्ला अध्ययनहरूले एकभाषिकहरू भन्दा द्विभाषिकहरूको बौद्धिक क्षमता माथिल्लो रहेको देखाएका छन्” (अधिकारी, २०७४) । विद्यालयमा घरेलु

भाषाको अभाव हुँदा विद्यार्थीले अन्य विषयलाई बुझ्न कठिनाई देखापर्दछ । यसैले उनीहरूको आधारभूत तहको शिक्षा नै दयनीय बन्दै जान्छ । यस्तो स्थितिमा भाषा शिक्षकलाई बहुभाषिक परिवेशमा भाषा शिक्षणबारे अधिगत हुनुपर्छ । विद्यार्थीको मातृभाषाको प्रकृति र भाषा सिकाइ रणनीतिबारे भाषा शिक्षकलाई जानकारी हुँदा सिकाइ सहजीकरण फलदाई बन्ने हुन्छ । कतिपय सिकारूहरू विद्यालयीय शिक्षा प्रारम्भ हुनुपूर्व नै आफ्नो मातृभाषा पहिलो भाषामा पारङ्गत भइसकेको हुन्छन् । उनीहरू मातृभाषाको प्रभावमा विद्यालयीय भाषा सिक्न सक्छन् । यस परिवेशमा भाषा सिकारूको मातृभाषालाई कक्षाकोठामा उचित सम्मान नदिइए विद्यालयीय भाषा सिक्न जटिल हुन्छ । विद्यालयका कक्षाकोठामा माध्यम भाषाका शब्दहरूका साथै अन्य भाषाहरूमा पनि सिकाउन सकिन्छ । विद्यार्थीले कक्षाकोठामा आफ्नो मातृभाषा प्रयोग गर्ने र सुन्न पाउने अवसर पाउनुपर्छ । घरको भाषाको मद्दतले बालबालिकाले विद्यालयको भाषा सजिलै सिक्न सक्छन् । धेरै सिकारूहरूले विद्यालय आउनु अघि घर र छिमेकमा भाषा सिकिसकेका हुन्छन् । यस परिवेशमा सीमान्तकृत समूहका बालबालिकाहरूको भाषा शिक्षण गर्दा तिनीहरूको भाषा अन्य विकसित भाषा जतिकै व्यवस्थित र समृद्ध छ । तिनीहरूको भाषाबाट सबै कुरा गर्न सम्भव छ भन्ने पक्षमा भाषा शिक्षक सचेत बनुपर्छ । बहुभाषिक समाज तथा भाषिक विविधतायुक्त समाजमा विद्यालय कक्षाहरू बहुभाषिक हुन्छन् । यस अवस्थामा कक्षाकोठामा विद्यार्थीहरूको भाषा स्वीकारिँदैन भने विद्यालयलाई नै स्वीकार नगरेको प्रतीत हुन्छ । भाषा शिक्षकले सबै भाषाहरूलाई समान महत्त्व दिनुपर्छ र कुनै पनि भाषालाई निम्न वा उच्च मान्नु हुँदैन ।

बालबालिकाले आधारभूत तहसम्म आफ्नो मातृभाषामा पढ्न पाउने अधिकारलाई नेपालको संविधान २०७२, शिक्षा ऐन (२०२८ संशोधन सहित) तथा नियमावली (२०५९ संशोधन सहित), विद्यालय शिक्षाको राष्ट्रिय पाठ्यक्रम प्रारूप २०७६, पन्ध्रौं पञ्चवर्षीय योजना (वि.स. २०७६/७७ - २०८०/८१), स्थानीय सरकार सञ्चालन ऐन २०७४, अनिवार्य तथा निःशुल्क शिक्षा ऐन २०७५, उच्च स्तरीय राष्ट्रिय शिक्षा आयोग २०७५, साक्षरता अभियान २०७६ आदिले स्थापित गर्नुको साथै विभिन्न अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय महासन्धिहरूले स्थापित गरेको छ ।

भाषिक विविधताको उचित सम्बोधन गरी बालमैत्री वातावरणमा शिक्षण गर्दा बढी प्रभावकारी हुने गर्दछ । यस किसिमको शिक्षाले भाषिक आन्दोलन र भाषिक अधिकारप्रति सम्मान व्यक्त गर्ने हुन्छ । मातृभाषाको संरक्षण र सम्बर्द्धन गरी आधारभूत भाषिक सञ्चार सिपको विकास गर्न बहुभाषिक शिक्षाको आवश्यकता पर्दछ । वर्तमानमा शिक्षाविद्हरू र भाषासम्बन्धी जानकारहरू बहुभाषिकतालाई विद्यालय शिक्षाको माध्यमका रूपमा लिनुपर्नेमा जोड दिन्छन् । बहुभाषिकताले शैक्षिक उपलब्धि र संज्ञानात्मक वृद्धिमा सकारात्मक प्रभाव पार्दछ । नेपालका भाषाहरूको अध्ययनले द्विभाषिका वा बहुभाषिक बालबालिकाहरू एकभाषी बालबालिकाभन्दा बढी रचनात्मक र सामाजिक रूपमा सक्रिय हुने गरेको पाइन्छ ।

बहुभाषिकताको परिचय

नेपाल बहुभाषिक मुलुक हो । “दुई वा सोभन्दा बढी भाषाहरूको उपयोग हुने स्थितिलाई बहुभाषिकता भनिन्छ” (रिमाल, २०७५, पृ. ७) । बहुभाषी भनेको दुई वा बढी भाषाहरू प्रयोग गर्ने व्यक्ति हो । विश्वमा बहुभाषिक मानिसको सङ्ख्या एकभाषीहरूको तुलनामा धेरै छ । कुनै पनि व्यक्तिको ज्ञान र व्यक्तित्व विकासका लागि बहुभाषिकता निकै उपयोगी हुन्छ । दुईभन्दा बढी भाषा प्रयोग व्यवहार गर्ने स्थितिलाई बहुभाषिक भनिन्छ । कुनै पनि व्यक्तिले मातृभाषा जस्तै अरू एक वा सोभन्दा बढी भाषाको प्रयोग गर्नु नै बहुभाषिकता हो । “दुईभन्दा बढी भाषाको वैकल्पिक उपयोग गरी सम्प्रेषण

गर्न सकने सामार्थ्य नै बहुभाषिकता हो” (पौडेल, २०७४, पृ. १९) । सजिलैसँग दुई भाषा बोल्ने व्यक्तिलाई द्विभाषी भनिन्छ भने दुईभन्दा बढी भाषा सजिलैसँग बोल्ने व्यक्तिलाई बहुभाषिक भनिन्छ ।

नेपालको भाषा नीति

भाषानीतिलाई राज्यद्वारा भाषासम्बन्धी तयार पारिएको आधारभूत सिद्धान्त वा मान्यताका रूपमा बुझ्न सकिन्छ । “भाषाको संरक्षण, संवर्द्धन, विकास र स्तरीकरणका निम्ति राज्य वा सरकारले अँगाल्ने नीतिलाई नै भाषानीति भनिन्छ” (गिरी, २०१०, पृ. १९३) । देशमा बोलिने सम्पूर्ण भाषाहरूको विकासका लागि उचित कदम चाल्नु हरेक राष्ट्रको दायित्व पनि हो र त्यसका लागि प्रथमतः भाषासम्बन्धी नीति बनाउनु पर्दछ । अतः आआत्नो देशमा बोलिने भाषाको उचित विकास र संरक्षणका निमित्त हरेक राज्यले भाषाका सम्बन्धमा तय गरेको स्पष्ट भाषा नीतिलाई बुझ्न सकिन्छ । “मुलुकमा निहित भाषा र तिनको अवस्था, प्रयोगगत वैशिष्ट्यता, तिनको संरक्षण, संवर्द्धनका निम्ति चालेको आधिकारिक कदम एवम् कानुनी प्रावधान तथा मान्यता नै भाषानीति हो” (पौडेल र भट्टराई, २०७७, पृ. ५) । प्रायः देशहरूमा एकभन्दा बढी भाषाहरू प्रचलनमा रहेका छन् । यस्तो स्थितिमा प्रचलित भाषाहरूमध्ये राष्ट्र भाषा, सरकारी कामकाजको भाषा, स्तरीय भाषा, सम्पर्क भाषा, शिक्षा तथा सञ्चारको भाषा, आदिमध्ये कुन भाषालाई कस्तो स्तर प्रदान गर्ने, ती भाषाहरूलाई कुनकुन रूपमा प्रयोग गर्ने भन्ने सम्बन्धमा हरेक राष्ट्रले एउटा स्पष्ट नीति तयार पारेको हुन्छ जसलाई भाषा नीति भनिन्छ ।

भाषा नीति कुनै पनि राष्ट्रले आत्नो देशमा प्रचलित भाषाहरूका सम्बन्धमा अवलम्बन गर्ने नीति हो । भाषाको विकास, विस्तार र संरक्षण गर्न, देशमा प्रचलित भाषाहरूलाई सबल र समृद्ध बनाउन, भाषाहरूका बिचमा सामीप्यता कायम गर्न, विभिन्न भाषिक वक्ताहरू बिच अन्तर सम्प्रेषणीयता कायम गर्ने लगायतका विविध सन्दर्भमा भाषानीतिको आवश्यकता र महत्त्व रहन्छ ।

नेपालको पहिलो लिखित संविधान (वैधानिक कानून, २००४) मा भाषाको नीतिगत व्यवस्था सम्बन्धमा कुनै कुरा उल्लेख गरिएको पाइँदैन । वि.सं. २००७ सालमा ‘अन्तरिम शासनविधान’ नामक संविधान जारी गरिएको पाइन्छ । उक्त संविधान नेपाली र नेपालका अन्य भाषा सम्बन्धमा मौन रहेको देखिन्छ । यसै सन्दर्भमा वि.सं. २०१५ सालमा ‘नेपाल अधिराज्यको संविधान २०१५’ जारी गरिएको छ । यो संविधानको धारा ७० मा “देवनागरी लिपिमा नेपाली भाषा राष्ट्रभाषा हुनेछ” भन्ने राष्ट्रभाषा सम्बन्धी एकभाषिक नीति अवलम्बन गरेको पाइन्छ ।

पहिलो पटक २०१५ को संविधानले नेपाली भाषालाई राष्ट्रभाषाको मान्यता दिई भाषासम्बन्धी संवैधानिक व्यवस्थाको प्रारम्भ गरेको छ । यस संविधानले नेपाली भाषालाई संवैधानिक मान्यता दिए तापनि अन्य भाषाका सम्बन्धमा भने यो संविधान पनि मौन रहेको देखिन्छ । यस अर्थमा यो संविधानले एक भाषिक नीतिलाई अवलम्बन गरेको कुरा प्रष्ट हुन आउँछ ।

वि.सं. २०१९ सालमा ‘नेपालको संविधान २०१९’ जारी भएको छ । उक्त संविधानमा भाषासम्बन्धी “नेपालको राष्ट्र देवनागरी लिपिमा नेपाली भाषा हो, भाग-१ दफा -४” भन्ने उल्लेख गरिएको पाइन्छ । यसरी भाषासम्बन्धी उक्त संवैधानिक व्यवस्था पनि २०१५ को संविधानकै निरन्तरताका रूपमा रहेको छ ।

२०४७ पूर्वका केही संविधानमा नेपाली भाषाका बारेमा स्पष्ट दृष्टिकोण राखिएको भए पनि अन्य भाषाका विषयमा भने मौन रहेको हुँदा वि.सं. २०४७ साल अघिको भाषा नीति एकभाषिक

देखिन्छ । यसै सिलसिलामा 'नेपाल अधिराज्यको संविधान २०४७' जारी भएको देखिन्छ । यो संविधान नै नेपाली भाषाका साथै नेपालमा बोलिने अन्य भाषासम्बन्धी चर्चा गर्ने पहिलो संविधान बन्न पुग्यो । यस संविधानमा नेपालभित्र बोलिने भाषाहरूलाई राष्ट्र भाषा र राष्ट्रिय भाषामा विभाजन गरिएको पाइन्छ । संवैधानिक व्यवस्थालाई दृष्टिगत गर्दा पूर्ववर्ती संविधानको तुलनामा यस २०४७ को संविधानले नेपाली भाषाका साथै अन्य भाषाका सम्बन्धमा उदारता देखाएको पाइन्छ । यस संविधानले नेपालमा प्रथमतः बहुभाषिक नीति अवलम्बन गरेको पाइन्छ ।

नेपालमा वि.सं. २०६३ सालमा 'नेपालको अन्तरिम संविधान २०६३' जारी भएको थियो । यस संविधानमा सर्वप्रथम नेपालीलगायत नेपालमा बोलिने सबै भाषालाई राष्ट्रभाषाको मान्यता दिएको थियो । यसले नेपालमा बोलिने सबै भाषाको विकास, संरक्षण र प्रोत्साहन गर्ने ध्येय राखी बहुलवादी भाषानीति अवलम्बन गरेको पाइन्छ । यस संविधानमा व्यवस्था गरिएका कुराहरूलाई दृष्टिगत गर्दा राज्यले यसभन्दा अधिका संविधानमा गरेका विभेदकारी भाषा नीतिको अन्त्य गरी बहुलवादी भाषा नीति अवलम्बन गर्न पुगेको देखिन्छ ।

नेपालमा २०७२ सालबाट 'नेपालको संविधान २०७२' जारी भएको छ । यस संविधानले नेपालमा बोलिने सबै मातृभाषाका बिच समान महत्त्व स्थापित गर्न खोजेको छ । यसले उदार भाषा नीति अवलम्बन गरेको छ । यस संविधानसँगै नेपालमा नेपाली भाषालाई सरकारी कामकाजको भाषाका रूपमा उल्लेख गरेको छ भने हरेक प्रदेशले नेपाली भाषाका अतिरिक्त आफ्नो प्रदेशभित्र बहुसङ्ख्यक जनताले बोल्ने भाषालाई समेत प्रदेश कानूनबमोजिम सरकारी कामकाजको भाषा निर्धारण गर्न सक्ने कानुनी व्यवस्था अघि सारेको छ । त्यस्तै आफ्नो मातृभाषामा शिक्षा पाउने, हरेक समुदायलाई आफ्नो भाषा, साहित्य, संस्कृति आदिको संरक्षण र विकास गर्ने जस्ता कुराहरूलाई पनि संविधानमा उल्लेख गरिएको पाइन्छ । यस संविधानमा भाषा सम्बन्धी बहुलतावादी एवम् बहुभाषिक दृष्टिकोण अवलम्बन गरिएको छ । यसमा सरकारी कामकाजको भाषाका लागि मान्यता पाउने आधार तय गरी नेपाल सरकार समक्ष सिफारिस गर्ने, भाषाहरूको विकास, संरक्षण र सम्बर्द्धनका लागि उपाय अवलम्बन गर्ने, मातृभाषाको विकासको स्तर मापन गरी शिक्षामा यसको संभाव्यताबारे नेपाल सरकार समक्ष सुझाव पेस गर्ने, भाषाहरूको अध्ययन, अनुसन्धान, अनुगमन गर्ने र नेपाल सरकारले प्रदेश सरकारसँग समन्वय गरी प्रदेशमा भाषा आयोगको स्थापना गर्न सक्ने जस्ता अधिकारहरू तोकि भाषा आयोगको गठन गर्ने नीतिगत व्यवस्था समेत अवलम्बन गरेको छ ।

वस्तुतः वि.सं. २००४ र २००७ मा निर्मित संविधानमा भाषाको नीतिगत व्यवस्थाबारे कुनै कुरा उल्लेख गरिएको पाइँदैन । वि.सं. २०१५ को संविधानले पहिलो पटक नेपाली भाषालाई मात्र संवैधानिक मान्यता प्रदान गरेको देखिन्छ । वि.सं. २०१९ को संविधानले पनि नेपाली भाषालाई राष्ट्रभाषाका रूपमा स्थापित गरेको पूर्ववर्ती संवैधानिक व्यवस्थालाई निरन्तरता दिएको पाइन्छ । वि.सं. २०४७ सालको संविधानले भने नेपालीका साथै नेपालका अन्य भाषाको विकासमा केही उदारता देखाएको पाइन्छ । वि.सं. २०६३ र २०७२ मा निर्मित संविधानमा नेपाली र नेपालका अन्य भाषाको नीतिगत व्यवस्थाबारे बहुभाषिक नीति अवलम्बन गरिएको पाइन्छ । वर्तमान संविधान भाषिक अधिकारका बारेमा निकै उदार देखिए पनि भाषाबारे विश्वसनीय तथ्याङ्क नहुँदा तथा राष्ट्रिय स्तरको बहुभाषिक नीति तय नहुँदा भाषिक अधिकारलाई सुनिश्चित गर्न सकेको देखिँदैन ।

भाषाका विकास, संरक्षण र सम्बर्द्धन गर्ने सन्दर्भमा राष्ट्रिय भाषा नीति सुझाव आयोगको प्रतिवेदन (वि.सं. २०५०) ले शिक्षाको माध्यम भाषाका सन्दर्भमा प्राथमिक तहमा शत प्रतिशत

मातृभाषी विद्यार्थी भएमा मातृभाषा, दुई भाषाका विद्यार्थी भएमा द्विभाषिक शिक्षा र बहुभाषी विद्यार्थीको जमघट भएमा राष्ट्रभाषा माध्यम उपयुक्त हुने सुझाव दिएको पाइन्छ । यसको आशय नेपाली भाषा बहुभाषिक कक्षामा माध्यम भाषाका रूपमा प्रयोग गर्नु उपयुक्त हुन्छ भन्ने देखिन्छ । नेपालमा बहुभाषिकताबारे विविध प्रकाशनगृहहरूले यथेष्ट स्थान दिएको पाइन्छ । यसै सन्दर्भमा “वि.स. २०६० सालबाट गोरखापत्रले बहुभाषिक पृष्ठलाई स्थान दिइ सूचना तथा सञ्चारको क्षेत्रमा बहुभाषाको प्रयोग भएको पाइन्छ” (पौडेल र भट्टराई, २०७७, पृ. ३४) । “स्थानीय स्वायत्त शासन ऐन २०५५ र नियामवली २०५६ लागू भएपछि काठमाडौँ नगरपालिका (?) ले नेवार भाषा र धनुषा तथा राजविराज नगरपालिकाले मैथिली भाषा लागू गरेका थिए” (पौडेल र भट्टराई, २०७७, पृ. १८) ।

बहुभाषिक कक्षामा शिक्षण सिकाइको माध्यम भाषाका सन्दर्भमा राष्ट्रिय पाठ्यक्रम प्रारूप (२०६३) ले आधारभूत तह (कक्षा १-३) मा शिक्षाको माध्यम मातृभाषा र विद्यालय तहमा शिक्षण सिकाइको माध्यम नेपाली, अङ्ग्रेजी वा दुवै माध्यम हुन सक्ने व्यवस्था गरेको पाइन्छ । यसले बहुभाषिक कक्षामा विद्यार्थीको आवश्यकताअनुसार माध्यम भाषाका रूपमा मातृभाषा, नेपाली र अङ्ग्रेजी दुवै उपयोग गर्न सकिने उल्लेख गरिएको देखिन्छ । तर बहुभाषिक शिक्षा कार्यक्रम (२०६३) कार्यान्वयन गर्न खोजिएता पनि बिचमा नै अलपत्र परेको छ ।

नेपालको बहुभाषिक यथार्थता स्वीकार गरी मातृभाषामा शिक्षा पाउने अधिकार सुनिश्चित गर्न बहुभाषिक शिक्षाको थालनी भएको थियो । कक्षामा देखिने बहुभाषिक उपस्थितिको सम्बोधन गर्न बहुभाषिक शिक्षा कार्यक्रम कार्यान्वयन निर्देशिका (२०६६) कार्यान्वयनमा ल्याइएको भए पनि बहुभाषिक शिक्षाको वास्तविक मर्मबोध हुन नसकेकाले एकल भाषिक कक्षाका लागि एकलभाषिक चिन्तन (१-३ कक्षासम्म मातृभाषा माध्यम) मा केन्द्रित देखिन्छ ।

कम्तीमा १-३ कक्षासम्म पढाइ हुने विद्यालय कक्षामा रहेका विद्यार्थीले मातृभाषामा शिक्षा पाउने (विद्यालय क्षेत्र सुधार योजना, २०६६-२०७२) सुनिश्चितता कायम गरेको देखिन्छ । विद्यालय क्षेत्र विकास कार्यक्रम (२०७३) योजनाले एक कक्षामा भिन्न भाषिक परिवेशका विद्यार्थीहरूको सङ्ख्या १५-२० सम्म भएमा शिक्षण सिकाइका क्रममा सबै भाषाको सम्मान हुने गरी माध्यम भाषा प्रयोग गर्नु पर्ने रणनीति तय गरेको देखिन्छ ।

राष्ट्रिय शिक्षा नीति (२०७६, दफा १०.८.१) ले एकातिर आधारभूत तहमा बालबालिकाको मातृभाषाका साथै गणित र विज्ञान विषयलाई अङ्ग्रेजी भाषामा पनि अध्यापन गर्न सकिने (दुईभन्दा बढी भाषालाई सँगसँगै सिकाउने बहुभाषिक शिक्षा) व्यवस्था उल्लेख गरेको छ । बहुभाषी कक्षा कोठामा मातृभाषामा आधारित बहुभाषिक शिक्षण पद्धति (कक्षा १-३ सम्म मात्र मातृभाषा माध्यम, छिटो निर्गमन सङ्क्रमणीय ढाँचा) लाई प्रोत्साहित गर्ने (दफा १०.८.४) व्यवस्था गरेको देखिन्छ ।

नेपालको संविधान २०७२ र शिक्षा ऐन सातौँ संशोधन (२००२) ले पनि प्रत्येक समुदायलाई आफ्नो मातृभाषामा आधारभूत शिक्षा पाउने हकको प्रत्याभूत गरेको छ । विद्यालय क्षेत्र सुधार योजना (२००९-२०१५) मा “कक्षा तीनसम्म मातृभाषालाई शिक्षाको माध्यम तथा कक्षा चार र पाँचमा मातृभाषालाई शिक्षाको माध्यमको रूपमा नेपाली भाषामा शिक्षण गर्नुपर्ने व्यवस्था गरिएको छ” । “राष्ट्रिय शिक्षा आयोगको प्रतिवेदन २०४९, राष्ट्रिय भाषा नीति सुझाव आयोगको प्रतिवेदन २०५०, राष्ट्रिय भाषामा प्राथमिक शिक्षा समितिको प्रतिवेदन २०५४, उच्चस्तरीय राष्ट्रिय शिक्षा आयोगको प्रतिवेदन २०५५, शिक्षासम्बन्धी उच्चस्तरीय कार्यसमितिको प्रतिवेदन २०५८, द्विभाषिक शिक्षासम्बन्धी

अध्ययन प्रतिवेदन २०५९ (२००९), आदिले मातृभाषामा शिक्षा अर्थात् बहुभाषिक शिक्षाको लागि सिफारिस गरेका छन्” (तामा^३ र राई, २०१३) ।

“भाषाबारे गम्भिर चासो राख्दै स्थानीय स्तरमा मातृभाषाहृको प्रयोग विस्तारमा जोड दिनुपर्छ र अति लोपोन्मुख भाषाका वक्तालाई नै बचाउनेतर्फ उन्मुख हुन आवश्यक छ । किनकि भाषा राष्ट्रको सम्पदा, हाम्रो गौरव हो र पहिचानको आधार हो” (योजनन तामा^३ २०७४, पृ. २३) । जातिगत भाषाको यपमा नलिई राष्ट्रिय सम्पत्तिको यपमा लिनु पर्ने कुरा व्यक्त भएको पाइन्छ । संविधानमा व्यवस्था भएअनुसार बहुभाषिक नीति निर्माण गरी लागू भएको देखिँदैन् । नीतिगत व्यवस्था भए पनि कार्यान्वयन पक्ष अत्यन्तै कमजोर रहको पाउन सकिन्छ । बहुभाषिक शिक्षाको सैद्धान्तिक अवधारणा र व्यवहार बिच कुनै तालमेल मिलेको देखिँदैन् । यसले गर्दा बहुभाषिक शिक्षा कार्यन्वयन प्रभावकारी बन्न सकिरहेको छैन् । स्थानीय तथा राष्ट्रिय आवश्यकता र सन्दर्भलाई मध्यनजर गरी आफ्नो मुलुक सुहाउँदो भाषिक नीति बनाउनु पर्ने देखिन्छ । बहुभाषिक शिक्षाप्रति राज्यले अपनत्वबोध गरेको पाइँदैन् । यसका लागि स्थानीय ज्ञान, विज्ञान र सिपलाई विशिष्टीकृत बनाएर सामाजिक तथा आर्थिक रूपान्तरणको बलियो आधार तयार गर्नुपर्ने हुन्छ । वस्तुतः यसका कार्यान्वयन गर्न शिक्षामा बालबालिकाहरूको आवश्यकतालाई पहिलो प्राथमिकता दिनुपर्छ ।

बहुभाषिकताका सन्दर्भमा मातृभाषी शिक्षा

विद्यार्थीले बुझ्ने र बोल्ने मातृभाषामा शिक्षा पाउँदा सिकाइ सहज, प्रभावकारी र आत्मविश्वासपूर्ण हुन्छ । “आमाको काखमा रमाउँदै होस् या परिवारमा तातेताते गर्दै पहिलो पटक प्राकृतिक र स्वतन्त्र तवरले सिकेको भाषा नै मातृभाषा हो” (पौडेल र भट्टराई, २०७७, पृ. ३८) । आमाको काखमा सिकिने भाषालाई मातृभाषा भनिन्छ । “मातृभाषामा शिक्षा भन्नाले विद्यार्थीको पहिलो भाषा वा उसले घरमा बोल्ने भाषालाई विद्यालयमा शिक्षण सिकाइका माध्यम भाषाका रूपमा प्रयोग गरिएको अवस्थालाई जनाउँछ” (शैजविके, २०७२, पृ. ४) । नेपाल सरकारका नीति तथा योजनाहरूले वि.स २०४७ पछि मातृभाषामा आधारित आधारभूत शिक्षालाई अवलम्बन गर्ने कुरामा जोड दिएको छ । तर, शिक्षाको माध्यम भाषाको रूपमा नेपाली भाषाको प्रयोग अझै पनि अधिक भइरहेको छ । “विशेष गरी प्रारम्भिक तहका कक्षाहरूमा मातृभाषिक संरचना (ध्वनि, वर्ण, शब्दभण्डार, वाक्य संरचना र बोध) का कारणले सिकाइ सहज हुने हुँदा र विद्यालयप्रति विद्यार्थीको आकर्षणसमेत बढ्ने कारणले मातृभाषाका माध्यमबाट पठनपाठन गर्न उपयुक्त हुने कुरा अध्ययनहरूले औँल्याएका छन्” (विद्यालय शिक्षाको राष्ट्रिय पाठ्यक्रम प्रारूप, २०७६, पृ. १३) ।

शिक्षा विभाग (२०७२) ले प्राथमिक तहमा कक्षाकोठामा पठनपाठन र सिकाइ क्रियाकलापमा शिक्षाको माध्यमका रूपमा ६९ स्थानीय भाषाहरू प्रयोग हुने गरेको देखाएको छ । शिक्षा विभाग (२०७२) का अनुसार शैक्षिक सत्र २०७१-०७२ मा ३० हजारभन्दा अलि बढी सामुदायिक विद्यालयका २९ हजार १३३ कक्षाकोठामा यी भाषाहरू प्रयोग भइरहेका छन् । हाल मैथिली, तामाङ, डोटेली, अवधी, भोजपुरी, थारु, मगर, लिम्बू, बाज्जिका लगायतका भाषाको प्रयोग हुने गरेको छ ।

विद्यालय क्षेत्र सुधार योजना (२०६६-२०७२) र सबै राष्ट्रिय कार्ययोजना (२०५८-२०७२) को लागि शिक्षाद्वारा परिकल्पना गरिएको मातृभाषामा आधारित बहुभाषिक शिक्षा दिशानिर्देश अभ्यास गर्न थालिएको छ, तर यो कम प्रभावकारी रहेको कुरा विभिन्न सरोकारवलाहरूले व्यक्त गर्ने गरेको पाइन्छ । युनेस्को (सन् २००८) को प्रतिवेदनमा उल्लेख गरेअनुसार “मातृभाषाका माध्यमबाट सिकाइ गर्ने अवसर

पाएका बालबालिकाहरूमा आत्मबल बलियो हुने, काम गर्ने प्रेरणा जाग्ने, कक्षालाई प्रभावकारी रूपमा सम्बोधन गर्न सक्ने, समयको सदुपयोग हुने, शैक्षिक उपलब्धि राम्रो हुने र ज्ञानात्मक क्षेत्र समेत राम्रो भएको कुरा व्यक्त गरको पाइन्छ” (रिमाल २०७४, पृ. ११) ।

पाठ्यक्रम विकास केन्द्रद्वारा मैथिली, भोजपुरी, अवधी, तामाङ, लिम्बू, राई बान्तवा, राई चाम्लिङ, शेर्पा, मगर (ढुट), नेवार (नेपाल भाषा), गुरुङ, थारु, सुनुवार, राजवंशी, मुगाली, याक्खा, थारु (मध्य क्षेत्र), तामाङ सम्भोटा लिपि, धिमाल, मगर (अथार), बज्जिका, कुलुङ, चेपाङ, खालिङ राई, रानाथारु, माभी र उर्दू गरी २७ वटा मातृभाषाका पाठ्यपुस्तकहरू (कक्षा १-५) निर्माण गरी हाल नेपालमा लागू भइरहेको छ (पाठ्यक्रम विकास केन्द्र, २०८०) । उक्त संस्थाले विभिन्न मातृभाषामा बाल सन्दर्भ सामग्रीहरू निर्माण गरेको र स्थानीय तहले पनि ठाउँ विशेष हेरी अन्य मातृभाषामा पनि पाठ्यपुस्तकहरू निर्माण गरी कार्यान्वयन गरेको पाइन्छ । यसरी शैक्षिक जनशक्ति विकास केन्द्रले तालिम प्याकेजहरू विकास गरिएको छ, जुन १० दिने शिक्षक व्यावसायिक विकास मोड्युल तालिमहरू शिक्षा विभागमार्फत लागू गरिएको छ । यसका अतिरिक्त प्रारम्भिक कक्षाका लागि केही स्थानीय भाषाहरूमा विकसित पाठ्यपुस्तकहरू छन् ।

अनुसन्धान विधि र प्रक्रिया

प्रस्तुत लेखमा निम्नानुसारको अध्ययन विधि र प्रक्रिया अवलम्बन गरिएको छ :

परिमाणात्मक अनुसन्धान ढाँचा : यो लेख तयारीका क्रममा परिमाणात्मक अनुसन्धान ढाँचाको प्रयोग गरिएको छ । यसमा भाषिक परिवेश पत्ता लगाउन सर्वेक्षण विधि र सिकाइ उपलब्धि पत्ता लगाउन वर्णनात्मक तथ्याङ्कशास्त्रीय विधिको प्रयोग गरिएको छ ।

नमुना छनोट : यसमा विद्यालय छनोट गर्दा असम्भावनायुक्त नमुना छनोट अन्तर्गत उद्देश्यमूलक नमुना छनोट विधिको उपयोग गरिएको छ । जसका आधारमा आ.व. २०८०/०८१ का सरस्वती माध्यामिक विद्यालय, कोटेश्वर, काठमाडौँमा कक्षा पाँचमा अध्ययनरत ६० जना विद्यार्थीहरूलाई नमुनाको रूपमा छनोट गरिएको छ ।

तथ्याङ्क सङ्कलन : प्रस्तुत अध्ययनमा प्राथमिक स्रोतबाट सामग्री सङ्कलन गरिएको छ । यसमा तथ्याङ्क सङ्कलनका लागि संरचित प्रश्नावलीबाट प्राप्त तथ्याङ्कहरूलाई वर्गीकरण गरी तालिकामार्फत प्रस्तुत गर्दै प्रतिशत र अंकको आधारमा विश्लेषण गरिएको छ । यसबाट विभिन्न भाषाको प्रयोग गर्ने विद्यार्थीहरूको सङ्ख्या र अनुपात स्पष्ट पारिएको छ । यस अध्ययनका लागि कक्षा पाँचका निम्ति निर्माण गरिएको विशिष्टीकरण तालिकामा आधारित भई शब्दभण्डार (४), वर्णविन्यास (२), व्याकरण (७), पठनबोध (४), निर्देशित लेखन (४), स्वतन्त्र लेखन (४) गरी जम्मा २५ पूर्णाङ्कको प्रश्नपत्र तयार गरी विद्यार्थीहरूलाई १ घण्टा समय दिई नेपाली भाषा सिकाइ उपलब्धिको परीक्षण गरिएको छ ।

व्याख्या र विश्लेषण

काठमाडौँ महानगरपालिकामा कक्षाको परिवेश

नेपालका विभिन्न प्रदेशबाट विभिन्न भाषिक सांस्कृतिक पृष्ठभूमि भएका बालबालिका काठमाडौँका विद्यालयमा आएका हुन्छन् । यहाँ विशेष गरी सामुदायिक र संस्थागत विद्यालयहरू रहेका छन् । काठमाडौँ जिल्लाका काठमाडौँ महानगरपालिकाका सामुदायिक विद्यालयअन्तर्गत कक्षा पाँचसम्म

पढाइ हुने विद्यालयहरू ८७ (कक्षा १ देखि ५ सम्म ७ वटा, कक्षा १ देखि ८ सम्म २२ वटा, कक्षा १ देखि १० सम्म २० वटा, १ देखि १२ सम्म ३८ वटा) वटा रहेका छन् (जिल्ला शिक्षा समन्वय एकाइ, काठमाडौं, २०८०) । अहिले सरकारी विद्यालयमा भाषिक र सांस्कृतिक विविधता मात्रै नभएर सामाजिक-आर्थिक पृष्ठभूमिमा आधारित वर्गीय भिन्नता पनि भेटाउँन सकिन्छ । सरकारी विद्यालयहरूमा निम्न र मध्यम वर्गका बालबालिका बढी रहेका छन् । यही भाषिक र सांस्कृतिक विविधताबाट, बहुभाषिक दृष्टिकोणले पनि मिश्रित संस्कृतिको विकास भएको देखिन्छ । विद्यालयमा बालबालिकाहरू स्वतन्त्र रूपमा एक अर्कासँग बोल्ने, खेल्ने तथा रमाउँने गर्छन् । कक्षाइतर परिवेशमा उनीहरू सहज तरिकाले आफ्ना क्रियाकलापमा सरिक हुन्छन् । तर कक्षाकोठाको गतिविधिमा धेरैजसो बालबालिकाहरू मौन हुन्छन् । किनभने कक्षाको वातावरण भाषा प्रयोगको दृष्टिकोणले प्रतिकूल हुन्छ । विद्यार्थीलाई माध्यम भाषामा शिक्षा ग्रहण गर्ने पने बाध्यात्मक स्थिति निर्माण गरिएको हुन्छ । त्यसैले विद्यार्थीका लागि मैत्रीपूर्ण र सम्मानजनक भाषिक व्यवहारसहितको अनौपचारिक वातावरण उपलब्ध गराउन आवश्यक देखापर्छ । प्राथमिक कक्षामा विद्यार्थीहरू मूलधारमा आउनका लागि घरेलु भाषा र कक्षाको भाषा (औपचारिक र मानक) सँग जोडिन सक्नुपर्छ । काठमाडौं महानगरपालिकाका सबै विद्यालयमा अध्ययन गर्ने बालबालिकाको लागि स्थानीय पाठ्यक्रमअन्तर्गत एकल नेवार भाषा (नेपाल भाषा) विषय अनिवार्य गरिएकोमा यो पनि एकल भाषिक अभ्यासको निरन्तरता दिएको पाइन्छ ।

यसले विद्यार्थीहरूले कक्षामा सिकाइ अनुकूलको वातावरण प्राप्त गर्न सक्दैनन् । जसकारण शैक्षिक उपलब्धि हाँसिल गर्न अझ कठिन हुन्छ । यस अध्ययनमा काठमाडौं महानगरपालिका भित्रको सरस्वती माध्यामिक विद्यालय, कोटेश्वरमा कक्षा पाँचमा अध्ययनरत विद्यार्थीहरूको बहुभाषिकताको बारेमा सर्वेक्षण गर्दा निम्नानुसार विवरण प्राप्त भएको छ :

तालिका नं. १

सरस्वती माध्यमिक विद्यालयका कक्षाकोठाको भाषिक परिवेश

क्र सं	भाषा	प्रयोग्यता सङ्ख्या	प्रतिशत
१.	नेपाली	३०	५०.००
२	भोजपुरी	११	१८.३४
३	मैथिली	५	८.३४
४	ठेठी	४	६.६७
५	मगर	३	५.००
६	नेवार	२	३.३४
७	राई	१	१.६७
८	डोटेली	१	१.६७
९	हिन्दी	१	१.६७
१०	लामा	१	१.६७
११	थामी	१	१.६७
	जम्मा	६०	

तालिका नं. १ अनुसार भाषिक परिवेशलाई आधार मानेर हेर्दा कक्षा पाँचमा जम्मा ६० जना विद्यार्थीहरू अध्ययनरत रहेका छन् । उक्त कक्षामा ११ वटा मातृभाषा प्रयोग गर्ने विद्यार्थीहरू रहेको पाइयो । जसमध्ये सबैभन्दा बढी ३० जना नेपाली मातृभाषा विद्यार्थी रहेको पाइयो । नेपाली इतर मातृभाषी विद्यार्थी ३० जना रहेको पाइयो । यसरी पहिलो नेपाली भाषी बाहेक ५० प्रतिशत नेपाली इतर मातृभाषी विद्यार्थी उक्त कक्षाकोठामा रहेको पाइयो । उक्त विद्यालयको विद्यार्थीहरूलाई हेर्दा जम्मा विद्यार्थी सङ्ख्या ६० जनामा ३० जना नेपाली भाषी रहेको र बाँकी ३० जना नेपाली इतर मातृभाषी (भोजपुरी, मैथिली, ठेठी, मगर, नेवार, राई, थामी, डोटेली, हिन्दी, लामा) बोल्ने भाषिक प्रयोक्ता रहेको पाइन्छ । उक्त कक्षामा जम्मा ११ वटा मातृभाषी विद्यार्थीहरू उपस्थित रहेको पाइयो । वस्तुतः सहरमा अवस्थित सामुदायिक विद्यालयहरूको कक्षाकोठा भाषिक विविधतायुक्त हुन्छ ।

तालिका २

बहुभाषिक कक्षाको भाषा सिकाइ उपलब्धि

भाषा	विद्यार्थी सङ्ख्या	विषय क्षेत्र						जम्मा (२५)
		शब्दभण्डार (४)	वर्णविन्यास (२)	व्याकरण (७)	पठनबोध (४)	निर्देशित ब्रन	स्वतन्त्र लेखन	

									(४)
नेपाली	३०	८२	२८.५	११४.५	८५	३८	२४	३७२	प्राप्ताङ्कको योगफल (प्रा.यो.)
		२.७३	०.९५	३.८२	२.८३	१.२७	०.८	१२.४	प्राप्ताङ्कको औसत (प्रा.औ.)
भोजपुरी	११	३२.५	१०.५	३५.५	३१.५	८	६	१२४	प्रा.यो.
		२.९५	०.९५	३.२३	२.८६	०.७३	०.५५	११.२७	प्रा.औ.
मैथिली	५	१०	३.५	१४	११	०	०	३८.५	प्रा.यो.
		२	०.७	२.८	२.२	०	०	७.७	प्रा.औ.
ठेठी	४	१३.५	४	१७.५	१२	८.५	३	५८.५	प्रा.यो.
		३.३८	१	४.३८	३	२.१३	०.७५	१४.६४	प्रा.औ.
मगर	३	५.५	१	११.५	८.५	२	०.५	२९	प्रा.यो.
		१.८३	०.३३	३.८३	२.८३	०.६७	०.१७	९.६६	प्रा.औ.
नेवार	२	३.५	२	६	३.५	३.५	३.५	२२	प्रा.यो.
		१.७५	१	३	१.७५	१.७५	१.७५	११	प्रा.औ.
राई	१	४	१	३	३.५	२.५	१	१५	प्राप्ताङ्कको योगफल र औसत (प्रा.यो.औ.)
थामी	१	२.५	०.५	३	३	०	०	९	प्रा.यो.औ.
डोटेली	१	३	०.५	२	२	०	०	७.५	प्रा.यो.औ.
लामा	१	१.५	०.५	१	१	०	१	४	प्रा.यो.औ.
हिन्दी	१	३	०.५	१.५	२.५	०	१	८.५	प्रा.यो.औ.

तालिका नं. २ अनुसार शब्दभण्डारअन्तर्गत तुलनात्मक रूपमा ठेठी भाषा प्रयोक्ताको औसत राम्रो देखिन्छ भने सबैभन्दा औसत कम लामा भाषा प्रयोक्तामा रहेको छ । वर्णविन्यासअन्तर्गत सबैभन्दा औसत बढी ठेठी, नेवार, राई भाषा प्रयोक्ता देखियो भने सबैभन्दा औसत कम मगर भाषी रहेको छ । व्याकरणमा सबैभन्दा बढी ठेठी भाषी प्रयोक्ता र कम लामा भाषी रहेको पाइन्छ । पठनबोधमा सबैभन्दा बढी राई भाषी र कम लामा भाषी देखिन्छ । निर्देशित लेखनमा सबै भन्दा बढी राई भाषी र कम थामी, डोटेली, लामा र हिन्दी भाषी प्रयोक्ता रहेको छ । स्वतन्त्र लेखनमा सबैभन्दा बढी नेवार भाषी र कम थामी, डोटेली र लामा भाषी देखिन्छ ।

नेपाली भाषी र नेपाली इतर मातृभाषी बिच तुलना गर्दा नेपाली भाषी विद्यार्थीहय्ले शब्दभण्डारमा प्राप्त गरेको जम्मा प्राप्ताङ्क ८२, औसत प्राप्ताङ्क २.७३ र नेपाली इतर मातृभाषी विद्यार्थीले प्राप्त गरेको प्राप्ताङ्क ७९, औसत प्राप्ताङ्क २.६३ रहेको पाइन्छ। यसरी नेपाली भाषी विद्यार्थीहय्ले वर्णविन्यासमा जम्मा प्राप्ताङ्क २८.५, औसत प्राप्ताङ्क ०.९५ र नेपाली इतर मातृभाषी विद्यार्थीहय्ले जम्मा प्राप्ताङ्क २३.५, औसत प्राप्ताङ्क ०.७८ रहेको छ।

व्याकरणमा नेपाली भाषी विद्यार्थीहय्का जम्मा प्राप्ताङ्क ११४.५, औसत प्राप्ताङ्क ३.८२ र नेपाली इतर मातृभाषी विद्यार्थीहय्का जम्मा प्राप्ताङ्क ९५, औसत प्राप्ताङ्क ३.१७ रहेको छ। पठनबोधमा नेपाली भाषी विद्यार्थीहय्का जम्मा प्राप्ताङ्क ८५, औसत प्राप्ताङ्क २.८३ र नेपाली इतर मातृभाषी विद्यार्थीहय्का जम्मा प्राप्ताङ्क ७८.५, औसत प्राप्ताङ्क २.६२ रहेको पाइन्छ। निर्देशित लेखनमा नेपाली भाषी विद्यार्थीहय्का जम्मा प्राप्ताङ्क ३८, औसत प्राप्ताङ्क १.२७ र नेपाली इतर मातृभाषी विद्यार्थीहय्का जम्मा प्राप्ताङ्क २४.५, औसत प्राप्ताङ्क ०.८२ रहेको देखिन्छ। स्वतन्त्र लेखनमा नेपाली भाषी विद्यार्थीहय्का जम्मा प्राप्ताङ्क २४, औसत प्राप्ताङ्क ०.८० र नेपाली इतर मातृभाषी विद्यार्थीहय्का जम्मा प्राप्ताङ्क १५, औसत प्राप्ताङ्क ०.५ रहेको पाइन्छ।

यसरी विषय क्षेत्र (शब्दभण्डार, वर्णविन्यास, व्याकरण, पठनबोध, निर्देशित लेखन, स्वतन्त्र लेखन) लाई आधारमानी समग्र नेपाली भाषी विद्यार्थीहय्ले प्राप्त गरेको जम्मा प्राप्ताङ्क ३७५, औसत प्राप्ताङ्क १२.५ रहेको र समग्र नेपाली इतर मातृभाषी विद्यार्थीहय्ले प्राप्त गरेको जम्मा प्राप्ताङ्क ३१६, औसत प्राप्ताङ्क १०.५३ रहेको छ। यसरी बहुभाषिक कक्षामा विद्यार्थीको भाषिक उपलब्धिलाई हेर्दा नेपाली भाषी विद्यार्थीहय्को तुलनामा नेपाली इतर मातृभाषी विद्यार्थीहय्को जम्मा प्राप्ताङ्क ५९ अङ्कले र औसत प्राप्ताङ्क १.९७ कमी रहेको पाइन्छ।

निष्कर्ष

नेपालमा बहुभाषिक शिक्षा सम्बन्धी राज्यका विभिन्न नीति र योजनाहरू निर्माण गरिएको तर प्रभावकारी रूपमा कार्यान्वयन नभएको देखिन्छ। भाषा सम्बन्धी संविधानमा व्यवस्था भए अनुरूप देशका हरेक क्षेत्रमा बहुभाषिक नीति निर्माण गरी लागू गराउनमा सम्बन्धित निकायहय्ले जोड नदिएको देखिन्छ। नीतिगत व्यवस्था भए पनि कार्यान्वयन पक्षअत्यन्तै फितलो रहेको पाउन सकिन्छ। संविधान, महासन्धी र अन्तराष्ट्रिय घोषणापत्रहय्मा गरिएको प्रतिवद्धताको राज्यले खासै चासो नदेखाएको देखिन्छ। बहुभाषिक शिक्षा कार्यक्रम कार्यान्वयन गर्न खोजिएता पनि बिचमा अलमलिएको पाउन सकिन्छ। अतः बहुभाषिक शिक्षामा राज्यका नीति र योजनाहरू खासै प्रभावकारी रूपमा कार्यान्वयन नभएको मान्न सकिन्छ। यस अध्ययनमा नमुनाको रूपमा छनोटमा परेका विद्यार्थीहरूलाई हेर्दा जम्मा विद्यार्थी सङ्ख्या ६० जनामा ३० जना नेपाली भाषी रहेको र बाँकी ३० जना अन्य भाषी (भोजपुरी, मैथिली, ठेठी, मगर, नेवार, राई, थामी, डोटेली, हिन्दी, लामा) बोल्ने भाषिक प्रयोक्ता रहेकाले उक्त कक्षामा जम्मा ११ वटा भाषिक प्रयोक्ता विद्यार्थीहरू भएकाले सहरी क्षेत्रमा अवस्थित सामुदायिक विद्यालयहरूका कक्षाहरू बहुभाषिक रहेको पाइन्छ। उक्त कक्षामा राष्ट्रिय जनगणनामा उल्लेख नभएका ठेठी भाषा (४ जना) प्रयोग गर्ने विद्यार्थीहय पनि रहेका छन्। उक्त कक्षामा विद्यार्थीहय्को भाषिक उपलब्धिलाई हेर्दा समग्र नेपाली भाषी विद्यार्थीहय र नेपाली इतर मातृभाषी बिचमा तुलना गर्दा नेपाली भाषीभन्दा नेपाली इतर

मातृभाषी विद्यार्थीहरूको जम्मा प्राप्ताङ्क ५९ अङ्क र औसत प्राप्ताङ्क १.९७ ले कमी रहेको पाइन्छ । वस्तुतः बहुभाषिक कक्षाकोठामा नेपाली भाषी विद्यार्थीहरू नै भाषिक सिकाइ उपलब्धि स्तर राम्रो रहेको छ । नेपाली भाषी विद्यार्थीहरू भन्दा नेपाली इतर मातृभाषी विद्यार्थीहरू कमजोर रहेका छन् ।

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